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NOMINATION HEARINGS OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION—MARCH 10 THROUGH DECEMBER 2, 2015

SECOND SESSION—FEBRUARY 11 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 20, 2016

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NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2015

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

Stafford Fitzgerald Haney, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to Costa Rica
Matthew T. McGuire, of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of two years
Gentry O. Smith, of North Carolina, to be Director of the Office of Foreign Missions, and to have the rank of Ambassador
Charles C. Adams, Jr., of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Finland

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:31 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. David Perdue, presiding.

Present: Senators Perdue, Gardner, and Kaine.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID PERDUE, U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA

Senator PERDUE. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on State Department Management will come to order.

Thank you all for being here today to hear from the nominees to very important positions that will allow these Americans to proudly represent the United States abroad. We have nominees for Ambassador to two countries, Costa Rica and Finland, both of which we share strong diplomatic ties. Our nominee for U.S. Executive Director for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and Director of Office of Foreign Missions, which remains very important as we seek to secure our diplomatic facilities abroad and the Americans working there.

I understand most of you have already been through this process and are coming back for a second go-round. It is Cory's and my first. So you will be patient with us today. Will you not? [Laughter.]

However, I was not here last Congress. So I appreciate your forbearance today, and we will move right through this as expeditiously as we can.

With that, I would like to recognize Senator—I am sorry. We will move right through this since he is not here.

Our first nominee—I am just going to highlight this just briefly and apologize for this, but I want to go through this.

Our first nominee, Mr. Stafford Fitzgerald Haney, who is nominated to be Ambassador to Costa Rica. Mr. Haney currently serves as Director of Business Development and Client Services at Pzena Investment Management, has served in positions with Pepsico and Citibank in some major Latin American countries such as Brazil, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. He graduated from Georgetown University School of Foreign Service with a masters and bachelors degree.

Our second nominee today is Mr. Matthew T. McGuire, who is nominated to be U.S. Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of 2 years. Mr. McGuire has held multiple positions in the Department of the Treasury and Commerce and prior to that, he had a very successful career in the finance industry. Mr. McGuire is a graduate of Brown University and has degrees from the University of London and Harvard.

Our third nominee is Mr. Gentry O. Smith, who is nominated to be Director of the Office of Foreign Missions with the rank of Ambassador. Mr. Smith is a career Foreign Service officer who started with the State Department in 1987. He has served in many posts overseas, including Cairo, Tokyo, and Burma, as well as the Secretary of State's protective detail. He also served as Deputy Assistant Secretary and Assistant Director for Countermeasures. Mr. Smith is a graduate of North Carolina State University.

Our fourth nominee is Mr. Charles C. Adams, Jr., who is nominated to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Finland. Mr. Adams is currently senior counsel at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, LLP. He has led a successful career, spending much of his time living in Geneva, Switzerland, as a managing partner for various law firms. He is a graduate of Dartmouth College and the University of Virginia School of law.

Thank you all for being here today and sharing your thoughts and viewpoints with us today.

We would remind you all that your full statements will be included in the record, as it was the last time you were here, without objection. So if you could please keep your remarks to no more than 5 minutes or so, we appreciate that so members of the committee can engage with you on these matters. And we will move as expeditiously as we can.

With that, we will take statements, starting with Mr. Haney first, please.

STATEMENT OF STAFFORD FITZGERALD HANEY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO COSTA RICA

Mr. HANEY. Chairman Perdue, Senator Gardner, thank you. It is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica.

I am profoundly humbled by this opportunity to serve and thank the President and the Secretary of State for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to protect U.S. citizens in Costa

Rica, deepen the bonds that unite our countries, and advance U.S. interests in Central America.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to acknowledge friends and family without whose support I would not be here today, starting with my wife, Rabbi Andrea Haney, and my children, Asher, Nava, Eden, and Shaia, who are at home watching hopefully. If I am confirmed, my wife and our four children will be joining me in San Jose, and it is only through their love and support that I am here today.

I would also like to mention my mother, father, and brother—may they rest in peace—who are here today with us in our hearts. My mother, Sandra Haney, was and still is my hero. She is also a link in a long line of family that has in various ways served our country proudly. From a fifth great-granduncle who fought in the Revolutionary War to my brother who served both overseas and at home to my great uncle who recently received an honorary doctorate in public service and was recognized by the Tennessee State legislature to my mother's marches and sit-ins to protest what she saw as injustices not compatible with the America we aspire to be, we have a long and proud tradition of serving our Nation. It is in my mother's honor and in her memory that I hope, if I am confirmed, to dedicate my service.

Costa Rica is an important ally in a region of critical strategic importance to the United States. It is the most stable democracy in Central America and its long-held traditions of protecting human rights and freedom of expression are a model for the region. Its strong commitment to investing in education and health has helped Costa Rica achieve literacy, life expectancy, infant morality, and income levels that are significantly better than elsewhere in Central America. It is no surprise that these positive attributes have attracted significant numbers of Americans to the country. Today, approximately 100,000 U.S. citizens call Costa Rica home and more than 1 million visit annually. If confirmed, their safety and well-being will be my top priority.

Despite its successes, Costa Rica, like its neighbors, confronts many challenges, including security challenges, as international drug trafficking organizations and organized crime increasingly penetrate Central America. The United States and Costa Rica enjoy an excellent partnership in security cooperation. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Government of Costa Rica to ensure that organized crime does not undermine the country's economy and democratic institutions.

Another of my highest priorities will be promoting greater Central American integration. As outlined in the Strategy for U.S. Engagement in Central America, the region will not prosper without better regional cooperation on trade, infrastructure development, strengthened democratic institutions, energy integration, and investment.

Given its ability and relative prosperity, Costa Rica can and should play a critical role in advancing our strategy in Central America. It can and should lead in working to create conditions in Central America that are conducive to reducing poverty and violence and creating jobs and opportunity, and it should serve as an example of what is possible in the region. President Solis has com-

mitted to working to promote regional integration and prosperity, and if confirmed, I will support him in those efforts.

I have many years experience living and working in international business in Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and Brazil. I understand the region and the challenges it faces. As President Solis made clear during his first year in office, Costa Rica is serious about improving its business climate and attracting additional foreign investment. If confirmed, my private sector experience will be an asset to helping Costa Rica achieve those goals. It would also serve me in working to advocate for stronger intellectual property protection, promote entrepreneurship, and public-private partnerships, and ensure that U.S. companies and investors encounter a fair and level playing field for doing business in Costa Rica.

If confirmed, I will work closely with Costa Rica to advance the many other policy objectives and priorities the United States and Costa Rica share. Costa Rica shares our commitment to protecting democratic freedoms and human rights and is vigilantly resisting any attempts to weaken the inter-American human rights system. This support for basic human rights, democracy, and freedom has never been more important in the region than today. Costa Rica is an international leader with important initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change and promote renewable energy use and sustainable development. I believe Costa Rica can become a regional hub of innovation and has the potential to assume a leadership role in advancing good governance and prosperity throughout Central America.

As our dedicated team at Embassy San Jose states, a safe, prosperous, and green Costa Rica not only benefits the citizens of both of our nations, but also the entirety of Central America.

Mr. Chairman, committee members, I thank you again for your consideration of my nomination to serve as Ambassador to Costa Rica, and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Haney follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STAFFORD FITZGERALD HANEY

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Costa Rica.

I am profoundly humbled by this opportunity to serve and thank the President and the Secretary of State for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to protect U.S. citizens in Costa Rica, deepen the bonds that unite our countries, and advance U.S. interests in Central America.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to acknowledge friends and family without whose support I would not be here today—starting with my wife, Rabbi Andrea Haney, and my children Asher, Nava, Eden, and Shaia. If I am confirmed, my wife and our four children will be joining me in San Jose and it is only through their love and support that I am here today. I would also like to acknowledge my mother-in-law, Betsy Dobrick, my brothers and sisters-in-law Adam and Allison Dobrick and Jeremy Dobrick and Tamara Hoover, and various close friends, whose support means so much to me and my family.

Finally, I would also like to mention my mother, father, and brother, may they rest in peace, who are here today with us in our hearts. My mother, Sandra Haney, was, and still is, my hero. As a young widow with two young children, she left home and family to provide my brother and me with the best education and opportunities she could. Working during the day and going to school at night, she showed us, by her example, that the United States is truly the land of opportunity for those who work hard on a level playing field. She did not have it easy as a single African-American woman raising two children alone in the 1970s, but she never gave up

and she knew her sacrifices would allow her children to have a better life. It was her firmly held belief; one which she passed on, that America's core values should serve as an example throughout the world. She also was a link in a long line of family that has in various ways served our Nation proudly. From a 5th great-grand-uncle who fought in the Revolutionary War to my brother who served both overseas and at home to my greatuncle who recently received an honorary doctorate in public service and was recognized by the Tennessee State legislature to my mother's marches and sit-ins to protest what she saw as injustices not compatible with the America we aspire to be—we have a long and proud tradition of serving our Nation. It is in my mother's honor and in her memory that I hope, if I am confirmed, to dedicate my service.

Costa Rica is an important ally in a region of critical strategic importance to the United States. It is the most stable democracy in Central America, and its long-held traditions of protecting human rights and freedom of expression are a model for the region. Its strong commitment to investing in education and health has helped Costa Rica achieve high literacy, life expectancy, and income levels and a low infant mortality rate. It is no surprise that these positive attributes have attracted significant numbers of Americans to the country. Today, approximately 100,000 U.S. citizens call Costa Rica home and more than 1 million visit annually. If confirmed, their safety and well-being will be my top priority.

Despite its successes, Costa Rica confronts many challenges, including security challenges, as international drug trafficking organizations and organized crime increasingly penetrate Central America. The United States and Costa Rica enjoy an excellent partnership in security cooperation. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Government of Costa Rica to ensure that organized crime does not undermine the country's economy and democratic institutions.

If confirmed, another of my highest priorities will be promoting greater Central American integration. As outlined in the Strategy for U.S. Engagement in Central America, the region will not prosper without better regional cooperation on trade, infrastructure development, strengthened democratic institutions, energy integration, and investment. Greater integration has long been an aspiration in Central America, but effective mechanisms for achieving that goal have remained elusive. The United States can play a constructive role in helping Central America create jobs and economic opportunities for its 43 million people, by helping the region improve infrastructure, integrate markets, reduce nontariff barriers, and benefit more from its free trade agreement.

Given its stability and relative prosperity, Costa Rica can help play a critical role in advancing our strategy in Central America. It can help lead in working to create conditions in Central America that are conducive to further reducing poverty and violence and creating jobs and opportunity and it can serve as an example of what is possible in the region. President Solis has stated a commitment to working to promote regional integration and prosperity, and, if confirmed, I will support him in those efforts. I will also work to create stronger linkages between the American Chambers of Commerce in Central America, so that the private sector is fully incorporated into the process of seeking solutions to the region's development challenges.

I have many years' experience living and working in international business in Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and Brazil. I understand the region and the challenges it faces. As President Solis made clear during his first year in office; Costa Rica is serious about improving its business climate, and attracting foreign investment. If confirmed, my private sector experience will be an asset in helping Costa Rica advance in those areas. It will also serve me in working to advocate for stronger intellectual property protection, promote entrepreneurship and public-private partnerships, and ensure that U.S. companies and investors encounter a fair and level playing field for doing business in Costa Rica.

If confirmed, I will work closely with Costa Rica to advance the many other policy objectives and priorities the United States and Costa Rica share. Costa Rica shares our commitment to protecting democratic freedoms and human rights, and is vigilantly resisting any attempts to weaken the Inter-American Human Rights System. This support for basic human rights, democracy and freedom has never been more important in the region than today. Costa Rica is an international leader with important initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change and promote renewable energy use and sustainable development. I believe Costa Rica can become a regional hub of innovation and has the potential to assume a leadership role in advancing good governance and prosperity throughout Central America.

As our dedicated team at Embassy San Jose states: a safe, prosperous, and green Costa Rica not only benefits the citizens of both of our nations, but also the entirety of Central America.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. Haney.
Mr. McGuire.

STATEMENT OF MATTHEW T. MCGUIRE, PH.D., NOMINATED TO BE U.S. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Dr. MCGUIRE. Thank you, Chairman Perdue, and thank you for convening us today and chairing this session. Thank you also to Senator Kaine for presiding today. And, Senator Gardner, thank you for coming. It seems appropriate that I congratulate Senator Perdue and Senator Gardner for your recent victories and for joining the Senate. It is quite an honor, and it is always good to have fresh thinking and fresh blood up here.

I would also like to just thank my mother, who is here today, Georgiana McGuire. I was noting earlier with a few people that the last time I did this, I had aunts and uncles and in-laws and all sorts of people. You do it a second time, you get Mom. [Laughter.]

I am thrilled to have her, but it is a lesson to everybody here.

It is an honor and a privilege, of course, to be here as President Obama's nominee as Executive Director for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, otherwise known as the World Bank.

Rather than read the full statement I sent over for the formal record, I would like to briefly discuss my career to date and then frame how I would approach the role of Executive Director, if I were to be confirmed.

So with that, I would just say that during the first part of my career, I taught and was focused on issues related to economic and development policy both in the United States and abroad. I got a Ph.D. in anthropology from Harvard, finishing in 1988, and my dissertation was on the redevelopment of public housing in Chicago. During that time, I also spent several months in Ethiopia and Eritrea researching the relationship between those countries shortly after the end of their 30-year-long war. And when I finished my Ph.D., I ran a welfare-to-work job training program in New York before joining a firm that helped U.S. cities redevelop public housing projects into mixed-income communities.

In 2003, I moved into the financial services industry, and I spent the next 8 years working for several mutual fund and hedge fund companies raising capital and serving as a senior executive in three entrepreneurial and dynamic firms. During that time, I began to more fully understand the role that financial markets play in our economy and how interconnected the global economy is as a result of the ease with which capital moves across national borders, industry sectors, and asset classes. In an era where CEO's and investors can deploy each dollar or euro or real almost anywhere in the world at almost at a moment's notice, it is increasingly important that countries like ours play close attention to their financial positions and that they strive to maintain and strengthen the integrity of their capital markets.

That view has been strengthened by my experience and my time over the last 4 years at the Department of Commerce and at the Department of the Treasury where I have worked closely with U.S.

businesses on a range of issues, including many related to international trade.

Should this committee and the full Senate confirm me, I will strive to be a sound steward of our country's capital at the bank at all times. I will work to ensure that each dollar we commit is used to support the values that have proven so durable since America's founding, that open societies are the strongest societies, that transparent systems are the most successful systems, and that those countries which endeavor to give all of their citizens a fair shot at becoming educated, being healthy, and achieving economic independence are the countries that will succeed no matter where they happen to be located. Those are just a few of the values I have watched President Obama champion for many years now, and I would be honored to carry them forward on his behalf, on the country's behalf as the Executive Director of the bank.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McGuire follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MATTHEW T. MCGUIRE

Thank you, Chairman Perdue and Senator Kaine, for presiding over today's hearing. I would also like to thank Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, and the distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor and a privilege to be here, as President Obama's nominee for Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. I have enjoyed meeting some of you and your staff during the confirmation process, and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

My mother was part of the first Peace Corps group ever to go overseas, "Ghana I," back in 1961. She was the first person in her family to go to college, having worked her way through, and when she graduated she heard President Kennedy's call to reach out beyond America's shores and to make a difference however small or however large it might be. She taught English in a small town in Ghana called Tema, and many years later a student of hers from the Tema Secondary School became one of my professors at Brown University. As you might imagine, I grew up hearing many stories about those sorts of connections, and I grew up hearing about the importance of America's role in the world, especially through its uniquely American institutions, such as the Peace Corps. My father, who died when I was 6 years old, also served in the Peace Corps, in what was then East Pakistan and is now Bangladesh. He spent most of his career working on international affairs as well, and his influence on me has been considerable even in his absence.

I also grew up working at my family's business here in Washington, DC, The McGuire Funeral Service. My great-grandfather, Robert Grayson McGuire, founded the funeral home in 1912, and when I was old enough I began spending my summers and my weekends there, washing cars, arranging flowers, shoveling snow off the driveway, and even acting as a pallbearer when a family was in need of another set of hands. And I will always remember that my mother and my uncle paid me minimum wage and no more, punching a time clock like everyone else, for every hour and every minute that I worked there.

Through the course of watching my grandfather, my mother, my aunt and my uncle, run the funeral home, I learned numerous things. I learned about how important it is to have a bank that provides credit in bad times as well as good; about how having economic independence makes it easier to engage with political issues of the day, like the civil rights movement, which my family was deeply involved in; and about the pride and responsibility that comes from being able to hire more people as your company grows. These are simple, yet powerful things that I carry with me to this day.

The first part of my career was squarely focused on issues of economic equality, and how public policies can increase the possibilities of ordinary citizens to raise their incomes and have a shot at realizing their dreams. I got a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Harvard, finishing in 1998, and my dissertation was on the redevelopment of public housing in Chicago. During that time I also spent several months in Ethiopia and Eritrea, researching the relationship between those countries shortly after the end of their 30 year-long war. And when I finished my Ph.D., I ran a welfare-to-work job training program in New York before joining a firm that helped U.S. cities redevelop public housing projects into mixed-income communities.

In 2003, I moved into the financial services industry, and I spent the next 8 years working for several mutual fund and hedge fund companies, raising capital and serving as a senior executive in three entrepreneurial and dynamic firms. During that time I began to more fully understand the role that financial markets play in our economy, and how interconnected the global economy is as a result of the ease with which capital moves across national borders, industry sectors, and asset classes. In an era where CEOs and investors can deploy each next dollar, or euro, or real, almost anywhere in the world at almost a moment's notice, it is increasingly important that countries like ours pay close attention to their financial positions, and that they strive to maintain and strengthen the integrity of their capital markets.

And that is what I would like to close with. If confirmed, you can be sure that I will undertake the role of Executive Director with that very sensibility in mind at all times. I will strive to be a sound steward of our country's capital at the Bank, and I will work to ensure that each dollar we commit is used to support the values that have proven so durable since America's founding: that open societies are the strongest societies; that transparent systems are the most successful systems; and that those countries which endeavor to give all of their citizens a fair shot at becoming educated, being healthy, and achieving economic independence, are the countries that will succeed no matter where they happen to be located. Those are just a few of the values I have watched President Obama champion for many years now, and I would be honored to carry them forward on his behalf, and on the country's behalf, as Executive Director of the Bank.

I look forward to answering any questions you have, and I thank you again for allowing me to come before you today.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. McGuire.

Mr. Smith.

STATEMENT OF GENTRY O. SMITH, NOMINATED TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Kaine. I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Director of the Office of Foreign Missions, OFM. I am profoundly grateful for the confidence that the President and Secretary Kerry have demonstrated in nominating me for this unique and important position.

My entire professional life has been dedicated to public service, beginning with my first career as a police officer in Raleigh, NC, to my assignments at embassies in Tokyo, Rangoon, and Cairo, and my most recent as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Countermeasures for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. I have strived in each to improve the conditions in which our colleagues live and work. I believe my dedication and commitment in this regard will serve me well, if given the opportunity to lead the Office of Foreign Missions.

As an organization, its primary goals being to use reciprocity to ensure the equitable treatment of U.S. diplomatic and consular missions and personnel abroad, regulating the activities of foreign missions in the United States to protect our foreign policy and national security interests, protecting our U.S. public against abuses of privileges and immunities by foreign missions operating here in the United States, and providing services and assistance to foreign missions that are located here on a reciprocal basis.

As you are aware, OFM was established in 1982 under the Foreign Missions Act. In passing the act, Congress made it clear that the operations of foreign missions in the United States are a proper subject for the exercise of Federal jurisdiction.

For more than 30 years, the act guided the Department's management and extension of foreign missions in the United States for

its privileges and benefits associated with acquiring real property, motor vehicle and driving services, for tax exemptions, customs clearances, domestic travel courtesies and restrictions.

The committee is well aware of the Department's ongoing efforts to ensure that our personnel abroad work in facilities that are safe and secure and functional. I can authoritatively attest that the relocation of an American Embassy is a complex and challenging task. To accomplish this job, the United States must have the interest and support of the host governments. In many countries, such support is there for the asking. In countries where the support is lacking, OFM plays a critical role in assisting with the resolution of impasses we sometimes face with foreign governments during our attempts to acquire real property in those countries and relocating and constructing our facilities.

When a country has an interest in improving or relocating one of its missions in the United States, the Office of Foreign Missions uses its ability to regulate the acquisition and the use of real property by foreign missions as a leverage to achieve the Department's own property-related needs in that country. Without OFM and its authorities under the Foreign Missions Act, we may not have been able to build a U.S. Embassy in Beijing or a new annex that is currently under construction there. This and more was achieved as a result of reciprocity and the Foreign Missions Act.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I am honored to have the opportunity to address you and the esteemed members of the committee. And if confirmed, I will do all that I can to further the important objectives that Congress has set out under the Foreign Missions Act. I look forward to continuing to work with you and to ensure the proper treatment of our foreign personnel serving abroad and, as importantly, the foreign missions that are here, that they continue to react as good neighbors.

Thank you for the opportunity and your consideration for my nomination, and I respectfully ask that my full statement be entered into the record.

Senator PERDUE. Without objection, it certainly will.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GENTRY O. SMITH

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Director of the Office of Foreign Missions (OFM). I am profoundly grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have demonstrated in nominating me for this unique and important position.

My entire professional life has been dedicated to public service. Beginning with my first career as a police officer in Raleigh, NC, to my assignments at our Embassies in Tokyo, Rangoon, and Cairo, and to my most recent role as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Countermeasures in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, I have strived to improve the conditions in which my colleagues live and work. I believe my dedication and commitment in this regard will serve me well if given the opportunity to lead the Office of Foreign Missions, an organization whose primary goals are:

- Using reciprocity to ensure equitable treatment for United States diplomatic and consular missions abroad and their personnel;
- Regulating the activities of foreign missions in the United States to protect our foreign policy and national security interests;
- Protecting the U.S. public from abuses of privileges and immunities by members of the foreign missions; and

♦ The provision of service and assistance to the foreign mission community in the United States on a reciprocal basis.

As you are aware, OFM was established in 1982 as a requirement of the Foreign Missions Act. In passing the act, Congress made it clear that the operations of foreign missions in the United States are a proper subject for the exercise of Federal jurisdiction.

For more than 30 years, the act has guided the Department's management and extension to foreign missions in the United States, privileges and benefits associated with the acquisition and use of real property, motor vehicle and driving services, tax exemptions, customs clearances, and domestic travel courtesies and restrictions.

In my estimation, the Foreign Missions Act is a landmark piece of legislation which has positively influenced and conditioned the environment in which U.S. diplomatic and consular missions abroad operate.

This committee is well aware of the Department's ongoing efforts to ensure that our personnel abroad work in facilities that are safe, secure, and functional. I can authoritatively attest that the relocation of an American Embassy is a complex and challenging task. To accomplish this job, the United States must have the interest and support of the host government. In many countries, such support and assistance are there for the asking. In countries where support is lacking, OFM plays a critical role in assisting with the resolution of impasses we sometimes face with foreign governments during our attempts to acquire real property in their countries for the relocation and construction of our facilities.

When a country has an interest in improving or relocating one of its missions in the United States, OFM uses its ability to regulate the acquisition and use of real property by foreign missions as leverage to achieve the Department's own property-related needs in that country. Without OFM and the authorities it has under the Foreign Missions Act, we may not have been able to build the new U.S. Embassy in Beijing, or the new annex building under construction there. This and more was achieved as a result of reciprocity and the Foreign Missions Act.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I am honored to have the opportunity to address you and the esteemed members of the committee. If confirmed, I will do all that I can to further the important objectives Congress set out in the Foreign Missions Act, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure proper treatment of our Foreign Service personnel abroad, and that foreign missions are good neighbors here at home.

Thank you for this opportunity and your consideration of my nomination. I respectfully request that my full statement be entered into the record, and I will be happy to answer your questions.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. Smith.

Mr. Adams.

STATEMENT OF CHARLES C. ADAMS, JR., NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND

Mr. ADAMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Senator Kaine, it is a renewed pleasure to have the opportunity of appearing today before this committee. It is a tremendous honor to have been renominated by the President for this post, and I thank both the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence that they have shown in me. If confirmed, I very much look forward to working with you and with your colleagues in Congress to further U.S. interests in Finland.

Mr. Chairman, with your kind permission, I would like to say a few words—to repeat a few words actually that I said on a previous occasion with respect to the reasons why for me, if confirmed, the privilege of serving as an Ambassador of the United States has deep personal significance.

My late father, Charles C. Adams, dedicated the entirety of his professional career to representing the United States as an officer of the Foreign Service, supported throughout by my late mother, Florence Schneider Adams. They, and what came over time to be a family of six children, spent many years in posts around the

world with stints in between back home here in Washington, principally in Europe and Africa. And so I had the opportunity as a Foreign Service brat to witness firsthand from the perspective of a kid at the time the enormous skill and savvy and dedication and personal courage that my parents brought to their service to their country, as did also all of the other men and women of the Foreign Service with whom they were privileged to serve. And I saw also the burdens and the sacrifices that they were prepared to endure in serving their country.

Now, after my own service in the Peace Corps in East Africa from 1968 to 1970, I chose to go into the private sector, and I spent more than 40 years in the practice of international law and policy at high levels. But throughout this time, I have always had very close to my heart the idea that as a salute to the memory of my mom and dad and to the magnificent men and women of the Foreign Service with whom they served that I, in turn, might some day be afforded the profound privilege of serving my country as an ambassador of the United States.

And I have to say that in the 6 months of a holding pattern, in effect, since I last had the privilege of appearing before this committee, the sentiment on my part, far from having in any way been diluted or diminished, has in fact, been reinforced. And so I do thank you very much, indeed, for the opportunity of reappearing before this committee today.

I am very excited that the President should have asked me to represent the United States in Finland. Finland is a very close partner of the United States. It has been a member of the European Union since 1995, has developed an innovation-led economy, has worked very closely with the United States as a partner in the Partnership for Peace of NATO, and has supported the United States in Afghanistan and elsewhere in promoting human rights and security around the globe.

As to the matter of shared security, ever since 1950 Finland has been a very dedicated participant in U.N. peacekeeping missions around the world, and although not a member of NATO, it is, as I have mentioned, a participant in NATO's Partnership for Peace program. And Finland maintains a very high level of cooperation and interoperability with the NATO alliance. It regularly participates in joint training missions with the United States and its allies, including joint air training later this very month with Sweden and Estonia and the United States Air Forces.

And Finland is one of the largest contributors to the OSCE special monitoring mission in Ukraine with 19 observers on the ground currently and very substantial contributions as well to the observation force in respect of the Ukraine elections last year.

The Finnish Government has also contributed troops to the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan, has suffered fatalities, along with others of our allies, and it has pledged $1 billion a year from 2015 through 2017 in further support of the Afghan National Security Forces. Finland has also taken the lead on the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 in respect of women's rights and participation of women in Afghan civil society.

Secondly, the United States and Finland share the vision of a strong, robust transatlantic economy that delivers benefits for all

of our citizens. That is why, if confirmed, one of my very top priorities will be increasing economic cooperation between our two countries through expanded bilateral trade and investment. The United States is currently Finland's fourth-largest customer and sixth-largest supplier with bilateral trade valued in excess of $7 billion. I believe that we can do still more and enhance the position of the United States as a principal valued trading partner of Finland.

I will work closely also with the Finns on the increasing importance of the Arctic region. As you know, the United States is about to take over, on April 25, the chairmanship of the Arctic Council, and the Finns will have the next succeeding chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2018 to 2019.

As to our shared values, the United States and Finland have a relationship which continues to thrive because of the strong people-to-people ties between our two nations. And these relationships are the lifeblood of our partnership. I can recall having had, as a college student at Dartmouth, a summer job as an escort interpreter with the Department of State, and I had the occasion to participate in the international visitors program as an interpreter with delegations from abroad. And it happens that Finland, in participating in these IVP programs over the years, now has as alumni many senior members of the Finnish Government, including President Niinisto, Prime Minister Stubb, and other important figures in Finland's Government who came to see the United States as young students at the time.

Senator PERDUE. I apologize for interrupting. Could we move to a conclusion so we can move this along? I apologize. I am trying to keep us on schedule here. Thank you.

Mr. ADAMS. Well, I thank you for your attention.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Adams follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHARLES C. ADAMS, JR.

Mr. Chairman and honorable members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Finland. It is a tremendous honor to be asked to serve in this post, and I would like to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to further U.S. interests in Finland.

With your kind permission, I would like to say a few words about my personal background and why this makes the privilege to serve as an ambassador so meaningful, if confirmed by the Senate.

My late father, Charles C. Adams, dedicated the entirety of his professional career to representing the United States as a Foreign Service officer, supported throughout by my late mother, Florence Schneider Adams. They, and what came over time to be a family of six children, spent many years in posts all over the world, principally in Europe and Africa, between assignments back home here in the United States. I had the opportunity to witness at first hand, through the eyes of the "Foreign Service brat" that I was, the enormous skill, savvy, dedication, and courage that my parents, and all other professionals of the Foreign Service, brought to their service to their country, and the burdens and sacrifices they were prepared to endure.

After service in the Peace Corps in East Africa in 1968–1970, I chose to enter the private sector, and have practiced international law and policy at high levels for now over 40 years. But I have always had close to my heart the idea that, as a salute to the memory of my mom and dad, and to the magnificent men and women of the Foreign Service with whom they served, I might someday be afforded the extraordinary privilege of serving my country as a United States Ambassador.

My feelings in this regard have in no way diminished; rather they have intensified in the 6 months since having first shared these remarks with this distinguished committee.

I am very excited that the President asked me to represent the United States in Finland. Finland is a close U.S. partner. It has been a member of the European Union since 1995, has developed an innovation-led economy, engages closely with us as a NATO partner, including in Afghanistan, and leads in promoting human rights around the globe.

Finland and its EU partners have stood with the U.S. in implementing sanctions against Russia, sharing our belief that Russia must be held accountable for its actions in Ukraine and abide by its commitments under the Minsk Agreement.

Participation in multilateral fora is a core component of Finland's foreign policy and this is demonstrated through its partnership with the U.S. in international organizations like the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

If confirmed, I will work to sustain and advance the strong U.S.-Finland bilateral relationship. I will work to do so by championing U.S. national interests across three areas: our shared security, shared prosperity, and shared values.

First, on our shared security: ever since the 1950s, Finland has been a dedicated participant in U.N. peacekeeping missions around the world. At the 2014 NATO summit in Wales, Finland became an Enhanced Partner of the alliance. Finland has been a participant in NATO's Partnership for Peace program for years and maintains a high level of cooperation and interoperability with the alliance. Finland regularly participates in joint training missions with the U.S. and our allies, including joint air training later this month, and is one of the largest contributors to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine, contributing 19 SMM observers.

The Finnish Government has contributed troops to the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, and has pledged $8 million per year from 2015 to 2017 in support for the Afghan National Security Forces. Finland has taken the lead on implementation of UNSCR 1325, the Resolution for Women, Peace and Security, which seeks to protect women's rights and participation in Afghan society.

Finland also played a critical role in addressing the crisis in Syria through its participation in the mission to transport and destroy Syrian chemical weapons and in 2014 provided over $14 million in humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people.

Finland has demonstrated a commitment to combating violent extremism in partnership with the United States, having implemented enhanced antiterrorism legislation in January and participating in the Foreign Terrorist Fighters Working Group.

Second, the United States and Finland share the vision of a strong, robust transatlantic economy that delivers benefits for all our citizens. That is why, if confirmed, one of my top priorities will be increasing economic cooperation between our two countries, through expanded bilateral trade and investment.Finland strongly supports a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T–TIP), which, if successfully negotiated, could further increase bilateral economic ties and strengthen the overall U.S.–EU economic relationship. I will also work closely with the Finns on the increasingly important Arctic region. Finland is eager to work with us on our upcoming chairmanship of the Arctic Council, and will take over the chairmanship after us in 2017.

Finally, on our shared values, the U.S.-Finnish relationship continues to thrive because of the strong people-to-people ties between our two nations. These relationships are the lifeblood of our partnership. If confirmed, I will travel throughout the country meeting with students, media, local officials and civil society listening to their priorities and concerns and speaking to the enduring value of our cooperation.

Finland has played an active role in advancing our shared security, economic, and social values. If confirmed, I look forward to representing my country in advancing a still deeper connection between the United States and Finland.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have addressed you today, and am at your disposal to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

Senator PERDUE. No. They are very eloquent remarks. I apologize for closing that off.

It must be easier the second time, guys. You did very well.

As we said in the opening remarks, this is the second time you have been here. I appreciate your forbearance.

I have a couple questions of my own here for the record, and then we will move to the ranking member, Senator Kaine, for his remarks and questions as well. I will try to be brief. I appreciate your forbearance today. And I am glad your mom is here, Mr. McGuire.

Dr. MCGUIRE. Thank you, sir.

Senator PERDUE. Mr. Haney, as Ambassador to Costa Rica, what would your top policy priorities be as you approach that country? It is one of the shining stars, as you said, in Central America, indeed Latin America. And what can we do to raise our cooperation together to the next level?

Mr. HANEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the question.

I think the broad policy objectives that I would have in Costa Rica very much mirror—align with the broader objectives we have within Central America as they were recently outlined in the Strategy for U.S. Engagement in Central America.

So specifically one would be promoting prosperity and economic integration from a regional perspective, enhancing security, as well as promoting improved governance. And I think Costa Rica can both benefit from our focus on these areas, as well as help us do some of the heavy lifting that we need in the region.

So, for example, on the prosperity and regional integration, Costa Rica has done fairly well relatively. As you said, it is a shining star within the region and within Latin America. It is 40 percent of the trade of the CAFTA–DR, the free trade agreement within the region. But there are still other areas that they can take advantage of within this trade intraregionally, and to do that, they need to address things such as the high cost of power, as well as the transportation infrastructure and facilitating trade on an intraregional basis. I think that is an overlapping priority that we have with the Solis government and that is something that we could work on with them.

As far as enhancing security goes, Costa Rica has done an excellent job. Coming from the private sector, I always look at return on investment. So what does the U.S. taxpayer get for the investment we are making in our partner countries? And Costa Rica, by far, has probably done one of the best jobs in the region on security cooperation. Last year, they seized more cocaine than any other country in Central America, and it was 30 percent more than the previous year. In the last 4 years, it has continued to grow up. So I think we can continue to work on security with the Costa Ricans.

And then I think very much and very importantly for Costa Rica and for the United States is that our relationship is at a different level now. It has matured to the point where we look at Costa Rica as an asymmetrical partner in helping us address some of the key issues in the region. And so I would hope to be able to help the Costa Ricans, perhaps do some of the initiative-building activity that they can do to take some of their experience in promoting human rights and democracy, education, as well as economic development and transport that to the rest of the region as well.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

Mr. McGuire, what is your impression of the coordination between the World Bank and the regional development banks? More broadly, in light of the request of the general capital increases from these institutions, what do you see as the division of labor between these institutions, and how should Congress think about and prioritize those requests?

Dr. MCGUIRE. Sure. So on the first of those questions, the coordination there—it is ongoing. It is consistent. The World Bank, obvi-

ously, is considerably larger than the others, the African Development Bank, the Inter-American, the Asian Development Bank, the European Development Bank. And so there is always a discussion back and forth, and as many people have explained it to me, people often take the World Bank's lead. So the practices and the policies of the bank are quite consequential in terms of the practices of some of the others.

Certainly, were I to be confirmed, I already know some of the other executive directors, at least the executive director at the Inter-American Development Bank. I know the woman who has been nominated for the African Development Bank. I certainly look forward to maintaining and strengthening those relationships and then making sure that staff are talking where and how it is appropriate as well. So that is the first piece.

In terms of the division of labor, the World Bank has extraordinary expertise in any number of countries around the world. That said, one can always get even more expertise from those who are on the ground who are focusing just on a particular region. And so certainly I would expect for an intellectual exchange.

In terms of projects themselves, I think that is a discussion that should be an ongoing one, and there are certain banks which have greater expertise in certain areas, let us say, on financial reform or education. The bank has a particularly strong team thinking about infrastructure and public health, and I think we ought to play to our strengths and make sure that we are not just overlapping all the time but that we are complementary in how projects fit with one another.

And then there are instances where there are particular projects that are larger, perhaps a little riskier, where we actually do want to be alongside one another to spread out some of that risk and to make sure that we are really utilizing the U.S.'s contributions to all the banks most effectively.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you very much.

Mr. Smith, what do you consider to be the OFM's highest priorities, and how do you perceive your potential role in achieving them. You have served in the State Department as Deputy Assistant Secretary and Assistant Director for Countermeasures in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, since 2009 I think.

Mr. SMITH. That is correct.

Senator PERDUE. How do you perceive your role in achieving those priorities?

Mr. SMITH. Senator, as I stated during my previous testimony here, my highest priority will be ensuring the equitable treatment of our personnel who serve in facilities abroad by the host governments under which they operate and also make sure that our national interests and foreign policy interests here in the United States are protected by regulating the activities of those foreign missions that are located here in the United States.

How I will do that is by remaining engaged with the various regional bureaus at the State Department, along with their regional executive directors, who have day-to-day interaction with our embassies and consulates that are around the world to make sure that any issues that come up that we can address from a perspective of reciprocity that we can do that.

I will also, of course, stay in close contact with the Under Secretary for Management and the chiefs of missions at those embassies so that if I personally have to be engaged in any of those activities to bring about resolution, that I can do that as well.

And as I stated during my last testimony, of course, I will remain engaged with the Congress, with the members here, and with your committees if there are specific issues of interest that we can resolve as well.

Senator PERDUE. Great. Thank you.

My time has expired. In the second round, I have one more question for Mr. Adams, but the ranking member—we are going to waive the time constraint on this since he has not had a chance for his opening remarks.

So, Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thanks to all the witnesses.

I have voted for you once already. So I am not going to ask questions and make you think I am trying to satisfy myself of whether I made a mistake or not. I very much support you. I congratulate you on the renomination.

I also want to say, Mr. Adams, your story about your own family's personal history is a very touching one. But it really does call to mind the tremendous sacrifice that our Foreign Service professionals make. The three of you, I guess, will have the title of Ambassador, and then, Mr. McGuire, you will be Executive Director. But you are all Ambassadors, but you also will be working with some fantastic small A ambassadors.

As I travel to do CODEL's as part of this committee, when I am in another country, I almost always will meet with first- and second-tour Foreign Service officers, the newcomers to the State Department family to ask them about their lives and their perceptions and to answer their questions. I always come back—Senator Cornyn and I were in Latin America 3 weeks ago. I always come back with a high degree of real inspiration for the service. I think we do a good job of thanking our military who serve in harm's way these days, but an awful lot of our nonmilitary personnel who serve overseas who get sent to places that may not be their first choice, sometimes to places where they cannot bring family, sometimes to places where there is physical danger—it is really important work. And so you will be working with wonderful colleagues, and I know that you will express that appreciation to them every day that you serve.

To just maybe go left to right, Mr. Adams, I want to ask you about—we had a hearing this morning about Russia and the Ukraine. We have had a lot of hearings about Russia in the months since you were here and about what is happening. Talk a little bit about the Finland-Russia relationship now and, in particular, whether the sanctions that the United States and NATO have imposed on Russia are having an effect on the economy of Finland.

Mr. ADAMS. Thank you, Senator. Let me address the second part of your question first, if I may.

Finland, as you know, is a very strong proponent of the sanctions regime against Russia and has implemented those sanctions forcefully. Even though, inasmuch as Finland has a very active trading

relationship with Russia, it is Finland which, among the EU countries, has probably paid the highest price in terms of the impact on its economy. Finland's exports to Russia in 2014 were down by 13 percent in respect of 2013, largely as a result of the direct sanctions and of the reduced value of the ruble which impeded Russian purchasing power in respect to Finnish goods and services. Finland has stepped up and has made it clear that it is prepared not only to enforce existing sanctions but to advocate for enhanced and stronger sanctions to the extent that the crisis in Ukraine is not rapidly brought to a satisfactory close.

The relationship between Finland and Russia is ancestral. As you know, Finland spent over a century as a grand duchy of the czar of Russia from 1809 to December 6th of 1917. There had been dealings before. There have been dealings after, including armed conflict, as you know. In the course of the Second World War, Finland on two separate occasions staved off the assaults of the Red Army, incurring the admiration of the world in so doing.

It is a delicate relationship. Finland is very firmly anchored with the West in terms of its values, in terms of its liberal political system, its democracy, in terms of also of its sense of oneness with its neighbors to the west and to the south, even as Finland has sought to maintain a relationship with Russia that is based on shared respect and a concern for good neighborly proximity, and Finland has succeeded admirably in so doing.

The crisis in the Ukraine has brought focus on Finland as an interlocutor and bearer of messages to Russia which are heeded and paid close attention to by Russia because of the privileged posture of Finland and the respect with which Finland is held by Russia due to this relationship of several centuries standing. And if confirmed, I would look forward to working closely with the Finnish Government in continuing to strive for a satisfactory and prompt resolution of the crisis in Ukraine to which Finland is uniquely positioned to contribute.

Senator KAINE. Thank you very much, Mr. Adams.

Mr. Smith, the issue of the reciprocal treatment of U.S. Embassy and consular personnel in nations where they serve and then our treatment of their personnel here—there have been some newsworthy instances in the last couple years, most notably in some back and forth between the United States and India with respect to treatment of Indian Embassy and consular personnel in New York and then actions taken in India that challenged some of the rights of our Embassy personnel.

But one that is ongoing right now that I am just kind of curious about—I just returned from Latin America with Senator Cornyn, and when we were in Colombia, there was an escalating tension with the neighboring country of Venezuela. And my understanding is that Venezuela has sort of directed us to reduce our number of Embassy and consular personnel from—I do not know—about 100 down to 17. There are about 80 Venezuelan consular personnel in the United States. I am just curious if you have any insight that you can share in an opening setting as to how we are trying to work through that particular challenge to the credentials to our Embassy and consular personnel in Venezuela.

Mr. SMITH. Well, as you stated, Senator, as much as we can talk about it in open session, which is rather limited, but I agree with you. We got the number that we needed to reduce down to 17. We are looking at the situation now because, as you stated, there are more than 17 diplomats from Venezuela that are currently operating in the United States. And so we will continue in negotiations and discussions with the Government of Venezuela to come to a much more honest recognition of how many personnel they have here and hopefully be able to respond in a reciprocal way so that we can keep our numbers pretty much equal to what their numbers are. So it is still a situation that is developing. It is one that is still very much under study with the Department and one in which we remain engaged with the Venezuelans on this particular issue.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you, Mr. Smith, for that.

Mr. McGuire, I want to ask you about the activities of the IBRD in the Americas. The President currently has a budget proposal in that is Plan Central America. It is with respect to the Northern Triangle countries in Central America, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. The dramatic escalation in the number of unaccompanied minors coming to the United States, an average of about 20,000 to 35,000 in 2013, nearly 70,000 in 2014, drew a lot of attention to these three countries that have three of the worst murder rates in the world, huge amounts of poverty. And the President's proposal deals with kind of an all-encompassing strategy to help them deal with security challenges, fight narcotrafficking, and also do the kind of economic development and justice reforms that will enable the people to want to stay rather than to have to leave their countries due to poverty and violence.

Talk a little bit about the IBRD kind of portfolio. It looks to be about a third of activity is in the Americas. How can the IBRD be an asset to this need to hopefully upgrade the security and economic situation in Central America so we do not see the push of unaccompanied minors coming to our country.

Dr. MCGUIRE. Sure. I appreciate it. And I was actually in Colombia just last summer on a trade mission with the Commerce Department, and so I thought about a number of these issues from a regional perspective myself recently.

I would say the first place I would start is importantly to your point, realizing that there is an all-in strategy here in the sense that on certain matters it will be the State Department which is able to take the lead and help the Northern Triangle countries in particular. In certain instances, it is USAID on the bilateral side. It is worth noting that 11 of the 21 countries with which the United States has free trade agreements are in this hemisphere. All three of the Northern Triangle countries we have free trade agreements with. So there is an existing strong base there for increasing commerce, which leads to increasing stability.

That is really the part and parcel of what the World Bank is about, is stabilizing economies, growing economies so that a lot of other problems often can fade away so long as you are paying attention to them a little more directly like security and some of the things that you are addressing. So I think that is important to realize. There is a larger context here and this is an ongoing set of challenges that we are dealing with.

In terms of the IBRD, you are right. I believe it is closer to a quarter of the overall portfolio is within Latin America. So that is pretty significant. I would note that the two large economies within the region, the largest, Brazil and Mexico, are number one and number two in terms of total portfolio exposure, if you will, at the bank. So there is consistent and ongoing work. And I think the challenge for the bank is to continue to look at where it can have the greatest impact.

One example I will use—and please take it not as a recommendation to bank staff where they ought to go. But when I was in Colombia, one of the things I heard an awful lot about is the great potential that the eastern region had for developing agriculture. It is very fertile land. One of the big challenges that they have is, should that be fully developed, there are not enough roads and rail to get to market in the more densely populated regions to the west but also for export. And so these sorts of infrastructure projects could be something that would make a difference. Again, I am not making recommendations but saying these are the kind of things that the bank and its expert staff continue looking at to say how do we grow the economy, how do we diversify the economy, how do we give people multiple options so perhaps they are not drawn into some of the other activities that are going on down there.

And then finally, I would say, getting back to my original point, it is working in conjunction with all the other U.S. Government entities to make sure that we are working hand in hand and not at cross purposes so we can be most effective in trying to stabilize the region and help it to continue to grow.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. McGuire.

And finally, Mr. Haney, I want to congratulate you. On this CODEL I was talking about, we spent about 35 minutes in the airport in Costa Rica, and the mere knowledge that we were there caused Embassy officials to drive and meet with us in our layover and ask us penetrating questions about when Fitz Haney was going to be confirmed by the Senate of the United States. And I thought if they drove all the way out to the airport about an hour from downtown knowing we would have 5 minutes to talk on your behalf, that speaks well for the team that you will be working with.

Costa Rica, a fascinating country; 120,000 American citizens, approximately, live there and more than 1 million Americans visit Costa Rica every year.

As we are grappling with some of the issues I asked Mr. McGuire about some of the security challenges in Central America, really two things. What can we do to help Costa Rica share some of its expertise, civil justice system, for example, in Honduras—I am very familiar with Honduras, having lived there. One out of 100 murders leads to a conviction. So there is almost complete impunity for the most serious crime there is, and that means people do not cooperate with the courts or police. Why be a witness? Why tell somebody what you saw if there is not going to be a conviction anyway? And that is a fairly common thing in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala. Costa Rica has a different tradition. I am interested in what you might be able to do to help sort of share that tradition in the region because of the cultural similarities.

But also, I am curious. Is Costa Rica seeing any up-tick in criminal activity? There is a little bit of a squeezing the balloon phenomenon. The better we do in Colombia, the more we push some criminal activity elsewhere. When we invest in Plan Merida in Mexico, we push some criminal activity elsewhere. Is Costa Rica seeing any escalation, especially in narcotraffic, and what might the United States do to help them deal with that issue?

Mr. HANEY. Thank you, Senator. And thanks to the team in Embassy San Jose who drove out to advocate on my behalf. I hope to be down there soon.

Let me start with the second part of your question. I do think that is the importance of the entire approach, both from the U.S. Government perspective, as well as the strategic perspective that we have to address this on a regional basis. Because of the success we have had in Colombia and success we have had in Mexico, being a business person, my belief is that as people develop distribution channels, they are going to ship through whatever they think they can make money on. And so the countries in the middle, so all of Central America, have been squeezed and have all experienced an up-tick or increase in violence. And Costa Rica has not been spared that up-tick. Last year, the murder rate went back up in Costa Rica, and it was most directly related to narcotrafficking.

So I think the fact that the country has, like I said, seized more drugs last year than any other country in the region—and that was a 30-percent increase over the previous year, and it has been 4 years in a row—tells, I think, one of two things. One is that the Costa Ricans are a very willing and capable partner, and we need to continue to partner with them on initiatives around security. And two, probably other countries are not doing as well as they should do if Costa Rica is number one in this. So I think they are exposed, and we can do everything we can to continue to support their democratic institutions so that they cannot become as tainted or as fragile as the Northern Triangle institutions are.

Now, what can Costa Rica do? I do think that Costa Rica, given its strong traditions and given its relative success on democracy and human rights, can serve to help institution-build within the region. And so I think our engagement—you know, we have not had an ambassador in Costa Rica now for almost 2 years, and I think our high-level engagement with the Government of Costa Rica will help them really to move to the next level. It is a natural impulse, I think, of the Solis government. President Solis has said that Costa Rica cannot prosper if the rest of the region is not prospering as well. And I think that is a shift in mindset that the Costa Ricans have come to as of late, but I think that we need to do everything we can to help them continue on that path.

And so one of my priorities will be engaging both the Costa Rican Government, as well as broader civil society really, because Costa Rica has a very deep and broad civil society, and see how can we bring training and other things, from a judicial standpoint, some of the things that we have helped, actually Costa Rica with, through some of the CARSI funding we have done over the last 5 years to really export that expertise to the Northern Triangle to really help and help the Costa Ricans continue to realize that helping the Northern Triangle is actually helping them as well.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have no further questions, and thanks to all the witnesses.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

I just have a quick question, Mr. Adams, for the record. As you think about taking on this responsibility—and let me echo the ranking member's comment about your story. That is very touching.

As you think about, though, taking on this responsibility, how do you see the priorities? What will be your main focus as you take on this responsibility?

Mr. ADAMS. Senator Perdue, I think that the first priority for any United States Ambassador has to be the safety and the security of embassy personnel and of U.S. citizens at large in the particular country. And certainly this is something that, if confirmed, I will have foremost in my mind every day of my service in Finland.

Second, there is the matter that Senator Kaine addressed just now, the resolution of the crisis in Ukraine and the role that can be played by Finland in a constructive sense, working with the United States and with the European Union to communicate to the Russians the absolute necessity of finding a satisfactory resolution to this crisis quickly in order that the sanctions regime can gradually be diminished rather than strengthened still further.

Thirdly is the matter of the expansion of the bilateral trade relationship between Finland and the United States where, as I indicated, I believe that the United States can move up in the rankings both as a customer of Finland and as a supplier of goods and services to that country.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you very much.

Gentlemen, thank you for your comments today and for your forbearance and for being here today. Your testimony is in the record, and I am very impressed.

Just so you know, we are going to keep the record open in case Senator Gardner or any other members of the committee have any last-minute questions. I do not know that there will be any. But we ask that you respond to those if you get those in the next few days.

Again, I really want to thank you for your willingness to serve our country. I am very encouraged when I meet high-quality people with backgrounds like yours willing to serve. So thank you very much.

With the thanks of this committee, unless the ranking member has anything else, we will stand adjourned. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 3:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MATTHEW T. MCGUIRE, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT, TO A QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE MCGUIRE'S RESPONSES TO A QUESTION FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. The World Bank Board in the next few months will be reviewing staff recommendations to improve the procurement practices of the Bank. While a number of very positive steps are being proposed, it is my understanding that, currently,

the staff does not appear to be planning to propose changes to the bid price preference margins that are granted to domestic bidders on bank projects (15 percent preference on goods and 7.5 percent on works). Such preferences raise questions about compatibility with efficient procurement and fair bid competition. In fact, the impact of this practice can affect issues that go beyond Bank procurement. For example, the Bank's policy sometimes serves as an imprimatur for many developing countries to follow this practice in their own procurement, all of which is to the detriment of U.S. based bidders.

♦ If confirmed, will you press for a prompt and serious review of this practice?

Answer. Yes.

DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE MCGUIRE'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR BARRASSO

Question. I appreciate that in your testimony, you committed to "be a sound steward of our country's capital at the Bank." It is critically important that U.S. resources are used in a responsible and effective manner.

♦ Do you believe requiring borrowers to accept higher cost energy projects is a responsible use of taxpayer dollars when affordable and reliable alternatives are readily available?

Answer. The World Bank should support expansion of low-cost, reliable energy access in developing countries, and should do so taking into account full lifecycle costs, including environmental and social costs. In some instances, this may lead to higher costs up front, but should not lead to higher costs for the life of the project. The World Bank has an important role to play in increasing the commercial viability and promoting the expansion of renewable, clean, and efficient energy sources and technologies.

Question. If confirmed, what criteria would you use to determine whether you will vote in support of energy development projects at the World Bank?

Answer. As I evaluate energy projects, I will look to see that the project meets the country's energy needs, has considered all relevant alternative approaches, and is as sustainable (both financially and environmentally) as possible. Of course, there are a variety of issues to consider in any project, including existing laws and policies, and these will apply to energy projects as well.

Question. Will you vote in support of energy development projects that include oil, coal, and natural gas at the World Bank?

Answer. I will vote in favor of projects that are consistent with U.S. law and policies and the World Bank's own operating guidelines. Consistent with its own Energy Sector Directions Paper, the World Bank should work to increase the commercial viability and promote the expansion of renewable, clean, and efficient energy sources and technologies. Global energy needs are vast, and there are instances where fossil fuels like gas and oil can play a role in the transition to such sources. Both the administration's Climate Action Plan and the World Bank's Energy Sector Directions Paper recognize the important bridging role that natural gas can have in moving toward more sustainable sources of energy supply.

Question. What are the current energy policies, rules, and restrictions at the World Bank that impact financing of energy development projects dealing with fossil fuels?

Answer. In July 2013, the World Bank adopted a new approach to its engagement in the energy sector. The approach recognizes the importance of increasing access to modern energy services through an integrated approach that addresses both energy supply and demand issues, including energy efficiency, tariff pricing, and reducing technical losses. The approach notes that the World Bank Group will "only in rare circumstances" support new greenfield coal power generation projects, such as meeting basic energy needs in countries with no feasible alternatives. The paper also says that the World Bank will scale up its work helping countries develop national and regional markets for natural gas.

Question. The World Bank approved a total of $1.6 billion in new projects in China through its nonconcessional window in fiscal year 2014. In fiscal year 2014, China was the third-largest recipient of financial assistance from International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, after Brazil and India. In 2014, China participated in the creation of two separate development banks called the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Development Bank.

♦ Why is the World Bank continuing to lend substantial resources to China, when China can more than meet their financing needs in the international capital market and started creating their own international lending institutions?

Answer. China's per capita income ($6,550) remains below the threshold ($7,185) at which point World Bank management is supposed to initiate discussions about graduation.

If confirmed, I will encourage the World Bank to begin discussions to transition China away from World Bank lending as it crosses the graduation threshold and to move toward other vehicles, such as reimbursable technical assistance and analytical and advisory assistance, to meet its development needs.

Question. What is your view of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Development Bank? What kind of duplication will these new development banks have with existing multilateral and regional institutions?

Answer. I believe that there is a pressing need to enhance infrastructure investment around the world and that any new institutions should be designed to complement the existing institutions. I also believe that any new multilateral institution should incorporate the high standards that the international community has collectively built at the World Bank and the regional development banks.

Question. Do you believe that lending substantial resources to dynamic emerging market economies with access to international capital markets diverts capital away from countries with greater needs and lack of financial options?

Answer. No. The World Bank's sovereign lending is split between two different windows specifically to address this issue. Countries with greater needs and a lack of financial options receive concessional financing (grants or highly concessional loans) through the World Bank's concessional window—the International Development Association (IDA). As a country's per capita income increases and it gains access to international credit markets, it graduates from IDA to the World Bank's nonconcessional window—the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).

The allocation of the IBRD's financial resources depends on a variety of factors, including the size of the borrower's population, economy, and its credit ratings. This method of allocating resources helps the IBRD to maintain its AAA credit rating and limits the need for frequent infusions of capital by its shareholders. Given differing credit profiles, reducing lending to upper middle-income countries will not result in a dollar-for-dollar increase in capital available for IBRD lending to lower middle-income countries. The IBRD must be able to provide adequate resources to lower middle-income countries as they graduate from IDA, but the IBRD has taken a number of steps to ensure that it has adequate capital resources to do so over the medium-term.

Question. What specific policies do you propose for graduating middle-income countries at the World Bank?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to urge World Bank management to apply the World Bank's existing graduation policy in a more consistent fashion. According to World Bank policy, countries remain eligible to borrow from the IBRD until they are able to sustain long-term development without further recourse to World Bank financing and until they have reached a sufficiently advanced level of development. The World Bank uses a per capita income threshold (currently $7,185) as a trigger for discussions on graduation. I believe that the World Bank should be having serious discussions with more borrowers about graduation. As countries approach the threshold for graduation, I will also encourage the World Bank to be more selective about which sectors it supports in those countries, with a focus on those that have the greatest impact on poverty reduction and have a global or regional public good aspect associated with them.

RESPONSES OF CHARLES C. ADAMS, JR., NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE ADAMS'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR SHAHEEN

Question. If confirmed as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Finland, will you commit to making the issue of gender equality and the particular challenge in Finland of gender-based violence a priority for this bilateral relationship?

Answer. If confirmed as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Finland, I commit to continuing our efforts to enhance human rights, including with regard to gender equality. With the use of important tools such as the annual Human Rights Report,

and with the assistance of the State Department's Office of Global Women's Issues, I will continue to partner with Finland on eliminating gender inequality globally as well as engage with Finland on addressing gender-based violence at home. I am encouraged by our ongoing partnership with Finland, which has been the lead on U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325 implementation in Afghanistan. In this role, Finland has helped promote the importance of women in peace and security. The Finnish Government has also recognized the problem of gender-based violence domestically and adopted a 5-year, multisectoral action plan to combat violence against women. In addition, Finland recently passed legislation, effective January 1, 2015, outlining the government's assistance to and responsibility for safe houses and shelters for victims of domestic violence. If confirmed, my team and I will continue to support efforts to address the problem of gender-based violence.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2015

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

Paul A. Folmsbee, of Oklahoma, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Republic of Mali

Mary Catherine Phee, of Illinois, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Republic of South Sudan

Cassandra Q. Butts, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas

Katherine Simonds Dhanani, of Florida, to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Federal Republic of Somalia

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:16 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jeff Flake presiding.

Present: Senators Flake and Markey.

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

Senator FLAKE. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order. I would like to welcome all of you here, both the nominees and family members.

We have talked and been able to meet all of you in my office. Thank you for coming by.

As you know, I have long had an interest in Africa, having spent some time there. Last week, Ed and I presided over a hearing, a subcommittee hearing examining the economic policies or the promises that exist on the continent, particularly after the summit we had, the Leader summit last August. That was our first hearing in the Congress, and we will have many more.

But today, we are going to hear from nominees to Mali, South Sudan, and Somalia, and we will look at some of sub-Saharan Africa's most serious challenges. We also have the nominee for the Bahamas as well. I am grateful that she is here.

After seeing positive developments in 2013, Mali's security and governance climate has continued to deteriorate. And despite international pressure and ongoing mediation efforts, the conflict of South Sudan has continued for over a year, costing more than 10,000 lives, displacing more than 2 million people, causing millions more to require humanitarian assistance.

The administration's decision to nominate an Ambassador in Somalia offers at least a glimmer of hope for movement on the security and governance front. I look forward to hearing more about the potential for progress, as well as the hurdles that exist, when we establish a presence in Mogadishu.

We are also considering a nominee, as I mentioned, for the Bahamas. It is an important regional neighbor, and I look forward to thoughts on economic progress and partnership with us here.

Thank you all for your time and for your expertise. I look forward to your testimony.

With that, I recognize Senator Markey.

STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, so much, and I very much appreciate you holding this very important hearing.

Three of the nominees that we are going to be talking about, and to, today, and hoping to be confirmed as U.S. Ambassadors, are looking at three of the most challenging countries in sub-Saharan Government: Mali, South Sudan, and Somalia. The fourth is seeking confirmation to the Bahamas, a place that most likely conjures up thoughts of vacation, but in truth it is a critical country on the United States third border in the Caribbean.

All four of our nominees have distinguished records of public service that will continue as U.S. Ambassadors when they are confirmed.

And I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having this hearing.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Markey. Our first nominee is Paul Folmsbee. Mr. Folmsbee is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. He currently serves as executive director of the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs. Previously, Mr. Folmsbee served in a number of challenging assignments, including senior civilian representative for the Regional Command East Afghanistan; principal officer at the U.S. consulate in Mumbai, India; the Provincial Reconstruction team leader in Baghdad; and the director of international narcotics in law enforcement affairs at our Embassy in Pakistan.

Mr. Folsmbee has also served in a number of Africa assignments, including Gabon, Tanzania, Kenya. Mr. Folmsbee earned a B.A. in political science from Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kansas, and an M.A. in social anthropology from the University of Oklahoma in Norman, OK.

Our second nominee is Mary Catherine Phee. Ms. Phee is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, currently serves as chief of staff in the Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. From 2011 to 2014, Ms. Phee served as deputy chief of staff in Ethiopia. She was previously director for Iraq at the National Security Council, the regional affairs coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in Rome, and counselor for political affairs at the U.S. mission at the U.N. in New York.

Ms. Phee has held multiple positions focusing on Iraq and other countries in the Middle East. And before joining the Foreign Service, Ms. Phee also worked at Development Alternatives, a Bethesda, MD, company, and as deputy press secretary for Senator

Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Ms. Phee earned a B.A. at Indiana University and a master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

Our third nominee is Cassandra Butts. Ms. Butts is currently a senior adviser to the CEO at the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Previously, she served at the White House as deputy counsel to the President, general counsel in the Office of the President Elect, and general counsel for the Obama transition project. Prior to these nominations, Ms. Butts was the senior vice president for domestic policy at the Center for American Progress, and counsel and policy director for Representative Richard Gephardt in the United States House of Representatives.

She earned a B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC, and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Our fourth nominee is Katherine Simonds Dhanani. Ms. Dhanani is a career Foreign Service officer and currently serves as director of the Office of Regional and Security Affairs in the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs. Previously, Ms. Dhanani served as consul general at the U.S. consulate in India. She has held numerous assignments in Africa, including deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Harare, Zimbabwe, and at the U.S. Embassy in Gabon. Prior to Gabon, she was political and economic section chief at the U.S. Embassy in Zambia, and economic section chief in the DRC.

Ms. Dhanani earned a B.A. from Kenyon College in Gambier, OH, and an M.A. from MIT.

So thank you all for being here. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and viewpoints. I am sure you will want to introduce family members as well, and we appreciate them for the sacrifice that they make as well as you serve.

We would appreciate it if you could keep your testimony to about 5 minutes, and then we can have time for questions to be asked.

So we will recognize Mr. Folmsbee first, and thank you again for being here.

STATEMENT OF PAUL A. FOLMSBEE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALI

Mr. FOLMSBEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, and distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to come before you as President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Mali. I deeply appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me for this position.

I am supported here today by my friends and colleagues from the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs, as well as my friends from USAID. In fact, my former PRT deputy leader from Baghdad is actually sitting behind me, Jeff Bakken. He is a good man.

My wife, Angie Chin, is also a U.S. diplomat and is probably watching us from Bangkok, Thailand, right about now. Unfortunately, she could not be here today.

My career in the Foreign Service began in 1987 and has led to me to assignments all over the world. The bulk of my assignments have been in developing countries, including Kenya, Haiti, Gabon,

and Tanzania. In Iraq in 2007, I embedded with the 2/82nd Airborne, and ran a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Sadr City and Adhamiyah in downtown Baghdad. In Afghanistan in 2011, I embedded with the 1st Cavalry as a senior civilian rep for Regional Command East, where we worked on expanding governance and economic development programs.

If confirmed, I would draw upon these experiences and many others to deepen U.S.-Mali ties, as we continue to work toward our mutual goals of combating extremism, strengthening democratic governance, and fostering inclusive economic growth.

Mali continues to emerge from the most serious security, political, and development crisis it has faced since independence. It is rebuilding its social, economic, and governance institutions following the March 2012 coup d'etat and subsequent takeover of parts of northern Mali by extremists.

Poverty both exacerbates Mali's conflicts and underscores its capacity challenges. Mali is ranked 176th of the 187 nations in the United Nations 2014 Human Development Index. In addition, the recent coup and the events that followed revealed the fragility of Mali's government institutions.

Despite these challenges, Mali peacefully elected a President and National Assembly in 2013. The new government has made national reconciliation a top priority, and donors are now engaging with the country. It is within this context U.S. engagement will be critical as we foster democratic values, promote good governance, and engender peace and security.

U.S. assistance programs will continue to increase access to education and health services, improve nutrition and sanitation, strengthen Malian food security, and facilitate inclusive economic growth. One of the key strategies for deepening economic growth is expanding the resiliency of poor communities so they will not be vulnerable to the shocks of extreme weather and conflict.

Security and stability remain a major challenge. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission, which is quite a mouthful, we call it MINUSMA, was established by the Security Council Resolution 2100 in April of 2013 to support the stabilization of the country and to carry out a number of security-related tasks.

Our government continues to fully support that effort by providing training, equipment, and intelligence. The success of this mission is critical to the long-term stability of the country.

Another key objective is to aid in the reformation of the Malian security sector by supporting institutions that can manage internal and external security threats, contribute to national and regional stability while adhering to civilian authority and respect international law and human rights norms.

While there are a number of areas in the security sector that require investment, the near-to-medium-term priority for U.S. assistance are those activities that will refine the national strategy, repair civilian-military relations, improve access to justice in the north, and encourage the legislature and civil society stakeholders to hold security services accountable.

The government has engaged in internationally supported efforts to advance peace talks with the northern armed groups. These talks are ongoing, and their positive outcome is far from ensured.

The U.S. Government will continue to participate in these negotiations as an observer and will also continue to look for opportunities to support a balanced and peaceful way forward.

The outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa, and the threat it represented to Mali, punctuated the need for urgent cooperation on health matters. Early containment of the outbreak was a major priority for the Government of Mali, international partners, and the United States. Fortunately, the threat was successfully contained, aided in part by direct U.S. assistance from the State Department, the National Institutes of Health, CDC, and USAID.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I will look to you for counsel and support to ensure that our bilateral relationship remains firmly rooted in our shared vision of a democratic and prosperous Mali.

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

[The prepared statement of Mr. Folmsbee follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAUL A. FOLMSBEE

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to come before you as President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Mali. I deeply appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me for this position.

I am supported here today by my friends and colleagues from the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs and USAID. My wife Angelika Chin is also a U.S. diplomat and is serving at our Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand. Unfortunately she could not be here today.

My career in the Foreign Service began in 1987 and has led me to assignments all over the world. The bulk of my assignments have been to developing countries including Kenya, Haiti, Gabon, and Tanzania. In Iraq, in 2007, I embedded with the 2/82 Airborne and ran a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Sadr City and Adhamiya in downtown Baghdad. In Afghanistan in 2011, I embedded with the 1st Cavalry as the Senior Civilian Representative for Regional Command East and worked on expanding governance and economic development programs. If confirmed, I would draw upon these experiences and many others to deepen U.S.-Mali ties as we continue to work toward our mutual goals of combating extremism, strengthening democratic governance and fostering inclusive economic growth.

Mali continues to emerge from the most serious security, political, and development crises it has faced since independence. It is rebuilding its social, economic, and governance institutions following a rebellion in the north, the March 2012 coup d'etat, and the subsequent takeover of parts of northern Mali by extremists. Poverty both exacerbates Mali's conflicts and underscores its capacity challenges. Mali is ranked 176th of the 187 nations in the United Nation's 2014 Human Development Index. In addition, conflict with northern groups, the recent coup and the events that followed revealed the fragility of Mali's government institutions. Despite those challenges, Mali peacefully elected a President and National Assembly in 2013. The new government has made national reconciliation a top priority and donors are engaging with the country. It is within this context that U.S. engagement will be critical as we foster democratic values, promote good governance and engender peace and security. U.S. assistance programs will continue to increase access to education and health services, improve nutrition and sanitation, strengthen Malians' food security, and facilitate inclusive economic growth. One of the key strategies for deepening economic growth is expanding the resiliency of poor communities so that they will not be vulnerable to the shocks of extreme weather and conflict.

Security and stability remain a major challenge. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was established by Security Council Resolution 2100 in April of 2013 to support the stabilization of the country and to carry out a number of security-related tasks. Our government con-

tinues to fully support that effort by providing training, equipment and intelligence. The success of this mission is critical to the long-term stability of the country.

Another key objective is to aid in the reformation of the Malian security sector by supporting institutions that can manage internal and external security threats, contribute to national and regional stability while adhering to civilian authority, and respect international law and human rights norms. While there are a number of areas in the security sector that require investment, the near- to medium-term priority for U.S. assistance are those activities that will refine the national security strategy, repair civilian-military relations, improve access to justice in the north, and encourage the legislature and civil society stakeholders to hold security services accountable.

The government has engaged in internationally supported efforts to advance peace talks with the northern armed groups. These talks are ongoing and their positive outcome is far from assured. The U.S. Government will continue to participate in these negotiations as an observer and will also continue to look for opportunities to support a balanced and peaceful way forward.

The outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa and the threat it represented to Mali punctuated the need for urgent cooperation on health matters. Early containment of the outbreak was a major priority for both the Government of Mali, international partners, and the United States. Fortunately, the threat was successfully contained, aided in part by direct U.S. assistance from the State Department, the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Agency for International Development.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I will look to you for counsel and support to ensure that our bilateral relationship remains firmly rooted in our shared vision of a democratic and prosperous Mali. Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Phee.

STATEMENT OF MARY CATHERINE PHEE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

Ms. PHEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, distinguished members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of South Sudan.

I would like to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I will look forward to working with this committee.

I would also like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues who have generously shared encouragement, support, and laughter throughout my career. I could not undertake these challenges without them. And I would like to draw special attention to my sister, Amy, who is here today.

I am deeply proud of the opportunity to serve our Nation and to apply my experience in tough situations to advance American interests and values.

Mr. Chairman, I know you and the members of the committee share in the profound disappointment many of us experienced in December 2013 when the political process in South Sudan broke down, and the country's leaders resorted to violence to resolve their disputes. And as you noted, this has resulted in a significant loss of life and nearly 2 million people have been displaced inside and outside of South Sudan. More than 4 million people now need emergency humanitarian assistance, and the country's fledgling economy is at a standstill.

Our disappointment is rooted in the special relationship that we in the United States, including Congress, successive administra-

tions, and the American people, forged with the people of South Sudan during their long civil wars and struggle for self-determination. We had high hopes that the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which led to independence in 2011, offered a permanent end to war. But we were not blind to the challenges of overcoming decades of inadequate government, security, and development, and, with our international partners, sought to avert a breakdown of the fragile political order.

Then and now, our core interests remain strengthening this young democratic state and promoting internal stability and regional peace.

In collaboration with our Troika partners, which are the United Kingdom and Norway, we are backing negotiations to convince President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar to commit to a durable cease-fire and to agree to a transitional government of national unity. The negotiating effort has been led by the group of countries neighboring South Sudan known as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, or, more easily, IGAD. To the frustration of all, to date, the parties have resisted compromise.

The current IGAD chairman, Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, announced March 6 that he would reform the peace process to formally include the African Union, the Troika, the United Nations, the EU, and China. We support this approach.

To be sustainable, we believe the final peace agreement must respect the desire of the people of South Sudan for justice and accountability, as well as reconciliation and healing.

We have called for the prompt release of the official report from the African Union's Commission of Inquiry, which was charged with investigating human rights violations and other abuses during the armed conflict. To advance the peace process, the U.N. Security Council on March 3 unanimously adopted a resolution we introduced that established a targeted sanctions regime and proposed an arms embargo that could be imposed should the South Sudanese leaders fail to respond to the mediation.

To address the humanitarian impact, we have provided more than $994 million in emergency humanitarian assistance, including help for internally displaced persons and refugees in neighboring countries. This assistance has helped stave off famine and provided lifesaving services such as water, sanitation, and health care.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work with the leaders and the people of South Sudan to help end the conflict and begin the rebuilding. I will provide vigorous support to the ongoing effort to improve the humanitarian situation.

Through our partnership, we can help South Sudan begin to recover from this devastating setback, and regain the opportunities present at independence.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I assure you that, if confirmed, I will be proud to carry on the diplomatic tradition of ensuring the safety and security of American citizens abroad while focusing on the welfare of the American and South Sudanese staff of Embassy Juba.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, I thank you for the honor to appear before you today, and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Phee follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARY CATHERINE PHEE

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of South Sudan. I would like to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me. If confirmed, I will look forward to working with this committee. I would also like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues who have generously shared encouragement, support, and laughter throughout my career. I could not undertake these challenges without them. I am deeply proud of the opportunity to serve our Nation and to apply my experience in tough situations to advance American interests.

Mr. Chairman, I know you and the members of the committee share in the profound disappointment many of us experienced in December 2013 when the political process in South Sudan broke down and the country's leaders resorted to violence to resolve their disputes. This breakdown has generated a senseless conflict. There has been a significant loss of life and nearly 2 million people have been displaced inside and outside of South Sudan. More than 4 million people now need emergency humanitarian assistance and the country's fledgling economy is at a standstill.

Our disappointment is rooted in the special relationship that we in the United States—including Congress, successive administrations, and the American people—forged with the people of South Sudan during their long civil wars and struggle for self-determination. We had high hopes that the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which led to independence in 2011, offered a permanent end to war in South Sudan. But we were not blind to the challenges of overcoming decades of inadequate governance, development, and security, and, with our international partners, sought to avert a breakdown of the fragile political order. Then and now, our core interests remain strengthening this young democratic state and promoting internal stability and regional peace.

In collaboration with our Troika partners, which are the United Kingdom and Norway, we are backing negotiations to convince President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar to commit to a durable cease-fire and to agree to a transitional government of national unity. The negotiating effort has been led by the group of countries neighboring South Sudan known as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, or IGAD. To the frustration of all, to date the parties have resisted compromise. The current IGAD Chairman, Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, announced March 6 that he would reform the peace process to include the African Union, the Troika, the U.N., the EU, and China. We support this approach.

To be sustainable, we believe the final peace agreement must respect the desire of the people of South Sudan for justice and accountability, as well as reconciliation and healing. We have called for the prompt release of the official report from the African Union's Commission of Inquiry, which was charged with investigating human rights violations and other abuses during the armed conflict.

To advance the peace process, the U.N. Security Council on March 3 unanimously adopted a resolution we introduced that established a targeted sanctions regime and proposed an arms embargo that could be imposed should the South Sudanese leaders fail to respond to the mediation. The resolution demonstrates that the international community condemns this conflict and seeks a prompt, negotiated end to the crisis.

To address the humanitarian impact on the people of South Sudan, we have provided more than $994 million in emergency humanitarian assistance since the conflict began, including help for internally displaced persons and refugees in neighboring countries. This assistance has helped stave off famine and provided lifesaving services, such as water, sanitation, and health care.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work with the leaders and the people of South Sudan to help end the conflict and begin the rebuilding. I will provide vigorous support to the ongoing effort to improve the humanitarian situation. Through our partnership we can help South Sudan begin to recover from this devastating setback and regain the opportunities present at independence.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I assure you that, if confirmed, I will be proud to carry on the diplomatic tradition of ensuring the safety and security of American citizens abroad, while focusing on the welfare of the American and South Sudanese staff members of Embassy Juba.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Markey, I thank you for the honor to appear before you today and I welcome your questions.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.
Ms. Butts.

STATEMENT OF CASSANDRA Q. BUTTS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

Ms. BUTTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be our next Ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

I am profoundly grateful for the honor the President has bestowed upon me, and for the confidence shown in me by Secretary Kerry, as I look to assume this new assignment, if confirmed.

I would like to take the opportunity to introduce my sister, Deidra Abbott, who is here today, representing my family. My family has been a wellspring of support for me, and I would not be here today but for their support, their love, and their belief in me.

I believe my experience as a lawyer and a policy adviser, and my service to my country in the executive and legislative branches, have well-prepared me for the duties of Ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. Having worked on some of the major legal policy issues of our time, including my most recent experience in international development at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, I have always sought solutions consistent with the values of our great Nation. I understand that leading with our values is a basis for finding lasting policy solutions and building strong partnerships at home and abroad.

If the Senate confirms me, I would bring those experiences grounded in my strong belief in equality, justice, and compassion to the post of the Ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Through close political and economic and cultural ties, the United States and the Bahamas have forged a strong bilateral relationship that has served both countries quite well. Bahamians regularly travel to the United States to visit friends and family and to conduct business, and approximately 6 million U.S. citizens travel to the Bahamas annually.

The proximity of the Bahamas to the United Sates inextricably links our country's national security. Together, we are confronting shared challenges, such as illicit trafficking, including narcotics, arms, and people, as well as bolstering the rule of law.

If confirmed, my first and foremost priority will be to ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens living in or visiting the Bahamas, as well as the Turks and Caicos Islands, which are included among Embassy Nassau's consular oversight.

I will work closely with the Bahamian authorities, community groups, and the entire U.S. mission, including the U.S. law enforcement officials, under Chief of Mission Authority, to promote innovative, effective, and whole-of-government-based efforts to reduce crime rates and other illegal activities. I will also continue to promote greater economic ties and growth, including exploring ways to make the Bahamas a more attractive place in which to invest and do business through the development and enforcement of stable and transparent regulations, as well as procurement and investment procedures.

If confirmed, I will work to assist the Bahamas in protecting and preserving for future generations the incredible natural beauty that makes it the vacation destination of choice for so many people, including by expanding marine protected areas. As part of the same effort, I will encourage the Bahamas to adopt cleaner technologies and build strong and resilient energy markets, which will not only provide a more secure and sustainable clean energy future in economic growth, but also limit the effects of greenhouse gas emissions.

I also will make working with our Bahamian partners on human rights issues a priority by seeking to further gender equality; to expand opportunities for disenfranchised youth; and to encourage Bahamian officials to adopt fair, humane, and transparent practices related to irregular migrants, including improved access to refugee status determinations.

Expanding educational exchanges is one of the best ways to deepen the already existing cultural and historic ties between the United States and the Bahamas. At present, approximately 1,700 students from the Bahamas study in the United States, and more than 750 students from the United States study in the Bahamas. If confirmed, I will seek to increase levels of educational exchange between our two countries, including through enhancing existing partnerships and building new ones.

While geography and history have forged strong bonds between our countries, the Bahamas also maintains close economic ties with many other nations. As the world economy continues to rebound, the Bahamas key tourism and hospitality sectors have seen increases in Asian investment. We do not see foreign economic and commercial links to the Bahamas as a threat to U.S. interests. We strongly believe that the American companies can successfully compete with anybody in the world when transparent regulations and practices with steadfast respect for the rule of law prevail.

The United States has not had an ambassador in Nassau for over 4 years, but we have strong leadership and staff at U.S. Embassy the Bahamas continuing the important work of the mission. Still, the value of having a confirmed U.S. Ambassador to advance U.S. interests cannot be overstated.

If confirmed, I will strive to further the good work of our Nassau mission and strengthen the close and productive bilateral relationship.

In closing, I am confident that I have the experience and imagination and the energy to lead our bilateral relationship with the people and the Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. I thank you, again, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Ranking Member Markey, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Butts follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CASSANDRA Q. BUTTS

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. I am profoundly grateful for the honor the President has bestowed upon me and for the confidence shown in me by Secretary Kerry as I look to take up this assignment, if confirmed.

Please allow me to introduce the members of my family who are here today. My family has been a wellspring of support. I am here today because of their love and support and because of their dedication and belief in me.

I believe my experience as a lawyer and policy advisor and my service to my country in the executive and legislative branches have well prepared me for the duties of Ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. Having worked on some of the major legal and policy issues of our time, including my most recent experience in international development at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, I have always sought solutions consistent with the values of our great Nation. I understand that leading with our values is the basis for finding lasting policy solutions and building strong partnerships at home and abroad. If the Senate confirms me, I would bring those experiences, grounded in my strong belief in equality, justice, and compassion, to the post of Ambassador to the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Through close political, economic, and cultural ties, the United States and the Bahamas have forged a strong bilateral relationship that has served both countries well. Bahamians regularly travel to the United States to visit friends and family and to conduct business. And approximately 6 million U.S. citizens travel to the Bahamas annually. The proximity of the Bahamas to the United States inextricably links our countries' national security. Together we are confronting shared challenges such as illicit trafficking, including in narcotics, arms, and people, as well as bolstering the rule of law.

If confirmed, my first and foremost priority will be to ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens living in or visiting the Bahamas, as well as the Turks and Caicos Islands, which are included under Embassy Nassau's consular oversight. I will work closely with Bahamian authorities, community groups, and the entire U.S. mission, including U.S. law enforcement officials under Chief of Mission authority, to promote innovative, effective, and whole-of-government based efforts to reduce crime rates and other illegal activities. I also will continue to promote greater economic ties and growth, including exploring ways to make the Bahamas a more attractive place in which to invest and do business through the development and enforcement of stable and transparent regulations as well as procurement and investment procedures.

If confirmed, I will work to assist the Bahamas in protecting and preserving for future generations the incredible natural beauty that makes it the vacation destination of choice for so many people, including by expanding marine protected areas. As part of this same effort, I will encourage the Bahamas to adopt cleaner technologies and build strong and resilient energy markets, which will not only provide a more secure and sustainable clean energy future and economic growth, but also limit the effects of greenhouse gas emissions.

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While geography and history have forged strong bonds between our countries, the Bahamas also maintains close economic ties with many other nations. As the world economy continues to rebound, the Bahamas' key tourism and hospitality sectors have seen increases in Asian investment. We do not see foreign economic and commercial links to the Bahamas as a threat to U.S. interests. We strongly believe that American companies can successfully compete with anybody in the world when transparent regulations and practices and steadfast respect for the rule of law prevail.

The United States has not had an ambassador in Nassau for over 4 years, but we have had strong leadership and staff at the U.S. Embassy in the Bahamas continuing the important work of the mission. Still, the value of having a confirmed U.S. ambassador to advance U.S. interests cannot be overstated. If confirmed, I will strive to further the good work of our Nassau mission and strengthen a close and productive bilateral relationship.

In closing, I am confident that I have the experience, imagination, and energy to lead our bilateral relationship with the people and the Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. While at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, I have seen firsthand the important work carried out by our ambassadors and their teams as they engage and advocate for U.S. policy goals and objectives. If confirmed, I

pledge to uphold the tradition and high standards of public service expected of a U.S. ambassador. I look forward to the opportunity to continue to serve my country.

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

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Dhanani.

STATEMENT OF KATHERINE SIMONDS DHANANI, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

Ms. DHANANI. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, I am honored to appear before you today to be considered for the position of United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia.

I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence in me they have shown with this nomination.

If confirmed, I pledge to work with you to advance our interests by promoting a unified and peaceful Somalia with a stable and representative government that can defend its territory, foster economic development, and defend human rights.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me at this time to introduce my husband, Azim Dhanani. His support has meant everything to me as he accompanied me to assignments around the globe. And if confirmed, I will continue to rely on him as I take up my new responsibilities.

This is a critical time in our engagement with Somalia. Decades of conflict, famine, and oppression led many to label Somalia a failed state. Today, Somalis are proving those pessimists wrong. There is progress in Somalia, measured, but real progress on security, on economic development, and on the establishment of representative government.

Just over 2 years ago, the United States officially recognized the Federal Government of Somalia. Since that time, we have been working closely with the Somalis as they rebuild their state and lay a foundation for the future.

The decision to nominate the first U.S. Ambassador to Somalia in over 2 decades was taken in recognition of our deepening relationship and our conviction that Somalia is on a path that will bring better times. Establishment of a permanent diplomatic presence in Mogadishu will represent the culmination of this recognition process, but there is no fixed timeline for achieving this objective.

If confirmed, I will carefully monitor the security environment in Somalia, as I seek to advance our diplomatic objectives with no higher priority than my responsibility for the security of personnel under my charge. U.S. interests in Somalia are clear, just as the collapse of Somalia was a strain on the region, stability, prosperity, and peace in Somalia will bolster positive trends in economic and democratic development in Africa.

Violent extremists exploited the past failure of governance in Somalia to our and Somali's detriment.

We have a strong humanitarian interest in easing the suffering of 2 million refugees and internally displaced persons, in reducing the food insecurity that leaves Somalia vulnerable to famine, and

in addressing the failures that place Somalia at the bottom of the list on so many human development indicators.

If confirmed, I will keep these U.S. interests firmly in mind as I lead U.S. engagement with the Somali Government, the Somali people, and the international partners who share our commitment to seeing Somalia succeed.

Mr. Chairman, in my written statement, I outlined the U.S. strategy on Somalia, which was submitted to Congress last summer. In the interests of time, I will not repeat that, but in sum, U.S. policy revolves around three elements: security, the political process, and development. Gains in each reinforce and must keep pace with the others.

Mr. Chairman, Somalia is moving in the right direction but more progress is needed. Somali leaders must pull together to build their institutions, protect their citizens, and unite their country. Somalia's neighbors and friends must assist in that effort.

I can assure you today that, if confirmed, it will be my honor to restore U.S. Mission Somalia, advance U.S. interests, and strengthen our relationship with Somalia. And I look forward to the opportunity to work with the committee to achieve those goals.

I also look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dhanani follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KATHERINE S. DHANANI

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today to be considered for the position of United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence in me they have shown through this nomination. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you to advance our interests by promoting a unified and peaceful Somalia, with a stable and representative government, that can defend its territory, foster economic development, and defend human rights.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me at this time to introduce my husband, Azim Dhanani. His support has meant everything to me as he accompanied me to assignments around the globe, and, if confirmed, I will continue to rely on him as I take up my new responsibilities.

This is a critical time in our engagement with Somalia. Decades of conflict, famine, and oppression led many to label Somalia a "failed state." Today, Somalis are proving those pessimists wrong. There is progress in Somalia—measured but real progress—on security, on economic development, and on the establishment of representative government. Just over 2 years ago, the United States officially recognized the Federal Government of Somalia. Since that time, we have been working closely with the Somalis as they rebuild their state and lay a foundation for the future. The decision to nominate the first U.S. Ambassador to Somalia in over two decades was taken in recognition of our deepening relationship and our conviction that Somalia is on a path that will bring better times. Establishment of a permanent diplomatic presence in Mogadishu will represent the culmination of this recognition process, but there is no fixed timeline for achieving this objective. If confirmed, I will carefully monitor the security environment in Somalia as I seek to advance our diplomatic objectives, with no higher priority than my responsibility for the security of personnel under my charge.

U.S. interests in Somalia are clear. Just as the collapse of Somalia was a strain on the region, stability, prosperity, and peace in Somalia will bolster positive trends in economic and democratic development in Africa. Violent extremists exploited the past failure of governance in Somalia, to our and Somalis' detriment. We have a strong humanitarian interest in easing the suffering of 2 million refugees and internally displaced Somalis, in reducing the food insecurity that leaves Somalia vulnerable to famine, and in addressing the failures that place Somalia at the bottom of the list on so many human development indicators. If confirmed, I will keep these U.S. interests firmly in mind as I lead U.S. engagement with the Somali Government, the Somali people, and the international partners who share our commitment to seeing Somalia succeed.

Mr. Chairman, as referenced in the U.S. Strategy on Somalia that the State Department submitted to Congress last summer, and the subsequent January update, U.S. policy revolves around three elements: security, the political process, and development. On the security front, our top priority is degrading al-Shabaab, which has links to al-Qaeda. Driving al-Shabaab from its remaining strongholds and neutralizing it as a destabilizing force are critical to open up space for legitimate governance and development opportunities. If confirmed as Chief of Mission, it will be my priority to continue our efforts to help our African partners to degrade al-Shabaab. I will continue to support the African Union Mission in Somalia—or AMISOM as it is most commonly known—until Somalis are ready and able to assume full responsibility for their own security. To that end, building the capacity of the Somali National Security Forces will be a top priority.

In Somalia, political and security gains must reinforce and keep pace with one another. The Federal Government has made progress establishing government institutions, negotiating relationships with regional authorities, and supporting community stabilization. However, the Somali Government's institutional capacity and reach remain extremely limited. If confirmed, I will ensure that the United States, in very close coordination with our international partners, continues to support the Somali Government as it implements "Vision 2016"—the Somali-led state-building agenda for completing a federal state-formation process, holding a constitutional referendum, and preparing for democratic elections.

As we focus on the long-term goals of establishing a sustainable federal system of governance, we must keep in focus the immediate needs of the Somali people. Tragically, Somalis continue to face a multitude of natural and man-made threats to their livelihoods and their lives. Those imperiled by al-Shabaab risk losing their land, their livestock, and their lives; those freed from al-Shabaab may still be in danger from an overall lack of security, including gender-based violence and interclan rivalry. Last year alone, conflict forced more than 80,000 Somalis from their homes. The food security situation continues to teeter on the brink of crisis with a million or more Somalis at risk. If I am confirmed, U.S. efforts to help address these urgent needs will remain at the forefront of our engagement.

Mr. Chairman, Somalia is moving in the right direction, but more progress is needed. Somali leaders must pull together to build their institutions, protect their citizens, and unite their country. Somalia's neighbors and friends must assist in that effort. I can assure you today that, if confirmed, it will be my honor to restore U.S. Mission Somalia, advance U.S. interests, and strengthen our relationship with Somalia, and I look forward to the opportunity to work with the committee to achieve those goals.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Ms. Dhanani. I want to apologize. I put an "L" in your name at the beginning.

Well, thank you for your testimony, all of you, and thank you again to the family members who are here and watching from afar, as well.

Mr. Folmsbee, with regard to Mali, what is the biggest U.S. commercial interest that we have there?

Mr. FOLMSBEE. You know, Senator, to be honest with you, Mali is fighting for last place in a human index factor put out by the United Nations. Its economy is at a low point after the 2012 coup, and so it is very modest.

Any kind of economic development issue, I am sure we could dig up some U.S. sales and that sort of thing, but it is going to be very limited. In reality, it is going to be development assistance at this point.

Senator FLAKE. So commercial development not for a while, mostly development?

Mr. FOLMSBEE. If we can hook some U.S. companies out there, I promise you I will personally get on it and help get them out there.

Senator FLAKE. It is a good place to start, in that regard.

Mr. FOLMSBEE. Absolutely.

Senator FLAKE. Well, great.

Ms. Phee, just yesterday it was reported that the legislature or the lawmakers in South Sudan voted to extend the President's term for another 3 years. I guess they are trying to confer legitimacy where they can. What role is President Kiir playing at present, in your view? What can he do to help the situation at this point?

Ms. PHEE. Thank you, Senator. We believe the best approach remains a peace agreement, a peace agreement that would end the conflict and establish a transitional government of national unity. And one of the key tasks of that transitional government would be to hold elections, permanent elections. That would be the best way to renew legitimacy.

The President's Special Envoy, Ambassador Donald Booth, was in Juba yesterday meeting with President Kiir to continue to push him to make the compromises necessary to reach that peace agreement.

Senator FLAKE. We have a long way to go, though, it is safe to assume.

Ms. PHEE. It is a challenging task ahead of all of us. One good sign is the fact that so many are unified in wanting to see an end to this conflict. The neighbors, the African Union, the United Nations, China is supporting us in this effort. So, hopefully, if we continue to speak with a collective voice, we will be able to make an impact.

And in that regard, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Congress for its efforts. Its statements, its meetings, its calls, have helped reinforce that message to the South Sudanese leaders that it is time to make compromise.

Senator FLAKE. The countries in the region are playing a role through the regional organization, but Uganda has kind of played an outsized role there. Has that been negative or positive or both? I know there have been some issues with some of the troops.

Ms. PHEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. IGAD has had a tough time, but I think it is important to recognize that any peace agreement that is reached will need the support of its neighbors to be fully effective. So we continue to engage with them to work closely with them to try and help them reach the shared goal that we all have of seeing an end to the conflict.

Senator FLAKE. You mentioned one of your roles, as it is for every Ambassador, to protect U.S. citizens who happen to be traveling there. To what extent do we have U.S. citizens—I am assuming it is mostly those in the Sudanese diaspora. What kind of visits are they on right now? I mean, are there other many visits going on?

Ms. PHEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for raising that point. The State Department last issued a travel warning for South Sudan advising American citizens not to travel there because of the current conflict. We did that in January of this year. So you are absolutely correct. The primary set of visitors from the United States are members of the diaspora, who, like us, care very deeply about this situation and are trying to support a positive resolution.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Butts, when we spoke in my office, you were talking about the pretty robust presence that we have there given our interest

in all the travel, 6,000 visits a year. Can you describe how many State Department employees, roughly, and how many folks from Customs and other agencies of government there are there?

Ms. BUTTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Nassau is distinct as a post in that there are actually fewer State Department employees in Nassau than there are Homeland Security employees. Actually, there is more of a Homeland Security presence there from Customs and Border Protection, and a lot of the work that we do around immigration and trying to deter irregular migration. There is a significant Coast Guard presence in Nassau. So in total, we have a little over 200 staff with about 20-plus on the State Department side, and about 70 for Homeland Security, and then other agencies are also included. We have a few from DOJ. We have, of course, have a military attaché at post.

And as you appreciate, it is an archipelago, so there are a number of islands. So in Freeport, for example, there is a significant Customs and Border Protection presence, because of preclearance for flights that go between the United States and between the Bahamas.

So it is a distinct post in both the size and the composition of the staff at post.

Senator FLAKE. A lot of your function will be coordinating then, I assume?

Ms. BUTTS. It will, and that is actually one of the challenges of the post. Things have been working very well. The Chargé there, Lisa Johnson, is actually with us today and has done a great job waiting for an ambassador.

But the coordination is a significant part. Fortunately, the agencies work very well together, and we have a very, very robust coordinated effort in dealing with illicit trafficking and dealing with irregular migration.

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you.

Ms. Dhanani, can you describe the security situation currently in-country? My understanding is that you will not be stationed in the country, initially. You will operate from Nairobi. We have a secured facility at the airport, I guess.

Can you kind of describe the challenges that we have there, and what the timetable might be for you to actually be in-country for more than a few days at a time, I should say?

Ms. DHANANI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and you have identified one of the major issues that will be preoccupying me.

I go to Nairobi with a mission of reestablishing a permanent diplomatic presence in Mogadishu, but that will depend on improvements in the security circumstances on the ground. We have adopted a policy that involves continual monitoring of the security environment and phased reengagement. The phase that we currently stand at allows us to have members of the U.S. Government team enter Mogadishu for periods of up to 2 weeks, to stay for periods as long as 2 weeks. But we can only have a limited presence in Mogadishu at any given time.

And at the moment, our assessment of the security situation does not permit us to move beyond the airport. Clearly, we need to see improvement in the security situation what will allow us to have greater access to all of Mogadishu, as well as have greater numbers

of people on the ground at the airport. So there are limitations today, but it is an enormously improved situation to what it was as little as 2 years ago.

During the last year, the team in the Somalia unit and the U.S. Government employees made 161 trips into Somalia. They visited Mogadishu. They visited many of the regional capitals. They have really had an opportunity to substantially expand their engagement.

As I am there, I will be engaged in constant risk monitoring, risk mitigation, and risk management as we seek to take advantage of improved security to move further and engage further in the pursuit of the objectives that we have in Somalia.

Senator FLAKE. A little more complicated than finding a real estate agent and looking for a residence then, I assume. Well, thank you.

Mr. Markey.

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

Ms. Phee, could you talk about a year later after the United States announced sanctions against South Sudan, in terms of the cooperation we are getting from the EU in ensuring the effectiveness of our policy?

Ms. PHEE. Thank you very much for that question.

The resolution that was adopted earlier this month in the Security Council was a unanimous resolution that established a framework to impose international targeted sanctions. That unanimous resolution follows individual steps by the United States, where the President has used his Executive authority, as well as action by the EU to impose EU's targeted sanctions. So we are now ready to use the forum in the Security Council as a tool to support the peace negotiations.

I think, in sum, I would characterize the EU posture as complementary to our own and adding to the collective pressure to reach an end to the conflict.

Senator MARKEY. Ms. Dhanani, how would you characterize al-Shabaab's relationship with al-Qaeda in all of it is manifestations? And how would you describe al-Shabaab's ability to recruit outside of its region, to further destabilize the area?

Ms. DHANANI. Senator Markey, al-Shabaab has formally affiliated with al-Qaeda, so when we engage or consider engagement regarding al-Shabaab, we treat al-Shabaab as we would al-Qaeda.

A very worrying aspect of the crisis in Somalia in recent years has been the effect that it has had on Somalia's neighbors. Certainly, in Kenya, in the Westgate mall attack last year, but also throughout the region in Uganda, Djibouti, and elsewhere, there have been incidents. There have been attacks—some successful, some unsuccessful—that have their roots in al-Shabaab.

And it is for that reason that Somalia's neighbors have formed the bulk of the force that we are supporting as they seek to reverse the gains of al-Shabaab.

Senator MARKEY. What is al-Shabaab's largest source of revenue today?

Ms. DHANANI. My understanding, sir, Ranking Member Markey, is that al-Shabaab continues to rely on charcoal trade, taxes that

they achieve through the charcoal trade, and also through extortion.

They no longer control cities. They no longer control large areas. But they are present in various places in the country. Their resources are much more limited than they were when they controlled a large part of the country, but they still have access in a number of places.

Senator MARKEY. Okay, thank you.

Mr. Folmsbee, can you talk a little bit about the French presence in Mali, its military there, what role it is playing, what success it is enjoying or not enjoying? Just give us a little bit of an overview of the French role right now in that country.

Mr. FOLMSBEE. Well, thank you for that question, Senator.

The French role has been critical. The French went into Mali in 2013 and drove al-Qaeda out of the Northern areas. We have heavily supported that activity, mostly in logistics, but the French have done a lot of good work there. Also with training and setting up MINUSMA, they have also played a key role, although they are also assisting directly with the Malian Army as well, where there have been some difficulties. So they played a very key role.

Senator MARKEY. What is it going to take for the rebels to agree to a peace deal, in your opinion?

Mr. FOLMSBEE. Well, that is a good question. You know, I think the fundamental issue is going to come down to the government and the northern groups, led in part by MNLA, to agree to some terminologies relating to the devolution of authority and power.

I do not know if I see the end of that just yet, but I am hopeful that we will get there. So I think we can hope that will come.

Senator MARKEY. Okay, great, thank you.

Ms. Butts, who I have known for 20 years, can you talk a little bit about the immigration policy in the Bahamas and the questions that are being raised about the barriers that are being erected to being able to gain citizenship and not living in a stateless status? Could you give your overview of what that situation looks like today?

Ms. BUTTS. Yes, absolutely. Thank you, Ranking Member Markey.

We work in a coordinated effort with the Bahamians to patrol both sea and surface patrols to deter irregular migration in the region, but also to interdict irregular migration when we have the opportunity to do so. It is my understanding that migrants coming through the area are principally Haitian and Cuban migrants who stop off in the Bahamas, and ultimately want to make their way to the United States.

If I am confirmed, one of the things that I will urge the Bahamian Government is to ensure that they are following international standards in how they are managing irregular migration with the support of the United States as we have supported them in the past.

There are significant pockets of migrants in the Bahamas. There is a large Bahamian-Haitian community in the Bahamas. As you are probably aware, Senator Markey, there has been a change in the policy of the Bahamian Government. It actually went into effect in November 2014. It now requires that migrants who are in the

country actually have passports of their countries of nationality, and they also have documentation that they can legally be in the Bahamas.

There have been concerns that have been raised by the Bahamian-Haitian community and by human rights advocates that the implementation of the policy has unfairly targeted Haitian communities, and that the Haitians or that the detainees who are being detained as a result of the policy in the detention facility are not being treated to international standards.

I will, certainly, urge while I am there, if I am confirmed, that the Bahamians follow international standards in how they are implementing their immigrant policy and also how they are maintaining the detention facilities.

As you are aware, Senator Markey, I have worked for a number of years on issues related to migration. These are things that I care about, I understand, and I look forward to having the opportunity, if confirmed, to engage on the issue.

I am very confident, though, that the Bahamians have robust democratic institutions, and they will be able to address these concerns with the help of the U.S. Government and also the international community, and I look forward to engaging.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

We will do one more round, if that is all right.

Mr. Folmsbee, do we know who is responsible for the latest attacks on the MINUSMA forces?

Mr. FOLMSBEE. In the north, yes, I believe there is very good intel on that. This is an open session, and I do not know if it is out in the public yet. But there is good intel on that.

There were also attacks in Bamako, and al-Mourabitoun actually has claimed responsibility for those attacks.

Senator Flake. Do we know what is leading to this increase in attacks?

Mr. FOLMSBEE. Well, it is very clear that some of the Tuareg extremists groups are looking to put pressure on the government as it relates to the peace talks. I think there is little doubt about that.

But I also think that they will be thwarted. I think there is a lot of pressure back against them.

Senator FLAKE. As far as the U.S. Government is concerned, do we have the right mix in civilian and military tools for you in the country?

Mr. FOLMSBEE. I think we do, but I will also say, if confirmed, I am, certainly, going to be looking at that, because that is a fair question. The key issue is going to ultimately be what is the north—the opportunity for the government is really to make inroads to the north. There have to be paved roads up there. There have to be jobs up there. There have to be hospitals up there.

So if the government does not swing around with that, our actions will not matter that much. So we have to make sure that the government takes that on.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Phee, you mentioned in your testimony, the U.N. Security Council on March 3 resolution established a targeted sanctions re-

gime, even proposed an arms embargo that could be imposed, should these South Sudanese officials not respond to mediation. What effect do you believe that would have, particularly the arms embargo that is talked about?

Ms. PHEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The objective of the resolution was to send sort of an unequivocal signal to the parties that they were at a crossroads, that it is really time. This conflict has gone on too long. The humanitarian consequences are devastating. And it is time to reach an end and find a way forward.

So it was an effort to provide the negotiators with a tool to convince both sides that there is no self-interest in sustaining the conflict. That is the objective of the resolution. It is tied very closely to the progress of the negotiations, particularly, as I mentioned, this new effort by IGAD to reformulate the negotiating process, and, frankly, to provide a more direct role for outsiders such as ourselves to be engaged and hopefully bring this over the finish line.

Senator FLAKE. All right, well, thank you.

Ms. Butts, we have cooperation with the government with regard to drug interdiction, with the Bahamian Government. Can that be improved, or is that considered good? How would you characterize it?

Ms. BUTTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have made tremendous progress in that area. As you are aware, during the 1980s there was very robust trafficking, a lane through the Bahamas. And at that point in the 1980s, about 80 percent of the cocaine that came to the United States actually came through the Bahamas.

Since then, we have actually established a very robust partnership that is focused on our OPBAT task force. As recently as 2011, actually 10 percent of the cocaine coming to the United States actually came through the Bahamas, and so we have had tremendous success in that regard.

Unfortunately, over the past couple of years, Mr. Chairman, we have seen a bit of an uptick in what was 10 percent in 2011, has now become about 14 percent. So we are doing well. We can, certainly, do better. We could, certainly, use additional resources to fight illicit narcotics coming through. But we have a very strong partnership with the Bahamians on that area.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Dhanani, what do you think the prospects are for elections that are scheduled to be held next year? And given a very complicated arrangement with the government appointed, as opposed to elected, how credible will that be seen around the country, if these elections are actually held?

Ms. DHANANI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I think you have touched on an extremely important factor. We need a Government of Somalia that is a representative government, that the people feel is answerable to them, and that is representative to all the regions of the country in order to have stability going forward.

The existing Federal Government of Somalia was selected. Elders selected the Parliament, and the Parliament nominated the President, and there is a degree of representivity, but not to the extent that we require.

That government, however, has defined and outlined a detailed roadmap toward representative government. "Vision 2016" is the name of this roadmap. It is a roadmap that we and the rest of the international community are supporting.

It includes a number of steps on which the deadlines have already been missed, quite frankly. We are currently focused on urging the Somalis to make progress toward restoring that schedule, making progress toward establishing a constitution.

Creating a federal system is a very complicated task. When we think of what our Founding Fathers achieved and the stability of the United States, it is quite remarkable. This is the challenge that faces Somalis today. And we are supporting the vision that they have outlined, and we are urging, along with our friends and throughout the international community, that they stick to this plan that they have defined for themselves.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Markey.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Each of you is extremely well-qualified. Life's work has prepared you for the jobs which you are being nominated to take on for our country. What I would like you to, perhaps, give us is, in each one of your own words, your hopes for what you will be remembered for in your ambassadorship, what achievement you want to have left behind when your service has been completed. I am going to ask each one of you to give me a sense of what it is that you would like to have left as your legacy.

We will begin with you, Mr. Folmsbee.

Mr. FOLMSBEE. This is really a great opportunity to talk about that, so thank you for that question.

I think the key element and concern I have for Mali is the divide where the Niger River runs across the country. Everybody to the north has never really been connected to everyone to the south. So you have this cycle of conflict that has been going on for 50 years and probably much longer, actually.

I think the opportunity for all of us in the diplomatic community and the government is to help connect that. That is going to be through education and other areas, as well as in security.

So I hope that is the legacy that someone like myself and our whole team can leave behind, making that connection. That is going to make a big difference that will help stabilize that country.

That is what I am going to do, if confirmed.

Senator Markey. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Phee.

Ms. PHEE. Thank you, Ranking Member Markey, for your support. If I were to be confirmed, I would be the second U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of South Sudan, so that raises a question: Who wants to be second, right? Generally speaking, second is not a positive space.

But in this instance, I think second is very important and very special, because I would symbolize United States commitment to the people of South Sudan. We are there in the tough times, as well as the more fun times, as was experienced in 2011 when the new state was established.

So, moreover, I would also follow, I think, in the footsteps of so many Americans, students, church groups, activists, Members of Congress, members of so many administrations who have cared for so long for the people of South Sudan and all the suffering they have experienced.

So I would be proud to stand second behind all those folks, and represent U.S. commitment to helping get this right.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Ms. Butts.

Ms. BUTTS. Thank you, Ranking Member Markey.

There is so much that I want to do. If I had to boil it down, I would say, just overall strengthening the bilateral relationship, furthering social and economic justice in the country. Certainly, building on and enforcing and supporting human rights for all the people of the Bahamas, and just more within the mission, within post, strengthening management, improving morale, showing that the people who work at post are valued and all of their efforts are appreciated.

So I hope that my legacy is both inside appreciating the people who work at post, and outside reflecting the best of U.S. values and the best that we have to offer in America.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Ms. Dhanani.

Ms. DHANANI. Thank you, Senator Markey.

I think I have a small advantage here. Unlike my colleague nominated for South Sudan, I will be the first in sometime, and therefore, I have that advantage in a sense.

You know, the step of deciding to nominate someone to serve as Ambassador to Somalia represented the progress that was the result of a lot of hard work that many people, including many of my colleagues in the U.S. Government, put in over the last few years. So in a sense, my nomination is a tribute to the efforts that they made.

Similarly, I would hope the efforts that I and my team make will take us to that next step, the step of establishing a permanent diplomatic presence in Mogadishu. I think that step will be important in itself, but it will be even more important because it will be a sign that so many things have continued to move in a favorable direction, and that Somalia is getting closer and closer to being the kind of peaceful, secure, unified, stable place that we would all like to see it become.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Well, you are an extraordinary group, and we thank you for your willingness to serve our country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

I want to note the presence of the Deputy Chief of Mission, Chet Neymour, from the Bahamas here.

I want to thank all of you for your testimony and for being here. Thank you for your service. And hearing your remarks and looking at your resumes, it is apparent that you have all been at this awhile. And I know that sometimes our diplomatic efforts are overlooked by the general populace. You are not given the opportunity to board an airplane first or things like that sometimes that an-

other branch of our government seems to get noticed for. But I want you to know that we here appreciate what you do, and we are grateful for your sacrifice and for the sacrifice of your families. The risks, we know that the risks out there that you expose yourselves to as well, and they are not insignificant, particularly with many of these assignments.

So thank you for what you do. Thank you for being here.

For the information of members, the record will remain open until the close of business on Friday, March 27. This will include time for members to submit questions for the record. We would ask you to respond to these questions quickly. Your responses will be made part of the record as well.

Senator FLAKE. With the thanks to the committee, this hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:12 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF PAUL A. FOLMSBEE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALI, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE FOLMSBEE'S REPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. What further influence will the United States utilize through your offices or other means to compel greater compromise and collaboration in seeking sustainable peace, especially by the long-standing intransigent government and officials in the southern portion of the country? How will you work with the Government of Mali in addressing marginalization in the north?

Answer. The United States is engaged in robust diplomatic outreach to urge all parties in Mali to commit immediately to the March 1, 2015, peace agreement. We are working closely with the Government of Mali to support improved service delivery to northern Mali and are considering ways we could support a final peace agreement.

Right now, the United States is supporting a variety of efforts designed to promote peace and reconciliation in northern Mali, including translating, printing, and disseminating 30,000 copies of the peace agreement in local languages; empowering grassroots civil society peace campaigns through hundreds of local forums and discussions; promulgating radio and television programming and targeted SMS text messages reaching millions of Malians; and strengthening national-level institutions charged with resolving the crisis, such as through creating a communications cell in the Ministry of National Reconciliation and improving the capability of justice and civilian security institutions to provide vital services in the north.

Question. What are the positions of the United States, France, and neighboring states on the prospect of federalism or autonomy for northern Mali? How such reorganization affect U.S. policy in Mali?

Answer. The United States, together with France and other key international partners, strongly supports the June 2013 Ouagadougou Accord. This framework agreement, signed by both the Government of Mali and the northern armed groups, reinforces the international community's commitment to the territorial integrity of the Malian state.

Question. MINUMSA signals a shift in the context of United Nations peacekeeping operations in which peacekeepers are combating an extremist presence. Does the United States support U.N. peacekeeping as peace enforcement?

Answer. Today, two-thirds of U.N. peacekeepers are operating in active conflict areas, many with a chapter VII mandate of peace enforcement. The United States has supported that mandate for these missions. Some of these chapter VII mandated missions involve peace enforcement in situations involving extremists. MINUSMA does not necessarily represent a shift in the chapter VII operating environment.

MINUSMA's mandate, under chapter VII authority, to protect civilians and support the Malian authorities in stabilization efforts and to take steps to deter threats and prevent the return of armed elements, is one part of a broader strategy, including political engagement, to bring stability to northern Mali.

Question. How does the lack of an AFRICOM jurisdictional boundary in the Sahel region benefit U.S. Government efforts in dealing with the instability in Mali? What benefits would State Department realize if there was a unified region under one Regional Bureau? How does State Department work through the range of regional and bilateral programming applied to counter terrorism, transborder criminal trafficking and activity, build governance and economic capacity, train, equip, advise and assist security forces, and respond to humanitarian and human rights crises?

Answer. Through the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Program (TSCTP), the United States is working to address transborder issues in Mali and the Sahel. TSCTP supports programs that strengthen the Government of Mali's operational and tactical abilities to combat terrorism and programs designed to ensure that Malians remain unreceptive to extremist messages.

Programs designed to strengthen Mali's counterterrorism capabilities include:

- Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) training for law enforcement. This program provides police with training needed to protect facilities, individuals, and infrastructure from terrorist attacks and respond to major crises such as hostage takings.
- Establishment of a Legal Advisor from Department of Justice beginning in calendar year 2014.

Programs designed to counter violent extremism include:

- Installation of community radio stations in the most remote regions of northern Mali and support for radio programming;
- Support for small scale-community infrastructure such as school rehabilitation and well projects;
- Engagement with "medersas," which in Mali are Islamic versions of parochial schools that teach secular subjects and are very different from "madrasas" or Koranic schools;
- Publishing and distribution of 56,600 Arabic-language civics textbooks to medersas for the 2011–2012 school year;
- Cultural and educational exchange programs and the preservation of ancient Islamic manuscripts;
- Capacity-building for local government officials and institutions to support decentralization and democratic governance; and
- Skills training for youth, including a just launched USAID/Mali Out-of-School Youth Project (Projet d'Appui aux Jeunes Entrepreneurs) that provides out-of-school youth, ages 14–25, with low literacy skills nonformal basic education instruction, technical and work readiness training, as well as training in entrepreneurship and leadership.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE FOLMSBEE'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. As the Senior Civilian Representative embedded with Regional Command East in Afghanistan from 2011 to 2012 and as Provincial Reconstruction Team Leader embedded with the 2/82 Airborne in Sadr City and Adhamiya, Baghdad, Iraq from 2007 to 2008, I am proud of the work I did to promote stability, strengthen democracy and protect human rights in two dangerous but vitally important places. If confirmed, I will draw on my experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, among others, to emphasize the importance of protecting human rights and promoting justice as we work to support the national reconciliation process in Mali.

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

Answer. The 2013 inauguration of President Keita and the establishment of a new National Assembly through free and fair elections ended a 16-month transitional period following the 2012 military coup, armed rebellion, and terrorist occupation of the north. The restoration of a democratic government and the arrest of coup

leader Amadou Sanogo restored some civilian control over the military. The 2013 international military intervention helped to eradicate terrorists and the resumption of peace talks with armed groups has decreased armed conflict.

However, problems exist in some areas. These include ineffective civilian control over security forces and impunity toward the military; acts of sexual violence, summary execution, torture, and use of child soldiers by armed groups; killing of civilians and military forces including peacekeepers by violent extremists; trafficking in persons and exploitative labor, including child labor; and judicial inefficiency, poor prison conditions, arbitrary arrest and detention, lengthy pretrial detention prolonged trial delays, and lack of access to justice in the North.

If confirmed, I will continue Embassy Bamako's extensive diplomatic outreach and programming in support of the peace process and a national reconciliation process that will provide justice and accountability.

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 Mali in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. The Government of Mali took strong initial steps to advance justice and fight impunity from prosecution, most notably with the imprisonment and ongoing investigation against coup leader Amadou Sanogo and 28 other individuals implicated in extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances committed in the aftermath of the coup d'etat. Judge Yaya Karambe helped drive this fight against impunity as he worked under constant threat from Sanogo's supporters to gather evidence and arrest suspects, culminating in his uncovering a mass-grave with 21 missing Red Beret soldiers in December 2013.

These efforts are laudable, but I am concerned about the lack of progress in pursuing justice for victims of terrorism or human rights abuses that occurred during the occupation of northern Mali. Human rights abuses committed in northern Mali on all sides of the conflict have not been addressed and remain a sticking point in the reconciliation process. The capacity of the justice sector is significantly limited in the north, as judicial officials have been slow to return over continued fears of insecurity. Human rights organizations documented various abuses committed during and after the conflict, including northern armed groups which killed, raped, and abused soldiers and civilians during the 2012 invasion, and Malian Armed Forces which committed summary executions, torture, and forced disappearances upon retaking territory in early 2013.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in Mali?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with nongovernmental organizations in both the United States and Mali to solidify Mali's democratic transition and promote human rights.

Question. If confirmed, please describe steps that you will take to enhance effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly known as the Leahy amendment, within the Embassy in Mali as well as steps you would take to accomplish the goal of the law, namely, helping the Government of Mali end impunity for human rights violations by security forces.

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen security sector institutions in Mali by promoting accountability and civilian control. Careful attention to the Leahy vetting process is critical in assuring that this assistance reaches only those individuals within Mali's security forces who are not implicated in abuses of human rights and can be credible advocates for reform and professionalization through participation in a meaningful national reconciliation process that emphasizes respect for human rights of all Malians.

Question. After days of protests in the north and a rejection of the recent peace proposal by Tuareg rebels, the Malian Government announced that it would no longer negotiate on the future of the north.

♦ What are the implications of the recent stalemate over a peace deal?

Answer. Failure of the parties to reach an agreement risks further violence and increased alienation by the northern populations. However, the agreement would be only a first step toward peace, security, and development in the polarized communities in the north. Without a peace agreement and follow-on action to resolve longstanding issues that divide Bamako and the north, violent extremists will continue to make northern Mali insecure. This insecurity has increased, with more frequent attacks against civilians, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and the French forces of Operation Barkhane.

Upon signing a peace agreement, the opportunity for the Government of Mali is to noticeably establish a real presence in the north with hospitals, paved roads, schools, and expanding economic development. The United States will do all it can to assist the government in that initiative.

Question. In your written testimony, you referenced the need to reform the Malian security sector. Mali is one of six partner countries for the administration's new Security Governance Initiative (SGI).

- What is the status of the development of SGI programming in Mali?
- What has been achieved through existing security sector assistance programs such as the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP)?
- What lessons can be drawn from TSTCP to inform efforts under SGI?

Answer. An interagency Security Governance Initiative (SGI) team visited Mali in February to consult with Malian partners on potential areas for SGI engagement. Expert teams will reengage with Malian counterparts to develop joint country action plans and programs.

Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Program (TSCTP) activities in Mali remain very targeted to specific sectors and activities. We have small programs focused on law enforcement, justice sector, and corrections reform and Antiterrorism Assistance programming on crisis response and terrorist interdiction. In part this is due to the significant European Union program underway there that permits us to be more selective in our engagement. This year TSCTP supported the deployment of Law Enforcement and Resident Legal Advisors to assist in civilian security and justice sector reform. In addition, TSCTP supports several countering violent extremism (CVE) programs promoting peace building, reconciliation, and tolerance. Overall, the United States is focusing on broader security sector reform and political reconciliation before committing to the same kind of tactical training and equipping of counterterrorism units.

TSCTP's experience in Mali and elsewhere in the Sahel and Maghreb provides several important lessons which may benefit SGI efforts. Our experience in Mali highlighted the importance of addressing state weakness and focusing on institutional resilience as key parts of our overall engagement strategy. Before the fall of the Toure Government, TSCTP focused on tactical-level training for various Malian units and the underlying state weaknesses were not sufficiently addressed. Consequently, when the units were deployed without adequate leadership or logistical support, they quickly collapsed. By contrast, TSCTP has intensified its focus on building more sustainable capabilities in Chad, Mauritania, and Niger and invested in defense and civilian security institutions. Capacities in those countries remain nascent in many sectors, but we have seen benefits to the approach as they have responded to threats along multiple borders from Mali, Nigeria, and Libya.

Question. Mr. Folmsbee, you alluded to the north-south divide in Mali that has contributed to cycles of conflict. The integration of Tuareg citizens into the broader society has been an ongoing challenge, not only in Mali, but elsewhere in the Sahel.

- If confirmed as Ambassador, how do you plan to work with the Malian Government, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to work toward this goal?

Answer. National reconciliation is a top U.S. policy priority in Mali. If confirmed, I plan to continue working to promote national reconciliation through partnerships with civil society and the Malian Government and by participating in the peace talks as needed. Additionally, with USAID programming, we will promote economic growth and the health sector to help tie the north to the rest of the country.

In direct support of the peace talks, our efforts will include translating, printing, and disseminating 30,000 peace process documents in local languages; empowering grassroots civil society peace campaigns through hundreds of local forums and discussions; promulgating radio and television programming and targeted SMS text messages reaching millions of Malians; and strengthening national-level institutions charged with resolving the crisis, such as through creating a communications cell in the Ministry of National Reconciliation.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE FOLMSBEE'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR FLAKE

Question. What more, if anything, can be done to stimulate economic growth and alleviate poverty in Mali? What are the most significant U.S. commercial interests in Mali? What is the environment for U.S. businesses and investors, and how might it be improved?

Answer. Mali faces formidable challenges to economic development. Its economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, which makes up 45 percent of GDP and provides income for 75 percent of the country's population.

In order to promote long-lasting food security, the United States invests in the sustainable development of agriculture through the Feed the Future (FTF) initiative. Agriculture is a driver of economic growth, employment, better health, and nutrition, and remains a sector where Mali has an underexploited comparative advantage.

With an FY 2014 budget of $18 million, FTF works to develop and reinforce the private sector by targeting opportunities in the production, processing, and trade of selected commodities in key geographic areas. USAID/Mali also recently signed a nearly $14 million dollar Development Credit Authority (DCA) microcredit facility to support small and medium-size agricultural enterprises as well as female entrepreneurs.

Question. Would you advise an expansion of U.S. security assistance? Please describe how the Security Governance Initiative will be implemented in Mali.

Answer. Rebuilding Mali's security institutions in the wake of the 2012 coup is critical to Mali's capacity to control its porous borders and vast territory, counter terrorist influences and deny Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) the ability to use northern Mali as a safe haven. In our meetings with civil society, it is clear that better security service delivery and access to justice will be a critical component to any effort to bring stability to the country. Through the Security Governance Initiative and other complementary programs, we will support the development of these critical security institutions, systems and processes to increase accountability and improve security and justice through transparent and responsive governance.

Question. What is your assessment of security trends in the Sahel? How might U.S. counterterrorism efforts in Mali and the wider Sahel best be evaluated and prioritized?

Answer. The continued presence and activities of al-Qaeda affiliates, including Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), other armed extremists and transnational criminal groups in northern Mali, threatens both Mali and the broader Sahel region. Ensuring that Malians continue to reject extremist messages is a key focus of U.S. counterterrorism programming in Mali. Our ability to counter extremist influences depends on a skillful balance of programs designed to consolidate Malian democracy, support economic growth, deepen mutual understanding, promote moderate messages, and assist the Malian Government and local leaders to deliver basic services and counter the root causes of extremism.

Question. Who is responsible for recent attacks against MINUSMA forces, and what factors are contributing to their increase? How might U.S. interagency coordination related to regional counterterrorism be improved?

Answer. Al-Morabitun and the Movement for the Oneness and Unity of the Jihad (MUJAO), both groups with ties to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), have claimed responsibility for attacks against U.N. peacekeepers in Mali. Other armed extremists and transnational criminal groups, coupled with slow progress on national reconciliation between the Government of Mali and northern groups, have produced an increasingly insecure environment for the U.N. mission.

We are working closely with the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the GOM, troop and police contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs) and other international partners to support the mission to better operate in this insecure environment and implement its robust mandate.

U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) recently sponsored an asymmetric threat assessment team that traveled throughout the MINUSMA area of operations and is providing recommendations that may reduce peacekeeper vulnerability and contribute to IED threat mitigation. We are providing mine-protected combat vehicles for MINUSMA contingents and training peacekeepers how to use them, and exploring ways to support more C–IED training for troop contributing countries (TCCs).

In close partnership with MINUSMA's U.N. Police (UNPOL) and the EU Police capacity-building mission (EUCAP), we have also conducted IED awareness seminars for the Malian National Police who work in northern Mali. Additionally, the ACOTA Program has provided Counter-IED training to TCCs trained and deploying to MINUSMA (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, and Togo). During the 7–10 week battalion training, Counter-IED tasks relevant to an infantry battalion are integrated into command and staff, soldiers' skills and collective unit training.

Question. Mali's current peace process has gotten bogged down. What more can the United States do to encourage a peaceful political resolution? If another deal is

struck, what will you do differently than your predecessors to ensure that this next one, unlike the previous four peace deals, will stick?

Answer. We are working, with our international partners, to encourage all parties to sign the Algiers agreement as soon as possible. We are also considering how the United States could most effectively support the implementation of this agreement by leveraging our diplomatic and development assistance resources.

Question. Do we have the mix of civilian and military tools right in Mali? How will you, as chief of mission, ensure that U.S. civilian capabilities are not overshadowed by our military?

Answer. We continue to emphasize that the only way to create a lasting peace in Mali is through a durable political agreement between the Government of Mali and the northern armed groups. Embassy Bamako's diplomatic outreach in support of the peace process is a whole-of-government effort that emphasizes the importance of solidifying Mali's democratic transition and strengthening security sector institutions. We are beginning to implement robust civilian security engagement with the police and justice sector to improve these critical elements of a stable democracy.

RESPONSES OF MARY CATHERINE PHEE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PHEE'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. Does the United States agree with the 2014 African Union report that neither antagonist Riek Machar or Salva Kiir should serve in South Sudan's transitional government?

Answer. The report referred to is a leaked document which the African Union disavowed in an official statement on March 16. Our view is that the two leaders need to make compromises to reach a peace agreement and form a transitional government that can accomplish essential transitional tasks such as holding elections for a permanent government and establishing a hybrid judicial body to promote accountability and justice.

Question. How will U.S. influence on South Sudan's warring parties be affected by the expansion of the IGAD peace talks beyond IGAD member states?

Answer. "IGAD Plus," as proposed by IGAD Chairman, Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalgn, envisions additional leverage on the warring parties though enhanced international participation and cooperation, bolstering the negotiation efforts of the current IGAD leadership. This includes participation by the African Union, which has selected five African heads of state for this purpose, the Troika (United States, United Kingdom, and Norway), the U.N., the EU, and China.

A reformed and reinvigorated "IGAD Plus" process would unite a number of stakeholders and members of the international community behind a common peace plan and gives international partners, including the United States, a larger role in shaping process and substance. The United States will continue to look for further opportunities to enhance the IGAD mediation process and will lead international efforts to bring additional pressure upon the parties to shift their concern toward the people of South Sudan, instead of their narrow political interests.

Question. How do you assess the relationship between UNMISS peacekeepers and humanitarian organizations in fulfilling the protection of civilians mandate?

Answer. UNMISS is mandated to protect civilians with support from its 11, 669-person strong military force. This U.N. mission has four priorities: protection of civilians, monitoring and investigating human rights, creating the conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and supporting the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities agreement.

UNMISS has established seven protection of civilian sites for internally displaced persons and is protecting nearly 113,000 IDPs in these sites. In tandem with humanitarian organizations, UNMISS is providing assistance to civilians at these sites as well as to those displaced elsewhere in the country. The partnership between UNMISS and the humanitarian organizations is vital and robust and we continue to encourage both sides to cooperate with these efforts.

Recent troop deployments from Kenya, China, and Ghana will enable UNMISS to conduct its protection tasks more effectively, including patrols and proactive community engagement. Inadequate infrastructure, difficult weather conditions, and access

challenges posed by the parties in conflict hinder UNMISS' ability to fully execute its mandate.

Question. How will you ensure the United States does not enter into an agreement that perpetuates the failures of the 2005 CPA that left unresolved significant interethnic rivalries and challenges?

Answer. Recalling the scale and devastation of the Sudanese civil wars, which exacted tremendous human cost over two decades, the CPA was a critically important accomplishment that ended the fighting. Unfortunately, the parties to the CPA did not implement many of the important provisions designed to build institutions that would facilitate development and good governance throughout Sudan and what is now South Sudan. If confirmed, I will work to encourage both parties to end the current conflict in South Sudan and establish a transitional government that begins to address these longstanding challenges. The primary criticism of the CPA is that the official parties lacked diversity and inclusivity. I will seek to engage all stakeholders and encourage their participation in developing broad-based institutions and sustainable development.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PHEE'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. I have had the opportunity to directly advance human rights and democracy in nearly every assignment in my career and expect deep engagement in such efforts in South Sudan, if confirmed.

As a political reporting officer in Cairo, Egypt, from 1997–2000, I undertook pathbreaking reporting on the government's treatment of the Coptic Christian community and relations between Copts and Muslims. I convinced USAID to transfer democracy and governance funds to the State Department and with those funds administered a small grants program that provided assistance to human rights advocates; significantly, these grants were not subject to prior approval from the Government of Egypt.

Examples of the program's beneficiaries include activists working to combat female genital mutilation and those providing legal assistance to Egyptians who had been tortured. We also used these funds to support the travel of Egyptian activists to the United States to learn about American civil society and judicial processes. Several of the program's beneficiaries were active in the 2011 Arab Spring.

While administering an occupied province of southern Iraq in 2003–2004, I arranged for the establishment of a provincial council and municipal councils with reserved seats for women and religious minorities who were elected in caucuses from their communities. In explaining the purpose of reserved seats and the function of caucuses, I was able to educate local leaders who had no prior experience with inclusive participatory governance systems and to mobilize previously oppressed communities.

Most recently, as deputy chief of mission in Addis Ababa from 2011–2014, I arranged U.S. Government financial support for journalists fleeing the country who feared persecution, as well as for victims of Wikileaks. I chaired the mission's interagency working group on democracy and governance, and pioneered an innovative effort to create a dialogue between prominent American academics and senior Ethiopian party leaders about one party states in agrarian-based economies in East Asia (countries whose economic transformation Ethiopia seeks to emulate) which had chosen to liberalize politically in order to illustrate that democratization can bring stability and economic progress.

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

Answer. The most pressing human rights issues are ending the war, promoting accountability and addressing the needs of those displaced by the conflict. If confirmed I intend to support efforts to hold accountable those who have committed human rights violations, abuses, and other atrocities in this conflict. We have pledged to work with the South Sudanese, the AU, regional partners, and the U.N. to promote accountability for abuses committed in this conflict.

I will also support efforts to combat gender-based violence and the recruitment of child soldiers. I will promote the expansion of civic space for alternative voices and the role of a free press. I will reach out to local government officials, professional associations, civil society organizations, youth, women, and traditional leaders to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

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

Answer. In South Sudan there is a history of impunity for human rights abuses and violations. South Sudan also lacks strong institutions capable of enforcing the rule of law. Building local capacity and facilitating reconciliation among the people of South Sudan is a long-term challenge and will require the consistent support of the friends of the South Sudanese.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in South Sudan?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with human rights groups and other nongovernmental organizations, both local and international. I will reinforce current U.S. engagement with civil society and other South Sudanese and international partners to promote human rights.

Question. If confirmed, please describe steps that you will take to enhance effective implementation of Section 620 M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly known as the Leahy amendment, within the Embassy in South Sudan as well as steps you would take to accomplish the goal of the law, namely, helping the Government of South Sudan end impunity for human rights violations by security forces.

Answer. All U.S. Government assistance to the defense sector was suspended shortly after the outbreak of the current conflict. We remain concerned about the conduct of both the Government of South Sudan and opposition forces.

The United States has urged the African Union Peace and Security Council to immediately release the report of the African Union's Commission of Inquiry, which was charged with developing findings regarding violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law committed during the armed conflict, and formulating recommendations on the best ways and means to ensure accountability, reconciliation, and healing. We are prepared to support mechanisms that advance these goals. When the parties achieve a lasting peace and we review the possibility of providing assistance for security sector reform, I will work to ensure that all relevant U.S. Government agencies and offices are working together and actively sharing information to ensure the Leahy law is being fully implemented.

Question. The Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan has the lead role in directly engaging with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and parties to the conflict in South Sudan as part of ongoing peace negotiations.

- a. What is your role if any, in the peace process? In what ways will you work to bring an end to the civil war?
- b. In the event that the latest round of talks—reported to be scheduled for some time in April—do not result in an agreement, what next steps will the United States take to bring about an end to the conflict?
- c. How much information do ordinary citizens have about the peace process, and how are their interests being represented in negotiations?

Answer. a. If confirmed, I, in coordination with the President's Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, Ambassador Donald Booth, will steadfastly engage both parties on the need to make compromises and to come to a political agreement. I will also directly engage the people of South Sudan to promote peace and provide humanitarian assistance without regard to ethnic or political affiliation.

b. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is now moving ahead to prepare for a peace summit in the coming weeks, and has the critical task of engaging stakeholders and members of the international community to get behind a common peace plan. Ultimately, however, the decision to end this needless conflict lies with the warring parties. The United States will continue to look for further opportunities to enhance the mediation process and will lead international efforts to bring additional pressure upon the parties. We are in discussions with our partners in the region and the international community on how best to support upcoming talks, to increase pressure on the parties, and to widen international consensus to support the peace process if these talks fail.

c. Given the high rate of illiteracy, and minimal internet penetration and newspaper circulation in South Sudan, radio broadcast is the most effective means to disseminate information. And more of this is needed. We are working with implementing partners to expand accurate live broadcast radio coverage of the mediation and to distribute peace messaging through local partners. We have pressed IGAD to include a broad range of opposition political parties, civil society, religious leaders, women, and youth and have provided direct support to civil society participants in the process so they can advocate for the South Sudanese people.

Question. On March 24, Parliament voted to extend by 3 years President Kiir's term in office. Originally set to end on July 9, 2015, his mandate now expires in 2018.

- What was the reasoning behind the extension of President Salva Kiir's mandate, and what are the repercussions on the peace process?
- Could it affect former Vice President Riek Machar's willingness to negotiate? How transparent was the process through which the vote was debated and taken? What effects might the extension of President Kiir's mandate have on the development of democracy in South Sudan?

Answer. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan has justified the extension of its tenure to 2018 to allow more time to achieve a peaceful settlement. However, this step by the legislature sends a negative signal about the government's commitment to a transitional government and for the development of democracy in South Sudan. This action has created another political grievance for the opposition. We have been clear that the way to extend legitimacy without elections is through a negotiated peace agreement in South Sudan and the establishment of a transitional government.

Question. Administration officials, including Ambassador Booth in his testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on February 26, 2014, have stated that things must not "return to business as usual" which seemed to imply that a political solution among elites at the expense of justice and accountability for crimes committed is unacceptable.

- Are there currently discussions in South Sudan about the need for accountability for violations of human rights committed during the course of the conflict?
- What grassroots efforts are underway to promote justice, accountability and reconciliation? Is the United States supporting such efforts?

Answer. Discussions about the need for accountability have taken place among those in the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, opposition forces, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) mediators, and civil society groups. The U.S. Government has facilitated these discussions through its support for a multistakeholder peace process. The parties to the conflict have agreed on general provisions for a legal mechanism to prosecute those responsible for gross human rights abuses and violations, as well as a commission for truth, reconciliation, and healing, but no steps have been taken to put these into place absent a peace agreement. Justice and accountability are critical elements of a lasting peace.

The United States is encouraging grassroots efforts by South Sudanese groups and individuals to promote justice, accountability, and reconciliation. For example, the Department of State is in the process of funding an in-country South Sudanese civil society-led project to investigate and document human rights abuses and violations.

Question. There are reports that the Government of South Sudan is imposing burdensome bureaucratic obstacles such as arbitrary taxation, expulsion of staff, and a delay in issuing permits, that are making it difficult for nongovernmental organizations to provide humanitarian assistance. The United States has provided nearly a billion dollars in humanitarian assistance this fiscal year, and thus a strong interest in ensuring that the operating environment is conducive to efficient provision of assistance.

- Are you aware of the reports of bureaucratic obstacles imposed on organizations trying to carry out lifesaving humanitarian operations in South Sudan? What will be your role in helping to ensure they are able to carry out their work without being harassed or otherwise impeded by government?

Answer. I am aware of such concerning reports, including threats of expulsion of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), harassment, abduction, detention, and expulsion of NGO workers, delays in visas and work permits, denial of tax exemptions, import delays, and bureaucratic delays in moving cargo by road, river, and air.

If confirmed, I will engage all parties to press for immediate and unconditional access for humanitarian workers so they can deliver humanitarian assistance to all South Sudanese people in need. I will also work with other donor governments and organizations and the U.N. to help minimize the obstructions to humanitarian aid.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PHEE'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR FLAKE

Question. Does the administration view South Sudan's oil revenues as contributing to the current conflict, and, if so, are sanctions against the oil sector being considered?

Answer. We believe that the government revenues are largely being directed to security spending which makes the search for peace all the more urgent. At the same time, several factors have significantly decreased oil revenues for the government, which receives the majority of its income from oil. The conflict has caused a disruption in total oil production, which dropped from 220,000 barrels per day (bbl/d) in November 2013 to 150,000 bbl/d on average in 2014. The drop in the global price of oil has further reduced South Sudan's oil income. Production will only be restored to preconflict levels when the parties cease fighting and provide the security needed for critical repair and maintenance of oil infrastructure in South Sudan. We are not at this time considering sanctions against the oil sector.

Question. What is the extent of the Ugandan military deployment in South Sudan? Are Ugandan forces playing an active role in the fighting? How does the Obama administration view Uganda's role in the conflict?

Answer. At the request of President Salva Kiir, two brigades of Ugandan troops were deployed in December 2013 during the initial days of the conflict to protect key infrastructure and the city of Juba against opposition forces. Ugandan forces remain in South Sudan at the invitation of the government.

The Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities that was brokered by Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) mediators in January 2014, and signed by both the Government of South Sudan and the opposition, calls for the withdrawal of foreign forces from South Sudan. The parties have subsequently rededicated themselves to the Agreement and we continue to press for its immediate implementation.

We remain continuously engaged with the Government of Uganda to promote a common strategy for pressing the parties to stop the fighting and find a negotiated rather than a military solution to the conflict.

Question. Given the role you will play in the peace process, how do you plan to maintain legitimacy with both sides involved in the conflict?

Answer. The United States, in coordination with IGAD and our Troika partners Norway and the United Kingdom, has maintained the firm position that both parties are responsible for this conflict and the failure to reach peace. If confirmed, I, in coordination with the President's Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Ambassador Donald Booth, will steadfastly engage both parties on the need to make compromises and to come to a political agreement. I would also directly engage the people of South Sudan to promote peace and provide humanitarian assistance without regard to ethnic or political affiliation.

Question. In your testimony you note that the U.N. Security Council's March 3 resolution "established a targeted sanctions regime and proposed an arms embargo that could be imposed should the South Sudanese leaders fail to respond to the mediation."

- Do you think the threat of sanctions will be seen as credible by the parties and encourage them to reach a compromise?
- Are we able to identify significantly influential individuals for sanctions in both camps?
- What impact do you anticipate the arms embargo would have? How would it the power balance in the conflict?

Answer. The March 3rd U.N. Security Council's sanctions resolution allows for the imposition of asset freezes and travel bans on those who hinder the South Sudanese peace process or commit human rights violations. The resolution established a Sanctions Committee—which consists of all members of the Security Council—to review information regarding individuals and entities and designate them for sanctions. A U.N. Panel of Experts will be formed, which will help the committee gather and review information about those who may meet the sanctions designation criteria. Based on the findings of the Panel of Experts and our own findings, we will propose relevant individuals for consideration by the Sanctions Committee.

The resolution's credible threat of sanctions increases pressure on the parties to resolve the outstanding issues and begin a process that establishes the Transitional Government of National Unity. This incremental approach hones the efficacy of measures imposed and ensures continued buy-in and support from IGAD regional leaders.

Under this resolution, the Council has also committed to periodically review the situation in South Sudan and, as deemed necessary, consider additional measures, including an arms embargo. The U.S. Government believes that actions based on this resolution should be calibrated to maximize the Council's leverage to facilitate an end to the horrific violence and promote the beginning of a sustainable settlement. We believe that an arms embargo could pressure both parties to negotiate earnestly.

Question. How would you assess the capacity of U.N. peacekeepers in South Sudan to protect civilians? Do UNMISS forces currently have the capacity to go out on patrols and engage armed actors, if civilians are under imminent threat?

Answer. UNMISS is mandated to protect civilians with support from its 11,669-person strong military force. This U.N. mission has four priorities: protection of civilians, monitoring and investigating human rights, creating the conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and supporting the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities agreement.

UNMISS has created seven protection of civilian sites for internally displaced persons and is protecting nearly 113,000 IDPs in these sites. The mission works very closely with the humanitarian community that provides assistance to the IDPs in these sites. Recent troop deployments from Kenya, China, and Ghana will enable UNMISS to conduct its protection tasks more effectively, including patrols and proactive community engagement. Inadequate infrastructure, difficult weather conditions, and access challenges posed by the armed conflict hinder UNMISS' ability to fully execute its mandate.

Question. What additional leverage would an "IGAD Plus" bring to bear?

Answer. "IGAD Plus," as proposed by IGAD Chairman, Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalgn, envisions additional leverage on the warring parties though enhanced international participation and cooperation, bolstering the negotiation efforts of the current IGAD leadership. This includes participation by the African Union, which has selected five African heads of state for this purpose, the Troika (United States, United Kingdom, and Norway), the U.N., the EU, and China.

IGAD leadership has worked tirelessly to broker a comprehensive peace agreement. While the two sides have moved closer to a deal in recent months, neither has agreed to peace. A reformed and reinvigorated "IGAD Plus" process would unite a number of stakeholders and members of the international community behind a common peace plan and give international partners a larger role in shaping process and substance. Ultimately, however, the decision to end this needless conflict and to begin the process of reform and rebuilding of South Sudan lies with the warring parties. The United States will continue to look for further opportunities to enhance the mediation process and will lead international efforts to bring additional pressure upon the parties to shift their concern toward the people of South Sudan, instead of their narrow political interests.

RESPONSES OF CASSANDRA Q. BUTTS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE BUTT'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. At every stage of my adult life I am proud to have worked to advance the cause of human rights at home and abroad. As a college student, I was one of the organizers of an advocacy campaign to end the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's investments in corporations that did business in apartheid South Africa. Our campaign was successful, and the effort foreshadowed a path to the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa and the direction of my professional life.

My first job following law school was a fellowship with the Georgetown Women's Law and Public Policy Program, where I worked as a lawyer to advance access to quality health care for the poorest communities at the National Health Law Pro-

gram. My focus included addressing the particular challenges facing impoverished women of color, including the incarcerated. Our work advanced efforts to expand treatment for women of color with HIV/AIDS and to eliminate the practice of shackling incarcerated women while giving birth.

As a lawyer on Capitol Hill, I worked on civil rights issues and issues related to migration, asylum, and refugees. In the latter category, I traveled the world to view conditions for migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees in conflict and post-conflict zones working with the Department of State, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and a range of international NGOs to find durable solutions for some of the most vulnerable populations in the world. Through that work, we were able to provide critical oversight and increase the number of individuals accepted into the U.S. refugee resettlement program.

My work at Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) over the past 4 years has focused on advancing the values of democracy and human rights. As the chairperson of MCC's Investment Management Committee, I have overseen and approved investments of over $8 billion with partner countries that must prove a measured commitment to policy performance in the area of democratic governance and human rights. In my role, I have traveled to partner countries to the importance democratic governance and human rights to the work of poverty reduction through economic growth. In addition, my work at MCC has focused on advancing the agency's work on gender equality, ensuring that women and men are equal beneficiaries of our program is an international model for how to best integrate gender equality in development assistance.

Finally, as a lawyer at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the Nation's premier civil rights legal advocacy organization, I litigated civil rights cases on issues of voting rights and education. In addition, I advocated on Capitol Hill and within the executive branch for the expansion of a range of basic human rights for women and minority communities.

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 has a strong tradition of protecting human rights. Bahamians enjoy freedoms of speech and religion, and Bahamian media is able to present the various sides of issues and frequently takes editorial positions critical of the government.

The most pressing human rights concerns in the Bahamas center around the country's correctional and immigration detention facilities. Both are outdated, overcrowded, and do not meet the growing needs of the country. Local human rights organizations report of migration raids that ignore the rights of those they detain. The United States has provided training and technical assistance over the last 2 years under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), which has improved conditions at the Bahamas Department of Correction's (BDOC) and enhanced BDOC's capacity to operate a sanitary, safe, and secure correctional facility in conformity with international standards.

If confirmed, I will urge the government to take the steps necessary to improve conditions of detention and detention practices, both in terms of addressing immediate problems and in looking more systematically at modernizing and improving conditions over the medium to long term. I will also continue to apply U.S. assistance in these efforts where appropriate with the goal of bringing Bahamian facilities and procedures into full conformity with international human rights standards, practices, and procedures.

Statelessness remains an issue, particularly in the case of second generation Haitian children born in the Bahamas who have access to neither Haitian nor Bahamian citizenship at birth. I commend the Bahamian Government for proposing a constitutional amendment allowing for Bahamian citizen women married to non-Bahamian husbands to pass on their Bahamian nationality to their children. Statelessness is also a concern for migrant children born in the Bahamas who, according to the constitution, have the right to apply for Bahamian citizenship at age 18. The process to acquire citizenship is cumbersome and complex, and if confirmed, I will urge the government to both simplify the process and pass the constitutional amendment on gender equality before the end of 2015.

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 and democracy in general?

Answer. Although considered a "high income" country by the World Bank, the Bahamas faces significant resource constraints which make building new detention centers or expanding existing facilities challenging. In addition to resource problems, the country also faces significant challenges in its judicial system. Despite some recent improvements, criminal cases can be prolonged, and a lengthy appeals process often adds additional time after a trial before a case is finalized.

Societal and structural issues present the largest challenges to advancing human rights and democracy in general. The Bahamian Constitution protects against discrimination due to race, but societal prejudices exist, especially with regard to the Haitian immigrant community. The Bahamian Constitution and law currently do not prohibit discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity, and certain gender inequalities exist with regard to citizenship. The Christie administration has introduced constitutional amendments that would largely correct these deficiencies, but the process has stalled. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for improvements to the justice sector and promote nondiscrimination and nonviolence toward vulnerable groups.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in the Bahamas?

Answer. If confirmed, I will maintain a regular dialogue on human rights with all stakeholders, including human rights and other NGOs in the United States and local human rights NGOs in the Bahamas. In addition, if confirmed, I will engage in a frank dialogue with Bahamian officials on human rights issues, which will include bringing specific concerns to the attention of the government when it is appropriate to do so.

Question. If confirmed, please describe steps that you will take to enhance effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly known as the Leahy amendment, within the Embassy in the Bahamas as well as steps you would take to accomplish the goal of the law, namely, helping the Government of the Bahamas end impunity for human rights violations by security forces.

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue Embassy Nassau's current practice of ensuring that all Bahamian candidates for U.S. assistance are fully vetted in conformity with State Department and Defense Department procedures before any assistance is provided. I will ensure that the Embassy is diligent in denying assistance to Bahamian security force units when we have credible information that such units have committed gross violations of human rights. I will also press the Bahamian Government to establish an appropriate and transparent process to investigate allegations that government officials have engaged in human rights violations and to hold accountable those found to have done so.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE BUTTS'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR FLAKE

Question. What do you see as the most significant challenges in relations with the Bahamas? What would be your priorities if confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. The United States and the Bahamas enjoy a long-standing cooperative relationship and security partnership. As one of our closest neighbors, our shared interests include improving citizen security and promoting shared prosperity through trade.

If confirmed, I hope to continue working with the government of the Bahamas on efforts to strengthen citizen security, promote social and economic development, including advancing U.S. trade and investment interests, and reduce crime, including illicit trafficking and other transnational crime. If confirmed, I will encourage the Bahamas to take a more systemic approach to address the worsening crime situation. I hope to support efforts by the Bahamas to improve the education system and look at opportunities for workforce development. Other key priorities will be economic development and growth, including the attendant energy and environmental issues. Finally, I will ensure that the entire U.S. mission in the Bahamas—Bahamians and Americans—understands that their contributions are valued and that they are appreciated.

Question. The Bahamian economy was hard hit by the global financial crisis and has only registered meager economic growth rates over the past 3 years. What is the outlook for the Bahamian economy over the next few years? Is there any pros-

pect that the Bahamas will diversify its economy beyond tourism and financial services?

Answer. The Bahamas economy is projected to see real growth rise steadily to 2.8 percent by 2016 based on IMF forecasts. The government anticipates additional revenue from the new value-added tax that became effective on January 1, 2015, and the licensing and regulation of local gaming operations later in 2015. The Bahamas also expects economic boost from continued economic improvement in the United States, which is the Bahamas' largest trading partner and source of tourism dollars.

The Bahamian Government faces significant challenges in diversifying its economy beyond tourism and financial services in the near future. New investments in the light manufacturing and technology sectors are hindered by high energy prices and limited availability of skilled labor. The government continues to promote investment in nontraditional sectors outside of tourism and financial services, and is also making efforts to promote the agriculture sector in an effort to mitigate the high cost of importing food. The government also has announced plans to offer new products within the financial services sector, such as the development of an international arbitration center and an offshore clearing and settlement center for international currencies, in the hopes of attracting greater trade and investment to the country.

Question. U.S.-Bahamian cooperation on drug interdiction has been strong. Are there any further actions that the Bahamian Government can undertake to improve its antidrug efforts?

Answer. The United States and the Bahamas enjoy a long-standing history of counternarcotics cooperation, most notably under the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) led Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos (OPBAT). Under OPBAT, DEA Special Agents coordinate, in an integrated manner, with the Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF) and the Royal Bahamas Defense Force (RBDF) to gather intelligence, conduct investigations, and execute interdictions. OPBAT seizure operations increased substantially between FY 2012 and FY 2014. We believe this is due, in part, to increased U.S. support, cooperation, and equipment.

The Bahamian Government could impose stricter penalties on individuals convicted of serious drug offenses. In addition, the Bahamas continues to be challenged by delays in trials and in responding to U.S. extradition requests. Improved procedures to expedite extraditions would bring drug crime offenders more quickly to trial and serve as a more credible deterrent for traffickers. The Bahamas National Anti-Drug Strategy places significant emphasis on drug abuse, awareness, demand reduction, and treatment policies, but programs in these fields would benefit from additional resources. In addition, health care professionals report that women and residents of the Family Islands (i.e., islands other than New Providence) are underrepresented in substance abuse prevention and treatment programs.

RESPONSES OF KATHERINE S. DHANANI, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DHANANI'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. What considerations, apart from the holding of elections, were taken into account when recognizing Somalia as a sovereign state in 2012? What additional considerations have been identified as crucial in moving to the nomination of an ambassador?

Answer. U.S. recognition of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) on January 17, 2013, was the first step toward normalizing the U.S.-Somalia bilateral relationship. The decision was in large part due to the relatively credible political transition after more than a decade of transitional governments. The provisional constitution and Parliament forged from the 2012 transition were the first steps toward rebuilding a sovereign Somali state. Recognizing the FGS signaled U.S. commitment to sustained diplomatic engagement with Somalia.

The Department's decision to seek a Presidential Appointment of an ambassador was in recognition of the growing interagency engagement toward Somalia. Between FY 2006 and FY 2014, State and USAID provided nearly $3.1 billion in development, security, education, and humanitarian assistance. The level of U.S. assistance underscored the need to coordinate our Somalia engagement under an ambassador, to ensure that our relationship with the FGS best reflects our broad range of national security and foreign policy interests.

Question. What specific parameters, including political reconciliation and security concerns, will be required by the United States to warrant a move of the Office of Somali Affairs/U.S. Embassy for Somalia in Nairobi, from its current location to Somalia? What is the best estimate or U.S. expectation of a move of our mission to Somalia? Would it be to Mogadishu in every instance or is there an intermediate location elsewhere?

Answer. The Department of State does not have permanent diplomatic presence in Somalia due to continued instability and the high-threat environment in Mogadishu. After the December 25, 2014, al-Shabaab attack on the Mogadishu International Airport (MIA) compound, the Department is assessing what security upgrades need to be made to bolster MIA perimeter security and the internal compound utilized by U.S. diplomats. As security conditions permit, we look forward to broadening and deepening our engagement, and to reestablishing a permanent diplomatic presence in Mogadishu. As I mentioned in my testimony, there is no fixed timeline for the establishment of a permanent diplomatic presence in Mogadishu, but if confirmed, I will carefully monitor the security environment in Somalia and make the recommendation for a more enduring U.S. presence in Mogadishu, when the environment permits.

Question. How do the positions of U.S. Special Representative for Somalia and Ambassador to Somalia differ, if at all? Will the role of a U.S. Special Representative be necessary upon the confirmation of an ambassador, and if so, what role will the SE play?

Answer. The U.S. Special Representative for Somalia (SRS) is a secretarial appointee who manages the Department's relationship with the Federal Government of Somalia. The SRS, resident in Nairobi, also engages regional governments on Somalia—Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda—given their national security interests in Somalia as troop contributing countries. The SRS does not have authority to direct and coordinate the actions of U.S. executive branch agencies in Somalia. As chief of mission, unless otherwise directed by the President, the U.S. Ambassador to Somalia will have full responsibility and authority for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all U.S. Government executive branch activities, operations, and employees in Somalia. The role of SRS will no longer be needed as the U.S. Ambassador to Somalia will maintain the regional coordination role given the level of international engagement in Somalia.

Question. Yemen may prove a cautionary tale. In view of the unsuccessful efforts of significant U.S. military assistance and operational emphasis in Yemen to withstand political and militant unrest and in view of the ensuing instability, how will U.S. policy integration and coherence across USG agencies address current parallel efforts similar to those that existed in Yemen? What specific mechanism exists to harmonize U.S. policy governmentwide in moving Somalia toward sustainable governance and greater stability than it has had in decades? How will the U.S. role in partner efforts to help reestablish a viable government for Somalia change with an ambassador?

Answer. U.S. policy in Somalia directly links security sector reform to political progress. Our Somalia strategy, previously shared with Congress, includes ways in which political development and security progress must move in tandem. U.S. policy is harmonized governmentwide through the White House directed interagency policy coordination process, and with our international partners via the New Deal Somali Compact.

The United States and international partners support a regional force, the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), that enjoys broad international and regional support. AMISOM is composed of African troop contributors that have a strategic interest in stabilizing Somalia and as a result have initiated a number of military operations designed to pressure and erode al-Shabaab. AMISOM also has provided critical time and political space so the Somali political process can gain strength and the Federal Government of Somalia can begin to build a representative, apolitical, human rights respecting, professionally trained force under civilian oversight.

In Yemen, there was no international or regional force like AMISOM that provided Yemen's leaders the time and space to find a peaceful solution to Yemen's political crisis, while at the same time maintaining security and putting pressure on al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

Question. What is the status of Somaliland and Puntland as it relates to U.S. policy? How do you expect the status to change, if at all, in the near to mid-term? What are your priorities for working with Somaliland and how will this translate into engaging Somalia?

Answer. The United States recognizes a single Somalia, which includes Somaliland and Puntland. We are encouraged by the progress made in the integration of Puntland into the federal state formation process. While progress has stalled in regards to the formal, Turkey-sponsored talks between Somaliland authorities and the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), we continue to encourage dialogue between both parties.

The United States regularly engages with all levels of the Somali Government, including the FGS, the newly established interim regional administrations, and the authorities in Puntland and Somaliland. If confirmed, my priorities at the regional level will be to promote security, good governance, and economic development, as well as to advance the state formation process.

Question. The implementation of Vision 2016 is behind schedule. How will you apply pressure on the Somalia Government to complete the plan?

Answer. While implementation of Vision 2016 is behind schedule, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) has made significant and important progress, especially in regards to advancing the state formation process. That said, time is short and the FGS has itself acknowledged that Vision 2016 is behind schedule.

If confirmed, I will engage extensively with the President, Prime Minister, parliamentarians, and the regional governments, in close collaboration with our international partners, to push for a renewed focus on accelerating implementation of the Vision 2016 reform agenda. It is of paramount importance that the FGS move swiftly this year to lay the foundations for credible, democratic, and inclusive national elections in 2016, as well as for a constitutional referendum as envisioned by Vision 2016. The United States will maintain close engagement with the international community to ensure we have a coordinated approach to support the Somalis as they work towards 2016.

Question. How will East Africa region's instability and the drawdown of Embassy personnel in Nairobi, Kenya, affect the movement and accessibility of the U.S. Ambassador to Somalia to travel and conduct business with the Government of Somalia, its citizenry and U.S. programming in Somalia while operating from Nairobi?

Answer. The Somalia Unit, comprised of 21 personnel, was deemed to be of such strategic importance it was not reduced in size during the July 2014 drawdown of Embassy personnel in Nairobi, Kenya. The drawdown did not reduce staffing or programming operations of the Somalia Unit. If I am confirmed, the Department will transition the Somalia Unit to U.S. Mission Somalia and is in the process of determining the accompanying staffing footprint. As security conditions permit, U.S. officials will maintain regular travel into Somalia to conduct official business and promote our foreign policy objectives.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DHANANI'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have advanced U.S. interests in the promotion of human rights. In my current assignment in the Africa Bureau, I lead the office responsible for coordinating the Bureau's efforts to promote human rights throughout the continent. Our activities include, for example, ensuring that recipients of security assistance have clean human rights records; promoting atrocity prevention; promoting fair, credible, and peaceful elections; and defending the human rights of LGBT persons. We coordinate the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Trafficking in Persons Reports, and International Religious Freedom Reports for African countries. As consul general in Hyderabad, India, my team's activities included partnering with the private sector to sponsor training for disabled adults, promoting local nongovernmental organizations' projects to economically empower women in lower income Muslim communities, supporting efforts to combat HIV/AIDS stigma, and persuading local police to rescind an order banning a rainbow film festival. In Gabon our human-rights-related activities included a public program highlighting abuses committed as part of rituals to enhance political success and in Zambia we were particularly active in responding to the humanitarian needs of refugees, including projects aimed at protecting teenage refugee girls from sexual abuse and exploitation.

My actions to promote human rights were particularly important during my service as deputy chief of mission in Zimbabwe. The U.S. Embassy's programs directly assisted thousands of Zimbabweans whose human rights were abused by the regime, and our efforts to expose abuse changed the course of events surrounding the 2008 election. When U.S. Government-supported election monitoring made stealing the election impossible during a first round of voting, the Government of Zimbabwe launched a campaign of violence and intimidation to ensure that the ruling party would prevail during a runoff. The U.S. mission in Zimbabwe already supported a network of partners to provide medical care, psychological counseling, and legal counsel to victims of torture and other human rights abuses. When the scale and severity of abuse expanded dramatically, we led an international effort to protect victims and expose abusers. In addition to supporting shelters and services for internally displaced persons (IDPs), we interviewed scores of individuals who had been beaten and burned out of their homes to identify individuals at risk of further political persecution for targeted support. The Embassy led the diplomatic community in visits to torture camps, defying police roadblocks. On July 3, 2008, hundreds of IDPs who had been forced to leave a shelter arrived at the U.S. Embassy seeking refuge. We scrambled to identify alternative shelters for the women and children, and provided blankets and hot meals for over 150 men that winter night. The USAID Director and I spent July 4 identifying and setting up a shelter on a farm outside the city, where we identified partners able to meet the IDPs' basic needs in the ensuing weeks. Independent media and watchdog groups who enjoyed our support provided us with documentation of the regime's abuses which we shared throughout the region, convincing Zimbabwe's neighbors that this time they could not turn a blind eye to the Mugabe regime's crimes. As a result, the ruling party recognized that it would be unable to steal the runoff, and invited the opposition into a coalition.

I was proud to lead the team at U.S. Embassy Harare who demonstrated the tremendous compassion and empathy of the American people under the most trying circumstances, making a difference in both the lives of individual Zimbabweans and the course of public events.

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

Answer. If I am confirmed, working with the African Union, Government of Somalia, and Somali civil society to improve protection of civilians will be central to my engagement. Violence against women and girls, including rape, remains a pervasive problem. I will work with Somali and international counterparts including AMISOM to improve protection efforts, including ensuring that women can access the services they need and perpetrators are held accountable. I am also deeply concerned about the situation of media freedom in Somalia. The country remains one of the most dangerous places to be a journalist. I will regularly discuss protection concerns with Somali journalists themselves, speak out against abuses against journalists, and strongly encourage the Somali Government to fully respect freedom of expression. In addition, I will work with Somalia and the United Nations to further implementation of Somalia's action plan to end the use and recruitment of child soldiers and standardize operating procedures for the reception and handover of children separated from armed 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 Somalia in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. Key challenges to addressing human rights concerns in the country include continued insecurity in al-Shabaab-controlled portions of the country. This limits not only U.S. Government access to much of the country, but also access by international and local partners who could provide information that is vital to addressing human rights concerns. Human rights organizations have identified the lack of data on the situation in much of the country as problematic.

Improving civilian protection while conflict continues is extremely challenging, but it will be central to my efforts. Attacks, including direct attacks on civilians, continue to result in deaths, injuries, and displacement. Somali women and girls experience systematic marginalization, which makes it difficult to address gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. Women are reluctant to report abuse due to possible reprisals, and police are reluctant to investigate. The Government has arrested alleged rape victims. Authorities rarely used formal procedures to address rape. Improving protection for journalists is challenging in part due to the continued inse-

curity and presence of al-Shabaab. Also challenging is that the Government of Somalia and regional authorities continue to arrest, detain, and prosecute journalists. In regards to child soldiers, the government has taken additional steps to implement its action plan with the U.N., though, overall, implementation of the plan has been limited. More also needs to be done to improve demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration efforts for children separated from armed groups.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in Somalia?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my most important goals as U.S. Ambassador to Somalia will be improving respect for human rights in the country, so that all Somalis have the opportunity to exercise their fundamental freedoms and live their lives without fear. My efforts will include those focused on improving civilian protection, strengthening efforts to address rape, building respect for media freedom, and ensuring that children are not used as soldiers. Human rights and other NGOs are critical to this work and I look forward to meeting with them, if I am confirmed.

Question. If confirmed, please describe steps that you will take to enhance effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly known as the Leahy amendment, within the Embassy as well as steps you would take to accomplish the goal of the law, namely, helping the Government of Somalia end impunity for human rights violations by security forces.

Answer. The Leahy laws are based on a basic principle: A government security apparatus' respect for human rights bolsters its legitimacy and trustworthiness in the eyes of the people it is supposed to protect, and enhances its ability to protect. Moreover, holding violators accountable fortifies the rule of law, which will be key in our efforts to improve governance in Somalia. If confirmed, the Embassy staff and I will convey this message in all our interactions with the FGS. In terms of implementation, the Embassy and the Department vet all individuals and units of the security services; if confirmed, I will ensure that our vetting continues to be comprehensive, thorough, and in full compliance with the Leahy laws, and that those who violate human rights are restricted from training. Furthermore, I will strongly urge the FGS to hold all violators accountable for their actions.

Question. In your written testimony, you mention the importance of building Somali institutional capacity. The U.S. Government has spent considerable time and resources in training the Somali national army as part of its Somalia strategy. The U.S strategy toward sub-Saharan Africa states that as part of security sector reform, the United States will build security forces that "are subordinate to and operating jointly with their constitutional civil authorities."

- a. What programs are currently underway to build up the civil authorities in Somalia? What is the status of current efforts to build the capacity of the Somali Ministry of Defense? What plans do we have to build capacity in the judiciary and civilian oversight organizations that can provide oversight of the Somali National Army?

Answer. The United States has supported the development of the Ministry of Defense (MOD) by refurbishing the MOD headquarters at Gashandiga in Mogadishu, as well as providing a contract advisor who works with the Defense Minister at the MOD on a daily basis. Other donors are also participating in the effort to build the capacity of the MOD, including the European Union. We intend to expand our support to the MOD in the coming years, to include additional training, advisory support, and material support. Our assistance will reflect the absorptive capacity of the MOD, and complement the efforts of other donors. We are designing this support in coordination with other donors to strengthen civilian oversight of the military sothat respect for human rights and inclusivity become well entrenched.

- b. What tools were used to assess the requirements of the Somali National Army and what is the plan for monitoring and evaluating our current efforts in keeping with the policy guidelines contained in Presidential Policy Directive 23?

Answer. Defining the requirements of the Somali National Army (SNA) has been an iterative process involving inputs and analysis from across the U.S. interagency, the AU Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), other donors involved in the effort to develop the SNA, U.S.-funded advisors embedded with the SNA and MOD, and, most importantly, the Somalis themselves. Program monitors in Mogadishu, augmented by U.S.

Government personnel's visits, ensure programming is being provided in line with U.S. Government regulations and objectives.

♦ c. How is the United States coordinating with other donors in the security sector?

Answer. U.S. support to the Somali security services is coordinated by regular working group meetings within the framework of the New Deal's Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Group Two (PSG–2). PSG–2 and the subworking groups that fall under it, is the primary vehicle for coordinating international community support directly with the Federal Government of Somalia, the U.N., the AU, and other partners.

♦ d. What is the administration doing to build government capacity to administer or provide social services in Mogadishu and areas which have been liberated from al-Shabaab?

Answer. The United States is helping the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) define, coordinate, and manage the frameworks for national programs within the Office of the President, National Security Advisor, and the Ministry of Interior and Federalism. We support the Federal Government of Somalia to increase inclusiveness of political processes and facilitate the delivery of critical services in newly liberated areas, including training national and regional Parliaments to increase their oversight role through the Transition Initiatives for Stabilization from USAID. The United States helped the FGS understand the utility of initiating local-level reconciliation and civic dialogues in areas liberated from al-Shabaab, as a means to prevent new conflicts from erupting in the aftermath of liberation.

In FY 2014, the administration provided more than $58.3 million in development assistance to Somalia to promote peace and stability, foster good governance, spur economic growth and job creation, improve transparency and accountability, support institutional development, and increase the responsiveness of government institutions at the federal, regional, and local levels. The United States is supporting Somalia's Ministry of Education to help develop an Education Sector Strategic Plan. Development of this national plan will build government capacity to deliver improvements in educational quality and services across the country.

Question. Regarding the Somali Federal Government's Vision 2016 agenda, you mentioned that many deadlines have already been missed and that the international community continues to encourage the federal government to adhere to the roadmap.

♦ a. What is the status of constitutional development in Somalia?

Answer. The Somali parliamentary constitutional review committee has begun to advise the recently established Independent Constitutional Review Implementation Commission (IRIC), on chapters one and four of the constitution which address the critical issues of the status of Mogadishu in the state formation process and the electoral law. The Speaker of Parliament informed us that he intends to expedite the review process during the next session of Parliament (technically scheduled to open the week of April 20).

♦ b. What is the status of discussions about federalism and the integration of semiautonomous regions such as Somaliland?

Answer. The state formation process to build a federal system in Somalia is currently underway. Interim administrations, precursors to formal federal states, are now in place in Jubbaland and the South West region, and a reconciliation process is currently underway in the central regions. The Federal Government of Somalia and Puntland signed an agreement in October 2014 to pave the way for Puntland's recognition as a federal member state. To accelerate the federalism process, Mogadishu and the regional leaders recently created the Somali Leadership Forum to discuss key issues, including regional security force integration, 2016 elections, and the state formation process. Somaliland maintains its unilaterally declared independence from Mogadishu, but has engaged in Turkish-sponsored talks on issues requiring cooperation, such as airspace management.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DHANANI'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR FLAKE

Question. What are the prospects for Somalia to hold elections as expected in 2016? Given the political infighting and insecurity, will it be possible to hold a nationwide constitutional referendum and elections next year?

Answer. The United States continues to support the Federal Government of Somalia's Vision 2016 agenda, which includes holding national elections in 2016. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) itself has acknowledged that Vision 2016 is behind schedule. We consistently urge the FGS to accelerate the pace of reform and to put in place the institutions, laws, and processes necessary to meet its Vision 2016 goals.

Question. Given that the current central government was largely appointed and selected to overcome internal rivalries, do you think these elections will be viewed as credible and legitimate in the eyes of the Somali people?

Answer. The United States supports Somalia's state formation process, currently underway, which will lay the foundation for a more representative government. We continue to urge the Somali Government to begin the process to review the interim constitution and present a final version for its citizens to approve in a national referendum by early 2016. USAID's democracy and governance program in Somalia strengthens regional and national parliaments to perform oversight and to develop legislation, particularly as regards the legal framework necessary for credible and legitimate referenda and electoral processes. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Government of Somalia urgently to take steps toward inclusive and democratic elections. As Somalia continues to develop inclusive political institutions, its leaders must support the ability of citizens to choose their own government through periodic free and fair elections.

Question. How would you characterize al-Shabaab's relationship with al-Qaeda, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and the Islamic State, respectively?

Answer. Al-Shabaab publicly announced its merger with al-Qaeda in a February 2012 statement in which they pledged loyalty to al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. Al-Shabaab is not related to ISIS, although there have been reports of ethnic Somalis, not affiliated with al-Shabaab, fighting alongside extremist groups in Syria and Iraq. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, like al-Shabaab, is an al-Qaeda affiliate.

Question. What is the anticipated timeline for establishing an embassy in Mogadishu? What are the challenges with the current system, in which U.S. diplomats and USAID personnel travel back and forth from Kenya?

Answer. We look forward to broadening and deepening our engagement and to reestablishing a permanent diplomatic presence in Mogadishu. Currently, chief of mission personnel travel to Mogadishu and other locations in Somalia as security conditions permit. Establishment of a permanent diplomatic presence in Mogadishu will represent the culmination of this recognition process, but there is no fixed timeline for achieving this objective.

Question. The State Department budget justification includes a request for $110 million to support African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership (APRRP). According to the CBJ, the program would "build rapid peacekeeping response capabilities in Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda."

- (a). How does this proposal compare to existing training programs, including African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) Program?

Answer. APRRP assistance will complement but not replace existing peace operations capacity-building programs, such as the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program (which is funded predominantly through GPOI), and the International Police Peacekeeping Operations Support (IPPOS) program. GPOI and IPPOS emphasize broader, global capacity-building efforts focused on addressing a wider range of international peace operations shortfalls and strengthening the effectiveness of U.N. and regional missions. APPRP partners have and may continue to receive training through these other programs as well.

- (b). How would you see the program impacting troop contributing countries effectiveness in ongoing operations?

Answer. APRRP will focus on developing the capabilities of partner nations to deploy forces rapidly in support of an AU or U.N.-mandated operation. APRRP will inject targeted resources to address specific gaps in peacekeeping rapid response capabilities in the selected partner countries. With this specific goal in mind, APRRP works with a set of proven partners to emphasize training and provision and maintenance of equipment to enable rapid deployment and sustainment. While facilitating rapid deployment is the primary focus of the program, we anticipate that the improved specialty capabilities and institutional capacity provided through APRRP have the potential to benefit ongoing operations as well.

♦ (c). As you know, reports implicated Ugandan and Burundian troops participating in AMISOM of raping civilians. Would APPRP include modules aimed at protecting civilians? Would, if not how, do you guard against reputational risk to the U.S. from being associated with their training?

Answer. We are greatly concerned about the reports of sexual exploitation and abuse by AMISOM forces. The United States immediately engaged with the African Union and the Governments of Uganda and Burundi to urge them to undertake a credible and transparent investigation into the alleged incidents immediately. Ugandan and Burundian forces deploying to AMISOM currently receive substantial training related to human rights and protection of civilians through the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program and counterterrorism training funded through section 2282. We are continuously looking at ways to improve this training, including in response to the reports of sexual exploitation and abuse. That training will need to focus not only on increased awareness of sexual exploitation and abuse, but also on improving the capacity of the contingents to investigate allegations and hold perpetrators accountable.

We intend to keep APRRP focused on developing specialized capabilities and enabling units required to facilitate rapid deployment (including logistics, engineering, equipment maintenance, transport, intelligence, and medical capabilities), and, therefore, we do not expect protection of civilians to be a primary focus of the APRRP-funded training events. This is not because protection of civilians is unimportant, but rather because these topics are already being addressed through the existing predeployment training initiatives funded through the Global Peace Operations Initiative (like ACOTA) and section 2282. We intend APRRP to complement, not replace existing training initiatives.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2015

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

Mileydi Guilarte, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Alternate Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank

Jennifer Ann Haverkamp, of Indiana, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs

Marcia Denise Occomy, of the District of Columbia, to be United States Director of the African Development Bank for a term of five years

Sunil Sabharwal, of California, to be United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund for a term of two years

Brian James Egan, of Maryland, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:45 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John Barrasso, presiding.

Present: Senators Barrasso, Corker, Gardner, Udall, Cardin, Murphy, and Markey.

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

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

The committee is meeting today to examine the nomination of five individuals to serve our country's interests in international financial institutions in the State Department.

Again, congratulations on your nominations to these important positions. I want to welcome all of you and extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the committee, to all your families and friends who are here. And I hope that, when you get a chance to testify, each of you will introduce others that are here supporting you from your family.

Should you serve our Nation in these important positions, it is critical that each of you provide strong stewardship of American

taxpayer resources, demonstrate professionalism and good judgment, and vigorously work to advance the priorities of the United States.

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

Joining us this afternoon are five nominees. I am pleased to introduce them to the committee.

Mileydi Guilarte, who is been nominated to be the United States Alternate Executive Director of the Inter-American Development Bank. And she is currently serving as the International Cooperation Specialist in the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean at the United States Agency of International Development. She previously worked at the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

Jennifer Haverkamp is the nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. Ms. Haverkamp is currently an independent consultant and lecturer at George Washington University Law School. She has previously worked for the Environmental Defense Fund, serving as the Director of International Climate Program and the Managing Director for International Policy.

Marcia Occomy is the nominee to the be United States Director of the African Development Bank for a term of 5 years. She is currently a specialist leader at Deloitte Consulting and has been with Deloitte since 2009, where she has worked with the United States Agency for International Development on various assignments.

Sunil Sabharwal is the nominee to be the United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund for a term of 2 years. He is an independent investor and consultant in the international payment sector since 2006. During his career, he has worked at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and held senior positions at First Data Corporation, Western Union, and GE Capital.

And then Brian Egan has been nominated for the position of Legal Adviser at the Department of State. He is currently working as Legal Adviser to the National Security Council, Deputy Assistant to the President, and Deputy Counsel to the President. In addition to previously working with the national security staff at the White House, he has also served as an attorney adviser at the Office of Legal Adviser of the Department of State.

Now I want to turn to the Ranking Member, Senator Udall, to offer his opening remarks.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TOM UDALL,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO

Senator UDALL. Thank you very much, Chairman Barrasso, for holding this hearing. And I, too, want to welcome our nominees who are with us this afternoon. We have five well-qualified candidates with impressive resumes being considered today.

As most of you know, our subcommittee's jurisdiction covers a lot of ground, some would say from the ocean floor out to space. The Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, I think, would agree with that. Their work, ranging from

environmental issues, such as climate change, to emerging issues, such as space, is crucial to our foreign policy. Congress has a vital interest in international institutions to promote economic growth, to support the development of international law, to support strong environmental standards and improve security and lives. All serve to strengthen social and international development and further important objectives of U.S. foreign policy.

The nominations we are considering today provide an excellent opportunity for the United States to continue to work closely with the international community. Our participation in the international development organizations help shape the discussions in multilateral forums to reflect U.S. priorities and interests, and also ensure that organizations like the Inter-American Development Bank, the African Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund are well equipped to succeed in their missions. Those missions are essential to promote security, economic prosperity, and advocate for healthier lives through science and partnerships. That is a responsible course and brings greater stability, not only to specific regions around the world, but throughout the world.

So, I look forward to our discussions here today with this impressive list of nominees.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I would yield back.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Senator Cardin, anything you would like to add?

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just really want to welcome our nominees, thank you for your public service, your willingness to serve, and I also thank your families.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you both.

And all of the positions that the committee is discussing today are very important. I look forward to hearing the testimony.

Your full statements will be entered into the record in their entirety. And I ask that you try to summarize your testimony in about 5 minutes in order for members to have an opportunity to ask questions. Other members may be joining us at different times during the hearing. And again, please feel free to introduce your family members who are here today offering their support.

And, with that, Ms. Guilarte, may we please start with you?

STATEMENT OF MILEYDI GUILARTE, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTER–AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Ms. GUILARTE. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman Barrasso, Senator Udall, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am honored that President Obama nominated me to serve as the Alternate Executive Director at the Inter-American Development Bank. I am also grateful to Secretary Lew and Assistant Secretary Marisa Lago for supporting me.

I am also grateful to my family, friends, and colleagues that are present today for their love, encouragement, and unwavering support. I would like to acknowledge my mother, Zenaida Guilarte, who is with me today.

If confirmed, I will bring to the IDB a deep understanding of Latin America, solid experience with international development, and a strong belief in the value of public service, and the commitment to relentlessly promote U.S. interests in the region.

Representing the United States at the IDB, an institution created to support the economic and social development of Latin America, is a humbling yet vital undertaking. If confirmed, I would be the first Latina in nearly 30 years to hold this important position.

Since I appeared before this distinguished committee a year ago, I have continued to strengthen my experience and engagement in Latin America at the United States Agency for International Development, primarily working on our response to last summer's surge of unaccompanied minors from Central America. Addressing the interrelated economic, political, and security challenges facing the region, and their consequences, are critical to the national security interests of the United States. If confirmed, I hope to continue supporting this difficult and challenging task.

Let me take the opportunity to tell you a little bit about my background, which has helped shape how I came to pursue a career in international development.

Born in Cuba, I left Havana for the United States at an early age with my family in search of a better life with only a single blue suitcase in our hands. I spent my formative years in Miami, where I worked side by side with my parents in flea markets each weekend to help make ends meet. These experiences taught me the values of discipline and hard work. I was the first member of my family to graduate from college. And I feel deeply blessed to have prospered in America.

While in graduate school, I focused on developing a social academic foundation to understand economic, political, and social issue as they impact development and democracy. After graduation, my deep commitment to the promotion of democracy and human rights led me to work and live in various countries around the world.

Through these experiences, I deepened my leadership skills and learned how critical the interaction between financial institutions, donor, and civil society are in the development of the world's poorest nations. At the World Bank and at the United Nations, I worked on conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance, and strengthening the emerging democracies. Most recently, at the United States Agency for International Development, I have worked on our response to address the root causes of the influx of unaccompanied minors while at the same time contributed to the interagency process that produced the administration's proposed $1 billion request for Central America. These experiences allow me to appreciate the challenges of working within complex multilateral institutions and develop the skills to help promote effective initiatives in that environment.

Thinking about Latin America has been a constant throughout my life. The opportunity to represent our great country at the Inter-American Development Bank is a particular honor for me as an American born in Latin America. If confirmed, I will work diligently to advance U.S. objectives at the IDB by carefully

stewarding the resources of U.S. taxpayers and by promoting greater accountability, transparency, and effectiveness.

I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee and your staff. Thank you for your consideration. And I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Guilarte follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MILEYDI GUILARTE

Chairman Barrasso, Senator Udall, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored that President Obama nominated me to serve as the Alternate Executive Director at the Inter-American Development Bank. I am also grateful to Secretary Lew and Assistant Secretary Marisa Lago for supporting me.

I am also grateful to my family, friends, and colleagues [that are present today], for their love, encouragement, and unwavering support. I specially would like to thank my mother, Zenaida, for inspiring me to be better each day.

If confirmed, I will bring to the IDB a deep understanding of Latin America, solid experience with international development, a strong belief in the value of public service, and the commitment to relentlessly promote the U.S. interests in the region.

Representing the United States at the IDB, an institution created to support the economic and social development of Latin America, is a humbling yet vital undertaking. If confirmed, I would be the first Latina in nearly 30 years to hold this important position.

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Let me take the opportunity to tell you a little bit about my background, which has shaped how I came to pursue a career in international development. Born in Cuba, I left Havana for the United States at an early age with my family in search of a better life with only a single blue suitcase in our hands. I spent my formative years in Miami, where I worked side by side with my parents in flea markets each weekend to help make ends meet. These experiences taught me the values of discipline and hard work. I was the first member of my family to graduate from college, and I feel deeply blessed to have prospered in America.

While in graduate school, I focused on developing a solid academic foundation to understand economic, political and social issues as they impact development and democracy.

After graduation, my deep commitment to the promotion of democracy and human rights led me to work and live in various countries around the globe. Professionally, I have worked in countries as diverse as India, East Timor, the Philippines, and the Republic of the Maldives. Through these experiences, I deepened my leadership skills and learned how critical the interaction between financial institutions, donors and civil society are in the development of the world's poorest nations.

At the World Bank and at the United Nations, I worked on conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance, and strengthening emerging democracies. Most recently, at the United States Agency for International Development, I have worked on our response to address the root causes of the influx of unaccompanied minors, while at the same time contributed to the interagency process that produced the administration's proposed $1 billion request for Central America. These experiences allowed me to appreciate the challenges of working within complex multilateral institutions and develop the skills to help promote effective initiatives in that environment.

Thinking about Latin America has been a constant throughout my life. The opportunity to represent our great country at the Inter-American Development Bank is a particular honor for me as an American born in Latin America.

If confirmed, I will work diligently to advance U.S. objectives at the Inter-American Development Bank by carefully stewarding the resources of the U.S. taxpayer and by promoting greater accountability, transparency and effectiveness. I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee and your staff.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you so very much for your testimony.

Ms. GUILARTE. You are welcome.
Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.
Ms. Haverkamp.

STATEMENT OF JENNIFER ANN HAVERKAMP, NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR OCEANS AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS

Ms. HAVERKAMP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Udall and distinguished members of the committee. It is a great privilege for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.

With your permission, I have a longer statement for the record.

I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for placing their trust in me for this position. And I look forward to again working with Under Secretary Novelli, my former colleague from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. If confirmed, I very much look forward to working with the Congress, and with this committee in particular, to advance U.S. interests through our global environmental, scientific, and health diplomacy.

I am also deeply grateful to my family, my support and inspiration. With me here today are my husband, Jeff Kehne, my father- and mother-in-law, Bruce and Elizabeth Kehne, and my niece, Meagan Haverkamp. Our two children, Gregory and Adrianne, very much wish they could be here, but they are busy wrapping up their end-of-semester college activities far from Washington.

My parents, were they still alive, would have been enormously proud. My father, a college educator who served as a U.S. Navy lieutenant in World War II in the Pacific, and my mother, a teacher and homemaker who raised six children, believed deeply in the importance of education, hard work, and public service.

I am energized and eager to return to government and put my experience to work advancing American priorities and values. I would bring to the position a science background, having majored in biology in college and published ecological field research. I have dedicated most of my career to public service, and have worked for the last 22 years in the international realm. I served as the Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Environment and Natural Resources for most of my 10 years at USTR, and, before, held positions of responsibility at the Department of Justice, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Court of Appeals. More recently, I have worked and served on boards in the nonprofit sector, with a focus on finding practical solutions to confront climate change, conserve tropical forests, and advance clean energy.

I believe many aspects of my experience, especially at USTR, will have relevant parallels in the work of OES. These include strengthening the United States domestically through international engagement, finding ways to advance U.S. economic interests while protecting our environmental values, and promoting health and prosperity abroad, and leveling the playing field for U.S. companies through advancing environmental protections in other countries.

Turning to OES: Four decades ago, this Congress created the Bureau and gave it broad responsibilities for complex and consequen-

tial issues. In the years since, OES's signature issues of science, technology, and innovation, environment, oceans, and health have all played increasingly significant roles in strengthening the U.S. economy, advancing our foreign policy objectives, and buttressing our leadership positions around the world.

If confirmed by the Senate, my priorities would be interwoven and would encompass the themes of investments, innovation, and inspiration.

First, investments. I would continue and build upon the strong and effective investments Secretary Kerry is making in the oceans, the Arctic, climate change, wildlife conservation, and health. In each of these areas, achieving substantive and diplomatic gains depends upon making strong and effective investments in long-term policy development, interagency coordination, the best analysis, and partnerships with other governments, the private sector, and civil society.

Second, innovation. Advances in science and technology have sharpened the need to focus on science diplomacy. To remain the best innovators in the world, our scientists must have access to data, research results, and collaboration opportunities with their international counterparts. And science enables the United States to exert innovative leadership in averting catastrophes, whether from mercury contamination, an infectious disease like Ebola, or severe water shortages.

Third, inspiration. If confirmed, I would work to foster and capitalize on the tremendous talent and inspiration of the people in OES to build coalitions and yield important diplomatic wins.

In closing, I am eager to tackle the staggering pressures bearing down on the planet's people and natural resources—as Senator Udall said, from the ocean's depths to the ice-capped poles and to outer space, and to help shape foreign diplomacy in these areas for years to come.

If confirmed, I would work hard every day to successfully carry out the profound responsibility thereby conferred upon me.

Thank you for your consideration. And I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Haverkamp follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JENNIFER ANN HAVERKAMP

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Udall and distinguished members of the committee.

It is a great privilege for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES). I am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for placing their trust in me to help fashion solutions to the profound challenges facing our fragile world and the people it must continue to sustain. I am also grateful for the opportunity to again work with Under Secretary Catherine Novelli, whose dynamic leadership and excellent judgment I had the privilege to observe closely during our years together at USTR.

If confirmed, I very much look forward to working with the Congress, and this committee in particular, to advance the United States essential environmental, economic, and national security interests through our global environmental, scientific, and health diplomacy.

I am also deeply grateful to my family, who have supported and inspired me throughout my career in public service and international environmental and trade policy. With me here today are my husband, Jeff Kehne, my father- and mother-in-law, Bruce and Elizabeth Kehne, of Columbia (formerly Pikesville), Maryland, and my niece, Meagan Haverkamp. Our two children very much wish they could be

here but our son Gregory, a college junior, is studying mathematics abroad in Budapest and our daughter Adrianne is busy completing her freshman year of college.

My parents, were they still alive, would have been enormously proud to see this day. My father, a college educator who served as a U.S. Navy lieutenant in World War II's Pacific Theater, and my mother, a teacher and homemaker who raised six children, believed deeply in the importance of education, hard work, and public service. And I can thank our family's cross-country vacations, which Dad and Mom spent driving us to see our Nation's spectacular national parks and historic sites, for sparking my lifelong passion for nature conservation and outdoor recreation.

Professional background

I am energized and eager to return to government and put my experience to work advancing American priorities and values. My professional experiences have attracted me to this position and I might even argue this is a role I have been preparing for throughout my career.

I would bring to the position a science background, having majored in biology in college and published field research on the ecology of the North American tall-grass prairie. I have dedicated most of my career to public service, and have worked for the last 22 years in the international realm. For most of my 10 years at USTR I served as the Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Environment and Natural Resources and was a career member of the Senior Executive Service. Before USTR I also held positions of responsibility at the Department of Justice, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Court of Appeals. Though working at Foggy Bottom would be a new experience, over the years I have engaged actively with many of the Department's global environmental, fisheries, and economic issues and gotten to work with many of its outstanding officials.

I believe many aspects of my experience at USTR will have relevant parallels in the work of OES: strengthening the United States domestically through international engagement; finding ways to advance U.S. economic interests while protecting our environmental values; promoting health and prosperity abroad and leveling the playing field for U.S. companies by advancing environmental protections in other countries; and recognizing that often the best way to protect biodiversity is through solutions that accommodate the local population's economic needs—by making the forests and elephants and coral reefs worth more alive than dead.

More recently, I worked in the nonprofit sector to find practical solutions to confront climate change, conserve tropical forests, and advance clean energy. Addressing and preparing for climate change, one of the most profound challenges facing our generation, is a key priority of the President and Secretary Kerry, and cuts across many aspects of OES's work and that of the Department more broadly.

Overview of OES

Four decades ago, Congress passed legislation creating OES with broad responsibilities for complex and consequential issues, around the same time Congress addressed increasingly harmful environmental degradation by passing landmark environmental and pollution control legislation. Over the years since those laws were enacted, OES's signature issues of science, technology, and innovation; environment; oceans; and health have played increasingly significant roles in strengthening the U.S. economy, advancing our foreign policy objectives, and buttressing our leadership position in the world. More and more, the Department's regional bureaus and embassies consider OES's deep bench of substantive experts a valuable tool in their bilateral diplomacy, as the host countries seek out U.S. scientific and technological cooperation or assistance to address challenges such as wildlife trafficking or resolving conflicts over access to water resources. For example, OES experts supported efforts by countries along the Nile River Basin to establish a cooperative framework for managing its limited water resources that is expected to contribute to the region's economic development, peace, and security.

As part of the first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) in 2010, OES joined with the Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs and the Bureau of Energy Resources to become the "E" family, now under Under Secretary Novelli's leadership. This collaborative relationship was reinforced in the recently released second QDDR. I would welcome the opportunities this structure presents for close collaboration with these offices, a situation resonant with my career experiences in international trade, environmental protection, and clean energy development.

If confirmed by the Senate, my priorities would be interwoven and would encompass the following themes: investments, innovation, and inspiration. First, I would like to continue the strong and effective investments Secretary Kerry is making, especially in the areas of oceans, the Arctic, climate change, conservation, and

health. In each of these areas, investments in long-term policy development; interagency coordination; partnerships with other governments, the private sector, and civil society; and the best analysis will be key to achieving sustained substantive and diplomatic gains.

Second, innovation. Our knowledge of science to educate and inform our partners and the public will guide my thinking and bring an innovative, equitable and cost-effective approach to problemsolving. Advances in science and technology have brought our world much closer together and sharpened the need to focus on science diplomacy. To remain the best in the world, our scientists need access to data, research results, and collaboration opportunities with their international counterparts. And science underpins the actions we take and enables the United States to exert innovative leadership in averting catastrophes, whether from mercury contamination, an infectious disease or severe water shortages.

Third, inspiration. I would work to foster and capitalize on the tremendous talent and inspiration of the people in OES to build coalitions and partnerships. The Bureau's professionals have been at the forefront of international efforts to achieve important wins on the conservation, health, climate change, science, space and trade fronts, keeping a steady eye on the prize throughout often contentious, hard-fought negotiations (including some that I have witnessed firsthand).

Priority issues for OES

Across the wide range of issues that fall within OES's responsibility, I'd like to elaborate on my key priorities, if confirmed:

Oceans

The oceans, covering almost three-quarters of the planet, are vital resources for food, for transportation, for energy, for tourism. Secretary Kerry has rightly made global oceans policy a top priority of the Department, and if confirmed I look forward to throwing my energy into those efforts.

The key initiatives coming out of last June's successful Our Ocean international conference include goals to advance sustainable fisheries, reduce pollution entering the marine environment, stem the increase of ocean acidification, and protect ocean areas. One OES priority in 2015 is carrying out a plan developed by President Obama's Task Force on Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing and Seafood Fraud. Implementing this plan to combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud will help level the playing field for American fishermen and fishing businesses who play by the rules.

I would also prioritize OES's role in promoting sustainable global fisheries for the world's people who depend on oceans for their food and their livelihoods. Over 1 billion people worldwide rely on food from the ocean as their primary source of protein. OES is involved in a wide range of negotiations addressing the conservation and management of global fish stocks. The economic benefit to the United States generated by the fisheries subject to these negotiations, or managed by the regional fisheries management organizations within which many such negotiations occur, is estimated at between $12–$15 billion each year. These negotiations affect economic interests and stakeholders in virtually all parts of the United States, including the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, Gulf of Mexico, Alaska, Hawaii and the U.S. Pacific territories.

I am grateful the Senate gave its advice and consent to U.S. ratification of four important fisheries treaties last spring, and look forward, if confirmed, to working with Congress, members of the Oceans Caucus and this committee to implement them. Illustrative of these agreements' contribution to safeguarding U.S. economic interests is the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing. The Port State Measures Agreement combats these harmful fisheries practices through the implementation of robust, globally consistent requirements of parties, in their capacity as port States, to refuse port entry or access for landing fish, transshipment, packaging, processing, or servicing a ship if the ship is known to have engaged in IUU fishing. The U.S. fishing industry benefits when its competitors are compelled to also follow the rule of law, and I look forward to contributing to these efforts.

Arctic

As part of OES's responsibility for oceans and polar affairs, in recent years the Bureau has deepened its engagement with other Arctic countries, as the region's changing climate and receding ice cover have necessitated greater attention to emerging issues. As more Arctic waters become navigable and fishable, the need escalates for greater Arctic science cooperation, sustainable fisheries management, and protection of a fragile ecosystem newly opening to shipping, economic development and resource extraction. The Arctic is an excellent example of how U.S. envi-

ronmental and natural resource conservation interests are inextricably entwined with our economic and national security interests, and must be an integral part of our diplomatic efforts.

In April, the United States took over from Canada the 2-year rotating chairmanship of the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum made up of those eight nations with land territory above the Arctic Circle. The Council's priorities during the U.S. chairmanship will focus on stewardship of the Arctic Ocean, improving economic and living conditions for the people of the region, and addressing the effects of climate change in the Arctic. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Admiral Papp, the Department's Special Representative for the Arctic, as well as with other bureaus and government agencies, to make the best use of this important diplomatic opportunity.

Climate change

The Department's 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review focuses on four global policy priorities, including mitigating and adapting to climate change. As Secretary Kerry stated in his March 2015 speech before the Atlantic Council, climate change, like epidemics, poverty, extremism, and nuclear proliferation, is a challenge that respects no borders. He has also spoken frequently of our responsibility to future generations as stewards of the Earth.

If confirmed, I would look forward to supporting the Office of the Special Envoy on Climate Change (SECC), the Department's lead on international negotiations on climate change. Although OES does not lead this work, the Bureau lends its scientific and technical expertise to SECC. One example in particular is the work the Bureau is undertaking with Mexico and Canada to gain broad international support for an agreement to dramatically reduce hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in the atmosphere. The health and economic benefits that would be derived from eliminating 90 billion tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent through 2050 would be enormous. If confirmed, I would lend my professional expertise in the trade, economics, and environmental arena to ensure that the support the Bureau provides in confronting climate change is scientifically based, results oriented and of tremendous value to the American people.

Wildlife trafficking

Wildlife trafficking is a critical conservation concern and a threat to our country's national security. The illegal trade in wildlife has devastating impacts: it fuels corruption and undermines the rule of law, hinders economic development, contributes to the spread of disease, and is pushing some species to the brink of extinction. It is compromising the tourism-based economies of vulnerable African countries and, in some instances, is being used to finance organized crime, insurgencies, and possibly terrorism.

The toll on iconic species is horrific: the forest elephant populations in Central Africa, for instance, declined by approximately two-thirds between just 2002 and 2012. And while elephants and endangered rhinos slaughtered for their ivory first come to mind, many other species from most continents, including black coral, turtles and tortoises, iguanas, tropical birds, pangolins and primates, are all at risk. The United States is both a link in the transit chain and a final destination for some wildlife and wildlife products; our international efforts focused on reducing both supply and demand must and will be pursued in tandem with domestic actions.

The OES Bureau has an important role to play in carrying out the Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Combatting Wildlife Trafficking, issued in February. The Plan provides details for how the National Strategy's goals will be achieved and how progress will be measured. OES is leading coordination of two elements of the strategy: the international cooperation and partnerships and demand reduction components. OES is also contributing, through its support for regional wildlife enforcement networks (WENs) worldwide, to the global enforcement element.

The United States ramped-up efforts are beginning to pay off. We have, notably, reached agreements with China to cooperate in our efforts to combat wildlife trafficking. But there is still an enormous amount of work to be done, and if confirmed I would ensure that the Bureau's resources are deployed effectively in the fight against this global scourge.

Global health diplomacy

Before the daunting challenges of Ebola fade in memory, the United States Government needs to incorporate its lessons learned into our broader global health diplomacy, to better inform our Nation's responses to the inevitable future pandemics, wherever and whenever they may arise. The Ebola outbreak is but the latest evidence that the world has far to go to be ready to prevent, detect, and respond

to these global health security threats, and OES is well-positioned to help address this problem. The Global Health Security Agenda, a 44-country effort launched by the United States in 2014, has now gained over 100 new concrete commitments to prevent, detect, and rapidly respond to infectious disease threats before they become epidemics like Ebola. The Bureau supports this vital priority by working among these countries and with relevant international organizations to achieve the Agenda's targets. Among other efforts, the Bureau is also working to expand the number of countries able to meet their obligations to the World Health Organization to develop certain core capacities to detect, assess, notify, and report public health emergencies of international concern.

OES plays a critical, though often behind the scenes, role in global health diplomacy. The Bureau works closely with the Department's regional and functional bureaus, special representatives and other U.S. entities (CDC, HHS, DOD, USAID, et al.) with important roles in global health policy. The strong relationships that U.S. expert agencies have developed with their international counterparts are vital to advancing global health. But as we learned from Ebola, in a crisis, to mobilize the global resources needed, and to coordinate the efforts of multiple entities, it takes the high level, cross-cutting diplomacy that the State Department does so well. If confirmed, I would apply myself to finding ways to strengthen the international and interagency coordination on shared global health priorities, and to advancing global pandemic readiness.

Science and technology—promoting innovation and entrepreneurship

As I mentioned earlier, I consider the deployment of U.S. scientific and technological expertise, and our leadership in innovation, to be an important engine of diplomacy and global development. Equally important is to support the Secretary's efforts to increase the role of science across the work of the State Department.

Innovation and entrepreneurship have been fundamental drivers of U.S. economic growth since our country's founding, and promoting innovation abroad is an especially promising area of U.S. diplomacy. In this vein, OES has developed a Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST) initiative, which trains young entrepreneurs. GIST, itself an excellent example of bringing an innovative approach to diplomacy, has to date led to businesses that generated over $80 million in revenue. The program has worked in 86 emerging economies with over 2.6 million innovators and entrepreneurs around the world, providing training to over 4,500 startups. If confirmed, I would work to grow this program, which gives hope to young entrepreneurs and creates jobs in countries where the lack of economic opportunity can sow unrest and threaten our national security.

Closing

I am excited about the prospect of leading a bureau that brings to bear the best analysis to help pioneer scientific and technological breakthroughs. I am excited to tackle the staggering pressures bearing down on natural resources, from the oceans' depths to the ice-capped poles, to the savannas and to outer space, and to help shape foreign diplomacy in these areas for years to come.

If confirmed, I would work hard every day to deserve the extraordinary honor and carry out the profound responsibility thereby conferred upon me.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you. Congratulations, again.

I will next move to Ms. Occomy.

STATEMENT OF MARCIA DENISE OCCOMY, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. DIRECTOR OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Ms. OCCOMY. Thank you, Chairman and distinguished members of the committee. I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am honored that President Obama has nominated me to serve as the U.S. Executive Director for the African Development Bank.

I grew up in Chicago in a family of excellent role models who taught me the importance of hard work, discipline, and focus to be successful in life. My grandmother was one of the first African-American women to attend Radcliffe College in the early 1900s, and later became a prominent writer during the Harlem Renaissance. My father entered the University of Chicago at the age of

15, excelling in math and later becoming a computer executive in the retail industry in Chicago. My mother taught public schools for over 30 years, dedicating her life to public service. They and many others have influenced my decision, in part, to pursue an international development career later in my life.

If confirmed as the U.S. Executive Director to the African Development Bank, my vision is to leverage my international development experience to support U.S. interests in seeing the African Development Bank carry out its mission to promote economic development and progress across Africa.

Boosting growth is important for the African Continent but also for the United States by opening new markets and providing new customers for American goods and services. I have years of experience as a fiscal reform adviser on USAID-financed projects in developing in post-conflict countries. I have advised Ministries of Finance as they underwent public financial management reforms to strengthen their revenues and to build financial systems and capacity to put the country on the path towards economic growth. I have worked in countries in Central Asia, the Middle East, Central Europe, and in Africa, Egypt, Senegal, and, most recently, in the newest independent nation, South Sudan. I have experienced firsthand when countries struggle to balance implementation of sound fiscal policies while seeking to maintain political stability and security. I was in South Sudan and directly involved in assisting the country in post-conflict recovery efforts. Prior to my fiscal reform project implementation experience, I worked as a policy analyst at OMB during the 1990s.

I also have experience leveraging public-private partnerships for important local economic development projects. As a University of Chicago graduate student on a Patricia Harris Fellowship, I worked with the Habitat Company, a leading real-estate development firm which partnered with the Chicago Housing Authority to build scattered-site housing for public-housing residents to better integrate them into the broader community. This project was a model for how the public and private sector can partner to address a social issue effectively. I recognize that leveraging private-sector investment solutions and technologies will be a critical aspect of the future development of Africa, as well. I look forward to supporting the African Development Bank to leverage the financing instruments, to encourage private investment in Africa, including through public-private partnerships.

During his July 2013 visit to Africa, President Obama launched the Power Africa Initiative, a $7 billion, 5-year initiative to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa, in partnership with African countries and the private sector.

When President Obama launched the Power Africa Initiative in Tanzania, African Development Bank president Donald Kaberuka joined him as a symbol of how the United States and Africa are working together to promote inclusive growth in the region.

Attracting private investors to Africa will require significant investment in infrastructure and a climate that is conducive to investment. Creating the right investment climate will depend on Africa's commitment and ability to improve governance, transparency, regional integration, and to build a skilled workforce. The

African Development Bank has played a leading role in assisting African countries to address those issues, but more work remains to be done.

If confirmed, I commit to being a good steward of U.S. financial contributions to the bank and to ensure that the bank furthers U.S. economic and security interests.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to answering your questions today.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Occomy follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY MARCIA DENISE OCCOMY

Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Udall, and distinguished members of the committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored that President Obama has nominated me to serve as the U.S. Executive Director for the African Development Bank.

I grew up in Chicago in a family of excellent role models who taught me the importance of hard work, discipline, and focus to be successful in life. My grandmother was one of the first African American women to attend Radcliffe College in the early 1900s and later became a prominent writer during the Harlem Renaissance. My father entered the University of Chicago at the age of 15 excelling in math and later becoming a computer executive in the retail industry in Chicago. My mother taught public schools for over 30 years dedicating her life to public service. They and many others have influenced my decision in part to pursue an international development career later in my life.

If confirmed as USED, my vision is to leverage my international development experience to support U.S. interests in seeing the African Development Bank carry out its mission to promote economic development and progress across Africa. Boosting growth is important for the African Continent, but also for the United States, by opening new markets and providing new customers for American goods and services. I have years of experience as a fiscal reform advisor on USAID-financed projects in developing and post conflict countries. I have advised Ministries of Finance as they underwent public financial management reforms to strengthen their revenues and to build financial systems and capacity to put the country on a path toward economic growth, while building political capacity. I have worked in such countries as Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and in Africa—Egypt, Senegal and most recently in the newest independent nation South Sudan. I have experienced firsthand when countries struggle to balance implementation of sound fiscal policies, while seeking to maintain political stability and security. I was in South Sudan and directly involved in assisting the country in post conflict recovery efforts. Prior to my fiscal reform project implementation experience, I worked as a policy analyst at the OMB during the 1990s.

I also have experience leveraging public-private partnerships for important local economic development projects. As a University of Chicago graduate student on a Patricia Harris Fellowship, I worked with Habitat Company, a leading real estate development firm which partnered with the Chicago Housing Authority to build scattered site housing for public housing residents to better integrate them into the broader community. This project was a model for how the public and private sector can partner to address a social issue effectively. I recognize that leveraging private sector investment, solutions and technologies will be a critical aspect of the future development of Africa as well. I look forward to supporting the African Development Bank to leverage its financing instruments to encourage private investment in Africa including through public-private partnerships.

During his July 2013 visit to Africa, President Obama launched the Power Africa Initiative, a $7 billion, 5-year initiative to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa in partnership with African countries and the private sector. In announcing this key initiative the President noted, "America's been involved in Africa for decades but we are moving beyond a simple provision of assistance . . . to a new model, a partnership between America and Africa, a partnership of equals that focuses on (Africa's) capacity to solve problems and (Africa's) capacity to grow."

I embrace the President's vision. When President Obama launched the Power Africa Initiative in Tanzania, African Development Bank President Donald Kaberuka joined him as a symbol of how the United States and Africa can work together to promote inclusive growth in the region.

Attracting private investors to Africa will require significant investment in infrastructure and a climate that is conducive to investment in Africa. Creating the right investment climate will depend on Africa's commitment and ability to improve governance, transparency, regional integration and to build a skilled workforce. The African Development Bank has played a leading role in assisting African countries to address these issues, but more work remains to be done.

If confirmed, I commit to being a good steward of U.S. financial contributions to the bank and to ensure that the Bank supports our Nation's inherent values—recognizing that open societies are the strongest societies; transparent systems are the most successful systems; and countries that commit to equally helping their citizens be healthy and educated, with economic opportunities will be the most prosperous.

Thank you again for considering my nomination, and I look forward to answering any additional questions you may have.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much for your testimony.

Now we will hear from Mr. Sabharwal.

STATEMENT OF SUNIL SABHARWAL, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Mr. SABHARWAL. Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Udall, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today to present my personal and professional credentials for the position of the United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund.

I am grateful for President Obama for nominating me to this important office, and to Secretary Lew for his confidence and support. I also do want to thank the committee staff who have taken time to meet with me in the confirmation process.

If confirmed I look forward to advancing our shared commitment to make the IMF an even more effective organization and one where U.S. interests are strongly represented, promoted, and defended.

I would like to introduce the members of my family who are here with me today: my wife, Gabrielle, of 24 years, who has given up her forensic sciences career to follow me around the world and help me raise the family; my son, Nicolas, who just finished his sophomore year at Duke University studying computer sciences. He is accompanied by two of his college friends. It is great to see interest in the political process amongst youth.

Senator BARRASSO. You will be paying for dinner tonight. [Laughter.]

Mr. SABHARWAL. We did not talk about that yet. [Laughter.]

Who is missing—of course, the busiest person in the family is always the youngest, and that is my daughter, Isabella. She is 16, a sophomore at the Cathedral School, who simply did not want to give up her orchestra practice and her track-and-field practice 2 days before the D.C. State Championships, and her chemistry exam, shockingly. So, we are missing her.

I have submitted my written statement for the record. I do not intend to read that in its entirety here. However, I would like to point out, just briefly, that I arrived in this country 32 years ago from Communist Hungary. My family—my mother, brother, and I—we fled and arrived at the United States Embassy in Vienna, sought political asylum, and, through the support of a number of families, churches, organizations, charities, I managed to enroll col-

lege and start a professional career. I am extremely, eternally grateful to this country. And I am now looking to give back.

In the 27 or so years of my professional career, I had an opportunity to serve both on the public sector and predominantly on the private-sector side of things. In the public-sector capacity, I was an early American employee at the EBRD, the European Bank for Reconstruction Development, shortly after its inception, where I really found an appreciation of the role an IFI can play in funding infrastructure projects, creating institutions, and providing comfort to private-sector investment and engagement. However, as you have seen in the testimony, the majority of my experiences are in the private sector as an investor in financial services and financial technology.

With my various positions, I have had a chance to travel and live around the world. And I believe this professional background, coupled with my volunteer experiences with the sports movement and Olympic organizations, really have given me an opportunity to deal with people from every single continent from many, many countries. And this, I feel, has prepared me well to carry out the duties, if confirmed, of the U.S. Alternate Executive Director at the IMF. I think this is an important skill when you are dealing with an institution with up to 200 members and where you need their support to engage with you on a wide range of issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear here today. I would be pleased to answer any questions and, if confirmed, of course, working with you and your staff on a range of issues affecting the IMF.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sabharwal follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SUNIL SABHARWAL

Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Udall, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today to present my personal and professional credentials for the position of United States Alternate Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

I am grateful to the President for nominating me to this important office and to Secretary Lew for his confidence and support. If confirmed, I look forward to advancing our shared commitment to make the IMF an even more effective organization and one where U.S. interests are strongly represented, promoted, and defended.

I would like to introduce members of my family, who are here with me today: starting with my son, Nicolas, who is a sophomore at Duke University with an interest in engineering and the sciences. My daughter, Izabella, who is a sophomore in High School at the National Cathedral School, and is vying to follow her grandfather to be an Olympian track athlete, and finally my wife, Gabrielle, with a Forensic Sciences background whose attention to detail has helped me get through all the documents needed prior to me sitting here in front of you. We also share a common passion for the sport of fencing as we met 25 years ago in Culver City, CA, in a fencing club and continue our involvement with the sport and the Olympic movement.

I was born in New Delhi, India, to an Indian father and a Hungarian mother. My parents separated when I was 9, and I moved to Budapest Hungary part of the Soviet Block at the time. Following my mother's refusal to join the Communist Party, she was refused a business permit, was constantly harassed for her religious beliefs—in the end giving the family no choice but fleeing the country and seeking asylum at the U.S. Embassy in Vienna. I had just finished high school.

Through the cooperation of the U.S. State Department, the United Nations, and charitable organizations, we received political asylum in the United States, more precisely in Columbus, OH, and with specific assistance by the Upper Arlington Lutheran Church. To date, I will never forget the reception we received in Columbus, in December of 1983 (just a couple of days before Christmas) and will remain

forever grateful to Professor Cole and his family who enabled me to enroll at the Ohio State University weeks after my arrival. While I put myself through college with the use of financial aid, work-study, and scholarships, my family moved to California. Upon graduation, I joined them to begin my professional career.

When I left Hungary in 1983, I thought it was for good. Little did we know that less than 10 years later, massive political changes would sweep the region free. One of the first institutions created to foster the transition of the region was the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and I was fortunate enough to play a meaningful role in the region's transition as an American citizen and EBRD employee.

I established the EBRD office in Budapest in early 1992, a time in which Hungary was at the forefront of innovative foreign direct investment legislation and regulations. This experience allowed me to participate in landmark public and private sector transactions, including the first bank and telecomm privatizations, infrastructure projects, municipal finance, and venture capital deals of Central and Eastern Europe. In 1995, I transitioned to London to join the EBRD's headquarters staff as a member of its Financial Institutions team, which had the responsibility of investing in, and lending to, banks in the region. The 5 years I spent at the EBRD had shaped my early professional career and have had a significant impact throughout. I then spent about 10 years working for GE and First Data Corporation, most of it focused on investing in the financial services sector or companies that provide services to the financial services industry. For the last 8 years, I have served as an independent investor and adviser focused on the financial services, or "fintech" sector.

As a result of my global upbringing, through which I gained an ability to relate to people around the world, and my 25 years of tenure in the financial services sector—in both public and private domains—I am equipped with the experience necessary to carry out successfully the duties, if confirmed, of the U.S. Alternate Executive Director at the IMF. In addition, my language skills and volunteer experiences are also highly relevant in a body where we need to get representatives of nearly 200 countries to support us on a wide-ranging set of issues.

I look forward to answering your questions, and, if confirmed, to working with members of the committee on policy matters affecting the IMF.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you for your testimony. Congratulations, again.

And now, finally, Mr. Egan.

STATEMENT OF BRIAN JAMES EGAN, NOMINATED TO BE LEGAL ADVISER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. EGAN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Udall, and members of the subcommittee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as Legal Adviser to the Department of State.

I am humbled by the trust that the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me, and I am grateful to the committee for considering my nomination. I also appreciate the opportunity I have had to meet with committee staff, before this hearing, for productive discussions on a range of topics.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me to introduce my wife, Amy, and my children, Sally, Niles, and Damon, who are happy to have a half day of school to attend this afternoon's event. As you know, government service often requires long and unpredictable hours, which take a toll on our families. And I want to thank my family for the sacrifices they have made to enable me to pursue my passion for public service. I would not be able to carry out my current responsibilities, and I could not contemplate assuming the duties that I hope you will see fit to entrust to me, without their love and support.

I would also like to introduce my father, Dennis Egan, who, by example, has taught me the importance of hard work, independent judgment, and kindness in raising myself and my five brothers and sisters.

I am particularly honored to have been nominated for this position because serving as the Legal Adviser would mark a homecoming for me. Although I began my career as a lawyer in private practice, my calling has always been public service, and I have spent the past 10 years as a government lawyer, starting as a career attorney in the Office of the Legal Adviser. From my time there, I know that the Office of the Legal Adviser plays a critical role in advancing U.S. foreign policy and national security by providing high-quality and objective legal advice to the Secretary of State and other policymakers. The over 200 career lawyers and other professionals who make up the office strive to promote and protect U.S. interests around the world every day, without regard to party or politics, and in areas ranging from counterterrorism, law enforcement, and nuclear nonproliferation to the promotion of American trade and business and the protection of American citizens abroad.

I have dedicated my career to public service, to play a part, however small, in helping address the many legal challenges that are faced by the greatest democracy in the world. If confirmed, I would seek to uphold the office's tradition of providing rigorous and objective legal analysis in furtherance of our Nation's interests at home and around the world.

In my career, I have had the good fortune of being able to work in a number of national security legal positions with lawyers from around the government. And since 2013, I have been the Legal Adviser to the National Security Council. In my current role, I have the privilege of working every day with the President, Ambassador Rice, and other senior national security officials on a broad range of complex domestic and international legal issues. And in this capacity, I have had the privilege of working closely with general counsels and other senior lawyers from around the government, including the Departments of Justice, Defense, Commerce, Homeland Security, and the Treasury, the Director of National Intelligence, the CIA, and, of course, the Department of State. I have benefited immensely from the wisdom and counsel of Mary McLeod, who has served as State's Legal Adviser in an acting capacity for over 2 years, and many of the other outstanding attorneys who serve in the office that is known as L at the State Department.

Prior to serving in my current job, I worked at the Treasury Department as Assistant General Counsel for Enforcement Intelligence from 2012 to 2013, and my first job after graduating college was with the Department of Justice, where I served as a legal assistant in the Antitrust Division for nearly 3 years.

My experience in government have taught me a considerable amount about leadership, responsibility, problem solving, and collaboration. And these experience have deepened my conviction that we are best able to confront the foreign policy challenges that we face as a nation when the executive and legislative branches work together to address those challenges. While we may not always see the same issues in precisely the same way, or reach the same con-

clusions, if confirmed, I would be committed to maintaining an open dialogue with this committee on the issues that I will be responsible for as Legal Adviser.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Egan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BRIAN JAMES EGAN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Udall, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as Legal Adviser to the Department of State. I am humbled by the trust the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me, and I am grateful to the committee for considering my nomination. I also appreciate the opportunity I have had to meet with committee staff before this hearing for what I found to be productive conversations on a range of topics.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me to introduce my wife, Amy, and my children, Sally, Niles, and Damon. As each of you can attest, government service often requires long and unpredictable hours, which take a toll on our families. I want to thank my family for the sacrifices they have made to enable me to pursue my passion for public service. I would not be able to carry out my current responsibilities—and I could not contemplate assuming the new duties I hope you will see fit to entrust to me—without their continued love and support. I would also like to introduce my father, Dennis Egan, who by example has taught me the importance of hard work, independent judgment, and kindness.

I am particularly honored to have been nominated for this position because serving as Legal Adviser would mark a homecoming for me. Although I began my career as a lawyer in private practice, my calling has always been public service. I have spent the past 10 years as a government lawyer, starting as a career attorney in the Office of the Legal Adviser.

From my previous time there, I know that the Office of the Legal Adviser plays a critical role in advancing U.S. foreign policy and national security by providing high quality, objective legal advice to the Secretary of State, other policymakers within the Department of State, and departments and agencies across the Federal Government. The over 200 career lawyers and other professionals who make up the Office of the Legal Adviser strive to promote and protect U.S. interests around the world every day. They do so, without regard to party or politics, in areas ranging from counterterrorism, law enforcement, and nuclear nonproliferation to the promotion of American trade and business and the protection of American citizens abroad.

I have dedicated my career to government service to play a part, however small, in helping to address the many challenges faced by the greatest democracy in the world. If confirmed, I would seek to uphold the Office of the Legal Adviser's tradition of producing rigorous and objective legal analysis in furtherance of our Nation's interests at home and around the world.

Beyond working at the Legal Adviser's Office, I have had the good fortune of being able to work in a number of other national security legal jobs, with lawyers from across the Federal Government. Since 2013, I have been the Legal Adviser to the National Security Council and Deputy Counsel to the President. In my current role, I have the privilege of working every day to enhance the security and prosperity of the United States and the American people by advising the President, Ambassador Rice, and other senior national security officials on a broad range of complex domestic and international legal issues.

I have worked closely with the General Counsels and other senior lawyers of departments and agencies throughout the government, including the Departments of Justice, Defense, Commerce, Homeland Security, and the Treasury; the Office of the Director of National Intelligence; the Central Intelligence Agency; and, of course, the Department of State. I have benefited from the wisdom and counsel of Mary McLeod, who has served as State's Legal Adviser in an acting capacity for over 2 years, and many of the other outstanding attorneys who serve in the Office of the Legal Adviser.

Prior to serving as Legal Adviser to the National Security Council, I worked at the Department of the Treasury as Assistant General Counsel for Enforcement and Intelligence from 2012 to 2013. In that capacity, I was responsible for a staff of approximately 50 attorneys who provided legal advice and counsel on combating terrorism financing and other financial crimes, ensuring the effectiveness of U.S. financial sanctions regimes, and other issues related to Treasury's enforcement and intel-

ligence responsibilities. And my first job after graduating from college was with the Department of Justice, where I served as a legal assistant in the Antitrust Division for nearly 3 years.

My experiences in government have taught me a great deal about leadership, responsibility, problemsolving, and collaboration. These experiences also have deepened my conviction that we are best able to confront the foreign policy challenges we face as a nation when the executive and legislative branches work together to address those challenges. While we may not always see the issues in precisely the same way or reach the same conclusions, if confirmed I would be committed to maintaining an open dialogue with this committee on the issues that I will be responsible for as Legal Adviser.

The challenges we face as a nation in the areas of foreign policy and national security are increasingly complex, and the legal issues that underlie some of these challenges are equally complex. Our Nation's leaders require the best possible legal advice to navigate these challenges, consistent with the Constitution and our commitment to the rule of law. If confirmed, I commit to you that I will do my best to provide that advice.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you so much for your testimony. And welcome, to your family, as well.

Ms. Guilarte, the Latin American/Caribbean region have incredibly high energy costs, I think insufficient rates of investment; they rely on energy resources, such as Venezuelan oil, which may not be suitable, in the long run, in terms of sustainability. The countries are dependent on excess—on very expensive fuel. And I think we have an opportunity—and three members of this committee who are here today have all supported legislation—to make it a little easier for us to export U.S. natural gas, as well, and want to use the knowledge and the technology we have in the United States. Natural gas can be helpful in economies, because it provides a—much more affordable energy.

So, in your role, if confirmed, at the International—at the Inter-American Development Bank, you know, they talk about electricity demand in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is going to be doubling over the next decade. And they are looking at economic development role that natural gas can play. So, I am going to ask if you know of any steps right now that the Inter-American Development Bank is taking to provide the region with energy security and diversification through natural gas, and what role you would like to play in that.

Ms. GUILARTE. Thank you, Chairman, for your question.

I can understand your concern specifically about Venezuela and how their influence, especially on the ALBA members, especially those in the Caribbean and Central America, can have really a crisis situation, the way things are unfolding in Venezuela, and the impact that that could have in the region.

In terms of coal energy projects and what can be done better at the IDB, certainly all projects that come to the board are given full consideration. At the moment, there are no corelated projects——

Senator BARRASSO. And, I am sorry, I asked about natural gas.

Ms. GUILARTE. This—natural gas.

Senator BARRASSO. Natural gas, yes.

Ms. GUILARTE. If confirmed, what I can do, in my capacity, is that, one, I will make sure that those related projects that come to the board are given full consideration that it meets the needs of the country's energy demands, that we consider all relevant alternative approaches, and that ultimately they are sustainable, both finan-

cially and environmentally. I understand that the administration is also, through their Alliance for Prosperity, creating—in Central America—is looking at providing better and more diversed opportunities on energy efficiency approaches.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and members of this committee in ensuring that we look at all the range of options available.

Senator BARRASSO. Yes. But, I would say that, knowing that there was significant bipartisan support and an opportunity for affordable energy, it is something that I think would benefit that area.

Senator Corker, I am happy to turn my time over to you. I know you are on a tighter schedule, and you are chairman of this committee. So——

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I really appreciate you letting me do this. I know I am—you know I am here for just one of the witnesses and—or nominees. But, thank all of you for letting me doing—thank you for your service to the country that is getting ready to be in, in a different role, anyway.

To Mr. Egan, I just wanted to ask a few questions. I think you know I was going to do this. So, thank you for your willingness.

Congress has long understood that the 2001 AUMF covered al-Qaeda and the associated forces of al-Qaeda. Would you please describe the administration's legal view of why it is that ISIS is covered by the 2001 AUMF? And again, thank you for your continued service.

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

The administration's position is that the 2001 AUMF does cover the ongoing military operations against ISIL. And I think the key fact which is reflected most recently in a speech that the general counsel from the Defense Department gave—Steven Preston—about a month ago, is that ISIL is essentially the remnants of a group that was formerly known as Al Qaeda in Iraq, a group that we fought in Iraq for a number of years and that broke from al-Qaeda in 2013. The administration's view is that the break of that group should not change the legal authority to use force against that group. Given that ISIL, as it is now known, continues to fight Americans and American interests in Iraq, they believe that they are the true successor to Osama bin Laden, and they are, in fact, competing for affiliation of groups with al-Qaeda right now. And that is why the administration's view is that ISIL is subject to the 2001 AUMF.

The CHAIRMAN. And does the administration currently have the statutory or article 2 authority to defend the United States or coalition-trained forces in Iraq and Syria if those forces come under direct threat from ISIS—al-Nusra, Assad regime forces, Hezbollah, or any other armed groups? As you know, we have a train-and-equip program that is underway. And, as you know—well, anyway, I will let you answer the question.

Mr. EGAN. Senator, I should have, of course, noted the administration's proposal, which this committee has considered, for new authorization to use military force, which would be specific to the threat posed by ISIL in Iraq and Syria. The administration's view is, at this time, we would have the authority to use force against

ISIL and against the Nusra Front to defend our personnel in Iraq and Syria. I would say, to the extent that those personnel came under attack, we would—the President would likely have article 2 authority against anyone who had attacked them. But, we do have an AUMF that this committee has—that you have considered, that reflects the President's view on the appropriate scope of military force against ISIL in Iraq and Syria.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, actually, that is not true. Martin Dempsey and several—Ash Carter and several witnesses who came before us said that they did not have the authority to defend against Assad if the train-and-equip people that are not our folks—they are not part of our coalition, they are people that we are training in Syria to deal with both ISIS—well, we—in this particular case, ISIS. We may have another program. There may be another alleged program against Assad. But, they actually say they do not have that authority.

So, you are saying that you believe we do have that authority now to defend them against barrel bombs from Assad.

They said they had not sought that authority, and there was actually an internal debate right now within the administration as to whether to seek that authority.

Mr. EGAN. Then, Senator, I apologize. Maybe I misunderstood your question. I thought you were asking about our authority to defend our——

The CHAIRMAN. Right.

Mr. EGAN [continuing]. Troops who are currently stationed in Iraq——

The CHAIRMAN. No.

Mr. EGAN [continuing]. Which I think is a slightly different question.

The CHAIRMAN. The Syrian opposition train-and-equip group, we do not have that authority, would you agree?

Mr. EGAN. We would have the authority to conduct military operations against ISIL and al-Qaeda under the same rationale that we do to conduct our own direct operations against those groups. I think the question of our authority to use force against the Assad regime is a more difficult question, and, you are correct, sir, that that is one that is under policy consideration within the administration right now.

The CHAIRMAN. To defend the very people that we are training to go in and be on the ground.

Mr. EGAN. That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

I will just ask one more. And I want to thank the chairman for allowing me to do this, and the ranking member.

With United States forces on the ground in Iraq conducting activities in both Iraq and in Syria, what authority to protect and defend those forces, if any, is currently available under the 2001 or 2002 AUMFs? And is there something additional you gain under the 2002 AUMF that is not in the 2001 AUMF? I think you know the committee is looking at a number of things, one of which is the relevance of the 2002 AUMF. And I would appreciate it if you would answer that.

Mr. EGAN. Thank you, Senator.

So, the administration's position is that both the 2001 AUMF and the 2002 AUMF provide authority for the current military operations in Iraq and Syria. The President's AUMF proposal would, among other things, repeal the 2002 AUMF. And that is because he believes that the authority we have in both his proposal and in the 2001 AUMF would be sufficient to conduct the operations that are ongoing in Iraq and Syria.

The CHAIRMAN. And so, just to summarize so that you have been asked the same question that every other administration witness that has these kinds of responsibilities, you believe that, today, there is no authorization necessary—no additional authorization necessary to deal with ISIS—or ISIL, as you would call them—or Daesh, as some may call them.

Mr. EGAN. Senator, as a legal matter, I believe that we have the authorization that we need. I think the President has been clear that he believes that there are other reasons that it is important for this committee to continue its work on the AUMF. But, as a legal matter, our view is that we have the authority we need to conduct military operations against ISIL.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

And I will wish you the best, all of you, in your nomination testimony.

And thank you very much for this courtesy, both of you. Thank you.

Senator BARRASSO. Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Thank you very much, Chairman Barrasso.

Executive Director Guilarte, the Inter-American Development Bank has partnered with the Obama administration on several initiatives in Latin America. These include the Micro-Finance Growth Fund for the Western Hemisphere, announced at the fifth Summit of the Americas in April 2009, and the Women's Entrepreneurship in the Americas, announced at the sixth Summit of the Americas in April 2012. What are the objectives of these initiatives? And what have they accomplished so far?

Ms. GUILARTE. Chairman, I appreciate the question. I am sorry. Senator.

I am not familiar with the initiatives, in entirety, and I would appreciate if I can get back to the committee——

Senator UDALL. That would be great.

Ms. GUILARTE [continuing]. On your question.

Senator UDALL. If you could——

Ms. GUILARTE. Yes.

Senator UDALL. If you could answer that for the record, that would be terrific.

Ms. GUILARTE. I will.

Senator UDALL. Thank you very much.

Assistant Secretary Haverkamp, in 2013 President Obama issued an Executive order on combating wildlife trafficking, with some specific actions for the United States to take. Can you describe in more detail what the United States is doing to combat wildlife trafficking, and how the State Department is working to address these efforts?

Ms. HAVERKAMP. Thank you very much, Senator Udall, for that question.

Wildlife trafficking is a real scourge. And it is a problem, not just for the obvious reasons of the elimination of some iconic species, but it is also an economic problem for countries that depend on tourism. It is a national security problem because of the involvement of organized crime and extreme elements. It is also clearly a biodiversity concern. And it is, frankly, a health problem because of the potential for these illegally traded species to transmit diseases that affect people.

As you noted, the President has led this initiative. Recently, an implementation plan was released, where the Department of State, including the Bureau that I hope to lead, has a key role, in partnership with the Department of Interior and the Department of Justice. The focus that I would see having under this initiative is especially in the areas of public education, so that people are less likely to demand these products, and in the areas of enforcement, as well. Enforcement is an especially important concern for OES. There is a network of wildlife enforcement networks that OES has helped establish around the world, and I would be very interested in expanding that and helping to establish additional networks around the globe.

Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

My home State of New Mexico is the world's—has the world's first commercial spaceport and two national laboratories. So, my State appreciates the role of science—that science and technology play in protecting American security and providing economic opportunities. What are OES's main priorities with regards to space policy and science and technology cooperation?

Ms. HAVERKAMP. Thank you for that question.

In the area of space, in particular, the President, in 2010, produced a national space policy; and OES's work is consistent with and in furtherance of that policy. Key among that is the promotion of commercial space activities, including the work on Spaceport America that could contribute to expanding the opportunities for space transportation.

Also, OES has an important diplomatic role in working with other countries to do things such as address space debris so that it is safer to have increased space travel, working, as I said, in expanding the opportunities for commercial use of space and also working with other countries on things like the sustained funding of the International Space Station, that sort of thing. But, very much the role of the commercial entities, like Spaceport America, is something that we would like to see more of.

Senator UDALL. Yes, I appreciate that answer.

Executive Director Occomy, it is my understanding that, in 2013, the African Development Bank approved a new 10-year strategy which will focus on economic growth plus operational priorities, including infrastructure development, regional integration, private-sector development, governments and—governance and accountability, and skills and technology. How would you assess the strategy?

Ms. OCCOMY. Thank you, Ranking Member Udall, for that question.

I understand that the strategy is going along. One thing that I would say is that the African Development Bank has a strong partnership with the United States. And part of carrying out its strategy is actually to support the United States with key initiatives, such as the Power Africa Initiative. The Power Africa Initiative is designed to increase electricity access across Africa, which is a key priority for the African Development Bank, and it is a key directive, in terms of implementing one of the core parts of the strategy.

Again, if confirmed, I will make every effort to work with the African Development Bank to effectively implement its strategy and to make sure that the elements and the initiatives that are implemented are in line with U.S. interests, particularly U.S. economic and security interests in Africa.

Senator UDALL. Appreciate that answer.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BARRASSO. Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks for holding this hearing today. And thanks, to all the witnesses, for being here, and your families, as well. Thank you for your willingness to serve this country.

To Mr. Egan, just a couple of quick questions. Last week, we had a hearing before the East Asia Subcommittee, which also now addresses cyber issues. So, just a couple of questions on cyber. How do you envision your office interacting with Chris Painter's office as the Coordinator for Cyber Issues?

Mr. EGAN. Thank you, Senator.

I think that the issues of cybersecurity, cyber defense, are increasingly important, both as a policy matter—as you know, Chris Painter's office is deeply involved in international fora related to those issues—but also as a legal matter. I think you can look back to some remarks that my predecessor—hopeful predecessor—the Legal Adviser, Harold Koh, gave in 2012, where he kind of laid out the framework for how we would think about cyber activities from a international legal perspective. And I would anticipate, if I were confirmed by this committee and by the Congress, working very closely with Chris—and others at the State Department—to help further develop those rules in the interests of our own national security.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

And the Sony cyber attack carried out by North Korea was described by the President as an act of cyber vandalism and not cyber terrorism. In your legal opinion, where do you cross the line between cyber vandalism and cyber terrorism?

Mr. EGAN. Thank you, Senator.

An important legal question that came up in the context—would come up in the context of Sony or some future event is whether we would consider an act in cyber space a use of force, where the responses to use of force would apply. And considering a question such as that, I think we would look to the effects of the act. Did it result in death, destruction of significant amounts of property, and other similarly serious acts? I think it is hard to kind of speculate in the abstract, but those are the types of factors that I would anticipate looking to in addressing a question like yours.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

And, to Ms. Haverkamp, the United States assumed the chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2015. How do you assess our viability in working effectively with Russia, given that nation's aggression in Ukraine and increased military activity in the Arctic?

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

In the Arctic Council, this is an entity that the United States helped create many years ago. It operates by consensus among the countries that all have territory north of the Arctic Circle. Russia has been a part of that process for a very long time. And, while the United States has very significant problems with some aspects—significant aspects of Russia's policy, so far in the Arctic Council, their interests seem to have been to work together with the other countries of that region.

Senator GARDNER. So, you do not, at this point, see Russia's policies as an obstacle to United States Arctic policies or objectives in the region?

Ms. HAVERKAMP. The agenda that the United States has put forward for its chairmanship is one that the other countries had to agree to by consensus. And so, Russia has joined that consensus in the objectives of Arctic Ocean stewardship, safety, and security; protecting the health and economic well-being of the Arctic peoples; and addressing the concerns of climate change in that region.

Senator GARDNER. So, when it comes to the Arctic, Russia is living by the terms of the agreement, or at least what we believe the agreement to be?

Ms. HAVERKAMP. Well, the U.S. chairmanship just began last month. And so, I think—my understanding is that people are hopeful. But, it may be too early to tell.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

And I am going to—may need help with the last name. Is it Mr. Sabharwal? Very good. One of the primary tasks facing the International Monetary Fund is stabilizing the economies of two European nations: Greece and Ukraine. The next 1.5 billion dollar—billion Euro—excuse me—billion Euro payment from Greece to the IMF next month—will Greece be able to make the payment, or are we heading toward default?

Mr. SABHARWAL. Thank you for the question, Senator Gardner.

As you know, when the IMF stepped into Greece, back in 2010, there was serious risk of contagion effect. And whilst Greece perhaps is a small percentage, in terms of GDP, of the European and the global economy, it was critical that it steps in at that time, together with the other institutions, the European Central Bank and the European Commission.

Greece was supposed to, and did, make a payment in full last week. And thereby, this week—this actually opened the doors for a new set of discussions later on, taking place this week in Latvia, where we do not refer to them as a troika anymore, because the Greeks do not like that word. We—the institutions—the ECB, the European Commission, and the fund—are discussing a way forward so that Greece is able to make the payments, not just in June, but also in July and August. Of course, I am not at the fund at this point, I am not in the administration. But, from what I understand, the parties intend, including Chancellor Merkel, who

wishes that Greece stays in the eurozone, the institutions, and, after, let us say, about a month of pause in dialogue, everybody is back at the table. So, we do believe there will be a constructive resolution here.

Senator GARDNER. Obviously, one of the other important issues that—I mentioned Ukraine. Just yesterday, the United States Government signed a $1 billion loan guarantee for Ukraine. On March 11, the IMF approved a $17.5 billion loan payment to assist the Government of Ukraine. Recently, I met with Finance Minister Natalie Yuresko, and she had assured me that Ukraine is on a path to economic reform that would satisfy both the needs and requirements of the United States Government and other international creditors.

Do you share in this view?

Mr. SABHARWAL. Thank you for the question.

So, Ukraine and that part of the world is relatively close to me, because I spent part of my life growing up there. And if you think—wind the clock back 20 years, 23 years, to the origin of Ukraine's independence, it really—what has happened, one bad economic policy and one less-than-adequate government followed another for 20-plus years. Actually, Natalie is someone who, when I was at the EBRD, she was actually working for one of the venture funds that we were supporting at the time. So, it is great to see actually someone so knowledgeable about the region coming from the private sector, being in the position that she is right now.

To answer your question, the IMF had identified about a $40 billion need at Ukraine as a need to get into a financial and stable footing. Part of that 17 and a half billion is coming from the IMF; part of it from other institutions. And, of course, there is kind of a debt overhang in Ukraine, which I understand that the parties are in discussion as to how to manage that. As long as those discussions are ongoing, the fund will continue to be—proactively support Ukraine with its program. From what I understand, there is actually a team on the ground right now, a fund team on the ground. And the initial indications are that—whilst the issues are difficult, that the program is on track.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Senator Gardner.

Senator Murphy.

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

Welcome, to all of our nominees. I wish you good speed in your confirmation process.

I wanted to pick up where Senator Gardner left off, Mr. Sabharwal, to talk a little bit more about Ukraine. I am glad to know that you have some expertise, or at least some familiarity, with the region.

So, you know, it is always struck me that our policy on economic assistance to Ukraine is anchored in the theater of the absurd. We are giving them loan guarantees, we are partnering with the IMF and other creditors to extend loans with fairly high spreads to them. This is in the midst of an invasion of their country. We are forcing them to make very painful—very necessary, but very painful reforms in exchange for this money. It sort of strikes me as if your neighbor's house is on fire, and, instead of just delivering

them the bucket of water, you sit and negotiate with them for a period of hours on the terms for the repayment of that water, instead of just putting the fire out.

And so, I wanted to talk to you for a moment about this issue of debt reduction. Larry Summers just wrote a column, in which he said that the case for debt reduction with respect to Ukraine is, "as strong as any I have encountered in the past quarter century." And it strikes me as incredibly reasonable that the United States should be playing a leading role in working with Ukraine's creditors for a writedown of their debt, given the fact that they are in the middle of a war in the eastern section of their country, and that—they have, frankly, undertaken reforms already that are quite impressive in scope and dwarf reforms that have been undertaken in prior administrations.

So, I just wanted to get your sense of what you thought the importance of debt reduction was, as part of the strategy moving forward for Ukraine, and what role you see United States representation as part of the IMF infrastructure playing in that conversation.

Mr. SABHARWAL. Thank you for the question.

As I mentioned before, the identified gap of financing in Ukraine, from what I understand, is around $40 billion. Part of that is filled with the IMF facility of 17 and a half. And, in that, about one-five—15 million—billion is to come from, let us call it—whether it is a restructuring of the private-sector debt, maybe lengthening the maturity, a combination, lowering of interest rates. There could be a number of ways that the Government of Ukraine can achieve that, vis-a-vis its private-sector lenders.

I believe that the fund does not directly engage in the negotiations between the Ukrainian Government and the private-sector bondholders, but I do believe that the position of the Treasury and the position of the fund would be an encouragement—a strong encouragement of Ukrainian government to be at the table, continue good-faith negotiations with the private-sector lenders. And, whilst those are actually ongoing, the fund can continue with its program and continue to fund Ukraine as it tries to come out of its economic difficulties.

So, in summary, I would say the position would be of support, both from the Treasury—significant support—and the fund, but not a direct engagement of negotiations between two parties.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you for the answer to the question. I mean, I do not think that Ukraine, at this point, is largely the problem. My understanding is that it is the private creditors that are, right now, refusing to engage in a constructive process about debt reduction. And so, I would just counsel for a—if that is, indeed, the policy, that the IMF and our representation at the IMF is not going to get in the business of trying to unmask the fact that many of these creditors are refusing to engage in constructive conversations about debt reduction, I would, frankly, hope that we would have a little bit more active presence and participation, given that it is our money at risk. The United States has made loan guarantees. We have exposure here. And, to an even more important degree, if we do not unravel the economic mess in Ukraine, which I think debt reduction is a big part of, then the world's secu-

rity is at risk. That is not necessarily the IMF's responsibility, but it is certainly a U.S. interest.

Mr. SABHARWAL. Thank you very much, Senator.

I have taken note. And, if confirmed, I will take up the matter within Treasury and at the fund, itself.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Egan, I just wanted to just build on some questions you were getting from Senator Corker. As you know, there is a deep disagreement between many of us in the administration on this interpretation of whether the existing AUMF covers ISIL. I certainly do not believe that it does. I think it is a strain, a reach of pretty incredible proportions. And part of our worry is that we are not sure where this rationale ends, that if ISIL is included under the umbrella of an authorization of al-Qaeda, then what about all of the other groups that are, as we speak, pledging allegiance to al-Qaeda? Does that mean that the 2001 AUMF lives on forever, in that any group in any part of the country can find itself now a subject of U.S. force simply because it has aligned itself with ISIS?

Can you share a little bit as to what you believe the tests are right now as to how this new doctrine of interpretation that the administration is using of the 2001 AUMF plays out with respect to these groups around the world who have pledged allegiance to ISIL?

Mr. EGAN. Yes. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

I think the administration's test as to whether a group is an associated force of al-Qaeda is something that has been talked about for a number of years. And that is, if a group is an organized, armed group that has joined the fight against the U.S. or coalition partners alongside of al-Qaeda, a group could be considered an associated force of al-Qaeda.

You are correct that our view on ISIL is different.

Senator MURPHY. But, this is different, because this is not an associated force of al-Qaeda. This is now an associated force of ISIS.

Mr. EGAN. The way that I would think about it, at least, is that they are a successor to Al Qaeda in Iraq. They are, in fact, the group that was formerly known as Al Qaeda in Iraq, which is what our intelligence community would say. They are, in fact, al-Qaeda's longest affiliate, going back to the early 2000s. And I think if you look at the facts behind ISIS and their history, ISIL—ISIS and their history, they are probably uniquely situated, and it is hard to see another group that would fit the bill as they did, a group that we were fighting against, going back several years, that continued to fight us, that believes that they are the true successors to Osama bin Laden. There just are not other groups out there that I am aware of that would fit that bill.

Senator MURPHY. And I would just hope that you will help us understand some of the terminology that is being used today. In the administration's proposed AUMF, they suggest that "associated forces" will be those that are engaged in hostilities against the United States or our coalition partners. Well, because ISIS now has, arguably, roots in almost every corner of the world, and we have coalition partners in every corner of the world, you can see a definition by which even Boko Haram, if it is engaged in hostilities against a group that—against a country which is a coalition

partner, now all of a sudden falls under an authorization that was intended for a very different group.

And so, I think many of us are worried about the—not the 2000 AUMF authorization, in and of itself, but this new authorization that is proposed, and how big and unwieldy it could become. I look forward to working with you on some of those very tricky questions.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Senator Murphy.

Just to follow up, Mr. Egan, a couple of things, in terms of treaties, executive actions, where it all fits in. The Senate has passed a bipartisan piece of legislation for the Iranian deal to make sure that the Senate has an opportunity to review that, not at the treaty level, which is a 67, but as a—more of a disapproval motion, and then whether that is vetoed. So, how do you see these differences, in terms of treaty and just a disapproval motion? And what qualifies for what?

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

If I were confirmed, I think working with this committee on issues involving treaties, executive agreements, political commitments is one of what I would consider to be my most important responsibilities. I think that administrations from both parties have had a history of working with the Congress to identify agreements that would be treaties subject to the treaty clause in the constitution, other agreements that would be Executive agreements, and then political commitments of the type that the Iran deal is intended to be. And so, working through the nuances and making sure that this committee and the Congress understands how the administration is approaching a particular negotiation, I think, is one of the more important responsibilities I would take on if I were confirmed as Legal Adviser.

Senator BARRASSO. Yes. I mean, because the United States and other nations are attempting to negotiate an agreement on international climate later this year. And so, I wonder what conditions or provisions in a new climate change agreement would require advice and consent of the Senate, which would not, and, you know, will you commit to sending any new agreement for the Senate for advise and consent?

Mr. EGAN. Senator, I think each agreement would have to be looked at in each negotiation kind of on its facts. And I think Secretary Kerry, in his testimony before this committee, has identified a number of the facts that would be relevant to whether an agreement should be considered a treaty, an Executive agreement, or a nonbinding commitment. And I am not intimately familiar with the facts behind the climate negotiations, but I would commit to working with this committee to make sure that you were informed of the status of those discussions so that you could have an informed view on the nature of the arrangement being negotiated.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Ms. Haverkamp, the United States is currently participating in this climate negotiation, or will be soon, with the goal of reaching an agreement at the end of the year. Will you commit to ensuring that any new agreement the administration reaches internationally on climate change is brought to the Senate for advise and consent?

Ms. HAVERKAMP. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman.

My understanding of the status of the negotiations is that they are still at a fairly early stage, and focused primarily on what the substance of the agreement would be, and not yet really on the form. So, it is too early, I think, to say what might happen.

I do know that the mandate that the countries are negotiating under is one that creates a real opportunity for the United States, which is to create an agreement that involves contributions from all countries, not just the developed countries, which has been the case in the past. But, what form those contributions or commitments might take is something that has not yet been decided. The mandate gives countries a lot of flexibility in what type of decisions or agreements might come out of Paris.

Senator BARRASSO. And then, what role would you personally be playing in these negotiations, if you are confirmed, in terms of the climate change conference and the negotiations?

Ms. HAVERKAMP. As I believe you know, the lead for the U.N. climate negotiations at the Department of State is the Special Envoy, Todd Stern. And his office leads those negotiations. I would anticipate cooperating and collaborating with his office——

Senator BARRASSO. But, would he report to you? I mean, I am trying to get the pecking order.

Ms. HAVERKAMP. He reports to Secretary Kerry.

Senator BARRASSO. And you are not in that chain.

Ms. HAVERKAMP. Well, the——

Senator BARRASSO. You would not be, if confirmed, in the chain.

Ms. HAVERKAMP [continuing]. The arrangement is that there is a significant office within the Bureau that I would head, which is the Office of Global Change, and which provides a lot of the staff support, you might even say "the backbone" of technical expertise, to the Special Envoy's team. And there is a role that that group plays, in terms of the negotiations, in terms of technical expertise, and also in overseeing some of the adaptation foreign assistance funding that the Department provides.

Senator BARRASSO. It seems to me there is some duplication of climate change resources at the State Department. And so, I would ask, Are you committed to eliminating duplication and redundancies at the State Department? You know, I am trying to figure out, How does the Office of Climate Change in the Bureau interact with the Office of Special Climate Envoy? It does seem, I think, to a lot of taxpayers, as duplicate use of taxpayer dollars, at this point.

Ms. HAVERKAMP. Senator, I certainly embrace the idea of the Department using taxpayer dollars efficiently and effectively. And, if I am confirmed, I would take a very close look at that.

Looking more broadly at the question of Special Representatives and Special Envoys, it does seem that there are certainly times when an issue is of a certain priority or urgency, such as the U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council, which calls for bringing in a special office to lead that particular effort. Another example is the Ebola crisis, where the State Department created a Special Representative for Ebola, and that office has just recently been dismantled, and then some of that work brought back to OES.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Ms. Occomy, the African Development Bank's goal is to promote economic growth, reduce poverty in 53 African member countries. The U.S. Director should support, I believe, low-cost, dependable energy sources as a means to help countries spur economic growth. Now, these nations include some of the poorest countries in the world. African countries have substantial fossil fuel resources, including oil, coal, and natural gas. Do you believe the African Development Bank should end all financing for projects dealing with fossil fuels?

Ms. OCCOMY. Thank you, Chairman, for that question.

As you know, Africa has vast needs. And promoting access to affordable, reliable, efficient energy infrastructure and resources is actually a major focus of the African Development Bank, which includes projects related to coal, natural gas, and oil. If confirmed, I would vote in favor of projects that are consistent with U.S. policies and laws and are within the African Development Bank's operating guidelines.

You know, what is really interesting is that the administration's policies recognize the unique needs of the poorest countries, including those in African, and, as such, supports the United States to be in favor of coal power generation plant projects, but under certain conditions whereby, you know, those projects promote the most efficient coal technologies and—in the poorest countries without, you know, economically viable alternatives.

So, in essence, you know, the African Development Bank has been long committed to addressing the electricity access needs across African. And a demonstration of that is the Bank's strong collaboration with the United States in the Power Africa Initiative. So, if confirmed, I will continue to support and to promote the strong collaboration between the United States and the African Development Bank, and in the consideration of, you know, reliable, affordable energy infrastructure and services projects to help address the electricity needs across Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Senator Markey.

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

So, Mr. Egan, can you outline what you do believe are the limits—again, in terms of the use of the Authorization for the Use of Military Force that was passed in 2001, in terms of the President's inherent ability to use it to engage affiliates of ISIS, ISIL, or other groups? I mean, Senator Murphy asked about Boko Haram. Can you envision a situation where that would be something that could be justified as having been authorized under the 2001 authorization?

Mr. EGAN. Thank you, Senator.

I think the limits of the existing 2001 authorization are that it authorizes the use of military force against al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and their associated forces. And I think "associated forces" is an important limitation. It is not enough for a group to declare their affiliation with al-Qaeda in order to be covered by the authorization. They actually have to be, in international law terms, a co-belligerent with al-Qaeda. They——

Senator MARKEY. What is the phrase?

Mr. EGAN. A cobelligerent, sir. So, somebody who, for example, posts on the Internet their agreement with al-Qaeda, that would not, in and of itself, be enough to come within the AUMF. But, there has to be some degree of organizational affiliation between the two groups for the 2001 AUMF to apply.

Senator MARKEY. Okay. Are there any geographical limits?

Mr. EGAN. No, Senator, not in the existing 2001 AUMF.

Senator MARKEY. Yes. So, any group that could meet the test that you laid out, regardless of their geographical proximity to Afghanistan, could, in fact, be covered, in terms of the deployment of U.S. forces.

Mr. EGAN. I think that that is true, Senator, although I think that, if you look at the administration's history of its reliance on the 2001 AUMF, the groups against whom we have used that authority have been fairly limited, although I recognize this committee's and the Congress' questions about our use of the authority against ISIL.

Senator MARKEY. Yes.

So, Ms. Haverkamp, on climate change, I think there is big breakthrough that occurred between this administration and China. And I give you a lot of credit for that. Just a huge moment in history. As you are looking forward to Paris, do you see some additional opportunities to foster cooperation in a way that can advance our goals of reducing the dangerous greenhouse gases that are being sent up into the atmosphere?

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

While much of the attention is focused on Paris, and that is a very important forum for making advances on climate change, there are other fora where progress can and needs to be made. One very important one this year is the Montreal Protocol, where there has been significant progress recently on countries agreeing to try to address HFCs, which is a potent greenhouse gas, in that forum. And if I were confirmed, I would want very much to be part of the effort to get agreement by the end of this year, in the Montreal Protocol, on adding HFCs to its mandate and working toward the elimination of them.

Senator MARKEY. Secretary Kerry has done a great job in focusing upon illegal fishing. How do you see your role in furthering that agenda to make sure that we are stamping out illegal fishing around the world?

Ms. HAVERKAMP. Thank you for asking. That is a really important part of the mandate of the State Department and the responsibilities of the Bureau I would hope to lead.

As you know well, something like a billion people around the world depend on the oceans for the protein in their diets. And many, many people depend on the fishing industry for their livelihoods. Illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing is a very big problem. And there is a Presidential task force on that, which the State Department cochairs with NOAA. I would hope very much to be part of the efforts of implementing the work of that task force, which includes ramping up enforcement, educating people, expanding partnerships with other countries, and developing, for the United States, a traceability program.

Along those lines, I know the folks at the State Department are very pleased that this committee gave its advice and consent to the Port State Measures Agreement, which is an important aspect of addressing this problem. And I understand that tomorrow there may even be markup of implementing legislation for that and other fisheries agreements, which I very much consider important progress in addressing these issues. And, if confirmed, I would very much want to make that one of my priorities.

Senator MARKEY. Yes. And, you know, on the question of exportation of American natural gas, there is no question that the more of that that we do is—the harder it is going to be to meet our greenhouse gas objectives in the United States, because it is going to drive up the price of natural gas here and, as a result, make coal much more affordable here in the United States for utilities to be burning. So, it is going to run totally contrary to the goals that we are going to set, going forward. The Energy Information Agency said that there could be a 50-percent rise in the price of natural gas here domestically if we export all the natural gas that the Department of Energy is now approving for its export. So, that is just going to really drive a stake into our ability to be able to meet the promises that we are going to be making.

And sometimes I think we forget that we should also be focusing on exporting of energy efficiency technologies overseas. The Ukraine, for example, is the second least efficient energy-efficient country in the world. Only Uzbekistan is less energy efficient. So, if they just reached Poland's level of efficiency, they would back out all of their imported natural gas. And I think sometimes we do a disservice to these countries by not first focusing upon energy efficiency and promising them the larger projects that ignore the easy gains that they can make if they, in fact, use energy efficiency in a much more expansive way.

So, I thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thank you very much, Senator Markey.

Ms. Haverkamp, November 30, 2012, you wrote a blog at the Environmental Defense Fund stating, "The agriculture sector, itself, contributes a substantial share of the emissions that cause climate change, often in the form of powerful greenhouse gases like methane and nitrous oxide." In the same blog, you say, "The major emitters' paucity of vision, ambition, and urgency, has brought us to the brink of catastrophe."

How has the American farmers, who you state are responsible for, "a substantial share of the emissions that cause climate change" brought us, as you say, "to the brink of catastrophe"?

Ms. HAVERKAMP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The factors that contribute to climate change are many. But, the land-use sector is a major contributor, especially in developing countries. And that includes deforestation, it includes overuse of fertilizers, it includes, frankly, a fair amount of methane from rice production around the world. So, I think that that is a concern that is a worldwide concern, not just one that would affect American farmers. And when I was at Environmental Defense Fund, one of the things I worked on was addressing deforestation and helping rural farmers in India and Vietnam with finding low-carbon ways to improve their agricultural practices.

Senator BARRASSO. So, from 2011 to 2014, you were director of the International Climate Program at the Environmental Defense Fund. While in that position, you wrote another blog post stating, "One of Doha's notable developments was that, for the first time, the talks broached the subject of compensation from rich countries for the loss and damage incurred by the most vulnerable nations due to climate change." You went on to say, "The sobering reality is that grappling with the dangerous effects of climate change can no longer be put off to some future date. They are already inflicting harm."

So, do you believe U.S. taxpayers owe millions of dollars, if not more, in climate reparations to small developing nations?

Ms. HAVERKAMP. No, Senator, I do not. And the issue of loss and damage in the U.N. climate negotiations is one that does not need to be put in that box. And my understanding, though I am not close to the negotiations currently, is that it is in the adaptation context, in helping countries to adapt to significant effects of climate change that are coming, and some of which are already here.

Senator BARRASSO. But, when you said, "The dangerous effects of climate change can no longer be put off. They are inflicting harm." You blame the agriculture sector, contributing a substantial share of the emissions. So, you talk about rich countries, like the United States, owing money to developing countries, in the form of climate reparations. So, a good—it sounds like you believe American agriculture is partially to blame for climate change. As the poultry growers in Delaware, cotton farmers, Tennessee, cattle ranchers in Wyoming—are they responsible? Do they owe money for the loss and damage that they have, under, you know, your phraseology, "inflicted on developing nations" because of climate change?

Ms. HAVERKAMP. Mr. Chairman, I do not believe that owing reparations is part of what I was talking about. I believe that the agricultural sector can contribute in a very positive way to addressing climate change. And there are many opportunities, frankly, to help agriculture farm more efficiently if they are able to use more targeted fertilizer or, for example, again, with rice, use less water, so that there is less methane produced from the rotting of the submerged vegetation. I think that one reason that climate change is a profound challenge is that there are so many different contributions to the problem, and there are not easy solutions. It is something that requires a lot of effort and contributions from everyone

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Ms. Occomy, in your testimony, you committed to being a good steward of U.S. financial contributions to the bank. And we agree. It is critically important U.S. resources are used in a responsible and efficient manner. So, do you believe requiring borrowers—people that come to the bank to borrow money—that they accept higher-cost energy projects, in terms of only being able to borrow for costs for energy projects that are approved by some people that have a specific position, from a climate change standpoint—do you believe requiring borrowers to accept high-cost energy projects is a responsible use of taxpayer dollars when affordable, reliable alternatives are readily available?

Ms. OCCOMY. Thank you, Chairman Barrasso, for that question.

Again, you know, a major focus of the work of the African Development Bank is to promote access to modern, reliable, efficient energy services and infrastructure.

Senator BARRASSO. Even if it is more expensive. I mean, that is the question. Is modern, newer, not been around for thousands of years under the ground, but something built up and——

Ms. OCCOMY. Absolutely. When a project comes before us to review and to consider the U.S.'s determination as to whether to support that project, it is important to look actually at the full lifecycle costs. Sometimes there may be higher costs up front relating to implementing a modern, more efficient form of energy. But, over the lifecycle of the project, it should not be higher. So, I think it is important, not necessary to look just at the upfront investment costs, which seem to be higher, but to look at the full lifecycle costs of the project and to take that into consideration, and also to look at, generally speaking, potential environmental and social costs associated with not implementing a more modern, efficient, reliable source of energy.

So, I think it is important, you know, not just to look solely at perhaps higher costs up front, but to look at the full lifecycle costs of the project, the environmental, social costs, and so forth.

Senator BARRASSO. So, the social cost of carbon, the lifecycle of the project—in my multiple trips to Africa, people wanted affordable—first, they wanted electricity. They wanted electricity. I mean, it is an astonishing thing, as you travel to these areas that just completely go dark at night, due to lack of electricity. They want affordable energy today. And I do not think any of the many, many people I visited in so many communities give any consideration to the lifecycle cost of the project or the social cost of the project. And they believe—and I agree with them—that their lives could be made so much better with available electricity, affordable electricity today.

And I just—so, I think about this, and I think that—you know, should the economic feasibility, the potential to provide maximum access to energy with maximum efficiency, not be the biggest factors when evaluating projects to get electricity that is affordable to those people today? Is that not the thing that could actually help so many people worldwide, in terms of the long-term—you talk about lifecycle—I am talking about their life, that lifecycle of that individual, of that human being, who views the whole thing as their lifecycle, not some investment project lifecycle.

Ms. OCCOMY. Thank you, Chairman.

You know, as I stated earlier, the administration's policies do recognize that there are unique needs for the poorest countries, particularly those in Africa. And taking that into consideration, under certain administration policies, the United States can vote in favor of coal power generation plants if it is—under certain conditions, if the project promotes more efficient coal technologies and there is no other economically viable alternative.

So, I think the criterion really is, you know, looking at all of the alternative approaches to address the energy needs, particularly for the poorest countries, and then to figure out, What is the most economically viable alternative to address that need? So——

But, the United States can support coal projects in consideration of the current policies.

Senator BARRASSO. You know, I just recently learned that the African Development Bank—because you mentioned the word "voting" and how you can vote—and I learned that the bank is actually having elections for the new president, I think, in a couple of weeks. I do not even know how that is structured. Could you kind of run through that for me?

Ms. OCCOMY. Yes. Thank you for raising that point.

I welcome the African Development Bank's open, transparent, merit-based process for selecting a president. The bank will be selecting a president on May 28 at its annual meeting of eight candidates who have been put forth by their countries. I am not aware of who the United States is supporting of the eight candidates. But, if confirmed, I look forward to working with the newly elected president to implement his or her's vision for the African Development Bank, going forward.

Senator BARRASSO. So, is it an annual—you said at their annual meeting they are going to do this, of the eight candidates. Is it for a 1-year term, and they are just trying to figure out how——

Ms. OCCOMY. Right. Oh, I am sorry.

Senator BARRASSO [continuing]. How we decide how that——

Ms. OCCOMY. Right.

Senator BARRASSO [continuing]. How we vote for——

Ms. OCCOMY. Right. So, at the annual meeting, the president is elected. And this is after a very deliberative process, where the candidates have put forth their positions at different venues. In fact, they were here at the spring meetings for the World Bank and the IMF, and there was a side meeting where they presented their candidacies and agent—you know, agendas for those in the international development community. So, in general, it is a very open, you know, transparent, merit-based process.

The—excuse me—the term of the president, I believe, is for 4 years. And that term can be—he can—he or she——

Senator BARRASSO. Right.

Ms. OCCOMY [continuing]. Can be reelected——

Senator BARRASSO. Run for——

Ms. OCCOMY [continuing]. For another term.

Senator BARRASSO. Yes.

Ms. OCCOMY. And so, President Kaberuka, the end of his second term——

Senator BARRASSO. Oh, so—that is right, it is——

Ms. OCCOMY [continuing]. Is coming up.

Senator BARRASSO [continuing]. Open now to——

Ms. OCCOMY. And so, now that is why——

Senator BARRASSO [continuing]. Eight people.

Ms. OCCOMY [continuing]. They are electing a new president.

Senator BARRASSO. Good.

Thank you. Thank you. That helps clarify.

Mr. Sabharwal, a quick question for you. I think Senator Gardner asked you about Greece being able to make the recent 750 million euro payment, almost defaulted. They have another payment due in June. You know, I would ask if you would talk a little bit more about that, what the impact of a default would be, how effec-

tive this International Monetary Fund's program is in Greece, and what is the argument for having the IMF continue to loan more money to Greece, you know, given the situation.

Mr. SABHARWAL. Okay. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman. So, there are multiple questions there.

First of all, the significance of putting this policy in place was, of course, the contagion effect that was going to be significantly affecting the eurozone, which, in turn, as one of our major trading partners, going to affect the U.S. economy.

The second point I would make, that, as a percentage of total financing from the institutions, the IMF's share has actually decreased from about 26 percent, when it was put in place, to about 17 percent today. That is because of the different, kind of, repayment terms that there are between the IMF and the other institutions that are part of the package, the ECP and the European Commission.

We are encouraged that the discussions and negotiations are ongoing between the other parties. There was a period when there were no discussions, no constructive dialogue. But, we think that that period has passed. We are looking at meetings taking place later on this week in Latvia on the matter, and we believe that a resolution will be reached that will enable Greece to pay its obligations to the IMF as they come due. The IMF has really never lost money, so it has always been in a position that perhaps some nations have fallen into arrears for a period of time—for instance, Liberia—but they have recovered very successfully. So, we are fully confident that the discussions between the institutions and Greece will be successful.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you.

Senator Udall, additional questions?

Senator UDALL. I would submit most of my—the rest of my questions for the record and just thank the witnesses, and thank their families for the very supportive role that they play.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BARRASSO. And you make an excellent point there.

We thank each of you for your testimony, your willingness to serve our Nation. It is my hope each of you will be dedicated to advancing American interests all across the globe.

Members of the committee will have an opportunity, until the close of business on Thursday the 21st, to submit questions for the record. We ask you try to respond promptly in writing to the committee in order your nomination to be considered in a timely manner.

Thank you very much. Congratulations, again.

Hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF MILEYDI GUILARTE, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTER-AMERIOCAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE GUILARTE'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR BARRASSO

Question. What are the Inter-American Development Bank's relative strengths compared to the other international financial institutions? In what areas does the Inter-American Development Bank have a comparative advantage?

Answer. As a regional development bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has a sole focus on Latin America and the Caribbean, and its breadth and depth of knowledge of the economic, social, and political dynamics of the region and its borrowing member countries is its main relative strength. It has offices in every one of its borrowing member countries to ensure continuous policy dialogue and supervision of its projects. The IDB has developed broad-based sectoral/thematic comparative advantage in infrastructure, particularly energy; citizen security; and social sector development, including conditional cash transfer programs. The IDB also effectively works across countries on regional initiatives, including customs and trade facilitation, and transport and energy infrastructure.

Question. In January 2015, Vice President Biden stated, "An integrated North America, working to promote energy security beyond our borders can be a major asset for the entire hemisphere. And it's profoundly in the self-interest of the United States to see the Caribbean countries succeed as prosperous, secure, energy-independent neighbors."

- How can the Inter-American Development Bank help support greater regional interconnection of energy markets and infrastructure?

Answer. The IDB has a number of ongoing programs that actively support greater regional interconnection of energy markets and energy infrastructure investment. With significant assistance from the IDB over many years, Central American governments recently succeeded in integrating their electricity markets through an initiative known as the Central American Electrical Interconnection System (SIEPAC). To achieve this success, the IDB, in cooperation with the United States, facilitated a dialogue in 2013 among Central American governments that resulted in a ministerial declaration outlining the governments' commitment to regional energy trade. And in November 2014, the Central American governments supported a Mesoamerican Energy Investment Summit in Guatemala that drew over 500 participants to highlight the investment potential in the region and to celebrate the completion of the SIEPAC transmission line. The IDB has also provided direct financing totaling $253.5 million and an additional $25 million in technical assistance to support Central America's energy infrastructure and to facilitate creating the regional energy market.

In addition to Central America, the IDB has been working with Andean countries on the Andean regional electric integration process. The IDB has provided a variety of technical assistance to help in this effort and is the technical secretary of the Andean Electrical Interconnection System (SINEA).

The IDB has done considerable work with the Caribbean to assess the potential of regional energy markets, including how best to develop and use sustainable sources of energy, such as natural gas and renewable energy sources.

Question. What steps is the Inter-American Development Bank currently taking to provide the region with energy security and diversification through natural gas?

Answer. The IDB is committed to financing reliable, low-cost generation in Latin America and the Caribbean. The IDB is helping many clients develop favorable policy and regulatory frameworks for energy access, in addition to support for the private sector to increase the use of efficient technologies.

Now that the SIEPAC is complete, thanks in large part to the efforts of the IDB, Central American economies are looking to introduce natural gas to substitute for heavy fuel and diesel generation in the coming years. To support that effort, the IDB has completed prefeasibility studies for natural gas in power generation in both Central America and the Caribbean, and is supporting analysis of some natural gas projects, including the proposed Mexican natural gas pipeline project with El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.

Question. Do you believe that American liquefied natural gas exports would improve energy diversification in the Western Hemisphere and promote economic growth in the region?

Answer. Natural gas can be a useful part of a country's or region's energy diversification strategy like renewables and energy efficiency. As is the case for any energy infrastructure project, mobilizing the finance required to introduce natural gas into a given country requires open, transparent, and stable investment climates and appropriate legal, policy, and regulatory frameworks.

Question. What specific actions is the U.S. Government taking to work with the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the Organization of American States and American companies in coordinating efforts on cross-border trade in electricity, regional interconnection, and energy development?

Answer. Working with regional partners, including the IDB, the World Bank, and the Organization of American States (OAS), the United States is supporting the Connecting the Americas 2022 initiative (Connect 2022) under the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA). The most recent meeting of the ECPA was hosted by the Mexican Government on May 25–26, 2015. Connect 2022 seeks to achieve universal access to electricity and create a business climate that accelerates interconnection and renewable energy. Connect 2022 coordinates technical assistance for regulatory and institutional reform, builds on extensive bilateral and subregional government efforts to connect grids and empower regional energy integration, supports IDB and World Bank power sector programs, and catalyzes private investment to promote greater access to cleaner and low-cost energy.

The administration's Central America strategy, as well as the Northern Triangle's Alliance for Prosperity—for which the IDB serves as Secretariat—also advance Central American energy security by emphasizing energy sector reform and development. In addition, President Obama, in his April 2015 visit to Panama for the Summit of the Americas, launched a new Central American and Caribbean Energy Security Task Force to help these smaller markets promote policies that attract private investment in lower carbon power sources and reduce their dependency on imported oil.

The U.S. Department of Commerce maintains an Office of Business Liaison in the IDB to work with the American business community to identify business opportunities, provide advice and counsel on strategies for approaching those opportunities, and advocate before the IDB and borrowing country governments on behalf of interested American businesses.

The IDB also hosts the Americas Business Dialogue (ABD), which serves as a platform for private sector entities in Latin America and the Caribbean to engage with governments on potential reforms, and which includes efforts to maximize the potential of the region's energy market as one of its four areas of focus.

Question. In 2012, the United States joined leaders of the Western Hemisphere in committing to an initiative called "Connecting the Americas 2022." The initiative aims to achieve universal access to electricity through enhanced electrical interconnection by 2022.

- ♦ What is the status of this initiative and what progress has been made in reaching the initiative's goals?

Answer. Working with regional partners, including the IDB, the World Bank, and the OAS, the United States is supporting the Connecting the Americas 2022 initiative (Connect 2022) under the ECPA. The most recent meeting of the ECPA was hosted by the Mexican Government on May 25–26, 2015. Connect 2022 seeks to achieve universal access to electricity and create a business climate that accelerates interconnection and renewable energy. Connect 2022 coordinates technical assistance for regulatory and institutional reform, builds on extensive bilateral and subregional government efforts to connect grids and empower regional energy integration, supports IDB and World Bank power sector programs, and catalyzes private investment to promote greater access to cleaner and low-cost energy.

Significant process has been made in Central America, which has been a leader in furthering the Connect 2022 efforts. SIEPAC and the related regional transmission line, completed in September 2014, now connects six Central American countries from Guatemala to Panama and establishes a regional market.

In addition to Central America, the IDB and the United States have been working with Andean countries on the Andean Regional electric integration process. The IDB has provided a variety of technical assistance to help in this effort and is the technical secretary of SINEA.

Question. How is the Connecting the Americas 2022 complementing or adding to the work being done at Inter-American Development Bank?

Answer. The IDB has been a key partner in the Connect 2022 initiative, providing complementary support to the efforts of the United States. With significant assistance from the IDB over many years, Central American governments recently succeeded in integrating their electricity markets through the SIEPAC initiative. To achieve this success, the IDB, in cooperation with the United States, facilitated a dialogue in 2013 among Central American governments that resulted in a ministerial declaration outlining the governments' commitment to regional energy trade. And in November 2014, the Central American governments supported a Mesoamerican Energy Investment Summit in Guatemala that drew over 500 participants to highlight the investment potential in the region and to celebrate the completion of the SIEPAC transmission line. The IDB also has provided direct financing totaling $253.5 million and an additional $25 million in technical assistance to support Central America's energy infrastructure and to facilitate creating the regional energy market.

In addition to Central America, the IDB has been working with Andean countries on the Andean Regional electric integration process. The IDB has provided a variety of technical assistance to help in this effort and is the technical secretary of the SINEA.

The IDB has done considerable work with the Caribbean to assess the potential of regional energy markets, including how best to develop and use sustainable sources of energy such as natural gas and renewable energy sources.

Question. What kind of technical assistance and capacity-building programs is the United States providing to support the Connecting the Americas 2022 in Central America, the Caribbean, and the Andean region?

Answer. In collaboration with the IDB, the State Department and USAID are providing policy and technical assistance to improve regional electricity market development and trade in Central America. Additionally, the U.S. and Mexican Governments have been working with Guatemala on plans to pass through Mexican electricity and gas to benefit Central America as a whole.

In Chile and Peru, the State Department is working with utilities to assess interconnection options in support of connecting the Chilean and Andean electrical grids.

In the Caribbean, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), in coordination with the State Department, USAID, and the Department of Energy, are launching a $20 million facility to encourage investment in clean energy projects in the region. The facility will provide early-stage funding to catalyze greater private and public sector investment in clean energy projects.

Question. The United States is the largest contributor to the Inter-American Development Bank. Regional developing countries are required to have a controlling majority vote at the Bank. A March 2013 report by the Inter-American Development Bank's Office of Evaluation and Oversight stated that the effectiveness of reforms has been limited. The report found that, "reforms face inherent tensions with the demand-driven orientation of the Bank, and approaches are needed that can help meaningfully identify where Bank capabilities and borrower demand intersect."

Please describe the steps you would take to improve the effectiveness of the reforms.

Answer. If confirmed, I would work closely with IDB Management and fellow Board members to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations from the 2013 Office of Evaluation and Oversight Report to improve and deepen the effectiveness of the reforms undertaken as part of the Ninth General Capital Increase of the IDB. Some examples of those reforms are the recently approved revision of the policy for the Independent Consultation and Investigation Mechanism, the IDB's grievance mechanism for people affected by IDB projects; the update of the IDB's macroeconomic sustainability assessments; the IDB Governors' approval of a reform to consolidate the IDB's private sector activities within one entity; and improvements to IDB's framework for measuring development effectiveness, including enhancing its project completion reports and the guidelines for country strategies. If confirmed, I will encourage the Office of Evaluation and Oversight to continue reporting independently on the status of reforms and seek full implementation of action plans from IDB Management to continue improving the effectiveness of those reforms.

Question. What reforms would be your top priority at the Inter-American Development Bank?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work to ensure that the consolidation of the private sector activities of the IDB is implemented in a way that enhances efficiency and improves development effectiveness. I would promote sound use of financial resources, including through adherence to capital adequacy policies and prudential limits. I would also work to further the IDB's results focus to improve the impact of IDB activities in addressing inequality and bolstering growth in a region that is critical to the national and economic security of the United States. Given the IDB's pivotal role as Secretariat for the Northern Triangle's Alliance for Prosperity, I would also work to ensure that U.S. national interests remain a priority through the administration's Central America strategy.

Question. Do you believe meaningful reforms can take place while borrower countries maintain a majority of the voting power?

Answer. Yes. I believe that a number of meaningful reforms have already taken place at the IDB, particularly in the context of the Ninth General Capital Increase. As the majority owners of the IDB, the borrowing member countries have a strong interest in ensuring that the IDB's resources are deployed effectively and efficiently to address the challenges in the region. If confirmed, I will seek to work with all shareholders, including the borrowing member countries, to further implement and deepen the reform agenda at the IDB.

RESPONSES OF JENNIFER ANN HAVERKAMP, NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR OCEANS AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-DESIGNATE HAVERKAMP'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR BARRASSO

Question. Are you committed to eliminating duplication and redundancies at the Department of State?

Answer. I strongly support using taxpayer funds in the most effective and efficient manner. In properly managing the Department's programs and resources, it is of fundamental importance to continually look for and implement ways to improve the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of operations.

Question. In fiscal year 2014, what percentage of the work of the Bureau of Oceans and International Environment and Scientific Affairs involved international climate change? In fiscal year 2014, what percentage of the Bureau's funding was spent on international climate change programs?

Answer. My understanding is that approximately 14 percent of the Bureau's salaries and operating expenses in fiscal year 2014 involved international climate change. Approximately 78 percent of the Bureau's Fiscal Year 2014 Economic Support Fund (ESF) resources were allocated for adaptation, clean energy and sustainable landscapes programs.

Question. Please provide examples of specific projects funded by the Bureau for adaptation, clean energy, and sustainable landscapes in fiscal year 2014. What were the tangible results and impacts of the funding?

Answer. In the case of adaptation, my understanding is that the OES Bureau provides funding for two multilateral specialized adaptation funds, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), which support hard-won development gains in the face of climate variability and change. Examples include:

- In Nepal, the LDCF is providing community-based early flood warning to nearly 32,000 vulnerable people and reducing the risk of glacial lake outburst floods through artificial drainage.
- In Indonesia, the SCCF is strengthening the resilience of 40 rural communities by adjusting subsistence farming practices to be more resilient to variable and extreme climatic conditions and helping communities to improve water resources in the face of projected changes in rainfall patterns.
- In the Philippines, the SCCF is strengthening the resilience of vulnerable farming communities by stimulating private sector engagement in climate risk reduction, developing Weather Index Based Insurance and financial literacy training for farming households, preparing early warning system plans, and conducting vulnerability adaptation assessments.

In the case of clean energy, my understanding is that, with $20 million the OES Bureau has provided to the U.S.-Africa Clean Energy Finance Initiative (U.S.–

ACEF), to date, OPIC and USTDA expect to leverage a total of nearly $2 billion in investment to increase access to clean energy for Africa. The U.S.–ACEF program is designed to help promising clean energy projects develop into viable candidates for financing by providing small amounts of early-stage funding for essential inputs, such as technical and feasibility studies. U.S.–ACEF serves a catalytic role to advance these projects and help attract far larger levels of private sector follow-on investment, which can help to fuel economic growth in the region while providing access to modern clean energy services. For example, in Tanzania, $600,000 was made available to a U.S. energy developer to help fund a feasibility study which is expected to mobilize $139 million in capital for a 55-megawatt solar photovoltaic project at the University of Dodoma (UDOM) campus.

In the case of sustainable landscapes, my understanding is that the OES Bureau supports the SilvaCarbon program, a joint effort of eight U.S. Government agencies that enables developing countries to better understand and manage their forests by leveraging U.S. technical expertise on forest and forest carbon mapping and monitoring. This technical capacity provides an essential foundation to enable countries to prioritize their efforts to preserve forests, reducing emissions from deforestation and safeguarding other benefits like biodiversity and water quality. With technical assistance from SilvaCarbon:

- Ecuador has completed its first national forest inventory;
- Colombia was able to generate estimates of forest cover change annually for the first time;
- Gabon has developed a draft national land-use plan; and
- Peru finalized its first forest dynamics map, which provides essential information needed to estimate forest cover and deforestation rates.

Question. How does the Office of Climate Change in this Bureau interact with the Office of the Special Climate Envoy Todd Stern? In what areas is there overlap in responsibilities and duties?

Answer. My understanding is that the Special Envoy for Climate Change leads the international climate change negotiations for the U.S. Government and oversees policy aspects of international climate activities in the State Department. The Special Envoy has an office focused on high-level meetings, negotiations, and policy-making.

OES's Office of Global Change handles a large portfolio of issues. In relation to the international climate change negotiations, the office provides staff-level support for the Special Envoy and Deputy Special Envoys. Its officers serve as working-level negotiators, and the office provides staff support for high-level diplomatic meetings to advance U.S. objectives. These distinct roles are complementary and I understand that there is no duplication in duties between these offices, which work closely together.

Question. Please describe the current staffing, resources, and responsibilities of the Office of Climate Change. In addition, please describe when the Office was created and under what statutory authority.

Answer. At the present time, the Office of Global Change in the OES Bureau has 18 permanent, full-time direct hire staff. It also has nonpermanent positions, including six fellows and temporary staff, and five contractors. The Office of Global Change provides staff-level support and technical expertise for the Special Envoy and Deputy Special Envoys in international negotiations related to climate change, supports several international climate change initiatives, and oversees implementation of OES programs related to climate change. The office has expertise on issues such as climate change mitigation, adaptation, sustainable landscapes, finance, science, and technology, as well as on management of programs. The Office of Global Change was established in 1989 pursuant to constitutional and statutory authorities regarding management of the day-to-day conduct of U.S. foreign relations.

Question. Please describe the current staffing, resources, and responsibilities of the Office of the Special Climate Envoy. In addition, please describe when the Office was created and under what statutory authority.

Answer. The Special Envoy for Climate Change serves as the chief U.S. negotiator under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was ratified by the United States on October 15, 1992. In this role, he helps develop the administration's international policy on climate, and represents the United States internationally at the ministerial-level in all bilateral and multilateral negotiations regarding climate change. Todd Stern was appointed on January 26, 2009.

The Special Envoy's office was established under the constitutional and statutory authorities regarding management of the day-to-day conduct of U.S. foreign relations. The Special Envoy for Climate Change and his immediate office were established to provide greater senior level focus to ensure that the interests of the United States are adequately protected, given the complex and high-level nature of the international climate discussions.

The Special Envoy's office coordinates the deployment of federal expertise and resources in the UNFCCC negotiating process, helping to ensure the best possible outcomes for the range of U.S. stakeholders. In addition to the Special Envoy, the office currently has seven full-time staff and three contractors.

Question. The United States is currently participating in international climate negotiations with the goal of reaching an agreement by the end of the year.

- ♦ What form of an international agreement is the United States advocating for at the international climate change negotiations?
- ♦ Will the agreement be legally binding on the United States and other countries, including funding commitments for any provision contained within the agreement?
- ♦ What kinds of agreements or commitments currently under negotiation would require congressional action, such as the advice and consent of the Senate, and what might not? Please explain your reasoning.

Answer. A 2011 decision of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, adopted in Durban, South Africa, launched a process to develop a "protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties. . . . "

The Durban decision makes clear that the purpose of a future Paris agreement is to further the objective of the Convention (i.e., to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate), yet leaves the Parties with substantial flexibility regarding its form and the legal nature of its provisions.

It is my understanding that at this stage, the international discussions are more focused on the substance of the agreement than on issues related to its form, such as whether it should be a protocol or whether particular provisions should be legally binding. The administration has indicated that the United States seeks an agreement that is ambitious in light of the climate challenge; that reflects nationally determined mitigation efforts in line with national circumstances and capabilities; that provides for accountability with respect to such efforts; that takes account of evolving emissions and economic trends; and that promotes adaptation by parties to climate impacts.

- ♦ Can the administration enter into a politically binding international agreement without congressional approval?

Answer. I understand the term "politically binding" in your question to refer to arrangements that do not give rise to legal obligations under U.S. or international law. It is my understanding that such nonbinding arrangements have been utilized by Presidents of both parties throughout our history to address a range of diplomatic and national security matters and do not require congressional approval.

- ♦ What state, local governing entity or community would not be subject to a politically binding treaty?

Answer. I understand the term "politically binding" in your question to refer to arrangements that do not give rise to legal obligations under U.S. or international law. Accordingly, any such nonbinding arrangements would create no legal obligations for any state, local governing entity, or community.

- ♦ How does the administration plan to legally commit to the President's November 2014 pledge to cut U.S. greenhouse gas emission to 26–28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025?

Answer. I understand that the administration does not intend to legally commit the United States to the 26–28 percent target. Moreover, I understand that the administration favors an approach to the Paris agreement under which emissions targets are not legally binding.

- ♦ Please describe any existing statutory authorities the administration may expect to rely on to implement the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC.) Does the administration believe it has the full statutory authority to implement its recently announced INDC now or will the administration need Congress to provide additional authorities?

Answer. I understand that the administration carefully evaluated available statutory authorities in the development of the INDC. My understanding is that several

U.S. laws, as well as existing and proposed regulations thereunder, are relevant to the implementation of the U.S. target, including the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. § 7401 et seq.), the Energy Policy Act (42 U.S.C. § 13201 et seq.), and the Energy Independence and Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 17001 et seq.). Since 2009, the United States has completed the following regulatory actions:

Under the Clean Air Act, the United States Department of Transportation and the United States Environmental Protection Agency adopted fuel economy standards for light-duty vehicles for model years 2012–2025 and for heavy-duty vehicles for model years 2014–2018.

Under the Energy Policy Act and the Energy Independence and Security Act, the United States Department of Energy has finalized multiple measures addressing buildings sector emissions including energy conservation standards for 29 categories of appliances and equipment as well as a building code determination for commercial buildings.

Under the Clean Air Act, the United States Environmental Protection Agency has approved the use of specific alternatives to high-global warming potential hydrofluorocarbons (high-GWP HFCs) in certain applications through the Significant New Alternatives Policy program.

At this time:

Under the Clean Air Act, the United States Environmental Protection Agency is moving to finalize by summer 2015 regulations to cut carbon pollution from new and existing power plants.

Under the Clean Air Act, the United States Department of Transportation and the United States Environmental Protection Agency are moving to promulgate post-2018 fuel economy standards for heavy-duty vehicles.

Under the Clean Air Act, the United States Environmental Protection Agency is developing standards to address methane emissions from landfills and the oil and gas sector.

Under the Clean Air Act, the United States Environmental Protection Agency is moving to reduce the use and emissions of high-GWP HFCs through the Significant New Alternatives Policy program.

Under the Energy Policy Act and the Energy Independence and Security Act, the United States Department of Energy is continuing to reduce buildings sector emissions including by promulgating energy conservation standards for a broad range of appliances and equipment, as well as a building code determination for residential buildings.

♦ What was the process the administration used for determining the U.S. commitment? What consultations and inputs from Congress and the American public did the administration seek when working to establish the U.S. commitment?

Answer. I understand that the administration undertook an extensive, rigorous interagency process to identify and assess potential emission reductions that are both achievable and cost effective. This process examined options to reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases in every economic sector through existing statutory and executive authorities and voluntary programs.

It is my understanding that agencies responsible for implementing these existing statutory and executive authorities and voluntary programs have had wide ranging discussions with stakeholders from the public, private and nonprofit sector, including formal and informal consultations with Congress.

♦ What role does the Bureau of Oceans and International Environment and Scientific Affairs have in the international climate change negotiations?

Answer. The Office of Global Change in the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs handles a large portfolio of issues. In relation to the international climate change negotiations, the office provides staff-level support and technical expertise for the Special Envoy and support for high-level diplomatic meetings to advance U.S. objectives, and its staff serve as working-level negotiators.

♦ What role will you play in the negotiations? What specific advice, analysis, information, and support is the Office of Climate providing for the international climate negotiations?

Answer. It is my understanding that over the past 14 years, under this administration and the Bush administration, the OES Assistant Secretary did not play a direct, formal role in the international climate change negotiations.

The Office of Global Change in the OES Bureau provides staff-level support and technical expertise for the Special Envoy and Deputy Special Envoy in the negotiations. That includes expertise on issues such as climate change mitigation, adaptation, sustainable landscapes, finance, science, and technology, as well as program

management and support for high-level diplomatic meetings. Office staff also serve as working-level negotiators.

Question. In November 2014, President Obama announced a pledge of $3 billion to create a brand new Global Climate Fund. His fiscal year 2016 budget request asks for $500 million to start funding that pledge.

- What was the process the administration used for determining the appropriate commitment to the Global Climate Fund? What consultations did the administration have with Congress on this commitment?

Answer. It is my understanding that the administration undertook an interagency discussion among staff of the Department of Treasury, Department of State, Office of Management and Budget and the National Security Council to determine what the U.S. pledge should be as a good base of funding in the Green Climate Fund's initial few years. The key reference point was the Bush administration's $2 billion pledge to the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs), which that administration had planned to provide over a 3-year period. In light of a legislative requirement related to a multiyear pledge, I understand that the administration consulted with relevant House and Senate staff 10 days before the GCF pledge was announced, and then met with staff on multiple other occasions during those 10 days.

- What impact evaluations have been completed on the previous $2 billion in U.S. funding for international climate change already provided to the Climate Investment Funds?

Answer. My understanding is that an independent evaluation of the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs), carried out by the independent evaluation departments of the multilateral development banks, was released in June 2014 and is available at http://www.cifevaluation.org. Because of the early stage of most CIF investments (many of which are of very long duration), the evaluation focused more on institutional issues such as the process for developing country investment plans. Further CIF project-level evaluations will be conducted in the future. Each multilateral development bank that participates in the CIFs is including CIF programs or projects into their evaluation work program. Funding is being set aside in the CIF budget to support impact evaluations and other evaluation tools.

- When will the Climate Investment Funds be closed down? What will happen to the funding that remains or comes back into the fund?

Answer. My understanding is that the Trust Fund Committees of the Climate Investment Funds will make a decision in the future about the sunset of the CIFs, and when not to accept new contributions into the Funds. Then, once all contributions have been committed to projects, no new projects will be approved. Because the Climate Investment Funds are intended to sunset, my understanding is that financial reflows will probably not be used to finance future projects.

- Why is it responsible for the administration to recommend closing down the current Climate Investment Funds and creating a larger brand new Global Climate Fund if no evaluations have been done on the impact and results of U.S. funding to the current international climate change programs?

Answer. My understanding is that the administration supports having a robust evaluation program for the CIFs in order to inform future programs at the Green Climate Fund and elsewhere. An independent evaluation of the CIFs was released in June 2014 and is available at http://www.cifevaluation.org. Because of the early stage of most CIF investments (many of which are of very long duration), this evaluation focused more on institutional issues such as the process for developing country investment plans. We expect that further CIF project-level evaluations will be conducted in the future.

RESPONSES OF MARCIA DENISE OCCOMY, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. DIRECTOR OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE OCCOMY'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR BARRASSO

Question. Do you believe the African Development Bank should equally support all types of energy resources in order to provide sub-Saharan Africa with the electricity it needs to grow their way out of poverty?

Answer. Facilitating energy access and energy security for the people of Africa is a priority for the African Development Bank and the United States. I understand that energy access is essential to promoting the growth of African economies. If con-

firmed, I will be committed to promoting energy access through an appropriate mix of energy resources consistent with U.S. laws and policies and the African Development Bank's own operating guidelines and policies.

Question. When reviewing projects at the African Development Bank, what criterion is used in determining whether the United States will support the project?

Answer. In reviewing projects at the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United States takes into account a range of different factors to determine whether or not to support a specific project. These factors include the degree to which the project will support a country's efforts to reduce poverty, whether the project is well-designed and mitigates foreseeable risks, whether the project is as sustainable (financially and economically) as possible, and whether the project meets both the AfDB's policies and U.S. legislative provisions.

Question. Do you believe economic feasibility and the potential to provide maximum access to energy with maximum efficiency must be the biggest factors when evaluating projects?

Answer. Economic feasibility and the degree to which a project increases energy access are important, but not the only factors in evaluating energy projects. The design of effective energy projects will also take into account other factors, such as improving the long-term financial sustainability of the country's energy sector; reducing the potential for corruption in the project; and mitigating the environmental, health, and social impacts of the project.

Question. Coal provides a low cost 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. The U.S. Government is committed to providing energy access and energy security to people around the globe as an important element of economic development. In the poorest countries, where energy needs are often the greatest, I understand that the President's Climate Action Plan allows for support for new coal power-generation projects under certain conditions that focus on promoting the most efficient coal technologies and where no other economically viable alternative exists. In wealthier countries, the U.S. may support new coal-fired power projects that deploy carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) technologies.

Question. Please list and provide information on all the countries in the African Development Bank that have oil, natural gas, and coal resources.

Answer. According to the latest data available from the Energy Information Agency at the Department of Energy, the African Development Bank's regional member countries with the largest reserves of oil are Libya, Nigeria, Algeria, and Angola. The largest proved reserves of natural gas are in Nigeria, Algeria, Mozambique, Egypt, Libya, and Angola. The largest recoverable reserves of coal are in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Nigeria. Complete data for all countries with any proven reserves are below [Figure 1.] .

Question. What proportion of procurement contracts at the African Development Bank and the African Development Fund is awarded to U.S. businesses? What proportion of these contracts is awarded to Chinese businesses? What specific steps would you advocate for at the African Development Bank and the African Development Fund to increase the percentage of contracts awarded to U.S. companies?

Answer. In 2014, U.S. businesses received 0.54 percent of all procurement contracts by number and 0.26 percent of procurement contracts by value. Chinese business received 1.94 percent of contracts by number and 24.28 percent by value. If confirmed, I will advocate for maintaining transparent and competitive procurement practices and an increased focus on a value-for-money approach that considers costs over the full life cycle of projects rather than merely the lowest priced bid. U.S. firms are typically better positioned when such a value-for-money approach is taken. I understand that the African Development Bank is currently reviewing its procurement policies, which provides an opportunity to encourage a better focus on value-for-money approach to be reflected in the African Development Bank's updated procurement policies.

Oil, Proved Reserves	
Country	Billions of Barrels of Proved Reserves
Libya	48.0
Nigeria	37.0
Algeria	12.0
Angola	9.0
Sudan and South Sudan	5.0
Egypt	4.4
Uganda	2.5
Gabon	2.0
Congo (Brazzaville)	1.6
Chad	1.5
Equatorial Guinea	1.1
Ghana	0.7
Tunisia	0.4
Cameroon	0.2
Congo (Kinshasa)	0.2
Niger	0.2
Ivory Coast	0.1

Natural Gas, Proved Reserves	
Country	Trillions of Cubic Feet of Proved Reserves
Nigeria	180.0
Algeria	159.0
Mozambique	100.0
Egypt	77.0
Libya	53.0
Angola	9.7
Cameroon	4.8
Congo (Brazzaville)	3.2
Sudan and South Sudan	3.0
Tunisia	2.3
Namibia	2.2
Rwanda	2.0
Equatorial Guinea	1.3
Cote dIvoire (IvoryCoast)	1.0
Gabon	1.0
Mauritania	1.0
Ethiopia	0.9
Ghana	0.8
Uganda	0.5
Niger	0.2
Somalia	0.2

Coal, Recoverable Reserves	
Country	Millions of Short Tons of Recoverable Coal
South Africa	33241.0
Zimbabwe	553.0
Mozambique	234.0
Tanzania	220.0
Nigeria	209.0
Swaziland	159.0
Morocco	134.0
Congo (Kinshasa)	97.0
Niger	77.0
Algeria	65.0
Botswana	44.0
Egypt	18.0
Zambia	11.0
Central African Republic	3.3
Malawi	2.2

Figure 1.

Question. What do you believe is an appropriate role for China to play at the African Development Bank and African Development Fund?

Answer. China is a nonregional shareholder of the African Development Bank and a donor to the African Development Fund. China should continue to engage constructively with other AfDB shareholders and AfDB Management to support Africa's development. As China's income and role in the global economy grows, it should support the poorest countries by contributing more to the concessional window, the African Development Fund.

Question. What is your view of China's recently launched Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Chinese investment efforts in Africa? How will these efforts complement or duplicate efforts at the African Development Bank?

Answer. It is widely acknowledge that there is a pressing need to enhance infrastructure investment in Africa and around the world. China can provide an important contribution to Africa's development through its infrastructure investments, provided they maintain high-quality standards and operate within strong safeguards including established fiduciary, economic, and social safeguards. I believe that any new multilateral financial institution should share the international community's strong commitment to the high-quality standards of the existing multilateral development banks, including the African Development Bank. My understanding is that the AIIB intends to focus exclusively in Asia. However, if confirmed, I would encourage the African Development Bank to seek to ensure that any institution providing financing in Africa maintains these high-quality standards and operational safeguards.

Question. Please describe the planned $2 billion African Development Bank—People's Bank of China African Common Growth Fund and the U.S. view of this initiative. Is the United States considering a similar arrangement for the administration's Power Africa Initiative?

Answer. China created and will contribute $2 billion, over 10 years, to the Africa Growing Together Fund (AGTF) that will be housed at the AfDB. The AGTF will cofinance projects eligible for AfDB financing using a variety of funding modalities. The United States welcomes the additional financing that China will be making available to support Africa's development through the AGTF, especially as all projects financed from the AGTF must use the AfDB's standards, including those related to environmental and social safeguards and procurement rules.

While the United States has not considered a designated funding mechanism for its Power Africa partnership with the AfDB, the AfDB itself has pledged $3 billion of its own funds toward reaching the goals set by Power Africa. Power Africa is working closely with the AfDB to identify priority Power Africa transactions and allocate resources accordingly. In addition, both the AfDB and Power Africa have seconded staff members to the other's organization to enhance coordination. Power Africa has also provided $3 million to the African Legal Support Facility, an AfDB initiative that strengthens African countries' legal expertise and negotiating capacity in debt management and litigation, natural resources and extractive industries management and contracting, investment agreements, and related commercial and business transactions.

Question. The African Development Bank President Kaberuka recommended combining the African Development Bank and the African Development Fund lending windows into a single facility.

- Do you support this proposal? Did the 13th replenishment of the African Development Fund replenishment negotiations address this matter? What are the benefits and risks of providing market-rate and concessional assistance through the same facility?

Answer. I understand that while President Kaberuka expressed interest in this idea, AfDB Management has not actively proposed it during the negotiations on the 13th replenishment of the African Development Fund (AfDF) or since. The United States welcomes ideas from the multilateral development banks on how they can use innovative financial options to expand their lending capacity without additional resources from shareholders, and I understand that Asian Development Bank shareholders unanimously approved a similar proposal recently. I also understand that this approach would be more difficult for the AfDB due to the status of the AfDB and the AfDF as separate legal entities. The main benefit of such an approach is that the equity built up in the concessional window can be leveraged to create additional concessional and nonconcessional lending capacity. Risks include the need to ensure that the extra resources generated continue to benefit poorer countries and

the need to maintain an appropriate level of concessionality in lending to these countries.

Question. The elections for a new President of the African Development Bank is taking place on May 28, 2015.

♦ Who is currently running for President of the African Development Bank and what are the main priorities of each of the candidates?

Answer. Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, the Minister of Agriculture from Nigeria, was elected as the next President of the AfDB on May 28, 2015. The other candidates were:

Jaloul Ayed, former Minister of Finance, Tunisia;
Sufian Ahmed Beker, Minister of Finance, Ethiopia;
Kordje Bedoumra, Minister of Finance, Chad;
Cristina Duarte, Minister of Finance, Cabo Verde;
Samura Kamara, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sierra Leone;
Thomas Zondo Sakala, former Vice President of the AfDB, Zimbabwe; and
Birama Sidibe, Vice President of the Islamic Development Bank, Mali.

Each candidate's vision statement is available at www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/article/eight-candidates-in-the-running-for-the-next-afdb-presidency-submit-their-vision-for-the-bank-and-africa-14111/. All of the candidates prioritized building on the legacy of President Donald Kaberuka, supporting the private sector in Africa, reducing Africa's infrastructure deficit, enhancing inclusive growth and creating jobs for youth and women, building the capacity of fragile and conflict-affected states, and attracting the staff that the AfDB needs to play a leading role in these areas.

Question. What criterion does the United States use when deciding who to vote for as President of the Bank? What is your evaluation of these candidates?

Answer. The United States seeks candidates with a strong vision for supporting private sector-led growth and poverty reduction in Africa, a sound understanding of the AfDB's comparative advantages, a clear agenda for implementing the institutional reforms needed to make the AfDB more effective and to attract and retain high-quality managers and staff, and the ability to represent the AfDB as a leading development institution in Africa and globally. I welcome that there were several qualified candidates contesting the election.

Question. Which of the candidates is the United States supporting at the May 28, 2015 election?

Answer. The United States welcomed that there were several well-qualified candidates that contested the election. I was not involved in the voting process for the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Dr. Adesina to continue strengthening the AfDB so that it remains a leading contributor to Africa's development and a key partner for U.S. development efforts.

Responses of Brian James Egan, Nominated to be Legal Adviser to the Department of State, to Questions from Members of the Committee

brian egan's responses to questions from senator corker

Question. Congress has long understood that the 2001 AUMF covered: (1) al-Qaeda; and (2) "associated forces" of al-Qaeda. Please describe the administration's legal view of why it is that ISIS is covered by the 2001 AUMF.

Answer. The 2001 AUMF authorizes the use of force against al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and associated forces. Based on ISIL's long-standing relationship with al-Qaeda and Usama bin Laden; its long history of conducting, and continued desire to conduct, attacks against U.S. persons and interests; the extensive history of U.S. combat operations against ISIL dating back to the time the group first affiliated with al-Qaeda in 2004 and was known as al-Qaeda in Iraq; and ISIL's position—supported by some individual members and factions of al-Qaeda-aligned groups—that it is the true inheritor of Usama bin Laden's legacy, the administration has concluded that the President may rely on the 2001 AUMF as statutory authority for the use of force against ISIL, notwithstanding the public split between al-Qaeda's senior leadership and ISIL. A contrary interpretation of the statute would allow al-Qaeda and its cobelligerents, rather than the President and the Congress, to control the scope of the AUMF by splintering into rival factions while still continuing to prosecute the same conflict against the United States.

Question. Does the administration currently have statutory or article II authority to defend U.S.- or coalition-trained forces in Iraq and Syria if those forces come under direct threat from ISIS, al-Nusra, Assad regime forces, Hezbollah, or any other armed groups?

Answer. The administration's position is that the 2001 AUMF would provide authority to conduct military operations in defense of U.S.- or coalition-trained forces against ISIL, the Nusrah Front, and other groups who are either part of or associated forces of al-Qaeda, in the same manner as it does for ongoing U.S. operations against those groups. The administration also believes that the 2002 Iraq AUMF would provide legal authority for military operations in some circumstances against ISIL in defense of U.S.- or coalition-trained forces in Syria.

The question whether the 2001 AUMF, the 2002 AUMF, or the President's article II authority would provide legal authority to defend those forces against Assad regime forces or other armed groups would be more difficult.

The 2001 AUMF authorizes the President to use "all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons." To be an "associated force" of al-Qaeda a group must be both (1) an organized, armed group that has entered the fight alongside al-Qaeda, and (2) a co-belligerent with al-Qaeda in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners. The determination that a particular group is an associated force is made at the most senior levels of the U.S. Government, following reviews by senior government lawyers and informed by departments and agencies with relevant expertise and institutional roles, including all-source intelligence from the U.S. intelligence community.

The 2002 AUMF authorizes the President to "use the Armed Force of the United States as he determines to be necessary and appropriate in order to—(1) defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq; and (2) enforce all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq." Although the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq was the focus of the 2002 AUMF, the statute, in accordance with its express goals, has always been understood to authorize the use of force for additional purposes. Those purposes include helping to establish a stable, democratic Iraq to succeed Saddam Hussein's regime and addressing terrorist threats emanating from Iraq. At a minimum, to the extent that military operations against ISIL in Syria are necessary in order to achieve these purposes, they are authorized by the 2002 AUMF.

The President has authority under the Constitution to use force not amounting to "war" in the constitutional sense, where he reasonably determines that such force serves a sufficiently important national interest, at least insofar as the Congress has not specifically restricted it by statute. Whether the use of military force constitutes a "war" within the meaning of the Declaration of War Clause would, as described in previous opinions from the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, involve the need for a fact-specific assessment of the anticipated nature, scope, and duration of the planned military operations and of the exposure of U.S. military personnel to significant risk over a substantial period.

As a policy matter, the nature and extent of the support that the United States is prepared to provide to U.S.-trained Syrian forces is critically important and under active consideration, but as of this point has not been decided. If confirmed as Legal Adviser, I would look forward to working closely with this committee to explain the legal issues related to any decision that is made.

Question. With U.S. forces on the ground in Iraq and conducting activities in both Iraq and Syria, what authority to protect and defend those forces, if any, is currently available under the 2001 or 2002 AUMFs, and is there something additional you gain under the 2002 AUMF but not the 2001 AUMF?

Answer. The administration's position is that the 2001 AUMF and, at least in some circumstances, the 2002 AUMF provide legal authority for the ongoing U.S. military operations in Iraq and Syria, including the authority to use military force in defense of U.S. forces.

The 2001 AUMF authorizes the President to use "all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons" he determines were responsible for the 9/11 attacks, and it is not limited to a specific country or geographic region. This authorization clearly covers Usama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, and Congress and the federal courts have confirmed the Executive branch's view that the AUMF also authorizes the use of force against associated forces of al-Qaeda, each of which must be both (1) an organized, armed group that has entered the fight

alongside al-Qaeda, and (2) a cobelligerent with al-Qaeda in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners.

The 2001 AUMF authorized the use of force against ISIL beginning in at least 2004, when ISIL, then known as al-Qaeda in Iraq, pledged its allegiance to Bin Laden. Bin Laden then publicly endorsed the group as al-Qaeda's official affiliate in Iraq. After its formal affiliation with al-Qaeda, the group conducted numerous terrorist attacks against the United States and its coalition partners, and in response, the United States engaged in extensive combat operations against it.

The 2002 Iraq AUMF provides an alternative source of legal authority for U.S. military operations against ISIL in Iraq and, at least in some circumstances, in Syria. Among other things, the 2002 AUMF authorizes the use of force to "defend the national security of the United States against the continuing threat posed by Iraq," including in defense of U.S. forces.

The President has made clear that he would welcome bipartisan congressional action on a new, limited authorization for the use of military force that would specifically address the threat posed by ISIL. The President's AUMF proposal, among other things, would repeal the 2002 AUMF because the President believes the authority he would have under his proposal and the 2001 AUMF would be sufficient to conduct the operations that are ongoing in Iraq and Syria, including any operations to protect and defend the U.S. Forces who are part of those operations.

Question. The administration believes it has authority under the 2001 AUMF to use "all necessary and appropriate force" against ISIS. Does the administration have article II authority, on its own, to conduct the military activities we are currently engaged in against ISIS, or is congressional authorization necessary?

Answer. The administration has concluded that the 2001 AUMF provides legal authority to use military force against ISIL in Iraq and Syria. The administration has also concluded that the 2002 Iraq AUMF provides legal authority for military operations against ISIL in Iraq and, in at least some circumstances, against ISIL in Syria. The military activities against ISIL in which the United States is currently engaged in Iraq and Syria are being conducted pursuant to those statutory authorities. Because of its conclusion that the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs provide the necessary legal authority for the President, the administration has not developed a legal position on the question posed; namely, whether the President could rely on article II authority alone to continue to conduct the ongoing military activities we are currently engaged in against ISIL.

The Constitution recognizes important roles for both the President and the Congress in relation to the use of military force by the United States. As the administration has previously indicated to this committee, the President has authority under the Constitution to use force not amounting to "war" in the constitutional sense where he reasonably determines that such force serves a sufficiently important national interest, at least insofar as the Congress has not specifically restricted it by statute. Any analysis of the President's constitutional authorities to conduct these same operations in the absence of the AUMFs would therefore require a fact-specific assessment of the national interests served by these operations and their anticipated nature, scope, and duration, among other factors.

The administration has been clear in describing the critical national interests that are served by our ongoing efforts to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL in Iraq and Syria. At the same time, this and previous administrations have recognized the congressional interest, including as reflected in the War Powers Resolution, in providing express congressional authorization for the use of force by the U.S. military in major, prolonged conflicts such as the wars in Vietnam and Korea.

Regardless, the President has made clear that he believes that it is important that decisions to send members of our military into harm's way enjoy the support of Congress and the American people. This is the reason that the President has submitted the proposed ISIL AUMF to the Congress. I share that view, and, if confirmed, I would use my voice within the administration to support robust consultation with Congress on such matters, and to ensure that deliberations and consultations with Congress are fully informed by the important constitutional responsibilities of both branches of government in this area.

BRIAN EGAN'S RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. Given the foreign policy objectives of the section 1504 rule, please discuss how you intend to engage with the SEC to ensure that they issue a strong rule that serves U.S. foreign policy goals.

Answer. Section 1504 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act requires reporting issuers engaged in the commercial development of oil, natural gas, or minerals to disclose in an annual report certain payments to the United States or foreign governments for the commercial development of oil, natural gas, or minerals. Section 1504 advances U.S. foreign policy interests by ensuring transparency and reducing corruption in the extractives sector, supporting international initiatives related to extractive industry transparency, and more broadly, promoting energy security and supporting global economic development.

If confirmed as Legal Adviser, I will work with the State Department's policy bureaus to ensure that the SEC is appropriately aware of these foreign policy interests so that they may be given due regard in the rulemaking process.

BRIAN EGAN'S RESPONSES TO
QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR BARRASSO

Question #1. Do you believe a resolution adopted by the U.N. Security Council can preempt U.S. law?

Answer. No. U.N. member states are required under international law to accept and carry out decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. This does not, however, preempt the obligation to comply with applicable provisions of U.S. domestic law. When deciding whether to support or oppose proposed Security Council resolutions, the Department of State, working with other departments and agencies, carefully considers whether actions that would be required under the resolutions would be consistent with U.S. law. The United States has the right, under Article 27 of the U.N. Charter, to veto resolutions that would impose requirements that would be inconsistent with U.S. domestic law and thereby prevent their adoption.

Question #2. Could the executive branch use a U.N. Security Council resolution to justify action that U.S. law would otherwise not allow?

Answer. No. The executive branch cannot take actions that it is prohibited from taking under U.S. law. Thus, the fact that a U.N. Security Council resolution authorizes a particular action will not enable the executive branch to carry it out if the action is impermissible under U.S. law.

Question #3. If the U.N. Security Council adopted a resolution requiring countries to lift sanctions on Iran, would the U.S. be obligated to comply?

Answer. In the case of Iran, the Security Council adopted a series of resolutions beginning in 2006 requiring U.N. member states to impose certain sanctions on Iran. When the Security Council makes a decision requiring U.N. member states to impose sanctions, U.N. member states are required under international law to accept and carry out that decision in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. A Security Council decision to lift these requirements would relieve U.N. member states of their international legal obligation to maintain the sanctions on Iran that were the subject of the Security Council resolutions, but would not prevent the United States or other U.N. member states from continuing to impose sanctions on a national basis under their domestic law. In any event, as explained in response to Question #1, the United States has the right, under Article 27 of the U.N. Charter, to veto resolutions that would impose requirements that would be inconsistent with U.S. domestic law and thereby prevent their adoption.

Question #4. What types of agreements are constitutionally required to take the form of a treaty and must be submitted to the Senate for advice and consent to ratification?

Answer. The Constitution's text does not specify particular types of agreements that must take the form of a treaty. As a matter of practice, the United States has entered into a variety of agreements approved by statute rather than through the procedures specified in the Constitution's Treaty Clause. These include the United Nations Headquarters Agreement; agreements establishing the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other international financial institutions; the agreement establishing the International Labor Organization; the SALT I Interim Agreement; and trade agreements including NAFTA and the agreement establishing the World Trade Organization. This practice suggests that the executive branch, Senate, and House of Representatives together have understood themselves to have significant latitude to use regular legislative procedures as an alternative to the procedures specified in the Treaty Clause for the approval of international agreements when collectively they deem it appropriate to do so.

If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with this committee on issues related to the approval of treaties and other forms of international agreements. Administrations of both political parties have a history of working with the Congress to identify international agreements that would be subject to the Constitution's Treaty Clause and agreements that could be concluded with other forms of congressional approval or as a sole executive agreement.

Questions #5 & #6. Is the President only able to enter sole Executive agreements concerning matters under his exclusive constitutional authority, or may these agreements also concern matters over which authority is shared with Congress?

What domestic or international legal effect do "sole executive agreements" have when there is a conflicting federal statute?

Answer. In analyzing the scope of the President's authority with respect to international agreements, the Supreme Court has referred to the framework outlined in Justice Jackson's concurrence in *Youngstown Sheet and Tube* v. *Sawyer*, 343 U.S. 579 (1952). That framework indicates that the President's authority is at its maximum when he acts pursuant to an express or implied authorization from Congress; that when he acts in the absence of either a congressional grant or denial of authority, he can only rely upon his own independent powers; and that when the President takes measures incompatible with the expressed or implied will of Congress, his power is at its lowest ebb, for then he can rely only upon his own constitutional powers minus any constitutional powers of Congress over the matter. Id. at 635–638.

Consistent with this framework, the validity of any particular Executive agreement as a matter of U.S. law would depend on factors including the particular matter addressed by the agreement, the extent of the President's independent constitutional authority with regard to that matter, and whether Congress had legislated with respect to the matter. For example, where an Executive agreement conflicts with a federal statute, Justice Jackson's concurrence indicates that "Courts can sustain exclusive Presidential control in such a case only by disabling the Congress from acting upon the subject." It further observes that "Presidential claim to a power at once so conclusive and preclusive must be scrutinized with caution."

The fact that an international agreement may conflict with a federal statute does not affect the status of the agreement as a matter of international law. In *Medellin* v. *Texas*, the Supreme Court observed that, although the President lacked the authority as a matter of U.S. law to give effect to an obligation under an international agreement at issue in the case, "no one disputes that it constitutes an international law obligation on the part of the United States." 552 U.S. 491, 536 (2008).

Question #7. Under existing law, the United States is required to suspend direct foreign assistance to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup d'etat or decree or a coup d'etat or decree in which the military plays a decisive role. How is a coup d'etat defined under existing U.S. law?

Answer. The annual Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Acts provides that certain funds in the Act may not "be obligated or expended to finance directly any assistance to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup d'etat or decree or, after the date of enactment of this Act, a coup d'etat or decree in which the military plays a decisive role." This "military coup restriction" contains three elements that must be met in order to trigger the restriction: (1) whether the head of government was duly elected; (2) whether the head of government was removed from office, and (3) whether the removal was effectuated by the military or whether the military played a decisive role in the removal. Whether the military coup restriction could be triggered in connection with a particular change in government requires a detailed factual inquiry into all of the relevant circumstances.

Question #8. As noted, appropriations law requires the termination of certain foreign assistance if an elected head of government is deposed by a coup. At the time, an administration official was asked if it is "still U.S. policy that we are not determining that a coup was carried out in July in Egypt." He replied: "Nothing has changed in terms of approaching what you called the coup restriction; didn't make a determination, haven't made a determination, don't think we need to make a determination, are acting consistent with the provisions of the law and we'll continue to do so."

- In your opinion, did a coup occur in Egypt when Egyptian President Morsi was deposed from power?

Answer. The military coup restriction in the annual Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act does not require a determination to be made with respect to a particular change in government, so long as any assistance provided to the relevant government could be provided even if the restriction were triggered. Accordingly, the administration took action to restrict certain assistance to Egypt consistent with the military coup restriction until new legislation was enacted with regard to assistance for the Government of Egypt.

The administration decided it was not in U.S. foreign policy or national security interests to characterize the events in Egypt as either a military coup or not a military coup. Such a characterization would implicate a highly polarized debate in Egypt. The administration concluded that inserting the United States into that debate would undermine U.S. interests in a peaceful resolution to the crisis, risk alienating roughly half of the population in Egypt, and potentially put U.S. facilities and personnel in the region at increased risk.

Question #9. After a head of government is deposed from power, how long does the State Department have to determine if a coup took place?

Answer. The military coup restriction in the annual Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act does not require a determination to be made with respect to a particular change in government, so long as any assistance provided to the relevant government could be provided even if the restriction were triggered.

As explained in response to Question #7, three elements must be met in order to trigger the restriction: (1) whether the head of government was duly elected; (2) whether the head of government was removed from office, and (3) whether the removal was effectuated by the military or whether the military played a decisive role in the removal. Whether this restriction could be triggered in connection with a particular change in government requires a detailed factual inquiry into all of the relevant circumstances, and in some instances the facts on the ground may not be clear for a period of time.

Questions #10 & #11. How is it consistent with the law to never make a determination whether a coup actually happened when a leader is deposed from power? What other statutory regimes is this method of legal analysis applied to?

Answer. The military coup restriction in the annual Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Acts provides that certain funds in the Act may not "be obligated or expended to finance directly any assistance to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup d'etat or decree or, after the date of enactment of this Act, a coup d'etat or decree in which the military plays a decisive role." If the standard in the legislation is met, assistance must be restricted consistent with the military coup restriction. On the other hand, so long as any assistance provided to the relevant government could be provided even if the military coup restriction were triggered, it is consistent with the law not to make a determination. Many countries receive no assistance from the U.S. Government; others receive assistance that would not be impacted by the military coup restriction (for example, assistance only for non-governmental activities). Therefore, the applicability of this provision varies with respect to the nature of our assistance. The Department of State's efforts to ensure compliance with the military coup restriction are consistent with its broader efforts to ensure compliance with all applicable funding restrictions.

Question #12. There has been a lot of discussion about the type and form of a comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear program. The administration claims that a final deal on Iran's nuclear program will be an Executive agreement instead of a treaty requiring the advice and consent of the Senate for ratification. What is the legal basis for this position?

Answer. The administration has made clear that the P5+1 discussions with Iran are directed toward the conclusion of a nonbinding arrangement. Nonbinding arrangements are not Executive agreements in that they do not create legal obligations under U.S. or international law. As White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough indicated in a March 14, 2015, letter to Senator Corker, such nonbinding arrangements have been utilized by Presidents of both parties throughout our history to address a range of diplomatic and national security matters and do not require congressional approval.

Question #13. What conditions or provisions in a new climate change agreement would not require the advice and consent to ratification by the Senate?

Answer. It is my understanding that the international discussions on a new climate change agreement are continuing and have not resulted in any final decisions

on any conditions or provisions of the new agreement. Accordingly, I am not in a position to speculate as to whether any of the terms of the final agreement will require Senate advice and consent.

The administration will continue to consult with the committee regarding the negotiations. During his confirmation hearing, Secretary Kerry assured this committee that any international agreement brought into force for the United States will be done consistent with the U.S. Constitution.

Question #14. What form of agreement is the United States advocating for during the international negotiations? Has the administration been pushing for the agreement to be legally binding during the negotiations?

Answer. A 2011 decision of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, adopted in Durban, South Africa, launched a process to develop a "protocol, another legal instrument, or an agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties. . . . "

The Durban decision makes clear that the purpose of a future Paris agreement is to further the objective of the Convention (i.e., to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate), yet leaves the Parties with substantial flexibility regarding its form and the legal nature of its provisions.

It is my understanding that at this stage the international discussions are more focused on the substance of the agreement than on issues related to its form, such as whether it should be a protocol or whether particular provisions should be legally binding. The administration has indicated that the United States seeks an agreement that is ambitious in light of the climate challenge; that reflects nationally determined mitigation efforts in line with national circumstances and capabilities; that provides for accountability with respect to such efforts; that takes account of evolving emissions and economic trends; and that promotes adaptation by Parties to climate impacts.

*Question #15.*Will the final agreement be legally binding on the United States and other countries, including funding commitments for any provision contained within the agreement?

Answer. Please see response to Question #14.

Question #16. Can the administration enter into a politically binding international agreement without congressional approval?

Answer. I understand the term "politically binding" to refer to arrangements that do not give rise to legal obligations under U.S. or international law. As White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough indicated in a March 14, 2015, letter to Senator Corker in response to questions regarding negotiations with Iran, such nonbinding arrangements have been utilized by Presidents of both parties throughout our history to address a range of diplomatic and national security matters and do not require congressional approval.

Question #17. What state, local governing entity, or community would not be subject to a politically binding agreement?

Answer. I understand the term "politically binding" to refer to arrangements that do not give rise to legal obligations under U.S. or international law. Accordingly, any such nonbinding arrangements would create no legal obligations for any state, local governing entity, or community.

Question #18. Has the Palestinian accession and acceptance of the International Criminal Court jurisdiction triggered this prohibition on the Economic Support Fund assistance?

Answer. The administration continually reviews its assistance to ensure compliance with U.S. law, including those provisions pertaining to assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

At this stage, the administration does not believe that any of the legislative restrictions on Economic Support Fund (ESF) assistance to the Palestinian Authority have been triggered. At the same time, in light of the latest developments, the administration has indicated that it is reviewing our assistance for the Palestinian Authority to ensure that it supports our policy.

Question #19. Has the International Criminal Court Prosecutor's opening of a preliminary examination of the situation in the Palestinian territories, enabled by the Palestinian ad hoc declaration, triggered the prohibition on Economic Support Fund assistance? If the prohibition has not been triggered, what steps would the Palestinians or the International Criminal Court have to take for the prohibition to take effect?

Answer. The administration strongly disagreed with the decision by the ICC Prosecutor to open a preliminary examination of the situation in "Palestine" and has indicated that it will continue to oppose actions against Israel at the ICC as counterproductive to the cause of peace.

At this stage, the administration does not believe that legislative restrictions on ESF assistance to the Palestinian Authority have been triggered. At the same time, in light of the latest developments, the administration has indicated that it is reviewing our assistance for the Palestinian Authority to ensure that it supports our policy.

It is difficult to predict how events may develop in the future and an assessment of whether particular restrictions have been triggered would need to take into account the specific circumstances as they may evolve. If confirmed, I would expect to work with Secretary Kerry and other officials at the State Department to monitor the situation closely.

Question #20. What are the defects in Palestinian claims to statehood or sovereignty? What steps is the United States taking or planning to take to challenge Palestinian accession to the Rome Statute and acceptance of ICC jurisdiction?

Answer. The view of the United States is that the Palestinians have not yet established a state and are not eligible to become a party to the Rome Statute. We remain committed to achieving a negotiated two-state solution that would result in two states living side by side in peace and security. We continue to believe that the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians ultimately should be resolved by the parties reaching an agreement on final status issues.

With respect to the ICC, the United States has made clear its opposition to Palestinian action in seeking to join the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. This step is counterproductive, will damage the atmosphere with the very people with whom Palestinians ultimately need to make peace, and will do nothing to further the aspirations of the Palestinian people for a sovereign and independent state. Our actions have included formal submission by the United States of a diplomatic note to the treaty depositary for the Rome Statute setting forth our view that the Palestinians are not eligible to become a party to the treaty, and of a notification to the Registry of the Court itself to make clear that the Palestinians are ineligible to accept the jurisdiction of the Court under Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute. The United States issued a public statement strongly disagreeing with the decision by the ICC Prosecutor to open a preliminary examination of the situation in "Palestine" and indicating we will continue to oppose actions against Israel at the ICC as counterproductive to the cause of peace. The United States continues to make our opposition known to the Palestinians and the international community.

Question #21. Do you believe Russia is in "material breach" of its obligations under the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty? What are the differences between an activity described as a "material breach" versus a violation?

Answer. The international legal doctrine of material breach allows one party to terminate a treaty or suspend its operation in whole or in part based on inter alia another party's violation of a provision essential to the accomplishment of the object and purpose of the treaty.

The administration has made clear its extremely serious concerns about Russia's violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty's ban on the possession, production, and flight-testing of intermediate range missiles. However, the administration does not believe it is in the interest of the United States to suspend the INF Treaty at this time. As a result, the administration has not invoked the doctrine of material breach. The administration's current efforts are focused on convincing Russia to return to compliance and preserving the viability of the INF Treaty, which the administration believes continues to serve U.S. and allied interests.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2015

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

Gregory T. Delawie, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Kosovo
Ian C. Kelly, of Illinois, to be Ambassador to Georgia
Nancy Bikoff Pettit, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Latvia
Julieta Valls Noyes, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia
Azita Raji, of California, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:20 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Johnson, presiding.

Present: Senators Johnson, Gardner, Shaheen, Kaine, and Murphy.

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

Senator JOHNSON. This hearing is called to order.

I would like to first recognize—the Ambassador from Georgia who is here in the audience today. Welcome.

I am pleased to be holding this hearing to confirm some very qualified individuals who are willing to serve this Nation in the capacity of Ambassadors to Kosovo, to Georgia, to Latvia, to Sweden, and to Croatia.

I have been in the Senate now for 4 years, on Senator Foreign Relations for 2½, and I just have to say that I have always been very impressed with the quality of career Foreign Service individuals and people who serve this Nation in the capacity of Ambassadors. From my standpoint, it is such an important position, in terms of being able to convey our values around the world. I hope you all take that responsibility—I am sure you will—very seriously, conveying that America, although we are not perfect, has been a phenomenal force for good in the world. I certainly always ask our Ambassadors to think of how you can utilize this committee, whether it is holding hearings or potentially passing resolutions to reinforce the work you are doing in those countries that you are representing America for. I also point out to our Ambassadors that

you are representing those countries back to America. It is really a two-way street. I certainly appreciate your willingness to serve.

I know Senator Shaheen has a tight schedule, so I will not say anything further until I introduce the nominees.

Senator Shaheen.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEANNE SHAHEEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE

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

Welcome. I want to congratulate each of you on your nominations, and express my appreciation to you for your willingness to serve this country and take on these new responsibilities at such a critical time.

I also want to welcome all of your families who are here today. And I hope that you will introduce them as you are starting your statements.

You have all been named for ambassadorial posts in important countries in strategic areas of Europe. We are considering your nominations and our relations with these countries against the backdrop of an aggressive Russia in Europe's east and growing instability in its south, in the Middle East and in North Africa. I look forward to discussing a wide range of issues regarding the countries that you are going to serve, and other challenges facing Europe today, and hope that you will be confirmed to these very important posts.

Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Kaine, would you like to make a comment, or——

Senator KAINE. No, thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay.

With that, I will just introduce you one at a time before your testimony. And we will start from my right, going left, with Mr. Delawie. Mr. Greg Delawie is currently the Deputy Assistant Secretary within the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance at the State Department. He is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, and he is the nominee for Ambassador to Kosovo.

Mr. Delawie.

STATEMENT OF GREGORY T. DELAWIE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

Mr. DELAWIE. Thank you very much, Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shaheen, Senator Kaine.

It is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Kosovo. I deeply appreciate the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me.

I am accompanied today by my wife, Vonda Delawie, a retired Foreign Service officer, and, further back, my daughter, Torrence, and my son, Fred, all of whom have shared with me the joys and challenges of bouncing from one country to the next. For all of us, it has been an honor to work for the American people and to represent them to the rest of the world.

The United States relationship with Europe's youngest democracy is based on a shared vision of Kosovo's legitimate place in a Europe whole, free, and at peace. Indeed, Kosovo has made remarkable progress since declaring independence. It has drafted and implemented modern laws, economic growth has been steady, and security throughout the country has improved, creating an atmosphere that allows the EU-led dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia to flourish.

Despite these significant achievements, Kosovo continues to face many obstacles. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will lead a whole-of-government U.S. effort to help it surmount the remaining challenges to its becoming a fully democratic, multiethnic, sovereign nation.

If confirmed, I will focus on three central and highly interdependent areas: strengthening the rule of law, increasing regional security, and promoting economic reforms. I would like to share what I see as our priorities, beginning with the rule of law.

First, corruption hampers Kosovo's democratic and economic development. The Government of Kosovo must develop a coordinated approach to addressing it. If confirmed, I will intensify interagency support for Kosovo's anticorruption efforts and help restore citizens' faith in their government.

Next, Kosovo must respond appropriately to allegations of serious crimes committed between 1998 and 2000. Kosovo must uphold its commitments by adopting, soon, the necessary legal measures to set up a special court to handle any potential indictments stemming from the ongoing investigation into the alleged crimes committed during this period. I will, if confirmed, encourage the Government of Kosovo to diligently support the court's judicial proceedings.

Third, Kosovo confronts a significant human trafficking problem, despite having good antitrafficking and victim-protection laws. If confirmed, I will work with Kosovo to implement these laws and intensify the fight against this modern form of slavery.

In terms of regional security, normalization of the Kosovo-Serbia relationship is a fundamental requirement for lasting stability in the Balkans. We continue to fully support the EU-led dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, and full implementation of all elements of the April 2013 Agreement on Normalization. If confirmed, I will champion minority rights and promote integration throughout Kosovo. We must also find durable solutions for thousands of displaced persons.

I applaud Kosovo for its robust efforts to confront the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters heading to Syria and Iraq, and Kosovo's participation in the counter-ISIL coalition. With U.S. assistance, the Government of Kosovo is improving its capacity to prosecute terrorism cases and developing a national plan for countering violent extremism. If confirmed, I will continue backing this important work.

Kosovo is in the process of transitioning from the Kosovo Security Force to the Kosovo Armed Forces. If confirmed, I will ensure that the United States guides this transition in a way that increases regional stability, strengthens democratic institutions in Kosovo, and positions it to qualify for eventual NATO membership.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, encouraging Kosovo's economic reform and development will be one of my highest priorities. This will be key to reducing high rates of poverty and unemployment, to promoting regional ties, and to expanding opportunities for U.S. firms. The lack of dependable electrical power is widely considered Kosovo's greatest obstacle to sustained economic growth. If confirmed, I will work with Kosovo to implement its energy strategy, including promoting significant growth in renewable energy.

This is a daunting agenda, but I know from my 30-plus years in the Foreign Service that I will not have to pursue it alone. I will be able to draw on the experience of the talented team of Americans and local staff in Embassy Pristina, as well as on partners from multiple agencies in Washington, and on so many others who want to see Kosovo succeed. I look forward to remaining in close consultation with the legislative branch and this committee to advance U.S. interests in the Balkans.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will do my utmost to promote a democratic Kosovo whose citizens trust its institutions, which is at peace with its neighbors, and which is making a sustainable contribution to the global economy.

Thank you very much for your attention. I hope you will place your trust in me and confirm me as Ambassador to Kosovo. I am happy to take any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Delawie follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GREG T. DELAWIE

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members of the committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Kosovo. I deeply appreciate the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. I hope the committee and the Senate will share that confidence and confirm me. I am accompanied today by my wife, Vonda Delawie, a retired Foreign Service officer, my daughter, Torrence, and my son, Fred, all of whom have shared with me the joys and challenges of a lifetime bouncing from one country to the next. Wherever we have served, we have always remembered what an honor it is to work for the American people and to represent them to the rest of the world.

Our relationship with Europe's youngest democracy is based on a shared vision of Kosovo's legitimate place in a Europe whole, free, and at peace. The government and people of Kosovo deeply respect the United States, and are grateful for our role in ending the ethnic cleansing of the late 1990s. Over the past 16 years, with our strong support, Kosovo has made remarkable progress. Concrete examples of that progress include Kosovo's 2008 Declaration of Independence and the end of international supervision in 2012.

A democratic, fully sovereign, and multiethnic Kosovo must become an integral part of the international community. The United States has worked and continues to work closely with Kosovo toward that end. Although Kosovo faces enormous challenges in the interconnected areas of rule of law, regional security, and economic development, it has made progress. I would like to highlight some successes:

- With U.S. and international support, Kosovo has drafted and implemented modern laws to bring Kosovo's criminal legislation in line with international standards, to establish the rules of criminal procedure mandatory for court proceedings, and to reform the judicial system. The European Rule of Law Mission, EULEX, is building capacity in the judicial system, with the vital help of U.S. police, prosecutors, and judges.
- The NATO Kosovo Force, or KFOR, makes a multinational contribution to regional security. KFOR is uniquely trusted by Albanians and Serbs alike and its presence creates an atmosphere that allows the EU-led Dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia to flourish. The United States provides some 700 troops to KFOR.
- With U.S. guidance, Kosovo has moved up 42 places on the World Bank's "Ease of Doing Business" ranking, from 117th in 2011 to 75th in 2014. We have

helped Kosovo privatize its national airport management and energy distribution companies. U.S. technical assistance helped Kosovo conclude a landmark $460 million public-private partnership deal for the Brezovica ski resort complex.Our USAID economic programs in the last 5 years alone have generated 17,500 new jobs, $330 million in increased sales, and $37.6 million in new revenues across multiple sectors.

As impressive as these recent achievements are, Kosovo continues to face many obstacles. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will devote my time and energy to leading a whole-of-government U.S. effort to help Kosovo surmount these obstacles. We will focus on measurable improvement in three central and highly interdependent areas [the three "R"s]: strengthening the rule of law, increasing regional security, and promoting economic reforms to reduce poverty, unemployment, and energy insecurity. I'd like to share just a bit about what I see as our priorities, beginning with the rule of law.

Rule of law

Corruption hampers Kosovo's democratic and economic development. It deters investment, spurs emigration, and weakens confidence in public institutions. This in turn can create fertile ground for the growth of violent extremism. The Government of Kosovo must develop a more coordinated approach to addressing corruption, engaging all government agencies in the effort. If confirmed, I will intensify interagency support for Kosovo's efforts to combat corruption and restore citizens' faith in their government.

Kosovo must respond appropriately to allegations of serious crimes committed between 1998 and 2000. Under the auspices of the EU-established Special Investigative Task Force (SITF), an American prosecutor found evidence that indictable offenses were committed by a small number of former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) senior leaders. Kosovo must resolve these serious allegations if it is to close this chapter of its history and move forward with democratic development and Euro-Atlantic integration. The government is currently adopting the necessary constitutional amendments, legislation, and agreements to establish a Special Court to adjudicate SITF cases in line with international standards. While I hope that these measures will soon be in place, I will, if confirmed, encourage the Government of Kosovo to maintain a high level of support and cooperation throughout the judicial proceedings.

Kosovo confronts a significant human trafficking problem. It has antitrafficking and victim-protection laws, as well as a shelter for victims, but does not yet meet minimum standards for enforcement of antitrafficking laws or victim protection. To improve enforcement, the U.S. Embassy has provided antitrafficking training to Kosovo Government officials, and successfully encouraged the foreign ministry to include training on human trafficking as part of the standard preparation for all of Kosovo's diplomatic personnel. Kosovo's fight against trafficking is also supported more generally by U.S.-organized training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges in Kosovo. If confirmed, I will continue the Embassy's work with Kosovo to implement these laws and intensify the fight against this modern form of slavery.

Regional security

Normalization of the Kosovo-Serbia relationship is a fundamental requirement for enduring regional security and is effectively a precondition for Kosovo to be able to thrive over the long term. We continue to support the EU-facilitated Kosovo-Serbia High-Level Dialogue and full implementation of all elements of the April 2013 agreement on normalization, which have been a landmark joint achievement of U.S. and European Union diplomacy in the Balkans. This Dialogue success reflects great credit on the political leaders of Kosovo and Serbia alike for making tough compromises for the good of their two countries. Dismantling parallel structures and integrating the predominantly Kosovo Serb northern municipalities into Kosovo's legal and institutional framework are key to full normalization of relations. Kosovo has made significant progress: voters of all ethnicities participated in recent municipal and parliamentary elections; municipal governments in northern Kosovo are now elected and constituted under Kosovo law; the main Serb political group, Srpska List, is part of the governing coalition. Outside the Dialogue context, bilateral contacts increasingly take place at all levels, from interministerial dialogue to joint training for customs officers. Some aspects of normalization remain difficult to achieve, such as the planned creation of an Association of Serb Majority Municipalities.

If confirmed, I will champion minority rights and promote integration throughout Kosovo, including more proportional minority representation in the national and municipal civil services. Kosovo must find durable solutions for the thousands of

vulnerable persons displaced from Kosovo, many of whom now live in Serbia. U.S. programs assist some of those displaced in Serbia as well as returnees to Kosovo, but additional political and programmatic efforts are needed. Kosovo must also do more to protect the rights of Kosovo's other minorities, including the Roma, Ashkali, and Balkan Egyptian population, and promote their societal inclusion.

I applaud Kosovo for its robust efforts to confront the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters heading to Syria and Iraq, and its participation in the Counter-ISIL Coalition. Kosovo passed legislation making it illegal for Kosovo citizens to join foreign terrorist organizations. Since November 2013, Kosovo authorities have arrested over 80 suspects for participation in, or recruitment for, terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria. With U.S. assistance, the Government of Kosovo is improving its capacity to prosecute terrorism cases. The U.S. is also supporting Kosovo's effort to develop a "whole of government" approach to countering violent extremism. If confirmed, I will continue our backing for this important work.

As recommended in its U.S.-facilitated Strategic Security Sector Review, Kosovo is in the process of transitioning from the Kosovo Security Force to the Kosovo Armed Forces, with the stated mission of protecting the nation's territorial integrity, providing military support to civil authorities in disaster situations, and participating in international peacekeeping operations. The KAF is expected to develop capabilities in line with EU and NATO standards. If confirmed, I will ensure that the United States continues to guide and support this transition in a manner that is consistent with increasing regional stability, strengthens democratic institutions in Kosovo, and positions Kosovo to qualify for eventual NATO membership.

Energy security and economic development

Mr. Chairman, I can guarantee that one of my highest priorities, if confirmed, will be to continue to press for the reforms needed to develop Kosovo's economy. This is key to reducing high rates of poverty and unemployment, to promoting regional ties, and to expanding opportunities for U.S. exporters and investors. The government's reform agenda includes strengthening the legal environment necessary to attract and retain foreign investors, who are already drawn by Kosovo's relatively young population, low labor costs, and abundant natural resources. Anticorruption efforts are also vitally important.

The lack of dependable electrical power is widely considered Kosovo's greatest obstacle to achieving sustained economic growth. The government has made it a priority to modernize and improve the energy sector through a comprehensive energy development and security plan. If confirmed, I will work with Kosovo to implement its energy strategy, help meet its commitment to join the EU's common energy market, and to have a substantial share of its energy come from renewable energy sources by 2020.

Conclusion

This is a daunting agenda. But I know from my 30-plus years in the Foreign Service that I will not have to pursue it alone. I will be able to draw on the experience of the talented team of Americans and locally employed staff at Embassy Pristina, the experienced partners from multiple agencies in Washington, support from the legislative branch, and the contributions of private Americans and citizens of so many other nations who also want to see Kosovo succeed.

Mr. Chairman, for the past seven decades, the United States has been committed to building a Europe whole, free, and at peace. The work is not complete, but we know that we can achieve success because we have already accomplished so much. The history of the last 25 years has demonstrated how important it is for the United States to be involved in the Balkans. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to promote our mutual goal: a democratic Kosovo whose citizens trust its institutions, which is at peace with its neighbors, and which is making a sustainable contribution to the global economy.

Thank you very much for your attention. I hope you will place your trust in me and confirm me as Ambassador to the Republic of Kosovo. I am happy to take any questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Delawie.

Our next nominee is Ambassador Ian Kelly. He is the nominee for the Ambassador to Georgia. Ambassador Ian Kelly is a career member of the Foreign Service and currently serves as the Department of State's Diplomat in Residence at the University of Illinois—Chicago. Prior to that, he served as U.S. Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Kelly.

STATEMENT OF HON. IAN C. KELLY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO GEORGIA

Ambassador KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Shaheen, Senator Kaine. I am deeply honored to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to Georgia. It is a particular privilege for me to have a second opportunity to be considered by this committee and serve the American people in this way.

If confirmed, I pledge to devote all of my efforts to advancing U.S. interests and promoting the security of the American people.

For all 30 years of my government service, my wife, Francesca, has been by my side, and I am pleased that she is behind me right now.

Nearly 40 years ago, after spending several months studying in the U.S.S.R., I visited Tbilisi and was immediately struck by the vitality and independent spirit of the Georgian people. A few years later, the Georgian people were in the forefront of the movement to free the captive nations of the Soviet Union. We supported their desire for independence then, and we support it now.

The United States stands firm in its commitment to Georgia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. We condemn the ongoing occupation of Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions by Russian forces. Furthermore, Russia's so-called "treaties" with the de facto authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia have absolutely no legitimacy.

In Georgia, an important principle is at stake: the right of all sovereign nations to choose their own alliances and associations. The United States and our allies support Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, including NATO membership and EU integration. No third party has the right to veto those aspirations.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Georgian Government and my Embassy colleagues in realizing these aspirations. I will also urge all Georgians who believe in their country's Euro-Atlantic goals to unite in supporting them and move their country forward.

On the road to Euro-Atlantic integration, Georgia has made substantial progress toward becoming a fully democratic state. Its 2012 and 2013 elections resulted in the first constitutional changes of government in post-Soviet Georgia. While progress has been real and substantial, more work needs to be done for Georgia to realize its goal of an environment fully conducive to political pluralism. We will work with all parties in Georgia to help ensure the next parliamentary elections are the freest and fairest in Georgia's history. The United States has been a partner in this effort, with a robust assistance program to help Georgia strengthen accountable government and consolidate its democratic institutions.

If Georgia's quest to integrate with the West is to succeed, it is critical that we improve the climate for trade and investment. This is an area where the government and opposition should be able to come together. Georgia needs to take advantage of the great opportunity that its association agreement with the European Union rep-

resents, particularly increased trade between Georgia and Europe through the agreement's deep and comprehensive free trade area.

The United States appreciates Georgia's growing role as a regional business, trade, and logistics hub, and its contributions to the revitalization of East-West trade routes along the New Silk Road connecting European and Asian markets. If confirmed, I will support Georgia's focus on the future, particularly economic development, to create jobs and contribute to the long-term stability of the country and the region.

Mr. Chairman, there is a lot of work to do. And if the Senate confirms my nomination, I look forward to rolling up my sleeves and getting down to it, advancing the mutual interests of the American and Georgian peoples.

Thank you. And I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Kelly follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF IAN C. KELLY

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as Ambassador to Georgia. It is a particular privilege for me to have a second opportunity to be considered by this committee, and serve the American people in this way. If confirmed, I pledge to devote all my efforts to advancing U.S. interests and promoting the security of the American people. For all 30 years of my government service, my wife Francesca has been by my side, and I am pleased to introduce her to you today.

Nearly 40 years ago, after spending several months studying in the U.S.S.R., I visited Tbilisi, and was immediately struck by the vitality and independent spirit of the Georgian people. A few years later, the Georgian people were in the forefront of the movement to free the captive nations of the Soviet Union. We supported their desire for independence then, and we continue to support it today.

The United States stands firm in its commitment to Georgia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. We condemn the ongoing occupation of Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions by Russian forces. Furthermore, Russia's so-called "treaties" of alliance with the de facto authorities Abkhazia and South Ossetia have absolutely no legitimacy.

An important principle is at stake here—the right of all sovereign nations to choose their own alliances and associations. The United States and our allies support Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations, including NATO membership and EU integration. No third party has the right to veto those aspirations. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Georgian Government and my Embassy colleagues in realizing these aspirations. I will also urge all Georgians who believe in their country's Euro-Atlantic goals to unite in supporting them and moving their country forward.

On its road toward Euro-Atlantic integration, Georgia has made substantial progress toward becoming a fully democratic state. Its 2012 and 2013 elections resulted in the first constitutional changes of government in post-Soviet Georgia. While progress has been real and substantial, more work needs to be done for Georgia to realize its goal of an environment fully conducive to political pluralism. We will work with all parties in Georgia to help ensure the next parliamentary elections are the freest and fairest in Georgia's history. The U.S. has been a partner in this effort, with a robust assistance program to help Georgia strengthen accountable government, and consolidate its democratic institutions.

If Georgia's quest to integrate with the West is to succeed, it is critical that it improve the climate for trade and investment. This is an area where the government and the opposition should be able to come together. Georgia needs to take advantage of the great opportunity that its Association Agreement with the European Union represents—particularly increased trade between Georgia and Europe through the Agreement's Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. The United States appreciates Georgia's growing role as a regional business, trade and logistics hub, and its contributions to the revitalization of East-West trade routes along the New Silk Road, connecting European and Asian markets. If confirmed, I will support Georgia's focus on the future, particularly economic development, to create jobs and contribute to the long term stability of the country and the region.

Mr. Chairman, there is a lot of work to do, and if the Senate confirms my nomination, I look forward to rolling up my sleeves and getting down to it, advancing the mutual interests of the American and Georgian peoples. Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ambassador Kelly.

Our next nominee is Mrs. Nancy Pettit. Am I pronouncing that right? Good. I am generally bad about that 30 percent of the time. [Laughter.]

Mrs. Pettit is our nominee for Ambassador to Latvia. She is currently the Director of the Western European Affairs Office within the State Department and is a career Foreign Service officer. Mrs. Pettit's past positions include the Director of Policy Planning and Coordination of the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and positions at posts in Kiev, Moscow, and Vienna.

Mrs. Pettit.

STATEMENT OF NANCY BIKOFF PETTIT, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

Ms. PETTIT. Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Latvia.

I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me. If confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to devote my time, energy, and expertise to advancing America's interests in Latvia and strengthening relations between our two countries. I commit myself to working closely with the committee, your staffs, and your congressional colleagues to build on our shared interest in a strong and vibrant U.S.-Latvian partnership.

I would like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues for providing encouragement and support throughout my career. In particular, special thanks to my husband, Jim, the current Ambassador to Moldova; daughters, Sarah and Liz Pettit; and son-in-law, Josh Katzenstein, who are watching this online. I would like to introduce my sisters, Ellen Phipps and Barbara Bikoff, and brother, Russ Bikoff, who are here with me today. Thank you for coming.

I have spent the bulk of my 33-year career as a public servant working on issues related to Europe and Transatlantic relations. From my early days as a desk officer in the Office of Soviet Union Affairs to my most recent position as Director of the Office of Western European Affairs, I have devoted my professional life to advancing our shared vision of a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace. I believe these experiences have prepared me well to lead our mission in Riga, and, if confirmed, continue our work with the Republic of Latvia on a forward-looking, ambitious global agenda.

The United States and Latvia share a long history of friendship and cooperation. From the darkest days of the Soviet occupation through the end of the cold war, the United States commitment to the Latvian people never wavered. Following the restoration of Latvia's independence in 1991, the country embarked on an ambitious path toward Euro-Atlantic integration, joining NATO and the EU

in 2004, adopting the Euro in 2014, and setting a powerful example for other countries aspiring to be free.

As allies, United States and Latvian troops have fought together and died together in Iraq and Afghanistan. Through our cooperation in Afghanistan, Latvia has become one of only seven countries certified as Joint Terminal Attack Controllers who provide essential targeting expertise for NATO combat missions. With U.S. support, Latvia has also increased its development assistance to countries around the world. Whether it is contributing humanitarian assistance to fight the spread of ebola or supporting international efforts to combat ISIL, Latvia has always stepped up to the plate.

Without a doubt, Russia's continued aggression in Ukraine has challenged the vision of a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace, threatening the security of Latvia and all of our regional allies. This is why the United States has deployed company-sized units to Poland and the three Baltic States since April 2014 under Operation Atlantic Resolve. Through President Obama's $1 billion European Reassurance Initiative, we will maintain this rotational presence for as long as necessary, and fund military infrastructure improvement projects. These efforts embody the United States commitment to Latvia's security under NATO's article 5.

Meanwhile, Latvia has enacted legislation to meet its NATO defense spending commitment of 2 percent of GDP by 2020, and is using its role as the current EU-presidency country to maintain international pressure on Russia while also offering Moscow a diplomatic off-ramp, should it choose peace over further escalation. Mr. Chairman, if confirmed by the Senate, I will continue to grow our partnership with Latvia to the benefit of our shared security and prosperity.

Latvia has made advancing the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP, a top priority. If confirmed, I will work with my Latvian counterparts to build Latvian support for a comprehensive TTIP agreement that boosts economic growth, creates jobs, and sets a new standard for trade that reflects our shared values.

While Latvia has made great strides over the past 20 years implementing democratic reforms and rule of law, I believe more work needs to be done in the areas of combating corruption, addressing Holocaust-era legacies, such as Jewish communal property restitution, and taking advantage of Latvia's rich cultural diversity.

Almost 25 years ago, Latvia emerged from captivity seeking the democracy, prosperity, and security that we in the transatlantic community have enjoyed for nearly seven decades. Through sheer determination, sacrifice, and an enduring commitment to the principles of freedom, the Latvian people persevered and succeeded in building a vibrant, flourishing democracy. If confirmed, I promise to further enrich the bonds between our countries and continue confronting global challenges together as close partners and NATO allies.

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

[The prepared statement of Ms. Pettit follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NANCY BIKOFF PETTIT

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Latvia. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me in this nomination. If confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to devote my time, energy, and expertise to advancing America's interests in Latvia and strengthening the relations between our two countries. I also commit myself to working closely with the committee, your staffs, and your congressional colleagues to build on our shared interest in a strong and vibrant U.S.-Latvian partnership.

I have spent the bulk of my 33-year career as a public servant working on issues related to Europe and trans-Atlantic relations. From my early days as a desk officer in the Office of Soviet Union Affairs to my most recent position as Director of the Office of Western European Affairs, I have devoted a considerable amount of my life to advancing our shared vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. I believe these experiences have prepared me well to lead our mission in Riga and—if confirmed—continue our work with the Republic of Latvia on a forward-looking and ambitious global agenda.

The United States and Latvia share a long history of unbroken friendship and cooperation. From the darkest days of the Soviet occupation through the end of the cold war, the United States commitment to the Latvian people never wavered. Following the restoration of Latvia's independence in 1991, Latvia embarked on an ambitious path toward euro-Atlantic integration: joining NATO and the EU in 2004; adopting the euro in 2014; and setting a powerful example for other countries aspiring to be free.

Today, Latvia is one of our most reliable and valued partners. As allies, U.S. and Latvian troops have fought together and died together in Iraq and Afghanistan. Through our cooperation in Afghanistan, Latvia has become one of only seven countries that are certified as Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTAC), providing essential targeting expertise for NATO combat missions. With U.S. support, Latvia has also increased its development assistance to countries around the world. For example, through the State Department's Emerging Donors Challenge Fund, the United States and Latvia are cofinancing a project in Uzbekistan to enhance export control and border security capabilities. Whether it is contributing humanitarian assistance to fight the spread of Ebola or supporting international efforts to combat ISIL, Latvia has always stepped up to the plate. In short, Latvia is a global partner of first resort.

Without a doubt, Russia's continued aggression in Ukraine has challenged the vision I referenced earlier of a Europe whole, free, and at peace, threatening the security of Latvia and all of our allies in the region. This is why the United States has deployed company-sized units to Poland and the three Baltic States since April 2014 under Operation Atlantic Resolve. Through President Obama's $1 billion European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), we will sustain this persistent, rotational presence for as long as necessary.ERI will also fund military infrastructure improvement projects, including at Latvia's Lielvarde airbase and Adazi training grounds. These efforts embody the United States commitment to Latvia's security under NATO's Article 5. Meanwhile, Latvia has enacted legislation to meet its NATO defense spending commitment of 2 percent of GDP by 2020 and is using its role as the current rotating EU Presidency country to maintain international pressure on Russia, while also offering Moscow a diplomatic off-ramp should it choose peace over further escalation.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed by the Senate, I will continue to grow our partnership with Latvia to the benefit of our shared security and prosperity. Latvia has made advancing the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) a top priority of its EU Presidency. If confirmed, I will work hand in hand with my Latvian counterparts to build Latvian support for a comprehensive TTIP agreement that boosts economic growth, creates jobs, and sets the global gold standard for trade that reflects our shared values. In 2014, bilateral trade in goods between the United States and Latvia totaled $702 million. While significant, I think there is a tremendous potential to further cultivate our economic ties. If confirmed, I will work to increase our bilateral trade and investment. While Latvia has made great strides over the past 20 years implementing democratic reforms and rule of law, I believe more work needs to be done in the areas of combating corruption, addressing Holocaust-era legacies such as Jewish communal property restitution, and taking advantage of Latvia's rich cultural diversity.

Almost 25 years ago, Latvia reemerged from captivity seeking the democracy, prosperity, and security that we in the transatlantic community have enjoyed for

almost seven decades. Through sheer determination, sacrifice, and an enduring commitment to the principles of freedom, the Latvian people persevered and succeeded in building a vibrant, flourishing democracy. If confirmed, I promise to further enrich the bonds between our countries and to continue confronting global challenges together, as close partners and NATO allies. Thank you again for the privilege of appearing before you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mrs. Pettit.

Our next nominee is Ms. Azita Raji. She is our nominee for Ambassador to Sweden. Ms. Raji has served as a member of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships since 2013. She is also trustee of Barnard College and a member of the advisory board of the Social Enterprise Program at Columbia Business School. As a former investment banker, Ms. Raji specialized in European emerging markets.

Ms. Raji.

STATEMENT OF AZITA RAJI, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN

Ms. RAJI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Shaheen, and Senator Kaine.

I would like to begin by recognizing my parents for their wisdom, strength, and encouragement—which are fundamental to my being here today. I am deeply grateful to my husband, Gary Syman, who is here. And four out of our five daughters are here, and I am grateful to all of them. Our son-in-law, and especially our grandson, Theo—7-year-old Theo is here. And I have to admit that I am a little bit nervous today, because I really have not had a chance to prepare for his questions, which will undoubtedly come afterward. [Laughter.]

Ms. RAJI. I am here as a woman whose family endured the life-altering upheaval of the Iranian Revolution and found new hope and new life in the United States of America. Throughout my life, while working or studying in countries as different as Iran, Switzerland, Japan, and the United States, I arrived at the realization that I had been, in principle and sensibility, quintessentially American all along. So, I have never taken for granted the freedom to speak my mind, the protection of the rule of law, or our belief in unity within diversity, which is expressed in our country's de facto motto, E Pluribus Unum. That is the belief that has made me effective in what I have chosen to do in business, in philanthropy, in the political arena, and even in my own family life.

So, it is specially meaningful for me to find myself here before this distinguished committee, trusted by President Obama and Secretary Kerry to represent the United States of America, and to be asked to do so in Sweden, a valued partner and close friend of the United States, but also a country where respect for the rule of law, individual freedoms, human dignity, and gender equality are hallmarks of national identity and defining pillars of government policy.

So, if confirmed, I pledge and look forward to working closely with you to enhance our cooperation with Sweden by focusing on four priorities:

First, Sweden is an engaged and effective partner of the United States and NATO in promoting global peace and security. Our close cooperation in Ukraine as it fights against Russian aggression and

seeks to implement ambitious reforms is vital and greatly appreciated. Elsewhere, whether in Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Kosovo, or in fighting ISIL, corruption, and global terrorism, Sweden is a valued and reliable partner. So, if confirmed, I will work to further strengthen our bilateral partnership with Sweden in security, as well as supporting their cooperation with NATO.

Second, as a strong and long-standing economic partner of the United States—Sweden is the 11th-largest direct foreign investor and one of the fastest growing and largest investors per capita in the United States. Our economic partnership with Sweden supports over 190,000 American jobs. And, if confirmed, I will continue our focus on promoting bilateral trade and investment, specially focusing on emerging industries like clean energy, biotech, and information technologies.

Third, we have a very strong cooperation on environmental issues with Sweden, including our cooperation in the increasingly important Arctic region. If confirmed, I will continue our focus on addressing environmental challenges with Sweden, stewardship of the Arctic region, and scientific research. I also look forward to engaging with our Swedish partners both in the private sector and the government, to explore opportunities to leverage Sweden's energy leadership in the EU and its global leadership in environmental and clean energy technologies to advance our shared interest in an energy secure Europe.

Fourth, our friendship with Sweden is anchored in the close affinity between our peoples and the shared commitment that we have to democratic ideals and institutions around the world. That is manifested through our development cooperation, where Sweden is a strong and global leader, and we advance our interests in democracy promotion, human rights, gender equality, governance, and transparency around the world. There are—today there are 4 million Americans in the United States who claim a Swedish descent. They contribute to our culture and society and have been part of our economic development and success from the beginning by building successful companies, such as Nordstrom, Walgreens, and Greyhound. If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to advance this enduring friendship by taking a multistakeholder approach to developing partnerships outside of the government between our peoples and institutions and leveraging technology and public-private partnerships to reach new audiences.

Finally, we have an excellent, strong, dedicated, and talented Embassy team in Stockholm. And, if confirmed, I look forward to working with them and facilitating their continued success and being their biggest advocate. Their safety, as well as that of all Americans, will be my first priority, and most important priority.

Thank you very much. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Raji follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AZITA RAJI

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished members of the committee.

I would like to begin by recognizing my parents for their wisdom, strength, and encouragement, which are fundamental to my being here today. I am grateful to my husband, Gary Syman, for his unwavering support, and to our five daughters and seven grandchildren, for the joy and inspiration they bring me.

I appear before you as a woman whose family endured the life-altering upheaval of the Iranian Revolution, and found new hope and new life in the United States of America. Throughout my life, while living, studying or working in countries as different as Iran, Switzerland, Japan, Italy, France, and the United States, I arrived at the realization that I had been, in principle and sensibility, quintessentially American all along. And so, I have never taken for granted the freedom to speak my mind, the protection of the rule of law, and the opportunities to benefit from the similarities and differences that create the transformative mosaic that is America. Our country's de facto motto, E Pluribus Unum, speaks to our belief in unity within diversity, a belief that has made me effective in what I have chosen to do in business, in philanthropy, in the political arena, and even in my own family life. And it also speaks to a world that in its differing views has never been in greater need of commonality, kinship, and partnership.

Which is why it is an especially meaningful honor for me to find myself here, before this distinguished committee, and to have the trust of President Obama and Secretary Kerry to represent and serve the United States of America, and to be asked to do so in Sweden, an important partner and close friend of the United States and a country where respect for the rule of law, individual freedoms, human dignity and gender equality are hallmarks of national identity and defining pillars of government policy.

If confirmed, I pledge to serve our country to the best of my ability and to work closely with you to deepen the friendship and expand the cooperation between the United States and Sweden. I will focus on four priorities.

First, security challenges. Sweden is an engaged and effective strategic partner of the United States and NATO in promoting global peace and security. Our close cooperation with Sweden in support of Ukraine, as it fights against Russian aggression and seeks to implement ambitious reforms, is vital and greatly appreciated. Elsewhere, whether in Afghanistan (where Sweden made significant contributions to the ISAF mission, and currently provides assistance to Resolute Support Mission and support to Afghan democracy), or Africa (where Sweden is one of the largest contributors to Power Africa and to the global fight against Ebola), or Syria, Iraq, and Kosovo, or in fighting ISIL, global terrorism and corruption, Sweden is valued and respected as a reliable partner in advancing peace. If confirmed, I will seek to further strengthen our bilateral cooperation in addressing regional and global security challenges, and to support Sweden's partnership with NATO.

Second, economic prosperity. As a strong and long-standing economic and trading partner since 1783, Sweden is the 11th-largest direct investor and one of the fastest growing and largest investors per capita in the United States. Our economic partnership supports over 190,000 American jobs across 50 States. If confirmed, I will continue our focus on promoting bilateral trade and investment opportunities, particularly in emerging industries, such as information technology, biotech, and clean energy.

Today our economic focus must not just be bilateral, but also multilateral. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is an important building block of the wider trade policy agenda between the EU and the United States and will be an important focus of our work in the coming months. Sweden is a strong supporter of TTIP and a logical partner in this effort, having relied on free trade to become one of the world's most globalized, competitive, and innovative modern industrial economies. If confirmed, I will encourage Sweden to highlight and leverage its economic success in creating prosperity through trade to promote our shared objective of a comprehensive TTIP agreement.

Third, environmental challenges. The United States and Sweden have an active partnership on environmental and climate change issues, including our close cooperation in the increasingly important Arctic region. Sweden chaired the Arctic Council from 2011 to 2013, and its accomplishments included a historic marine oil pollution preparedness and response agreement. The United States assumed chairmanship of the Arctic Council in April 2015. If confirmed, I will prioritize our continued bilateral cooperation on environmental and climate change issues, stewardship of the Arctic region, and scientific research. As a global leader in environmental sustainability and clean energy technologies, Sweden derives more than half of its energy from renewable sources, making it less dependent on energy imports than most EU countries. If confirmed, I will engage with our partners in Swedish Government and private sector to explore innovative ways to leverage Sweden's energy leadership in the EU to advance our shared priorities in addressing climate change and European energy security.

Fourth, shared values. Our growing friendship with Sweden remains anchored in the genuine affinity between our peoples and our strong commitment to democratic values and institutions, a commitment expressed in our global partnership to pro-

tect and advance human rights and civil society. It is a friendship based on a shared heritage that dates back to 1638, when the first generation of Swedish immigrants arrived on the shores of what is now the State of Delaware. Today over 4 million Americans claim Swedish descent. They continue to enrich our culture and society and have been part of our economic success from the beginning, by building such successful companies as Walgreens, Greyhound, and Nordstrom. If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to deepen this enduring friendship, by encouraging understanding of our similarities and respectful debating of our differences, and by taking a multi-stakeholder approach to building innovative partnerships outside the government between our peoples and institutions and leveraging technology and public-private partnerships to connect with new audiences.

Finally, if confirmed, I look forward to meeting the talented and dedicated professionals of our Embassy in Stockholm. I will support their continued success and be their biggest advocate, as we work side by side to advance our vision of a deeper friendship and stronger partnership between the United States and Sweden. The safety and security of our team, and that of all Americans in Sweden, will always remain my top priority.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to your questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ms. Raji.

Now, our next nominee is Ms. Julieta Noyes. She is our nominee to become Ambassador to Croatia. Ms. Noyes currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary within the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs at the State Department, and is a career member of the Foreign Service. Her past positions include Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See and Director of the Office of Multilateral and Global Affairs at the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Ms. Noyes.

STATEMENT OF JULIETA VALLS NOYES, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Ms. NOYES. Mr. Chairman, Senator Shaheen, Senator Kaine, it is a privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia.

I am honored by the confidence placed in me by the President and by Secretary Kerry. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and with the Congress to advance United States-Croatian relations.

I am a first-generation American, the daughter of Cuban refugees who had to come to this country to build a new life. And I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to repay that debt with service to our great Nation.

It is a personal pleasure for me to be here with my husband, Nick, a recently retired Foreign Service officer, and our children, Alexandra, Nicholas, and Matthew. With 30 years as a Foreign Service family, we have many happy memories of times spent together overseas and here at home.

For the last 2 years, I have managed U.S. relations with the European Union and worked on trade, energy, security, and other issues with the EU. I have also overseen the work of U.S. Embassies in 15 Western European countries, managing a broad range of political, economic, security, and consular issues, and doing broad outreach. My work with nine NATO countries on security issues and defense sales has provided valuable lessons that I would apply, if confirmed, as the Ambassador in Croatia.

As Deputy Chief of Mission to the Holy See, I learned how to engage the Catholic leadership, which is important in Croatia. And

in all my assignments, I have worked hard to develop and empower my teams to foster high performance and high morale. I would do the same in Zagreb.

Mr. Chairman, our bilateral relationship with Croatia is strong and productive. Just last week, Assistant Secretary Victoria Nuland met with Foreign Minister Vesna Pusic to discuss how our partnership can advance our many common interests. In April, Embassy Zagreb and private-sector partners hosted the fifth Brown Forum in Croatia, a regional conference convened to focus on how to spur entrepreneurship and increase trade and investment between our countries and with the region.

Croatia has come a long way since its hard-won independence, becoming a NATO member in 2009 and the European Union's 28th and newest member in 2013. The citizens of Croatia deserve warm congratulations for all that they have achieved.

And Croatia has generously shared the lessons that it has learned assisting its western Balkan partners and neighbors in their aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration. We encourage the Government of Croatia to press forward and, in so doing, help address the remaining bilateral and regional legacies of the Balkans conflict.

Croatia is an active and committed EU member. A Croatian commissioner leads the EU's work on international cooperation and development. Croatian members of the European Parliament serve on the critical budget, economic, foreign affairs, and other committees. Croatia's leaders have endorsed a U.S./EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

As a reliable NATO ally, Croatia makes valued contributions to global security. We appreciate its commitment, first, to the international Security Assistance Force and now the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, as well as to the Kosovo Force, where Croatia provides valuable helicopter lift support. Croatia is a member of the global coalition to fight ISIL, and it was among the first countries to send observers into Crimea, and continues to provide monitors in eastern Ukraine for the OSCE mission. Brave Croatian men and women are serving in 11 peacekeeping missions around the world.

Croatia now enjoys a mature democratic society, yet there is more to be done. It continues to be challenged by sluggish growth and far too high unemployment. The Croatian Government has recognized the urgent need for reforms to welcome business investment, eradicate excessive redtape, and increase transparency and predictability for businesses.

If confirmed, I will seek to further solidify our partnership with Croatia, building on the exemplary work of our outgoing Ambassador and my good friend Ken Merten and our terrific country team in Zagreb.

As Ambassador, I will promote several interconnected priorities in Croatia: fostering economic growth and prosperity, helping Croatia realize its potential to become a regional energy hub, strengthening the capabilities of a willing security partner, and advancing regional stability. If confirmed, I will encourage Croatia's contributions to U.S.-EU relations in pivotal areas, such as transatlantic trade, energy security, and collaboration in the digital sphere. I

will also actively uphold our strategic alliance in NATO, the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, the Counter-ISIL Coalition, and more.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Shaheen, Senator Kaine, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I would welcome any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Noyes follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JULIETA VALLS NOYES

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia. I am honored by the confidence placed in me by the President and Secretary Kerry. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and the Congress in advancing U.S. interests in Croatia.

I am a first generation American, the daughter of Cuban refugees who built a new home in the United States, and I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to repay that debt with service to our great country. It is a personal pleasure to be accompanied today by my husband, Nick, a recently retired Foreign Service officer, and our children, Alexandra, Nicholas, and Matthew. As a Foreign Service family of 30 years we treasure many happy memories from our time living in Italy, Panama, Spain, Guatemala, and Mexico, as well as here at home.

For the last 2 years, I have managed U.S. relations with the European Union and have worked on trade, energy, security, and other issues in the EU. I also have overseen the work of 12 U.S. embassies and 19 consulates, covering 15 Western European countries, managing a broad range of political, economic, security, and consular issues, and carrying out outreach to publics and governments. My work with nine NATO members on security issues, defense sales, and participation in the Pentagon's review of force realignment in Europe has provided me useful lessons for directing the mission in Croatia. As Deputy Chief of Mission at our Embassy to the Holy See, I learned how to engage the Catholic leadership, which is important in Croatia. In all my assignments, I have worked hard to develop and empower my teams, and to foster high performance and strong morale; I would do the same in Zagreb.

Our bilateral relationship with Croatia is strong and productive. Just last week, Assistant Secretary Victoria Nuland met with Foreign Minister Vesna Pusic to discuss how our partnership can advance our many common interests. In April, the United States Embassy and private sector partners hosted the fifth Brown Forum in Croatia, a regional conference convened to focus on how to spur entrepreneurship and increase trade and investment between the United States, Croatia, and the region.

Croatia has come a long way since its hard-won independence, becoming a NATO member in 2009 and the European Union's 28th and newest member in 2013. The citizens of Croatia deserve warm congratulations for all they have accomplished. And Croatia has generously shared the lessons it has learned, assisting its western Balkan neighbors in their aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration. The United States supports the strides Croatia has made toward nurturing regional cooperation. We encourage the Croatian Government to continue to press forward and, in so doing, help address the remaining bilateral and regional legacies of the Balkans conflict.

Croatia is an active and committed EU member. A Croatian Commissioner leads the EU's important work on international cooperation and development. Croatian members of the European Parliament participate on the critical Budget, Economic, Foreign Affairs and other committees. Croatia's leaders have endorsed a U.S.-EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or TTIP.

As a reliable NATO ally, Croatia makes valued contributions to global security. We appreciate its commitment to the former International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and now in the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, and in the Kosovo Force (KFOR), where Croatia provides vital helicopter lift support. Croatia is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. It was among the first countries to send OSCE observers into Crimea, and continues to provide monitors for eastern Ukraine. Brave Croatian men and women are participating in 11 peacekeeping missions around the world.

Croatia now enjoys a mature democratic society, yet there is more to be done. It continues to be challenged by sluggish growth and far-too-high unemployment. The Croatian Government has recognized the urgent need for reforms to welcome busi-

ness investment, eradicate excessive redtape, and increase transparency and predictability for businesses. The United States will support Croatian reforms that lead to sustainable economic growth and prosperity. We want to strengthen the foundation for mutual economic expansion and trade relations.

If confirmed, I will seek to further solidify our partnership with Croatia, building on the exemplary work of our outgoing Ambassador and my good friend, Ken Merten, and our country team in Zagreb. As Ambassador, I will promote several interconnected priorities in Croatia: championing economic growth and prosperity, helping Croatia realize its potential to become a regional energy hub, strengthening the capabilities of a willing security partner, and fostering regional stability. My experience working directly with the European Union and its western European members has afforded me insights into our highest objectives with Europe. If confirmed, I will foster Croatia's contributions to U.S.-EU relations in pivotal areas such as the transatlantic trade deal, energy security, and collaboration between our countries in the digital sphere. I will also actively uphold our strategic alliance in NATO, the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, the Counter-ISIL Coalition, the State Partnership Program with the Minnesota National Guard, and more.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I welcome any questions you may have.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ms. Noyes.

Again, thank you all for your testimony and your willingness to serve our Nation. I would also like to join our ranking member, Senator Shaheen, in welcoming all of the family members here in the committee room, as well as those watching online.

So much of a country's success, whether it is for peace and stability or otherwise, really relies on economic prosperity. What I would like to do is go right down the panel, starting with you, Mr. Delawie. I would like each nominee to talk about the economic opportunities in the countries that you are going to represent the United States to, as well as the economic challenges. What is the greatest opportunity for cooperation between your country and the United States?

Mr. Delawie.

Mr. DELAWIE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Right now, the economic situation in Kosovo is improving. It is one of the poorest countries in Europe. Gross domestic product is about $7 billion a year. It has significant challenges, as I outlined in my testimony, but it also has significant opportunities. It has a very young population. It has significant natural resources that remain largely untapped. And it has a very, very talented population, which is demonstrated by the fact that the biggest export of Kosovo is its talented population that is elsewhere in—mostly in Western Europe, and that is sending billions of dollars in remittances home every year.

The opportunities for cooperation are, at present, limited by corruption, which I addressed in my testimony. And that is something that we have to work with the Kosovar Government to address. And I will do so, certainly vigorously, if confirmed.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Delawie.

Ambassador Kelly.

Ambassador KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that question.

Our bilateral assistance program is very much focused on trade and investment and enhancing opportunities for American businesses to invest in Georgia. And we very much see a growing economy as very much a part of our foreign policy priority promoting stability and security in the region.

I think, in terms of the greatest opportunities for Georgia, I think it is—I mentioned, already, its recent agreement with the EU, to increase trade with the EU. And I think that is a tremendous opportunity for Georgia. And also, I think the—Georgia's strategic position as—between Asia and Europe—and I think that it can really gain a lot from being this East-West corridor for energy, in particular, but also for transporting goods from Central Asia to Europe. And, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and with the Congress in identifying more opportunities.

Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ambassador Kelly.

Mrs. Pettit.

Ms. PETTIT. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

Deepening deepening trade and investment with Latvia is one of the highest priorities in our relationship. Last year, our total bilateral trade investment was about $700 million. If I am confirmed, I will work to expand that.

In terms of opportunities, I think the Northern Distribution Network, where Riga served as a hub for materiel going to Afghanistan, could possibly be developed into a new economic opportunity for Latvia. That is an area I would explore with them, if confirmed.

Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mrs. Pettit.

Ms. Raji.

Ms. RAJI. Thank you.

In many ways, we already have a very strong and long-lasting trade and investment partnership with Sweden that goes back to 1783. We have a robust—as I mentioned earlier, they are a strong foreign investor in the United States, and we have a—strong trade relationships.

Bilaterally, the opportunities lie in looking at industries where there is potential. For example, in the smart-grid industry in the United States, we are one of the leaders—export leaders—I think, the third-leading export leader of transmission and distribution equipment, electrical equipment. It is an area that was identified by the National Export Initiative as an area of high growth and potential for the United States to grow. Because of the interest, internationally, in investing in dated electricity infrastructure, that is an area that we can explore with Sweden that they possibly could be interested, as well as energy efficiency in the built environment. So, that is just to pick one sector.

Sweden presents a successful example in building prosperity through trade. It has managed to transform its once agricultural society over the last 150 years into one of the world's most prosperous, competitive, and innovative modern industrials economies, largely relying on trade, where it is now over 50 percent of its GDP.

So, we will explore the bilateral opportunities. But, I think there is also a multilateral opportunity. Because of Sweden's strong example in building prosperity through trade, I will look for opportunities to explore with our Swedish partners to see how we can highlight and leverage that strong example in Europe in reaching our shared objective of a Transatlantic and Pacific partnership.

And finally, I want to just say that my background in business and finance, especially in emerging markets, have made me realize the important connection between economic prosperity and political stability and civil society. So, I share Secretary Kerry's view that foreign policy is—economic policy is foreign policy. And if confirmed, I will use my skills in business and finance towards economic statecraft to open new markets for the United States, encourage foreign investment in the United States, and increase exports.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ms. Raji.

Ms. Noyes.

Ms. NOYES. Thank you, Senator

Croatia has suffered from recession for the last 6 years, and is only barely now coming to a position of positive growth. Its unemployment rate ranges from about 18½ percent for the general population to about 48 percent for youth. Its deficit is 5.7 percent of GDP, and its debt-to-GDP ratio is about 85 percent. Clearly it has a lot of economic issues that it needs to address in addition to its difficult investment climate.

But, Croatia also has some real advantages. It is breathtakingly beautiful country, very attractive to tourists. If confirmed, I hope that you will come to visit. [Laughter.]

Ms. NOYES. But, it is also—it has an enormously motivated, educated population. Its recent admission into the European Union has given it additional resources and expertise that it can draw upon. And Croatia also has energy resources of its own. It is these energy resources that the Croatian government is trying to expand on, in creating and making itself into a regional energy hub.

If confirmed, I would seek to work with the Croatian Government to tackle some of these very difficult economic issues, working with our government here, but also with the European Union and with Brussels and with other countries in the neighborhood, because a number of these are issues that need to be tackled regionally.

Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ms. Noyes.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Delawie, I had the opportunity to visit Kosovo in February of 2010 on their Independence Day—their second Independence Day. And I remember the people on the streets waving flags from Kosovo and from America, thanking Americans. It was very moving to see that.

I was very encouraged when I heard that there had been an agreement reached between Kosovo and Serbia to lessen tensions between the two countries. Can you give us an update on how the relationship with Serbia is going and what additional progress has been made since that accord was signed?

Mr. DELAWIE. Thank you very much, Senator Shaheen. And, if confirmed, I certainly hope you will come back and see what has changed since February of 2010.

The relationship between Kosovo and Serbia is going pretty well. We are firm supporters of the EU-sponsored dialogue. There was an agreement in 2013 that lead—is on a path toward normalization

of relations between the two countries. There has been a lot of progress in the last couple of years. The police are integrated now. The Serbs and Albanians are integrated in the same police department. Judicial structures are merged. The Serbian parallel courts in the northern chunk of the country are no longer taking new cases. There are liaison offices between the two countries. And the EU has been very enthusiastic in helping to promote this, using the idea of a potential path for both countries ultimately into EU integration.

The new EU High Rep. Mogherini was in Kosovo, actually, in March. She helped initiate some additional progress on judicial issues. So, progress is going pretty well, and I think we can all be happy of the role that the United States has played in promoting that progress.

Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. I agree, I think we should be very proud of that.

Can you also talk about the Serbian church? Because, as I remember, one of the concerns was the fact that many of the churches—Serbian churches were a concern, in terms of potential protection in the future.

Mr. DELAWIE. That is certainly one of the issues the Embassy in Pristina pays close attention to. They are talking about it. Protecting the Serbian orthodox heritage in Kosovo is certainly one of the key elements of this normalization dialogue, something our Embassy pays close attention to. And, as far as I know, that has been going relatively well. And I believe the Embassy has even put some money from the Ambassador's fund into remodeling and protecting some of the Serbian orthodox churches in Kosovo.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. That is very encouraging.

Ms. Noyes, can you—you mentioned the importance of Croatia in the region, in the Balkans, in terms of its future economic prosperity. Can you talk about what you, as Ambassador, would be able to do to encourage economic prosperity with the region, and also what the United States is doing to promote economic prosperity?

Ms. NOYES. Thank you, Senator.

Yes. One of the things that Croatia is seeking to do is to become a regional energy hub. It has resources of its own. It provides about 60 percent of its own gas for domestic use, but it also has a great geographic location and some infrastructure that already exists that would allow it, if it could build an LNG import terminal—and they are looking at building one on the Krk Island—that would allow it to be a hub for the exportation—or the importation of LNG, and then the exportation to other countries in the region. This would not only help with regional needs, but it would also reduce reliance on Russian gas.

And Croatia has also been very engaged and active within the EU and in NATO in advancing the Euro-Atlantic integration of its partners, and seeking to have greater relations between the EU and other countries in the Balkans.

So, if confirmed, I would certainly seek to promote both of those objectives—the LNG terminal, the creation of the regional energy hub—but also to support Croatia's advocacy and its emphasis on making all of the countries of the Balkans oriented toward the

West, both in terms of their democratic behavior, and their economic growth and their free-market orientation.

Senator SHAHEEN. And to what extent has Croatia been affected, or has it been affected, by the financial difficulties in Greece?

Ms. NOYES. Well, Senator, Croatia and Greece are the only two countries in the EU that have suffered from a recession for the last 6 years. In each case—and I know this a bit on Greece because of my current job, working with the European Union—there are factors in each country that are specific to the country, but there is no doubt that both countries were also affected by the greater economic downturn in Europe. As we see now with dropping energy prices—frankly, the drop in the value of the Euro—we are starting to see growth turning around in Europe. And, in fact, we are now seeing Croatia coming out of the recession and doing better.

So, they are not necessarily linked to each other, but they both have been affected by greater trends, as well as by macroeconomic issues that they need to tackle independently, both in Zagreb and in Athens.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Kelly, one of the issues that I have had the opportunity to raise with Georgian officials when they have been here is concern about the perception that arrests of some former political leaders raise questions about the rule of law and the judicial system in Georgia. And to what extent do you think it is—what can we do, in the United States, to encourage Georgia to continue to move forward with democracy and to address the potential to see former political opponents as subject to arrest, as opposed to what they are, which is former political opponents?

Ambassador KELLY. Well, thank you very much for that question.

Our top foreign policy priority for Georgia is helping it attain its aspirations, join Euro-Atlantic institutions. And, of course, we would not want to see anything degrade that trajectory toward Euro-Atlantic integration. And in our bilateral contacts, I know that Ambassador Norland has had many good consultations with the Georgian Government, and we have stressed the importance of not even having the perception of any kind of political use of any kind of judicial levers.

Having said that, we also have a very strong cooperation with Georgia to ensure that the judicial process, in all cases, is transparent and accountable. And I think Georgia has made great strides in ensuring the independence of the judiciary.

But, you have put your finger on one of the issues, that, if you do confirm me, that I am going to keep a very close eye on. So, thank you very much for raising that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. And my time is up, but let me just say how much I appreciate the close relationship that America and Georgia have had, and their contributions to our efforts in Afghanistan have been significant. So, I think they have made tremendous progress, and want to see them continue to succeed.

Ambassador KELLY. I second that. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Noyes, you talked a little bit about the security cooperation between the U.S. and Croatia. And I not—have not been to Croatia, so, when my staff and I were digging—it is pretty impressive. Croatia participates in U.N. peacekeeping operations in the Golan Heights, Cyprus, Sudan, Liberia, Lebanon, Western Sahara, and the Kashmir, supports NATO-led Kosovo Force, and also the ISAF in Afghanistan. Kind of feel funny saying that and saying, Are there things we can do to even strengthen the relationship? I am very impressed with the commitment of Croatia to peacekeeping through U.N. and other multinational organizations. But, are there remaining opportunities for us to deepen that tie?

Ms. NOYES. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, Croatia definitely punches above its weight on the security front. It participates in 11 peacekeeping operations. It is been with us in Afghanistan since 2003. It provided ammunition and weapons to both Iraqi forces and the peshmerga. It assisted with the removal of Syrian chemical weapons. And it is absolutely a critical support to KFOR through its provision of lift support.

That said, there is always more that can be done. And, if confirmed, I would look forward to working further with the forces in Croatia. One of the biggest priorities that we have there is to help Croatia modernize its equipment. It still has too much reliance on Soviet-era equipment, and still relies on Russia for spare parts and, in some cases, servicing of that equipment. So, one of my priorities, if confirmed, would be to help Croatia modernize its forces and its equipment to make them more interoperable with NATO forces, and to continue to support the efforts of this very willing ally.

Senator KAINE. Great.

Ms. Raji, I look forward to working with you on the economic issues. Virginia has a huge amount of direct investment from Swedish companies. The only vehicle manufacturing plant in Virginia is a Volvo truck plant in Dublin, VA.

But, I want to ask you about something else. You talked a little bit about the Arctic Council. I—this is something that I was not too aware of before I came to the Senate, but the United States has just taken on the chairmanship of the Arctic Council for the coming year. Talk a little bit about initiatives that you think the United States and Sweden can do together as the Arctic really changes in its strategic importance.

Ms. RAJI. Senator, thank you for that question.

The Arctic region, in fact, is an area of increasing importance. With the melting of the Arctic ice, there are new opportunities and challenges in shipping, commerce, trade, environmental protection, fishing, hunting, and the livelihood and the living conditions of the 4 million indigenous Arctic people that live there.

Correctly stated, we just took over the chairmanship of the Arctic Council. We have a very strong partnership with Sweden in the Arctic region and other environmental issues that I mentioned. But, focusing on the Arctic Council, we have a scientific cooperation with Sweden. We were cofounders of the Clean Air and—Climate and Clean Air Coalition, which focuses on reducing so-called short-lived climate pollutants, or black carbon, which is a concern in the Arctic. And Sweden has particular expertise and knowledge in that

area. We cooperate with them on that, and on that Council. Scientific research is another area.

And, broadly speaking, I would say that we share the values that the Arctic Council is the preeminent intergovernmental forum for cooperation. The Arctic has always been a region of no conflict and cooperation on scientific research and environmental issues. And all of the members are interested in maintaining that practical cooperation in our mutual goals.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you so much for that.

Ms. Pettit, I am interested in Latvia, with all of the challenges we deal with on this committee with Russian influence and their sort of more bellicose recent posture. Latvia—I guess, 38 percent of Latvians claim Russian as their mother tongue, and there are strong Russian cultural ties. What is the view of the, kind of, Latvian population about Russian expansionism in the Baltic region and elsewhere in Europe?

Ms. PETTIT. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

As you said, there are a large number of Russian speakers in Latvia. However, those Russian speakers are very supportive of Latvia's participation in Euro-Atlantic institutions. For example, the political party that represents these Russian speakers believes that Latvia should be a member of the EU. And there are many advantages to Latvia and all Latvians being members of the EU.

I think one of the areas of concern is Russian propaganda. The Latvian Government is addressing this issue. They are addressing it by increasing the number of Russian-language TV programs. They have a new television studio for their Russian-language programs. The United States is working closely with Latvia on this. VOA and RFE/RL now have a nightly Russian language program that is available online for Russian speakers who are looking for objective, truth-based media. And I—if confirmed—will continue to work with Latvia to address these issues.

I think the message we have to share is—as Azita mentioned and Julieta mentioned—is our strength through diversity. And we have a great message to share with Latvia.

Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Mr. Kelly, talk a little bit about the delicate situation that Georgia's in with Russia in the—a posture that they are in, contrary to international law, on the two areas of Georgia that you described. Georgia still has been a participant with NATO in missions. I think there is one underway, or recently, Noble Partner, on the borders of Russia, 300 American soldiers accompanied by 14 Bradley tanks transported across the Black Sea from Romania. NATO is scheduled to open a training center in Georgia later this year. How does Georgia manage this with the challenge with Russia now? And what can we do to shore them up?

Ambassador KELLY. Thank you very much, Mr. Senator.

I think you actually identified one of the most tangible examples of the way we are shoring up their aspirations to join NATO, and that is the training exercises going on right now, Noble Partner, where we have hundreds of American troops from 173rd Brigade who are helping the Georgians become interoperable with the NATO Response Force. And that is a—it is a real token of our sup-

port for this bedrock principle that every nation has the right to choose its own alliances. And Georgia has overwhelmingly chosen to join NATO.

So, much of our bilateral assistance, of course, is designed to help Georgia become interoperable with NATO. You also, I think, very sensitively pointed out the very difficult position they are in, with 20 percent of their territory under occupation and with the Russian troops there, digging in, showing no signs of living up to the terms of the cease-fire agreement in 2008 which called for Russian troops to return to their previous positions. They are actually hardening the border, putting up fences and surveillance cameras. They are denying monitors from—the international community, like the EU monitoring mission, from coming in, which was also agreed to in the 2008 cease-fire.

And I think, in general, we have to keep saying, over and over again, that we support their aspirations to integrate with Europe—to join NATO, to integrate with the EU. And, of course, we need to have tangible support, as well. And we are doing it. The Congress has made Georgia one of the largest recipients of foreign military financing. It is also one of the largest recipients of IMET, the International Military Education and Training. So, we really are, I think, you know, walking the walk as well as talking the talk. And, if confirmed, I will, as I say, continue to make this our priority, to support their Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, could I ask Mr. Delawie just one brief question? Thank you. I am over my time, but——

Mr. Delawie, I am curious about Kosovo, the number of foreign fighters that go from Kosovo into the ISIL theater in Syria and Iraq—per capita, among the highest in the world. I am puzzled by that. Could you educate the committee about why that is? What is it about Kosovo—it is geographic or sort of ideological positioning that leads that to be the case?

Mr. DELAWIE. I do not think there is one easy answer, Senator Kaine. They are—Kosovo is the poorest country in Europe. Unemployment, around 40 percent; among youth, it is probably in the neighborhood of 60 percent. So, there is this economic factor. There are some—some people are going for ideological reasons. Some people are going for excitement and adventure, unfortunately. So, there are a variety of challenges that Kosovo faces.

Fortunately, Kosovo passed a law, just 2 months ago, in March, that would criminalize many of the aspects of going to Syria and Iraq to join with ISIL. And we are working with the Embassy in Pristina very hard with the justice authorities, the police authorities, to train prosecutors, and to help the government get a grip on the problem.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Appreciate all of your testimony.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good to see you in the Chair's spot. I enjoyed our 2 years sitting at the head of this subcommittee.

And we have got a really fantastic group of nominees here today, all going to very interesting countries, many of them in transition. So, a few questions.

Maybe, Mr. Kelly, I will start with you to extend this conversation about Georgia's future. So, I am a believer that we are starting to compromise NATO's open-door policy without a real, tangible plan for enlargement that includes Georgia, understanding that it is a very difficult nut to crack with respect to the occupied and contested territories. But, that does not seem impossible. And so, I want to ask you, sort of, What are the preconditions from our standpoint right now, from the U.S.'s standpoint, as to what has to happen in order for Georgia to get NATO membership? And do you foresee a circumstance in which you could give the portion of Georgia that is not contested, is not occupied, membership, or give a type of membership with reservations concerning the extent of the occupied and contested territories?

Ambassador KELLY. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Of course, you know NATO is a consensus organization with all 28 members. I think, you know, the United States has a good story to tell, in terms of our support for Georgia's desire to join NATO. And I think that we really are doing a lot to help them prepare for membership. And so, I think a lot of what we have to do, and what we have to continue to do, because I think the Embassy is already doing it, is highlighting what the United States is doing, in terms of training Georgians, of integrating them into NATO missions. But, you have—you know, you have put your finger on the really hard part of it, of course, which is the fact that Russia occupies 20 percent of Georgia and has compromised its territorial integrity. And so, I think that we just have to stay focused on the overall goal of supporting Georgia in becoming more interoperable with NATO, in reforming its defense institutions—and we have multiple programs through State and through the Defense Department to do that—and also be very steadfast in rejecting Russia's illegal occupation of 20 percent of Georgia's territory.

Senator MURPHY. But, does that not effectively result in Russia having veto power over Georgia's accession to NATO? If we do not hold out the possibility that there is a pathway for them to join while the occupation continues, do we not essentially put the decision in Russia's hands?

Ambassador KELLY. I do not think that Russia or any other country has a veto on a country's desire to join NATO. We do have good—I think, a good dialogue through NATO with Georgia, through the NATO-Georgia Commission. I think that the path is clear to any aspirant to join NATO. Obviously, the occupation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia is a very difficult issue. But, this overarching principle, that all countries should be able to choose their own alliances and associations, is something that has to be really defended, and the United States has to do everything it can—and, of course, is doing everything it can—to help Georgia realize its aspirations.

Senator MURPHY. I think we have been halfhearted in our attempts to lead the way to Georgia's membership in NATO. I hope that we change at least the volume of our tune.

Mr. Delawie, you got big shoes to fill. Ambassador Jacobson has done really important work for us at a very critical time. I visited with her in Pristina last fall at a moment in which I think she showed immense discretion in forcing the different parties surrounding the government to make their own decisions about a coalition moving forward, resisting the temptation that sometimes comes with that position to get too involved.

I also visited the American University there, and one of the answers to the question about the roots of extremism is a real sense of hopelessness amongst young people in Kosovo, you know, large numbers of youth unemployed and very little access to higher education. The American University there is a unique asset that provides a pathway into the middle class for young people in Kosovo. I just hope that you will support their mission, support the work that the new government is trying to do to expand opportunities for higher education. It is really a—it is really stunning, the lack of opportunities to get advanced degrees in Kosovo. AUK is, right now, their best bet to do that, but, hopefully, that experience can be modeled, moving forward.

Mr. DELAWIE. Thank you very much, Senator.

I know Ambassador Jacobson has done an incredible job. And I am looking forward to doing my best to fill her shoes. But, it will be hard.

Fortunately, USAID has devoted a fair amount of resources to supporting the access to higher education for Kosovar citizens. You are right, there is a long way to go. And I certainly agree with you about this—the hopelessness. We have—we saw another example of that, not just in the ISIL direction, but also, in the winter, there were a fair number of Kosovo citizens who were attempting to emigrate, basically, to Germany. Another symptom of that. So——

Senator MURPHY. And I think we need to help the Kosovar Government understand that this is not just about law enforcement. They have really done some impressive things when it is come to standing up law enforcement's capabilities. But, they have, I think, got to understand the holistic strategy.

Just one question, Ms. Raji. Good to see you. I do not know if this question has been asked, but—Sweden stepped up their participation with NATO. They are obviously—have agreements with NATO through memorandums of understanding for training and military exercises. Important, given the forward positioning of Russia in and around the region, to have that dialogue continue. I assume that they are going to continue to be an active participant with NATO in whatever joint exercises are appropriate, and that we will encourage them to increase their level of military integration so that we can send a coordinated message, even with non-NATO partners, to Russia that, if they are going to continue to run submarines and jet planes over our friends' heads and to our friends' shores, that there is going to be a coordinated response.

Ms. RAJI. Great to see you, Senator Murphy, and thank you for that question.

As you know, Sweden is not an ally of NATO, but it is one of the—only five recently designated Enhanced Opportunities Partners. It has made significant contributions to the missions of

NATO, and, in fact, other multilateral institutions, such as the EU and the U.N. in peacekeeping and military exercises and so forth.

With regard to NATO, Sweden currently has troops under allied command in Kosovo and Afghanistan, and played a significant role in protecting the no-fly zone in Libya in 2011. And it continues to increase, as you said, some of its involvement with NATO in the exercises. For example, it joined the NATO Response Force in 2013, which will enhance joint capabilities. And it did sign an MOU for a Host Nation Support Agreement in 2014, which will regulate exercises and military transits on its soil, that has not been ratified, however.

We very much have a strong partnership with Sweden on NATO missions. And, if confirmed, I will continue their cooperation and partnership with NATO.

Senator MURPHY. Great.

If I—just one quick question I forgot to ask Mr. Delawie. The Riga summit starts tomorrow. There was an expectation that there might be an extension of visa liberalization for Georgia coming. It does not look like that may happen. I hope I—I ask you whether it is going to be part of your mission to continue to work with Georgia and with the Europeans to try to—I am sorry—Mr. Kelly—I am sorry—to Mr. Kelly—although you can respond to that question, as well, if you would like——

[Laughter.]

Senator MURPHY [continuing]. Mr. Delawie. Be happy to know what the Kosovar's Ambassador's position is on Georgia visa liberalization. [Laughter.]

Mr. Kelly, what is the role that we can play in trying to help them come to a better place on the question of visa liberalization, vis-a-vis the European Union, post-Riga?

Ambassador KELLY. Yes, thank you very much.

Yes, as I said before, the—our—really, our top foreign policy priority is to keep Georgia on a good trajectory. And I think that it will be important that the Euro-Atlantic community sends signals that Georgia is progressing on this path. And I think this will help address some of the concerns you mentioned before, obviously, about NATO's open door, too.

But, we—you know, a lot of our assistance program has been sort of reoriented to help Georgia implement the terms of the Association Agreement. And that is because it is really in our U.S. national interests that Georgia become integrated into the European Union and into European institutions, in general. So, we can help them bilaterally, with the EU, obviously, in pushing Georgia's case forward. But, we can also help them with our bilateral assistance program. And I know that we are doing that.

And if I am confirmed, I will make it a real priority to ensure that that trajectory stays on a nice steep path toward Euro-Atlantic integration. And, of course, that includes the EU.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to go over time.

Senator JOHNSON. Not a problem.

I am going to ask one other question before I close it out, so did you have any further questions before——

Senator MURPHY. That is okay.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay.

This question is really directed at Ambassador Kelly and Mrs. Pettit, but if any of the other nominees have anything to add, please do.

My first congressional delegation trip was in the spring of 2011, before I was on the Foreign Relations Committee, and we visited Georgia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Back in 2011, the representatives from all of those countries were talking about what Russia was trying to do to undermine those fledgling democracies.

We are seeing that, obviously, in spades today. I personally do not think Vladimir Putin is looking for off-ramps. I think Vladimir Putin is looking for on-ramps. I am highly concerned about Latvia. I am not sure what he is going to be doing in Georgia. I was up, by the way, right at the border, and I was able to look through binoculars at the Russians in the occupied areas.

The question I have is, What concerns do you have, in terms of what Russia is doing in Latvia or within the region, to undermine those democracies?

We will start with you, Mrs. Pettit.

Ms. PETTIT. Thank you, Senator.

I do not think I can say it any better than President Obama said it in Tallinn, right before the Wales summit in 2014, when he said that the defense of Tallinn and Riga and Vilnius is as important as the defense of Berlin, London, and Paris. And that is our very strong message.

Latvia is our NATO ally. And, through our bilateral security assistance and through our NATO activities—including the Baltic air policing, the IMET program, our FMF program, Section 2282, all of the Wales commitments that we are in the process of implementing, the establishment of the command-and-control unit in Latvia—each of the Baltic States will get a command-and-control unit, the Very High Readiness Task Force that is also being implemented—there is a lot going on. And I think this sends a very strong message of deterrence.

Senator JOHNSON. Again, that is what we are doing——

Ms. PETTIT. Right.

Senator JOHNSON. I am more interested, in terms of your knowledge of what Russia is doing. And I will throw out there the propaganda. I know I have gone over to Ukraine a couple of times with Senator Murphy, and with the bipartisan delegations, and it has always struck me how the Senators are shocked at how effective Vladimir Putin and Russia's propaganda is without any pushback, or virtually no pushback, on the part of the West.

Ms. PETTIT. Well, I——

Senator JOHNSON. So, again, I guess I am looking just for your knowledge of what Russia——

Ms. PETTIT. Right.

Senator JOHNSON [continuing]. Is doing——

Ms. PETTIT. There——

Senator JOHNSON [continuing]. To undermine——

Ms. PETTIT. There is——

Senator JOHNSON [continuing]. The democracy.

Ms. PETTIT. There is plenty of propaganda directed towards Latvia's Russian-language speakers. This is absolutely true. But, Latvia is addressing this issue. As I mentioned earlier, they have greatly enhanced the number of TV news programs they offer in the Russian language. Russian journalists are leaving Russia and moving to Riga. For example, a former editor of one of the biggest news platforms in Russia opened her own new platform in Riga, where there is press freedom. And she has gotten literally thousands and thousands of hits on her Russian-language Web site. The BBG, here in the United States, is working with—the Broadcasting Board of Governors—is working with Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty and making available new Russian-language programs online. Our goal is provide objective, truth-based media to the Russian speakers in Latvia. This is an issue of concern also within the EU. And I believe, that shortly, the EU will also be working on this matter and addressing this matter.

If I am confirmed, I will travel to the Russian-speaking areas of Latvia and engage directly with this population. And I think this is a great opportunity, again, to discuss or to present the U.S. view that there is strength in diversity.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay, again, I am concerned with the hybrid or ambiguous war. And obviously, propaganda is part of that. Maybe the first part. But, there may be other actions Russia might be taking.

Ambassador Kelly, are you aware of anything not even just in Georgia, but elsewhere in the Baltic States or—that ring of democracies around Russia? We obviously know it is happening in Ukraine.

Ambassador KELLY. Yes, I—you know, as someone who has followed Russia for many, many years, and am a bit of a Russia media junkie, I am appalled by the kind of—well, let us just—let us call it by its real name—by the lies that are being spread about what our intentions are in supporting these countries and about what Russia is actually doing in some of these countries.

And in the case of Georgia, I think that they are ramping up their outreach to Georgia, in terms of media. There are some NGOs that are active in Georgia. And I think this gets back to what Senator Murphy was talking about, about our concern about the—maintaining the level of support within Georgia. And we do not want to see that level fall. And so, we would be concerned about messages that run contrary to our values, that we are seeing in the Russian media. And we need to, as I say, ensure that Georgians appreciate that we stand behind them in supporting their desire to join NATO and to join European institutions.

And I know that Ambassador Norland has been very active in highlighting U.S. assistance for Georgia, in all of our public pronouncements, highlighting our support for their territorial integrity. And, as somebody who has dealt quite a bit in public diplomacy, I, too, will relish being able to go around Georgia and really show the Georgians that we are behind them.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay.

Any of the other nominees want to add anything on that subject? Sure. Mr. Delawie.

Mr. DELAWIE. Thank you, Senator, just very briefly.

Two of the major streets in Kosovo, in Pristina, are named George W. Bush Street and Bill Clinton Street. I do not think there will be fertile ground for any—too much Russian propaganda, in Kosovo at least.

Senator JOHNSON. We rely on you to make sure that remains that way.

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Chairman, one final question that I meant to ask Ms. Noyes.

The Croatians are currently flying Russian-made helicopters and are very interested in buying American-made Black Hawk helicopters, something that I spoke to their Defense Minister about when I was there, on the same trip where I visited Pristina. Can you commit to us that you are going to work with the Croatians to make a significant upgrade to their helicopter fleet, such that they are no longer reliant on Russian technology?

Ms. NOYES. Thank you, Senator.

I am delighted to report that this year we are working with Croatia to get them some Kiowas. And I understand that discussions are underway with regard to the Black Hawks. And, if confirmed, I would be delighted to support those efforts.

Senator MURPHY. Black Hawks are much better than Kiowas. [Laughter.]

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

Again, I would like to thank all of our witnesses for your testimony, for your thoughtful questions to our answers, and for your willingness to serve this Nation. I would like to thank your families for their willingness to support your service to this Nation.

If there is anything we can, as a subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, do to help you succeed in your mission as our Ambassadors to those countries, please let us know. We really do not think often enough about how what this committee says, what we do, and resolutions we may be able to pass, how that can actually aid you. Think of this committee and keep in communication with us. Again certainly wish you the best.

With that, the record will remain open for questions and statements until the close of business on Friday.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:40 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

NOMINATION

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2015

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

Gayle Smith, of Ohio, to be Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:03 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Corker, Risch, Johnson, Gardner, Perdue, Cardin, Menendez, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, and Markey.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

And I am going to go ahead and get rolling, and I am sure that Senator Cardin will be here in just a minute.

USAID oversees 20 billion dollar's worth of aid to over 100 countries. It is a very important organization. Gayle Smith, who has been nominated, will have 18 months to have an impact on this organization. And I will say that I think it is beneficial that she has served with the President's National Security Council and therefore inside the main building. She is someone that is trusted and not coming from the outside, and I know has been involved in these kinds of issues for a long, long time.

I do hope that in your testimony you will talk about some of the priorities that we have had here. I think you know the committee passed out on a unanimous vote an effort to end modern slavery. I know it is something that you for years have been involved in and care about, but I hope you will speak to that in your testimony.

I think you also know that there is a significant effort underway to reform the Food for Peace program. I know we talked about that some in our office. It is very important to many members. I think you know that some of us share the belief that it is a travesty that we are not serving the millions of people that could be served by reforming this program and being held hostage to various groups that benefit in ways that are not beneficial to the people that we are trying to serve.

And then thirdly, Power Africa. There is a significant effort underway to make sure that the millions of people that do not have

electricity even in their homes are able to do that in Africa, in particular, as I mentioned. And in the past, we have had some environmental issues that have said that, look, it is more important. We would rather people not have any electricity in their homes if it is going to produce 1 ounce of carbon, which is not exactly, I think, a policy or a value that most Americans adhere to. And I think we have been able to get to a place that achieves a balance between the environmental concerns, which I understand are real, but also the concern for human beings. And hopefully, you will talk a little bit about that.

I am glad that in your testimony you are going to refer to the tremendous need to deal with the organizational issues within the organization. This year we hope to pass into law a State Department authorization. We passed it out of committee unanimously last week. We are attempting, still, to deal with that through NDAA. At some point we need to do the same with USAID, but you internally will be able to do much.

So, I want to thank you for being here. I want to thank you for your willingness to serve. Again, I am glad the executive branch has nominated someone that has the kind of experience that you have.

And when Senator Cardin arrives he may want to make some opening comments, but I think short of that it would probably be best—unless one of the other committee members would like to address—if you would go ahead and give your testimony. We would appreciate it.

STATEMENT OF GAYLE SMITH, NOMINATED TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your comments on those important issues.

Chairman Corker, Senators Menendez and Coons, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee for Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. It is truly a privilege for me to come before this committee, and I am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their trust and confidence.

I would also like to thank my family: my mother who is watching from Columbus, OH; my brother Jay and sister-in-law Marianne; Ben and Sarah; and my father and sister, who though they may not be with us, will always be part of a family that has continued to provide me with support and encouragement.

Since being nominated, I have had the opportunity to consult with several members of this committee, and I have appreciated your guidance and counsel to ensure that USAID remains the world's top development agency.

In this time of great need and opportunity, USAID is working with a diverse array of partners to end extreme poverty, foster sustained and inclusive growth, and promote resilient democratic societies both as an expression of our values and to transform them into peaceful, open, and flourishing partners of the United States. These are principles that have driven my own approach to inter-

national development across a 35-year career and principles that I will continue to uphold as Administrator.

If confirmed, it would be an honor and privilege to support the USAID mission alongside the more than 9,000 selfless men and women who serve the American people in some of the world's most challenging environments.

Should I have the honor of being confirmed, I will pursue four priorities.

First, I will focus the Agency on programs that are achieving results and will be selective about initiating new commitments. I will work with Congress to institutionalize successful programs, including Feed the Future, Power Africa, and our efforts in maternal and child health.

Second, I will provide the leadership, guidance, and tools needed to enable USAID staff in Washington and in the field to deliver against our most urgent priorities. This includes expanding the Agency's work on democracy, rights, and governance. This also means expanding the Agency's impact on human trafficking and on corruption, laying the groundwork for the success of a critically important strategy for Central America, and ensuring an equally important transition in Afghanistan.

Third, if confirmed, I will act quickly to ensure that the Agency maintains global leadership and agility in responding to increasingly complex humanitarian crises. When a natural disaster strikes or a humanitarian catastrophe is imminent, USAID should be among the first on the ground to help those in need. I will also work with this committee and other stakeholders to pursue meaningful food aid reform that will enable us, as you, sir, suggest, to reach more people more quickly and while maintaining our historic partnership with U.S. farmers and maritime.

Fourth and perhaps most important, I will focus on further strengthening the institution. This will involve expanding the capacity of the Agency to mobilize resources and engagement from other partners; to draw on science, technology, and innovation to address development challenges; and to increase investment in effective local solutions.

Strengthening USAID also means tackling some of the management and operational challenges facing an agency that manages resources across more than 80 countries, often in complex environments. The Agency must ensure that American taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly. It must identify successful programs, learn from prior mistakes, apply lessons learned, and share best practices, all in an open and transparent way. If progress is not being made, it must take corrective action or terminate projects.

But strengthening USAID also means supporting and listening to its people both here and overseas. These are men and women with knowledge, institutional memory, and invaluable insight. Indeed, they take on some of the most daunting tasks and aspirational missions one can imagine, all on behalf of our Government and our country. It is my goal to give them the visibility, respect, and gratitude that they deserve.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I thank you for considering my nomination, and I look forward to your questions. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GAYLE E. SMITH

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee for Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. It is a privilege to come before this committee, and I am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their trust and confidence.

I would also like to thank my family—my mother, who is watching from Columbus, Ohio, my brother Jay and sister-in-law Marianne, Ben and Sarah, and my father and sister, who though they may not be with us, will always be part of a family that has supported and encouraged me—a family from which I draw strength and humor each and every day.

Since being nominated, I have had the opportunity to consult with several members of this committee, and I have appreciated your guidance and counsel to ensure that USAID remains the world's preeminent development agency. From the humanitarian emergency in Syria and ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine, to the pressing needs in Central America and the Ebola virus in West Africa, today's world demands creative solutions to increasingly complex problems.

Over the past two administrations, we have seen unprecedented bipartisan support for the Agency's key initiatives, from global health and food security to humanitarian assistance and science and technology—as well as a recognition that the Agency's work must be informed by a rigorous use of evidence and data to guide decisionmaking. These are principles that have driven my own approach to international development across a 35 year career, and principles that I will continue to uphold as Administrator, if confirmed.

In this time of great need and opportunity, USAID is working with a diverse array of partners to end extreme poverty, foster sustained and inclusive growth, and promote resilient democratic societies, both as an expression of our values and to help build them into peaceful, open, and flourishing partners of the United States.

If confirmed, it would be an honor and privilege to support the USAID mission alongside the selfless men and women who serve the American people in some of the world's most challenging environments.

With more than 9,000 men and women and a strong field presence in over 80 countries, USAID is uniquely positioned to flexibly respond to humanitarian crises with agility and to provide enduring leadership to solve the world's most intractable development challenges—all for less than 1 percent of the federal budget.

Over the past 5 years, USAID has embraced a new model of development shaped by data and evidence that brings together an increasingly diverse community—private sector companies, entrepreneurs, local civil society organizations, universities, NGOs, and communities of faith—to deliver meaningful results.

By using assistance to support capacity-building and reform critical policies, the Agency has led a government-wide effort to mobilize domestic and foreign private sector investments, including more than $10 billion of private commitments through Feed the Future and more than $20 billion through Power Africa. USAID has worked with entrepreneurs through its Global Development Lab to develop new technologies that address longstanding development challenges. It has partnered with a vibrant implementing partner community here in the United States that has made its own pledges to support reconstruction in Haiti, economic development in Africa, and global food security. And it has elevated the importance of local solutions, investing in the role and wisdom of partners on ground.

Against this backdrop, USAID has responded to an unprecedented number of humanitarian crises spawned by earthquakes and typhoons, droughts and famines, the Ebola epidemic, and chronic and new conflicts. In the past year, the Agency has simultaneously operated an unprecedented five Disaster Assistance Response Teams, bringing new knowledge and creativity to bear, whether by building resilience even while providing emergency relief or adapting data and technology to enable a faster and more efficient response.

USAID has taken great strides to improve operations, increase transparency, embrace accountability and ensure that the Agency is both responsive and responsible. There is much more to be done, but as someone who has worked with and observed this Agency and our foreign assistance programs for decades, I can sincerely offer that it is well on a path of reform and revitalization that is yielding and can yield greater and more potent returns for the United States and millions of men, women, and children around the world.

I believe that we share the view that both development and responding to humanitarian crises are in our national interests and that these pursuits reflect our val-

ues. I also believe that we share the view that we need a strong, capable, effective, and responsible USAID to pursue these interests and values. It would be an honor to serve as the USAID Administrator, and to turn my qualifications and experience to the task of leading the Agency.

Over a 35-year career in development and international affairs, I have spent two decades in the field, much of that time well outside capital cities. As a journalist for the BBC, American and European outlets, I spent months at a time in active war zones, covering conflicts that had escaped the world's attention.

I have consulted for the World Bank, UNICEF and major American foundations. I have worked with several NGOs, including members of the World Council of Churches when they mounted a cross-border emergency relief operation during the Ethiopian famine. I cofounded two NGOs, and today, the Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network and the ENOUGH Project remain active and effective advocates for a robust U.S. policy in support of development and human rights.

I have served on a congressional commission—the Helping to Enhance the Livelihood of People around the Globe (HELP) Commission—which was established to review U.S. foreign aid, and I worked for USAID, based in East Africa. I have served two Presidents, as Senior Director for African Affairs on President Clinton's National Security Council staff and as Senior Director for Development, Democracy, and Humanitarian Affairs under President Obama. I have traveled and worked with former President Carter and provided advice and assistance to President George H.W. Bush's National Security Council staff.

Over the last 6 years, as a member of the Obama administration, I have coordinated administration policy on global development and foreign assistance programs, democracy, governance and anticorruption efforts, and humanitarian crisis response.

Early in my tenure, I spearheaded efforts to develop the Presidential Study of Global Development Policy and the first-ever Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development, which elevated development alongside defense and diplomacy as pillars of American foreign policy.

Responding to humanitarian crises has been a significant focus of my time at the National Security Council, including the Nepal earthquake, major typhoons in Asia, the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

Working with departments and agencies, including USAID, I have assumed the primary role at the National Security Council for all major development priorities, including Feed the Future, Power Africa, ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic, maternal and child health, the Open Government Partnership, and the Partnership on Illicit Finance. I have co-led, with colleagues, the development of the Global Health Security Agenda, the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, and the President's Stand with Civil Society Initiative.

Should I have the honor of being confirmed, I will pursue four priorities.

First, I will focus the Agency on programs that are achieving results and will be selective about initiating new commitments. Further, I will work with Congress to institutionalize these programs. I will also work with this committee and other stakeholders to pursue meaningful food aid reform that will enable us to reach more people, more quickly, in times of need—all while maintaining our historic partnership with U.S. farmers and maritime.

Feed the Future and the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition have together elevated food security on the global agenda, registered direct impact on reducing poverty and improving nutrition, and mobilized billions of dollars in direct assistance and private resources. In 2013 alone, Feed the Future reached more than 12.5 million children with nutrition interventions and helped more than 7 million farmers and food producers use new technologies and management practices on more than 4 million hectares of land. If confirmed, I will ensure that Feed the Future and related nutrition programs continue to deliver these evidence-based results.

With a long-term goal of doubling access to cleaner, reliable, and efficient electricity in sub-Saharan Africa, Power Africa has already brought more than 4,100 megawatts worth of power transactions to financial close and raised over $20 billion from more than 90 private sector partners. At the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, President Obama tripled our initial goal to 30,000 megawatts, aiming to bring electricity to 60 million homes and businesses in Africa. If confirmed, I will support Power Africa as it closes more power transactions, partners with additional businesses, and expands into new countries.

If confirmed, I will continue the Agency's leadership in the global effort to end preventable child and maternal deaths. USAID has led an international coalition that developed targeted action plans in 24 priority countries that will save the lives of 15 million children and 600,000 women by 2020. I will also work closely with the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, the Centers for Disease Control, the National

Institutes of Health, and international and local partners to ensure that USAID does all it can to contribute to a goal that is within reach: ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Second, I will provide the leadership, guidance, and tools needed to enable USAID's staff in Washington and the field to deliver against our most urgent priorities. This includes expanding the Agency's work and impact on democracy, rights, and governance by securing and mobilizing additional resources to strengthen institutions and the rule of law, support and build the capacity of civil society organizations, enable free and fair elections, foster dialogue and promote transparency, and build on the successes of, for example, the recent elections in Nigeria. This also means, as I have discussed with several of you during our consultations, expanding the Agency's impact on human trafficking and corruption, laying the groundwork for the success of a critically important strategy for Central America, and ensuring an equally important transition in Afghanistan.

Third, if confirmed, I will act quickly to ensure that the Agency maintains global leadership and agility in responding to increasingly complex humanitarian crises around the world. In 2014 alone, USAID responded to 49 disasters in 42 countries. In addition to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, these included major crises in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Central African Republic, and, most recently, the earthquake in Nepal.

The Agency has developed an effective relationship with the Department of Defense, which has on multiple occasions deployed in support of USAID. USAID also continues to build the capacity and resiliency of governments to respond to disasters themselves. When a natural disaster strikes or a humanitarian catastrophe is imminent, the Agency is and should be among the first on the ground to help those in need, and in a world rife with crises, I believe it is critical to ensure that USAID remains one step ahead.

Fourth, and perhaps most important, I will focus on further strengthening the institution. That means building on the reform agenda launched by Administrator Rajiv Shah. This will involve expanding the capacity of the Agency to mobilize resources and engagement from other partners; to draw on science, technology, and innovation to address development challenges; and to increase investment in effective local solutions.

Strengthening the institution involves tackling some of the management and operational challenges facing an agency that manages resources across over 80 countries, often in complex environments. It is my view, and one that is shared by the staff of USAID, that the Agency must ensure that American taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly. It must identify successful programs, learn from prior mistakes, apply lessons learned, and share best practices—all in an open and transparent way. If progress is not being made, it must take corrective action or terminate projects.

USAID has already implemented critical reforms to safeguard taxpayer dollars, ensure greater accountability and oversight, and focus on sustainable results. In 2013, the Agency issued new guidance for awarding contracts that increased the weight of past performance in identifying potential contractors. Its new compliance unit has already executed over 200 suspension and debarment actions since its inception in 2011. If confirmed, I will build on these and other components of the reform agenda that strive to make the Agency more accountable to Congress and the American people. I will always be fully transparent about what is working and what is not, and I will ask for your help in solving problems and seeking opportunities.

Strengthening USAID also means supporting and listening to its people, both here in Washington and overseas. These are men and women with knowledge, institutional memory, and invaluable insight. Indeed, they take on some of the most daunting tasks and aspirational missions one can imagine, all on behalf of our government and our country. It is my goal to give them the visibility, respect, and gratitude that they deserve.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, should I have the honor of serving as Administrator, you have my word that I will be ambitious but focused; that I will not downplay challenges but seek your help; that I will strengthen a growing bipartisan consensus on development that serves us and the world so well; and that I will pass on to my successor an Agency that is strong and effective, responsive and responsible, and transparent and accountable—an Agency worthy of its dedicated men and women and those around the world that they aim to serve.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you for being here.

And our distinguished ranking member—I do not know if you want to make some opening comments. Okay.

As we have mentioned and you have mentioned, we have been working on some human trafficking issues and certainly hope to do something to majorly affect modern day slavery. What approaches has USAID identified and tested that demonstrably contribute to reducing modern day slavery?

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator, for the question and also for your leadership on this issue.

I think USAID to date has done a lot to contribute to this in the areas of training on rule of law, information and education through the media, through NGOs, through new applications, and new technologies, through also responding to the victims of human trafficking.

As you and I have discussed, I think that there is a foundation to build on and that we could actually do much more. If confirmed, I hope that we can expand on the work the agency has done to integrate the fight against human trafficking into its programs around the world to take full advantage of its presence in over 80 countries, to work on, importantly, the supply chains that USAID focuses on frequently as it is working on economic development and which, as you know, are among the places that human traffickers hide and exploit the most vulnerable.

So if confirmed, this is something that I will make a priority. I believe the men and women of the Agency believe it is a priority, and I very much look forward to working with you and others on the committee to explore what more we can do on this important agenda.

The CHAIRMAN. We, as you know, have been working on the Food for Peace program that I alluded to earlier. There is always a tug between working on this and making sure that the United States agriculture community is on board because, obviously, it matters relative to putting these reforms in place.

There are a lot of people out there that are trying to allude to the fact if we create more flexibility, that much of what we will be buying we will be buying from Russia and/or China, which is not true. But I wonder if you could expand on that non-fact?

Ms. SMITH. Senator, I think on this issue the facts show us a few things. One, Food for Peace has been an enormously valuable program for many, many decades. And I think we want to preserve——

[Audience disruption.]

The CHAIRMAN. One of your supporters, I guess.

Ms. SMITH. Yes. [Laughter.]

Anyway, if I may continue, Senator. Food for Peace has been a vital program. I have spent a lot of time in the field and have seen cases where food aid made an important difference, but also cases where the greater flexibility to which you allude would be enormously valuable in reaching more people more quickly. It is my belief that in consultation with key partners, constituents, and supporters of that program over time—it is my hope that we can find a way forward that would give USAID and particularly our people in the field that flexibility and ensure that at the same time we reflect and take into full account the very legitimate and important

interests of our communities here. I am optimistic that we can find a way forward. I am very encouraged by the number of Senators, yourself included, who have raised this during the consultations prior to this hearing. And so it is my intent, if confirmed, to work very closely with all of you to see if we can get this done.

The CHAIRMAN. Your predecessor had worked on, in essence, a $95 million transfer from food aid to the maritime industry in order to give ourselves the flexibility to feed more people. And as bad as that sounds—I actually wish every American could be aware of that—but as bad as that sounds, if there is a way to phase that out over a period of time so that it got to zero, there may be a way of dealing with this. I just wonder if you might give some editorial comments regarding that?

Ms. SMITH. Senator, I am a little bit hesitant to get too specific on the particulars. But I do think in principle—and I followed very closely Administrator Shah's work on this—that we can find ways to transition toward a program that is mutually beneficial to all involved. And I think considerable time has been given to thinking through how to do that within the Agency, even after Administrator Shah's departure, and I know among members of this committee. So I would be happy to sit down with you and with others to work through what exact calibration might be most appropriate and to consult, again, with all stakeholders so we can find a way to do this.

The CHAIRMAN. On Power Africa—the administration has spent a great deal of time talking about renewables being sort of the base delivery system in Africa. Not unlike our own country, there are places where renewables work decently well and there are places where they just do not. Does the administration support the development of fossil fuel energy as an integral and indispensable part of Power Africa acknowledging that, at its base, it is more important that we ensure that people have access to electricity than promoting goals that just do not agree with the particular area that we are in, and actually are not feasible?

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator, again for your interest in Power Africa.

Let me say a couple of things about how we have structured this initiative and address your particular question.

Power Africa, in identifying priority transactions, looks at a number of things. It looks at private sector demand, the potential for transformational projects, buy-in from the government, opportunities to exploit the vast resources on the continent, project viability, and overall impact.

Now, within that, it is our belief that like any modern power sector, we need to rely on a broad array of generation sources, including wind, solar, hydropower, geothermal, and natural gas.

On the particular issue you raised, except in the poorest countries or where those plants are equipped with carbon capture and storage technology, the United States does not provide public financing for new coal-fired power plants pursuant to President Obama's Climate Action Plan of June 2013.

Now, I want to be very clear that this is with the exception of the poorest countries, many of which are on the African Continent.

The CHAIRMAN. So you are saying in those areas that are very poor, that we are trying deal with the people in most need, that the Obama administration would support coal facilities to produce power?

Ms. SMITH. I think if these met the other criteria that we have designated as key for identifying projects, according to the terms of the Climate Action Plan in those poorest countries, it would be worthy of consideration.

The CHAIRMAN. If you do not mind, what are some of those other criteria?

Ms. SMITH. As I said at the start, we try to look at need, where we are going to have transactions that will have impact, where we have investor interest, buy-in from the government, where our experts take a look and think that the project is likely viable and it can make a meaningful contribution to the ultimate goal of Power Africa to double access to electricity. So those would be the individual project criteria.

The CHAIRMAN. So almost any of the countries we are dealing with would meet that criteria?

Ms. SMITH. Most countries in Africa would meet that criteria. I think there are a few where it is a little bit difficult, given the current conditions.

The CHAIRMAN. And again, natural gas. There are all kinds of other ways of dealing with it. I am not here to push one particular area. But obviously, when you are living in a place with zero electricity, getting that is important, and maybe some of these other criteria need to move away. So I think you have said that you agree with that—that the Obama administration agrees.

Ms. SMITH. I think it is critically important. And I think the other thing that Power Africa has done very well is an initiative called Beyond the Grid, which also looks at people in some of the poorest areas of Africa and the most remote and where new technologies and innovations can be deployed through micro-grid, or off-grid solutions. So that is another option for reaching some of the most vulnerable.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, first thank you for scheduling this hearing. I think it is very important that we move forward in the nomination process and have a confirmed Administrator for USAID. This is a critically important position, and I thank you for your cooperation in scheduling this hearing.

I want to thank Mrs. Smith for her willingness to continue to serve and her willingness to step forward with this very important position. And I want to thank your family because we know this is a joint sacrifice, and we thank you very much for that.

We have been debating for 3 weeks on the floor of the Senate our national security budget for the Department of Defense. The role that we play in development assistance is equally important part of our national security budget. So we consider the responsibility of this position to be one of the highest in our national security interests. So we thank you again for stepping forward.

Yesterday under Chairman Gardner, we had a hearing in the East Asia and The Pacific Subcommittee dealing with trade in the

region, and USAID was present to talk about capacity-building for trade. If we are going to have successful opportunities there, countries need to have the capacity to deal with modern trade agreements, and USAID plays a very important role there. And I could keep on going on about additional areas in which the responsibilities of the agency that you are being considered to lead plays.

Under Administrator Shah, there were new initiatives that many of us supported, including the Global Development Lab which allowed us to do more with the recognition that our resources are limited, by leveraging the help of private companies, universities, and NGOs. All of that is important. And I know that you understand how critically important it is to prioritize. And you and I had conversations about that, and you mentioned that in your preliminary statement.

I want to talk a little bit about human rights. You are not going to be surprised to learn that, because I think USAID can play a critically important role in advancing human rights, I want to talk about three priorities within that.

First, what efforts do you believe we can make to fight corruption? What will be our anticorruption strategies? When we look at stability globally, we find the countries that have not been able to deal with corruption are going to have a problem. Many believe that the Ukraine revolution was not so much about Russia's influence but more about people who wanted an honest government. We could go on—the Arab Spring was also a condemnation of governments that were corrupt and denied their people basic human rights.

The second issue I want you to talk about is the role of women. We have also found that the way a country treats its women is a good indicator of a nation's strength. And I am interested in your commitment and ideas and vision as to how USAID can be more effective in advancing the rights of girls and women globally as we look for greater stability and more reliable strategic partners.

And the third issue—and I put all three on the table—is that World Refugee Day is coming up. We are approaching 60 million refugees today, one of the highest numbers of refugees in modern history. When you look at the number of displaced people around the world, we have a crisis, and USAID needs to be actively engaged in what we are doing to deal with this humanitarian crisis.

So I would like to hear your vision in regards to how we will advance anticorruption measures as part of any program within USAID, how you plan to make advancing the rights of women and girls the highest priority within your agency, and what are we doing to carry out our responsibility in regards to the world refugee issue.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator. And I was thrilled when you raised in our meeting and as you raise right now the issue of corruption. I could not agree with you more, that it is perhaps the greatest enemy to development.

The flip side of that, of course, is if we can tackle corruption in meaningful ways, it frees up significant resources for development. This is something that is a priority for the Agency. It is something I would like us to build on through some terrific things the Agency has done over the years.

The first is, obviously, transparency. Now, that means transparency for USAID but also encouraging and calling for greater transparency from its partners. As you know, it makes a huge difference when citizens can see where resources go. So I think that is the first thing.

I think the second area—and this is where I think we are seeing some significant—insufficient but significant—momentum around the world is on greater adherence to norms and standards. We have been able, through multilateral organizations and other means, to work with countries to sign up to the international laws, rules, obligations, and treaties that require norms and standards on corruption.

The third—and I mentioned this to you in our meeting—is something called the Open Government Partnership, which the United States was a founder of with several other countries and has now grown to over 65 country members. What is quite interesting in that initiative is that it requires governments to join in publishing their budgets. Publishing the budget makes a huge difference and breaks the ice, if you will. I think we can build on that. Some countries have used it more effectively than others. A critical piece is that it entails a partnership between governments and civil society where civil society holds the government accountable for meeting the terms of its open government plan.

We are also working on—and this is something we would like to build on—a partnership to deal with illicit finance. There are huge losses in capital to the developing world to illicit finance. So that is also a priority on the corruption side.

Let me turn to your two other issues, if I may.

I think USAID has made the rights and well-being of women and girls a priority for many, many years, and that is a priority I would very much like to build on, whether it be in global health where it is a primary focus, in Feed the Future where there has been a particular focus on women farmers, but also in the areas of rights, access, and critically important, in training. I have traveled around the world and seen a lot of USAID missions. I have seen a lot of leaders in civil society and government. I have been very proud to see that some of those people were trained by USAID. So I think the training mission is critical, and support raising this issue at every opportunity.

Finally, USAID is also participating in the First Lady's initiative called Let Girls Learn, which is about enabling more young women to pursue their secondary education.

World Refugee Day is daunting. The numbers are staggering. USAID works closely with partners in the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration on this issue. It is my very strong view that we have to give a lot more attention to this so there is a better understanding of the consequences of conflict and violations of human rights. So, again, this is something that I think is in the Agency's humanitarian mission—while my hope is to strengthen the Agency's ability to stay a step ahead and respond, it is also to give much greater visibility to these issues.

Senator CARDIN. Let me just point out—and I appreciate not only your response but the conversations that we have had on these

subjects. You give me great confidence that these all will be highest priorities in your agency.

We need to be very strict about how we use our aid programs in countries that have challenges in dealing with corruption. We have got to make sure that the United States aid program is not contributing to a corrupt government or corrupt officials. And it is critically important that the Administrator send a very clear message and have clear directions on how not to participate in or fund corruption within governments.

Ms. SMITH. I could not agree with you more, Senator, and if confirmed, you will have that.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you for being here today. It is great to have a University of Colorado graduate testifying before the panel. So welcome.

And I just wanted to follow up some of the conversations we had in my office.

Yesterday we did have a hearing—Senator Cardin and I—with Jason Foley, the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Asia for the Agency. It was a good conversation.

One of the things we talked about is just where priorities are for the Asia-Pacific region. If you could just spend a little bit of time talking about that, I would appreciate it.

Ms. SMITH. And I think the greater emphasis on Asia has been reflected in an increase in resources and personnel. As we discussed the other day, I think there are some other things that we can explore in Asia. And I am interested in the reference to trade capacity-building. That is one of them. I think that is something USAID makes huge contributions to around the world whether it is at the level of petty trade, local trade, national, regional, or in fact global trade.

What I would like to do, if confirmed—and Senator, I would love to work with you and others on this—is do more of in Asia and elsewhere of what USAID has done very well in other parts of the world, and that is to help work on the constraints to private capital flows and increase private capital flows in support of development in Asia. That is number one.

Number two, work with governments again to build on what USAID has done to date to build the capacity to run and sustain economies that are inclusive and deliver for their citizens. I think that there is a lot that we can build out on, some of it aided by resources, which are critically important, as you have pointed out; some of it by taking the lessons the agency has learned in other initiatives in other parts of the world and applying them more effectively there.

So these are all things I think we can do. I am quite interested—as I say, I have less experience in Asia than other parts of the world—in consulting with you and with others and obviously our men and women in the Agency here in Washington, particularly those in the field, to see what more can be done.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

Last year, the GAO, the Government Accountability Office, produced an assessment of USAID's trade capacity-building efforts and

concluded—and I will quote the report. The U.S. Agency for International Development's 2003 trade capacity-building strategy does not directly guide TCB activities and parts of the strategy no longer reflect the current TCB environment.

If confirmed, do you plan to update the TCB strategy?

Ms. SMITH. Yes. I think that is something we can do, Senator—I have worked with USAID on this in my current capacity, and I think USAID has learned a great deal. One of the things USAID has also done a phenomenal job of over the last few years is, again, taking those lessons and then figuring out how to apply them. So I think that could be a very, very good exercise.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you. And I would love to follow up with you on some of the ideas for doing just that.

Ms. SMITH. Great. Thank you.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator, I noticed her staff was somewhat alarmed that she would answer a question off the cuff like that. So thank you for doing that. [Laughter.]

There was quite a shock in the back. [Laughter.]

Senator Menendez.

Senator GARDNER. That is the training of a University of Colorado graduate right there. [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, welcome. All my questions are off the cuff. No.

First of all, as someone who has been and is a huge supporter of USAID, this is an incredibly important nomination. I congratulate you on being nominated. And I appreciate having listened to you here at the hearing describe your priorities in the same way that you did in the private meeting that we had.

And there are a lot of issues I have, some which I will submit for the record. But the one that I want to pursue with you is the question of democracy and governance, and following on to Senator Cardin's questions of human rights.

I am concerned that democracy and governance at USAID under the President's tenure has been cut by 38 percent, and I think there are a lot of critical countries in the Middle East, North Africa, Latin America, and Africa as a whole that have great needs that are woefully underfunded. And part of our challenge is, yes, economic growth and giving people greater opportunities, but in part that comes from more transparent democratic governance at the end of the day in countries, which is a longer term proposition, but nonetheless incredibly important to stop, because when in the Middle East you are facing a future that is so dismal that you can have your mind converted to believe that dying is more glorifying than living, that is a real challenge. It is a challenge to our national security and interests. It is a challenge in the region. And unless we change the dynamics of what is happening in those countries over time, we will continuously be in a perpetual war. And so I think it is important to be thinking about that in the long term, but it has got to start in a more significant way. When you cut democracy and governance by 38 percent, it does not lead us in the right direction.

So, one, I would like to get your sense of how you will try to stem the tide here. Two, I would like to get a sense from you that—and you and I talked about this a little bit, about those who would say that stability is more important than democracy and governance, that we are willing to look the other way on democracy and governance in order to have stability.

And three, do you believe that if a country resists or attempts to thwart our democracy initiatives that we should simply end those programs in that country, as we are seeing such challenges, for example, in Pakistan, where several members of this committee and others of the Senate have written about NGOs, the NDI, The Republican Institute, and Save the Children, and others having challenges in Pakistan? Give me a sense on those issues.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator, and thank you both for the conversation we had the other day and your leadership on these issues.

I agree with you on the importance of resources, and I believe you are aware that the President's request includes an increase in resources for democracy and governance.

But I think there are several other things we need to do.

One is press others to also increase their resources. I think worldwide, if you look at investments in democracy, governance, and human rights, they are far below where they should be, and I think we are in agreement that this is essentially the backbone that is needed to ensure that the gains of development are sustained.

I would also like to look at the potential impact of having additional personnel on the ground, particularly democracy and governance officers, who often, with technical assistance—but not necessarily large quantities of assistance—can play a hugely important role in training and using their convening power and other tools to build capacity. I think USAID's record on training at the institutional level for civil society and NGOs is something we can build out. I know the Agency is looking at how to make greater use of regional platforms where more people and more organizations can be trained at once and where also, and importantly, networks can be built.

I also believe, sir, that a government that is credible in the eyes of its citizens is a government that delivers transparently and in ways that are meaningful and impact the lives of those citizens. So in the areas where USAID has a very big presence and budget in health and in food security, the Agency has worked on—and I think we can expand—also looking at governance in those sectors. Is it transparent? Are the budgets transparent? Are citizens able to avail themselves of the equivalent of a feedback loop to ensure that, again, those services are delivered but in a way that is effective and transparent?

As I mentioned in response to Senator Cardin the Open Government Partnership, I have been quite impressed by what that has provided in terms of triggering a worldwide debate on what open governance means and what the obligations of governments are, while also exercising the muscles of some governments in transition, with their civil societies to see what it is actually like to both cooperate and have civil society hold governments accountable.

I believe as well that USAID is in a very good position, along with the State Department, to play the role of broker or facilitator in dialogue between governments and civil society.

I appreciate that you also made, sir, the point about this being a long-term proposition. I think the importance of our investing as a nation through USAID and by any other means in institution-building is ultimately the key because it is when we have got strong, effective, and transparent institutions that I think we have the greatest assurance.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me make one observation before my time runs out, as well as one final question.

Ms. SMITH. Yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. And your answer, which I appreciate, a lot of it was focused on governance, and I agree that is an important issue. But I also think we have to decide whether USAID is going to play a role in democracy-building or not. And if it is, then it needs to be robust, and if it is not, then we need to think about how we move those resources to an entity that would, which brings me to my final question.

I am pleased to see that the administration has its traditional request for Cuba democracy programs at $20 million. And I have clearly a very different view of United States-Cuba policy than the administration. But the one thing, I would think, that we can all come together on are programs that ultimately we pursue worldwide in other countries that are undemocratic, and that we do not allow the entities in those countries, whether they are autocratic dictatorships or other authoritarian regimes, to just stop our programs at the end of the day because they do not like it, otherwise we would have given up a long time ago and would not have been successful in Eastern Europe at the time of Vaclav Havel, Lech Walesa, and so many others.

So the question is, as it relates to Cuba democracy programs, can you make a commitment that you will prioritize programs that strengthen independent civil society, defend human rights, and expand democratic space and increased access to information inside of Cuba?

Ms. SMITH. Senator, yes. Let me address a couple of things you have said.

First, I believe that the U.S. Agency for International Development is and must be an agency that is about supporting democratic institutions, expanding democracy and democratic practices. So I think that is and must remain a priority.

With respect to Cuba, my understanding is USAID is continuing programs in democracy, governance, human rights, and the free flow of information, and intends to do so. And that is certainly my intention if confirmed.

I also believe you make a very important point with respect to the situations where we find that governments reject, close space, or take other measures that constrain the evolution of democracy. I think we need to respond in those cases. I think we may respond differently in different cases and must do what is effective. In some cases, we may not be supporting an actual government. We may be working primarily with local civil society or other groups. But I do think it is something we must respond to, and I will, if confirmed.

Thank you.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Corker.

And welcome, Ms. Smith.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you.

Senator COONS. I very much look forward to your confirmation and to continuing to work with you in what I hope will be your new role in leadership of USAID.

And I appreciate and just want to join with the chairman in questioning about food aid reform and then talk a little bit more about effectiveness, monitoring, and economic development, if I could.

What role do you see for local and regional procurement and for readjusting some of the commodity and cargo preferences in the path forward toward a reasonable and balanced reform to our food aid program?

Ms. SMITH. Senator, again, as you know, the President in his budget made a proposal for food aid reform. So I certainly believe that this is something we need to pursue.

I believe there are ways to do it. I think there is probably some sort of equation that will be the ultimate solution. I am a little bit hesitant to get exactly into the particulars because in my current role I have not been directly consulting with all the parties.

But I do think we can and should find a balance that does a number of things: enables the Agency to respond more quickly and meet the needs of more people while maintaining those very important, vital parts of a program that have served us well over many years and also meet the needs and concerns of a broad range of constituencies. I think it is entirely possible. It is something I would make a priority, if confirmed.

Senator COONS. Great. Well, I look forward to working with you, the chairman, and other members on achieving that right balance between a lot a different interests and concerns.

There is a number of initiatives that you may well get to carry forward that are, in no small part, focused on economic development in a part of the world we have both spent a fair amount of time in, whether Power Africa, Trade Africa, Feed the Future, Global Health Initiative. I have a concern about Power Africa that it has largely been funded out of democracy and governance programming funds, and my hope is that we will get an authorization and then dedicated sources of funding for the long term. But speak to those initiatives, if you would, in terms of which you think has been most successful in the last 5 years and which you would prioritize your focus on, if confirmed as Administrator, to try and advance both economic development and human development.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator, and thank you for your engagement on Africa, but also your engagement on development.

I believe Feed the Future is one of the most successful initiatives we have seen in a long time. And I would point out that it was originally built as an initiative that started in Africa and has now expanded. There are Feed the Future countries outside of Africa that follow the same model, which include countries having a com-

prehensive plan and their own investing in that plan. I think this is something we can build on. I think it is something that has influenced the rest of the world. I think we have put food security and agricultural development back on the world's map, both through Feed the Future and support for that initiative. So I think anything we can do to ensure that it not only achieves as much impact as possible over the next 18 months but also well beyond that. I sincerely hope that Feed the Future is an initiative that will be continued, and I think it is worthy of it.

Power Africa—and I would be delighted, if confirmed, to work with you on any resource issues—I think is something that has shown us that the development model that USAID and the other agencies and departments that are part of that initiative, because there are 12 all together, have figured out. I think there has been a search for the silver bullet on energy or infrastructure. I do not believe there is one, but I do think that we have come up with something that allows us to identify viable projects, interested investors, and importantly, break down the constraints and build the capacity that is necessary to get a transaction done that not only yields greater access to electricity but exercises the muscles of trade and investment and also demonstrates success. Because, as you know very well, in Africa, risk perception is a very powerful thing, and I think over time we are reducing it.

I think it is also important that Power Africa is not overwhelmingly assistance-driven. The team has USAID at the lead, but again, all of those agencies and departments have done a phenomenal job of leveraging private sector capital and working with other countries. Sweden has put $1 billion behind this. The World Bank is engaged with us. So, again, using our leadership and a good idea to get others involved has been key.

I think Global Health, if I may, Senator, is and will remain a top priority I certainly hope for this administration, as it has for past administrations.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Across those few, if I might, I am pleased to hear that you think Feed the Future is scalable——

Ms. SMITH. I do.

Senator COONS [continuing]. And can expand just its early success in Africa and is worth working together to sustain and grow.

Second, I hope within Global Health that the development of an HIV vaccine will continue to be an area of priority and focus. Although it has a long trajectory, it would have an enormous cumulative impact.

I also just wanted to recognize that the value of partnering with other development entities from around the world, with the private sector, as demonstrated in your comments, I see real value in. The Millennium Challenge Corporation I think in a number of countries where I have had the opportunity to visit with its sites and when I have had the chance to meet with their leadership has turned me from a skeptic to a real advocate because I think that long-term model of having metrics and accountability and measurable results and of doing development in partnership with other governments in a way that builds their capacity I think is really promising.

Let me, as a last question, just mention the Paul Simon Water for the World Act. I joined a number of my colleagues, Chairman

Corker and Senator Durbin, Flake as a cosponsor. I think access to clean water and sanitation is one of those sort of foundational concerns like access to electricity. Just tell me, if you would, how USAID will seek to improve access to clean drinking water and sanitation in the developing world under your tenure if you become the Administrator.

Ms. SMITH. Senator, let me just echo your endorsement of MCC. I have enjoyed working with MCC and look forward to continuing to do so in a new capacity, if I am confirmed.

On the issue of water and sanitation, that is really one of USAID's strengths, whether it is in the development field or if you look at emergency responses around the world. The Agency is terrific at moving quickly and also on a long-term developmental footing.

My understanding is the Agency has been working on a much broader strategy and identified priority countries where our experts believe that USAID can have the greatest impact. It is something I am very eager to dive into further, including in support of the act. So I think it is something that I would like to come back to you on. I cannot claim to have exhaustive knowledge of it yet, but as I say, it is something the agency does very well. And my understanding is that they have been working very hard on plans to look at how it can be expanded but also how they can prioritize, again, in key countries where they can achieve the greatest impact.

Senator COONS. Well, if I could simply, while Senator Perdue settles in, let me just say in closing that on my trip to Liberia last December, I was really impressed with the DART team and with how USAID was not just delivering disaster relief, humanitarian relief, but helping coordinate across international and private sector and volunteer organizations and how the incident management system that really was, in large part, deployed through the DART team made a lasting and compounding difference in how a complex, broad humanitarian crisis was being dealt with. And I just wanted to commend the great work that USAID has done and I believe will continue to do under your leadership in responding to complex humanitarian crises.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you for that, Senator.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Perdue.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Smith, good to see you again.

Ms. SMITH. Good to see you.

Senator PERDUE. Well, thank you very much for your career service. And I find this role of USAID Administrator, as we talked, to be tremendously important. And I was very impressed with our conversation. I appreciate your forthrightness and candor in our brief time together. I look forward to maintaining that open dialogue. I think there is nothing better in trying to establish our foreign policy around the world than what we do with our philanthropy, and I know you share that as well. You said that in our meeting.

In our fiscal environment, obviously, we want to know that every dollar is—we are getting the most productive use out of that that we can. I know you share that as well.

Assuming you are confirmed, though, I would love to have you talk about it—and I am sorry I missed earlier testimony, but I would love for you to talk about your priorities in the next 18 months, if confirmed, and talk about are there private priority areas that you would see yourself focusing on in particularly the first year.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator. Thanks again for our meeting.

Yes. Let me briefly go through priorities.

The first is achieving maximum impact in the areas where I think we can achieve the greatest scale. And we have talked a bit about some of those, Power Africa, Feed the Future, and Global Health.

The second is a set of urgent priorities, including expanding the agency's work on democracy, human rights, and governance, obviously a critical strategy in Central America, and for transition in Afghanistan.

The third—and Senator Coons just referred to this. I believe that USAID is the best in the world in responding to crises anywhere. They are flexible. They are adaptive. They are creative. I think we need to make sure that the teams are able to keep one step ahead in a world where we are unfortunately seeing too many crises.

The last, but I think in many ways the most important and something you and I talked about, is the management operations of the agency. We put huge expectations on the men and women who serve this agency to operate and manage huge amounts of money often in very complex environments. They do an excellent job. I think they are committed to being fully responsible with taxpayer dollars. I think you will find with me that I will be totally and utterly frank with you about what goes well and what does not, but as I said to you in our private meeting, I will also come to you and ask for help when we need to fix things that may not work so well.

So on the operations and management of the Agency, I think USAID does a terrific job of doing assessments on the front end, looking at risk mitigation, evaluation and monitoring, and responding to oversight. I would like to work with the team—and it is a very dedicated team—to get out in front and ahead of some of these things to see if we can identify problems and challenges earlier, but also again to be able to come to you and other members of this committee with some options we may develop, and ask for your help and partnership in seeing if we can work together to make this agency as effective, as responsive, as responsible and agile as it needs to be in the world we live in.

Senator PERDUE. I look forward to that.

Another thing I want to follow up on is to have you speak to us a little bit about how do we get other partner nations around the world to help us in this role. I know they do now, but there are more needs than we can meet. And as one country, we cannot meet them all. This is not a budget conversation. It is really more of a conversation philosophically. From your role as the leading, I guess, contributor in this effort around the world, how would you

use this position to help influence other countries to step up their support of philanthropy the way we are?

Ms. SMITH. First of all, I am not shy about asking for money.

But, Senator, I think there are a couple things. And one great example of this has been the work on food security and agriculture where agencies and departments, including USAID, including the State Department—all of us rallied together to look at what the world was investing in agriculture, looking at what we could do, and then literally going country to country and saying here is what we expect you to put on the table. And we challenged other countries to triple their investments. We were polite, we were evidence-based, and we were relentless. Ultimately we mobilized $33 billion.

Now, I think we can do that as a matter of practice. I think part of it is, again, challenging countries, looking at the evidence of where the investments are lacking, figuring out what is appropriate, and pushing politely until we get there. I think our convening power helps us enormously as does our success. Again, with Power Africa, the fact that Sweden announced last summer $1 billion in support of this enterprise is because it is a good idea and it is working. So I think the power of our example works.

The last thing I would like to mention, Senator—and I think this is a trend we should build on—is that in a number of countries, we are seeing the important recognition by governments that something called domestic resource mobilization is key, that it is critical that they invest more in health, in education, in agriculture, and rely more on their own budgets. Now, some of that means that they need assistance in things like how to manage an effective tax administration. I think we need to capitalize on this trend, build on it where we have got countries that are stepping up and being real leaders on it, and then using that to challenge other countries to meet us at least part way. So I think that is another way that we can mobilize additional resources.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

If confirmed as Administrator, what would you do to ensure the priorities identified at the mission level are incorporated into final budget submissions to Congress and that presidential initiatives, while important, do not distort necessarily—I know they are important and they need to be taken into consideration, but they do not distort the type of assistance that you as the Administrator determine to be of utmost importance. I guess what I am looking for is the priorities in making sure that we all agree on those priorities with regard to meeting the needs that USAID is charged to do.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you for that question. And, Senator, I will not fool you. This is not easy. There are huge demands. There are huge opportunities, and it always is ultimately a question of tradeoffs and prioritization.

So I think the first thing is to look carefully at what the Agency's priorities are, to lean in the direction of those places we are getting the greatest impact and meeting the greatest need. Again, that is not easy because it means letting some things go. I am prepared to do that if that is what, again, the people in the Agency and others agree with, but I think that is something we have to look at.

The other is I think listening to the field. We send teams out in the field to run USAID missions. They have got eyes and ears on

the ground. They have got a sense and the experience to know what is working and what is not and where we can have real impact. So I think factoring that in at the end of the day is important.

And finally, I think we have got to continue to leverage and draw in other resources because, as you said yourself—and I strongly agree—we cannot do everything. I think something we can do more of is mobilize, quite frankly, other people's resources to match our own.

Senator PERDUE. Well, thank you for your testimony.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy.

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

Welcome. I look forward to working with you in your new position. You have done very well today. Thank you for taking the time to meet with all of us.

I am glad to hear in response to a question from Senator Perdue, you are not shy about asking for money because I wanted to ask you a question about resources.

Interestingly, you skirted the issue a little bit in response to a question from Senator Menendez. You said resources are important, but let me tell you all the ways that we can get around needing more resources. And it speaks to a fear that I at least have about the aid community.

I mean, the Defense Department is never shy about coming up to Capitol Hill and telling us when they do not have the resources to meet their operational demands, and they tell us routinely the risk at which we are putting the Nation if we do not fund the Department of Defense's budget to the amount that meets their defined objectives overseas.

I do not always feel the same way about the aid community, and often it is just a question of how we allocate scarce resources and how we draw on other partners. And all of that is important.

But does USAID have the resources today to meet its operational demands? How much of this can continue to be just robbing Peter to pay Paul? Do we not have to have a pretty fundamental conversation about the growing number of crises across the world and the fact that today we are spending 1.1 percent of our GDP on foreign aid, when back in the 1950s we were spending 3 percent of our GDP on foreign aid? At some point we have got to reckon with that number. Right?

Ms. SMITH. Senator, I welcome your comments, and I think absolutely that we do. I think, if confirmed, I will also function as a member of the administration that is responsible for putting together an entire budget and take those factors into account.

But I think there is something key that you are getting to. I think we are in a position now to make the case certainly to the American people. I have been encouraged by the conversations I have had with members of this committee that foreign aid is a worthy investment, that we get a return, that it impacts our influence and our standing around the world, and that we can prevent more crises than those to which we have to respond. So I think it would be a wonderful thing to start making the case that this a worthy

investment and one that we should consider over time increasing. I would be delighted to work with you on that.

I do also want to say—and I certainly was not attempting to skirt something, but I also believe that assistance is one of the tools we have, but it is not the only one. The Agency has done a phenomenal job at a time when ideally it would have a much bigger budget, of figuring out, again, how do you mobilize other people's resources, how do you work with the NGO community, which has made huge commitments of its own, and how do we, again, leverage what is now billions of dollars in private capital. So I think regardless of where the budget is, that is something that we have got to focus on.

You did mention the word "operational," so I just want to make one quick plug of something that, if confirmed, I hope that we can discuss, and that is USAID's operating budget, which is also one of the key elements of its ability to function around the world and is absolutely critical. I would want to rely more fulsomely on the experts in the Agency to come back to you on that. But that is one of the, if you will, force multipliers to the effectiveness of the Agency over time.

Senator MURPHY. One of the issues that we talked about, which I would love to hear your thoughts on in open committee, is the issue of flexibility. One of the things that I routinely hear from mid-level and upper-level operators in the field is that partially by internal processes, partially by congressionally directed earmarks, that we compartmentalize funding on a geographical basis and then on an operational basis, a categorical basis such that it is hard to move money as fast as the crises move our attention.

Are there things that can be done internally? Are there things that we need to work with you on to make sure that you have the flexibility to move money as quickly as events on the ground demand it?

Ms. SMITH. Senator, that is an issue I would love to come back to you on, if confirmed. I think it is vital.

USAID has a lot of people who are masters of figuring out how you move between the various pieces to move money as quickly as possible, but also respond to requirements that the Agency is obligated to and wishes to respond to, whether they come from the legislative or executive branch. I think if we could talk about how to provide the Agency with greater flexibility, that would be of enormous value. I think part of that equation is also working with you on how USAID can ensure that it will be fully responsible with that greater flexibility.

I have known this agency for a long time. I have watched it go through a lot of permutations. I think it is better positioned today than at any time I have seen in 20 years to assume the responsibility for and act on that greater flexibility. And if that is a conversation that we could have, if I am confirmed, I would be delighted.

Senator MURPHY. And then lastly, I just wanted to get your thoughts about the way in which USAID can be built more tightly into the overall national security infrastructure. There is a really fascinating report that one of your former colleagues, Gen. Jim Jones, headed. It had about a half a dozen former generals and ad-

mirals, as well as a number of policy-thinkers, talking about the better ways to integrate both State Department resources and USAID resources into the strategic commands to make sure that we have a more coherent conversation happening out in the field so that we can have a coordinated response to crises.

I think about the movement of an organization like al-Shabaab out of Somalia into Kenya. If we had been able to all think about the ways ahead of time to try to buttress those sections of Kenya which were vulnerable to the movement of al Shabaab, we might have been able to prevent a little bit more of the seepage that ended up happening.

Are there some opportunities to try to connect strategic commands and USAID? They are some of your biggest boosters, frankly, and there seems to be a need to maybe have a little bit more coherence in the field.

Ms. SMITH. Well, I think that is a very good point. And the Department of Defense has been a big champion of USAID largely for the reasons you suggest. USAID is the agency best positioned to pursue the prevention that is needed so we have fewer crises.

I think USAID and the Department of Defense have a very good relationship. It is one that has expanded including because of joint responses in humanitarian crises. I know that on the Sahel and other parts of the world, the two agencies have together looked at roles and responsibilities but also how to think about what might be done on the side of prevention. And I think that is something I am very interested in pursuing further.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Markey.

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

Can you give us the 1 minute on geothermal in Ethiopia?

Ms. SMITH. Sure. Thank you, Senator.

Geothermal in Ethiopia has a huge potential. All along the Rift Valley, as you and I discussed, there is the potential to provide electricity for a huge chunk of the continent. It is not easy to exploit, but we are finding that there is increased interest. Power Africa is behind transactions in Kenya and in Ethiopia that we hope to see significant progress on, including in the coming weeks. I think it is something that could be a profound game-changer for the region again.

Senator MARKEY. We were told by the President of Liberia, a country of 6.5 million people, that her whole country only has 40 megawatts of electricity.

Ms. SMITH. Exactly.

Senator MARKEY. What can one geothermal facility in Ethiopia do?

Ms. SMITH. You could go from 500 to 1,000 megawatts.

Senator MARKEY. A thousand megawatts.

Ms. SMITH. Potentially. There are lots of megawatts in that geothermal rift there along the valley, sir.

Senator MARKEY. Right. So ultimately we are looking at something that is potentially 25 times bigger—one plant, one facility—than all of the electricity in Liberia today.

Ms. SMITH. But we are looking at some serious impacts. And again, I think we have got to be mindful of the challenges in exploi-

tation of geothermal. But I think we are seeing increasing evidence of its potential, of the interest by investors, and of the viability of some of these projects. We still have to focus on the Liberias that do not have that potential and have the kind of acute shortages you talk about, particularly at a time when, after having survived decades of war and now an Ebola epidemic, they are able, fortunately, to focus again with our Power Africa team on turning the lights on there.

Senator MARKEY. The numbers are just so exponentially larger that they just match up with the cell phone wireless revolution in Africa. I mean, it is almost like a perfect analogy of how we are not talking about a doubling or a tripling. We are talking about something with one facility in Ethiopia that is 50 times bigger than everything that is going on in Liberia. So that is something that we just, again, continually have to focus on and understand that it is transformational. When a place has all the telecommunications they need and all of the electricity they need, capitalism, commercial activity is going to flourish and similarly the education of the kids, the health of the kids, all the way down the line.

Let us talk about health systems post-Liberia. What can USAID do to make sure that there is a better infrastructure in place on an ongoing basis in these countries so that they can be the front line and effective in making sure that these diseases just do not spike out of control?

Ms. SMITH. That is a really important question, Senator, and thank you for asking it. Senator Coons mentioned the DART team deployed, and even from the initial deployment of that disaster assistance response team, looking at the health systems has been a priority, building on some significant progress made over the years, but obviously insufficient progress given the impact that the Ebola epidemic has had. I think there are several things that can be done.

One is transferring some of the capabilities that have been developed in Liberia out of misfortune to other places and making sure those are retained. There are now people who are trained as lab technicians to track the data on an epidemic, to do some of the treatment and prevention.

The second is part of something called the Global Health Security Agenda, which was launched by the President with an eye to doing two things, both getting countries to adhere to the norms and standards that are required to manage global health threats, but also and importantly build the capacity of countries like Liberia to be able to prevent, detect, and respond to global health threats.

Lastly, I think for USAID, for the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator for the CDC, and for all the U.S. Government agencies that work in health, there have been some important lessons. I think about the importance of health system strengthening. This has been a priority since the beginning of the administration. I will admit it has not been the easiest thing to market. Health system strengthening really did not capture a lot of imagination I think until we saw the Ebola epidemic. But the teams are working now on how we can do as much as possible——

Senator MARKEY. Can you take tuberculosis as an example——

Ms. SMITH. Yes.

Senator MARKEY [continuing]. And talk about what USAID can do in terms of detection and prevention of tuberculosis in the countries that you have an ability to influence? Can you talk about that a little bit?

Ms. SMITH. I think many of these are the same systems. And what is needed and I think what USAID does very well across the board on health is how do you have the education in place, train the people who you need on the ground, provide the education, and then put in the extra training and capabilities that are needed for diagnostics, for treatment, in TB for sustaining treatment because one of the biggest challenges there is that if people fall off their treatment, you have got a recurrence or even worse. So I think, again, it all comes back to health systems, to training, and to putting in place those things that enable local communities to play a central role.

And one last thing on tuberculosis, if I may. It also means mobilizing other countries to do more because if you look at where the evidence of tuberculosis is today, much of it is in the world's poorest countries. A great deal of it is in the BRICS. And so I think the other piece is going back and pressing other countries to do more.

Senator MARKEY. And finally, USAID has partnered with MIT in working on a comprehensive initiative on technology evaluation in order to ensure that we are using the smartest technologies effectively in order to aid in development in these countries. Can you talk a little bit about that and how we can continue to advance that effort to maximize working smarter, not harder to extract all of the economic opportunities in these countries?

Ms. SMITH. Senator, I am not familiar with that particular project. I am familiar with the extraordinary work that has been done by—if I am confirmed—my predecessor.

Senator MARKEY. You have my vote.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, sir.

Dr. Shah is a real expert in science and technology and did a great deal to create, as you know, the Global Development Lab.

I think the partnerships with universities are key. Those are already yielding significant results. I think how to use data more effectively both in running the organization but also in terms of tracking solutions and what is working and what is not.

The Grand Challenges that USAID has run have been some of their greatest successes. My personal favorite is one that was to develop a set of protective gear for people who are working in environments like Ebola epidemics where they can work for longer periods than 45 minutes. It was Johns Hopkins and a wedding dressmaker in Maryland that came up with the solution on that.

I think there is enormous potential out of what has been done to bring science, technology, and innovation into USAID. I think the challenge is to look at how we can get some of these things to scale.

Senator MARKEY. I think your whole life has prepared you to sit in that chair, and I think our country and the world is lucky to have you being willing to take on this job. So thank you so much.

Ms. SMITH. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. I am sure that Senator Markey knows that his whole life has prepared him to sit in his chair. [Laughter.]

So with that, Senator Cardin I know has some additional questions.

Senator CARDIN. If I could return to a point I raised earlier from the hearing we had yesterday in the East Asia and The Pacific Committee dealing with capacity-building and using USAID programs as they are related to capacity-building for trade, I want to talk a little bit about labor capacity issues and how you see the tools you have available being used to maintain and expand those opportunities.

If we move forward—and I hope we do—with the agreement with the Trans-Pacific Partnership, there are several countries there that have significant challenges as relating to their capacity to comply with a quality trade agreement such as TPP, particularly on labor issues. How do you see your aggressiveness in using the labor capacity tools that are available to help us meet these needs?

Ms. SMITH. Senator, this is something I have talked to USAID about. USAID has a long history of working with labor organizations to build up to both norms and standards and build capacity. I think there is every intention of continuing those programs. If it is possible to expand those, I think that is worth looking at. But this is something I think the Agency has got a long track record of working on around the world and in Asia, and I certainly think in the Asia-Pacific that is a place where, if confirmed, we would certainly want to continue to do that.

I would be happy to talk to you further and get your thoughts and more details on any specific ideas you may have.

Senator CARDIN. Well, I appreciate your commitment on this. I think it is going to require the agency's initiatives in some of these areas, and I look forward to working with you in that regard.

Ms. SMITH. That would be great.

Senator CARDIN. There has been some conversation about the use of the Global Development Lab. I mentioned it and Senator Coons mentioned it. Do you have thoughts as to how that program could be strengthened so that we can leverage the program for stronger involvement from the private sector in helping achieve the missions of USAID?

Ms. SMITH. Sure. I think the partnerships that the Global Development Lab has already built are part of what is going to anchor it and allow it to succeed. One of those is, again, with universities around the country, and also with the private sector. I think there is some real potential in looking at how we can take some of these innovations to scale. There is the capacity within USAID to provide some initial small capital to entrepreneurs, for example, or to ideas that seem to be viable enough to work. I think part of the challenge will be then getting with the private sector to figure out how we can take some of these things to market. And that is something I would very much like to do. I will rely on its experts, if confirmed, to determine what the best examples might be.

But I genuinely believe that this kind of lab, that kind of innovation, those kind of entrepreneurs or the ideas that have come out of grand challenges—that if we use our convening power, the relationships that the Global Development Lab already has to work

with the private sector to take these solutions to market—we will not only innovate, but do something the lab was built for and that is to get to scale.

Senator CARDIN. I think it is excellent. I would also urge you to put a bigger spotlight on what you are doing. I think this is a story that is not well understood yet, particularly in our country. So I think you should. This is a success, and you should really put a spotlight on it.

One last point. Senator Corker and I have had many conversations about moving the President's nominees through our committee in an efficient way. And today's hearing is an indication of us moving forward on nominations.

It is my understanding that there are several senior positions in USAID that require Senate confirmations where nominations have not been yet submitted to the United States Senate, including the top position in Africa and some others. If you are confirmed, can we have your commitment that you will do everything you can to make sure that we get these appointments in a timely way? It is frustrating for many of us who are pushing to say we need to confirm positions when the administration has not submitted their nominees.

Ms. SMITH. Yes. I will happily make you that commitment, sir.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I am glad to see that he is pushing in two directions, not just one. [Laughter.]

Senator Perdue.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have one last question.

Ms. Smith, with your operational background, I cannot resist this and I ran out of time earlier. But Senator Murphy reminded me just how important it is that we set priorities. We mentioned that we are only spending about 1 percent of our budget as opposed to maybe 3 percent in the past. I want to look at that. I am not knowledgeable about the 3 percent.

But I do look at the last 6 years where we have spent $21 trillion in our Government. We borrowed $8 trillion of that. That means of the $20 billion, which I believe is in 2015's budget for USAID—and put that in perspective. The State Department is $51 billion. So this is $20 billion of the $51 million. That means that we borrowed $8 billion in order to meet needs around the world.

And this goes back to my question about how do we get other players to step up and how can we leverage what we are doing. But the reality is right now we are borrowing 40 percent of what we are using to support philanthropy around the world. I do not know any other country in history that has ever done that.

And so the question I have that comes behind that is, operationally how do you look at the priorities? Right now, five efforts, as I understand it—and I would love to be corrected, but I think this is right. Five programs represent 90 percent of that $20 billion. Health, humanitarian needs—health is the third. Humanitarian needs is about 20 percent. Democracy and governance is 13 percent. So those three things are about two-thirds of the money we are spending, or about $13 trillion. Economic growth and agri-

culture are only about 20 percent, a little more than 20, about 23 percent.

So the question is—you do not have to answer today because you have not had a chance to get into the budget and all that. But one of the things I would look forward to is an active conversation about what you see the allocation needing to be relative to the needs that are out there, the objectives and the mission of USAID, given that 40 percent of what we are funding is borrowed. I mean, that puts a perspective on it I think that makes—it just puts every dollar in play relative to how important it is that we make every dollar count. So would you respond to that please?

Ms. SMITH. I will. I also took note of your saying that you would be happy to talk to me about this later when I have had a chance to review the budget in great detail.

I think this issue of prioritization is key. And again, I do not want to understate how difficult it is. USAID has a lot of important initiatives and programs.

What I would really like to do is sit down with the men and women who run these programs both here in Washington and in the field, get their honest assessment of what they think is the most effective, what they think should be prioritized, how they think about that, be able to work that through with the agencies, with others in administration who have views on this, and come back to you and talk it through.

Senator PERDUE. That is acceptable. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

If there are no other questions—do you have any, Senator Markey? You are good? I just have a couple and we will close.

Ms. SMITH. Sure.

The CHAIRMAN. Again, thank you for your testimony and your willingness to serve in this capacity.

I was interested in your exchange with Senator Markey and just the order of magnitude change that can take place when we have power production of that magnitude in a country with so little. And we have so many countries in Africa that have that kind of situation. Sometimes administrations on both sides of the aisle try to tout the amount of output that is created, but as you know—and we talked about this in the office—what is important is to ensure you have a distribution system, and you have that power, and you have a cost recovery mechanism or a tariff system in place so that it can be sustained for the long haul and will be there. So many of us have seen—I know you have seen—projects that were completed but they serve no purpose.

I wonder if you could just talk a little bit about that?

Ms. SMITH. Yes. I think there a couple of issues there, Senator. And thank you for the question.

One of the things that Power Africa also focuses on is some of the policy issues, which are key to sustainability. So I think that is vital.

I also think that something, if confirmed, we can do more of and a better job of is looking at that sustainability up front and making sure that the policies are in place, figuring out things like recurrent expenditures that sometimes are not factored in are factored in so that we know that we are not investing in something that 5,

10, 15 years later is going to prove to be dormant or ineffective. So I think that is critically important. It is something that is a priority of mine.

With respect to Power Africa in particular, one of the great things about having not only USAID but all of these other departments and agencies involved is that it is a real opportunity to get to the policy issues that are necessary alongside those very exciting investments to make sure that these are sustainable over time, and that the investments include all of the other cost recovery and pieces that you mentioned.

The CHAIRMAN. While you were at the NSC, you praised the administration's transparency efforts. And we noticed that with the foreign assistance website, we still are not getting full reporting from all Federal agencies relative to that. And while I am sure our friends in China have access to that data, I wonder if you would——

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. If you would commit to going ahead and bringing that up to a full-scale basis and make sure that all of that reporting is taking place?

Ms. SMITH. Sure. Senator, I will continue to work on that. And I will confess to you that several colleagues and I made a priority of really looking at foreign aid transparency. I think in all honesty, we were not fully aware of what we were getting into when you look at the complexity of the full range of departments and agencies that provide foreign aid and their different systems and how one translates all of that information. That is a work in progress. It is something I will certainly lend my support to and continue to work on. And I appreciate your support for it because I think it is absolutely vital.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you for being here today. I appreciate the time you took with committee members in advance.

Without objection, if the record could remain open until close of business Friday and if you would respond to those questions, we would appreciate it.

Ms. SMITH. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And without further ado, the meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:23 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF GAYLE SMITH, NOMINATED TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE SMITH'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Water, sanitation, and hygiene

Question. The 2012 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) determined that a lack of access to clean water in the developing world will increase the risk of state failure and global instability over the next decade, which in turn will pose strategic issues for the United States. In light of the recent passage of the Water for the World Act and its emphasis on prioritizing help for the most in need, what efforts would you undertake to ensure water and sanitation funding is not used as a strategic bargaining chip but that appropriate prioritization takes place as required by

law, increasing access to clean drinking water and sanitation where it's needed most, as part of a global strategy to engender goodwill toward the United States and reduce the risk of global instability?

Answer. Thank you for your leadership on this issue, including your sponsorship of the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act, which I was pleased to see signed into law.

It is my understanding that the act aligns with USAID's 2013 Water and Development Strategy, in that both prioritize USAID's water investments based on (1) country needs (targeting countries with the least access to safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene, and highest rates of death of children under 5 due to diarrheal diseases); and (2) opportunities (focusing on countries with host-government commitment to supporting water, sanitation, and hygiene).

As you may know, the majority of USAID's priority WASH countries and the majority of the Agency's WASH funding can be found in sub-Saharan Africa, a region that has historically suffered from the lowest rates of access to safe drinking water and sanitation in the world.

The country prioritization and funding trends both demonstrate USAID's commitment to supporting the water needs of the very poor, and providing a foundation for sound governance of water resources that helps contribute to stability in priority countries.

If confirmed, I will focus on sustainably expanding access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene to the neediest countries in an increasingly water scarce world and look forward to consulting with the Congress and relevant stakeholders to ensure we are meeting the intent of the Water for the World Act.

Freedom promotion

Question. Where do you see democracy and liberty promotion fitting into the agenda of USAID?

- a. What percentage of USAID funds and staff time should be spent on democracy and liberty promotion?
- b. How does that compare to the current allocation of staff time and funds for democracy and liberty promotion?

Answer. Democracy promotion is central to development, and an integral part of the U.S. national security strategy. This is highlighted in the President's two published strategies as well as in the two Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Reviews issued by the State Department and USAID. Within USAID, a new strategy on democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) frames the importance of an integrated approach to programming within the sector, and equally on a holistic approach between this sector and the economic and social sectors. If confirmed, I intend to make democracy promotion a top priority.

As stated during my testimony, to advance implementation of the new DRG strategy, if confirmed, I will support a greater presence of DRG officers in the field. Democracy officers are on the front lines each day, convening and networking civil society organizations, finding innovative ways to promote human rights, and working to ensure our programs in health, food security, climate change, and economic growth incorporate elements of citizen participation and government accountability.

With respect to USAID managed and comanaged accounts, the President's FY 2016 request includes a substantial increase in democracy funding when compared to the FY 2015 request. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing funding and staffing levels and working with Congress to ensure appropriate resources are available for this critical area.

Question. As space for civil society continues to shrink globally, how will you put President Obama's "Stand with Civil Society" initiative into action?

Answer. USAID has been a key player in the President's Stand with Civil Society agenda, a global call to action to support, defend, and sustain civil society amid a rising tide of restrictions on its operations globally. As a result of Stand with Civil Society, USAID has augmented programs that strengthen legal and regulatory environments for civil society; held numerous consultations all over the world with civil society; and made bold calls to strengthen regional coalitions, improve donor coordination and promote innovative partnerships, and engage local governments to collaborate with civil society to solve community problems.

USAID is also exploring innovative ways to support civil society. For example, in partnership with the Government of Sweden and private philanthropy, the Agency is supporting an effort to connect civil society across the globe through the Civil Society Innovation Initiative. Through a constructive, cocreation process with civil society, USAID and its partners will work together with local and regional CSOs to design up to six regional Hubs that will be connected at the global level. These

regional Hubs, intended to add value to and augment existing support to civil society, will encourage cooperation, innovation, research, learning, and peer-to-peer exchanges. They will feature virtual and physical components that can aggregate existing tools and resources, including on leadership capacity and regionally based resource mobilization, as well as serve as a support platform for civic activists that could provide on-demand legal aid.

These are the types of activities I will continue to support to ensure that USAID is supporting the U.S. Government's efforts to respond to the backlash on democratic principles occurring around the world.

Program impact

Question. U.S. assistance has had many successes, but too often USAID is focused on dollars spent, rather than impact. If confirmed, how will you push USAID to be focused on development outcomes?

Answer. In order to maximize the impact of every development dollar, and as part of the USAID Forward reform agenda, USAID has introduced new operational policies related to strategic planning, program design, and monitoring and evaluation. As you know, this suite of reforms was designed to increase the Agency's strategic focus and development impact by ensuring that programs are designed to respond to local contexts, and that USAID learns from experience and adapts programs accordingly for better development outcomes.

USAID's Evaluation Policy, released in 2011, is one of the key operational policies that is bringing new methodologies for measuring impact to the design and evaluation of development activities. Since 2011, over 950 evaluations, and expanded training in evaluation for over 1,400 USAID staff, have bolstered active management by missions and operating units in evidence-based decisionmaking.

USAID has strengthened its ability to plan and implement strategically, to monitor and evaluate impact, and continuously feed what is learned back into planning and implementation processes to improve outcomes. Another operational reform that has strengthened strategic planning for improved outcomes is the use of Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) to ensure analysis of changes in country situations and status in the medium term, and support evaluations and interim Agencywide assessments to inform decisions about adjustments in resource allocations. If confirmed as Administrator, I will work to further institutionalize these reforms across the Agency.

Question. What are your thoughts on innovative pay-for-performance contracts, such as Cash-on-Delivery Aid, where U.S. taxpayers would only be footing the bills for measurable achievements?

Answer. I understand that USAID is committed to utilizing the most effective and efficient means for incentivizing, attaining, and sustaining development results.

Examples include:

(A) Acquisition and Assistance: For acquisition (contracts), USAID has several options to incentivize contractors by tying payment to performance, including cost plus award fee, fixed price award fee, cost plus incentives fee, and fixed price incentive fee contracts. For assistance (grants and cooperative agreements), a fixed amount award, which was previously referred to by USAID as a fixed obligation grant, is the main pay-for-performance mechanism. I understand that USAID strives to use these mechanisms when appropriate.

(B) Government-to-Government (G2G) Assistance: Most of USAID assistance to local governments is "projectized" which means that the Agency's funding is for a specific project, not simply budget support, and financed via either cost reimbursement, fixed amount reimbursement, or resource transfers (i.e., cash transfers in a few select countries).

If confirmed, I would be interested in looking at other innovative pay-for-performance approaches, including Cash on Delivery.

If confirmed, I am committed to achieving results that sustain in the most efficient and effective way. However, in pursuing this results focus, I also want to ensure that the approaches we use do not undermine or distort current systems such that the countries on their own are not able to sustain this assistance.

Africa

Question. At a time when China and other countries are making huge inroads into Africa, often displacing American influence, how would you advance American interests in this competitive environment?

Answer. I believe America can continue to assert influence as a global leader in Africa, even as sub-Saharan Africa attracts significant investment from China and many other countries. At the U.S.-Africa Leader's Summit (ALS) President Obama

told the largest gathering of African leaders ever held in Washington, "We don't look to Africa simply for its natural resources. We recognize Africa for its greatest resource which is its people and its talents and its potential." The United States relationship with Africa is about much more than extracting minerals from the ground for our growth. The United States seeks to build partnerships that create jobs and opportunity for all our peoples, and unleash the next era of African growth. The U.S approach provides a mix of investments in Africa representing a comprehensive American agenda that promotes influence in the forms of democracy, individual liberties and respect for the rule of law as well as soft power influence where we have a significant undisputed edge in working with African governments.

USAID can demonstrate leadership and advance American interests in Africa through development programming that engages and empowers Africans. USAID invests heavily in programs that ensure Africans have a stake in their own development and continues to engage in Africa on a large scale. In its first year, the Power Africa initiative made significant progress toward achieving its initial goal of adding 10,000 megawatts (MWs) and 20 million business and household electrical connections in six countries in sub-Saharan Africa. During the ALS, President Obama announced a tripling of Power Africa's goals—Power Africa partners would work together to add 30,000 MW and 60 million connections across all of sub-Saharan Africa. Through Power Africa, USAID is coordinating a total of 12 U.S. Government agencies and working with over 100 private sector partners, multilateral development institutions, bilateral partners, and African governments to increase power generation across sub-Saharan Africa. To date, Power Africa has helped projects expected to generate over 4,100 megawatts of electricity generation capacity reach financial close.

Through the Feed the Future initiative, USAID is working with African governments, the African Union, and the private sector in Africa and abroad to address the root causes of hunger, poverty, and food crises. U.S. leadership is ensuring that the fight against hunger and poverty is a global endeavor. Indeed, our L'Aquila commitment of $3.5 billion over 3 years, which the United States met and surpassed, spurred other partners to pledge more than $18.5 billion. And the United States was instrumental in the development of five key principles that were subsequently adopted at the Rome World Summit on Food Security in November 2009. Now known as the Rome Principles, they constitute the foundation for collective, global action on agricultural development and food security. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID continues to show such leadership on the continent through bilateral and regional partnerships with African institutions, and through the USG's power to convene global responses to African challenges.

Through the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), the U.S. Government is empowering a new generation of young Africans to contribute to solving challenges in their communities and around the world. YALI works in partnership with a robust network of stakeholders from across the continent and in the United States to support young African leaders as they spur growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance, and enhance peace and security across Africa. This initiative also builds lasting linkages between the United States and Africa in government, business and civil society.

At the same time, since China is the largest single trading partner with the African region, it is important that the United States engage the Chinese to channel global development resource flows toward more transparent, accountable, and transformative development objectives in line with our values. Through this engagement, the USG has an opportunity to encourage compliance with international standards for environmental and social risk assessments. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of State on developing a strategic framework for enhancing this engagement.

As outlined in the President Obama's U.S. Strategy toward sub-Saharan Africa, the United States commitment to Africa is long-standing and deep. The United States has invested in development partnerships with Africans to foster sustained economic growth, promote food security, increase resilience to climate change, and improve the capacity of countries and communities to address HIV/AIDS, malaria and other health threats. This is the foundation of a continuing strong relationship between the U.S. and African nations.

Yemen

Question. Earlier this year, USAID suspended its conflict resolution programming in Yemen due to an escalation of conflict. What are your views of the proper role for USAID in Yemen and how USAID might be able to restart these important programs?

Answer. As you know, USAID supports local, civilian-led conflict mitigation programs and efforts to foster dialogue throughout many countries worldwide. Yemen currently faces a humanitarian crisis, with conditions deteriorating rapidly, and USAID is focused on addressing this crisis through its continued life-saving humanitarian assistance. Since FY 2014, the Agency has provided $158 million in humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected and vulnerable populations in Yemen. USAID works through trusted humanitarian partners that are seasoned professionals with many decades of experience working in conflict zones and difficult operating environments, such as Somalia and Afghanistan.

In light of the extremely difficult security and operational situation in Yemen, some USAID programs, including social and economic development programs, have been suspended. The safety and security of USAID implementing partners, beneficiaries, and local staff in Yemen is USAID's first priority and the Agency does not want to put them at risk unnecessarily. I understand that USAID has worked diligently to ensure that this suspension will allow the Agency to keep programs in place so that it can quickly restart activities—including conflict management and mitigation activities—at any point when the situation is permissive, civil society partners can meet in a safe environment, and USAID can ensure sufficient program oversight.

Risk assessments missing in program planning

Question. While USAID has increased its partnerships with local partners in country-led programming, the Government Accountability Office reports risk assessments that are carried out by USAID are many times not used during program planning in order to mitigate those risks. How would you address this as Administrator?

Answer. It is my understanding that USAID has addressed the concerns raised in the GAO report regarding the alignment of its fiduciary risk assessments with its program planning process. If confirmed as Administrator, I am committed to creating the conditions whereby countries can lead, resource, and sustain their own development. To the extent that effective government systems are key to sustaining desired results, under my leadership, the Agency will continue to invest directly in those systems to improve their function. I will ensure that the Agency continues to conduct in-depth fiduciary risk assessments at the country level, as well as at the institutional level for those organizations in which the Agency is directly investing.

My understanding is that in 2014 USAID revised its internal regulations to align its processes for fiduciary risk assessment and program planning, and accompanied that revision with a worldwide training program. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that USAID staff worldwide are familiar with and implementing these regulations so that these fiduciary risk assessments are used in program planning in order to mitigate such risks.

Grants vs. contracts

Question. In order to achieve maximum accountability for results, efficient use of resources, and the incorporation of lessons learned from prior development efforts, what do you think the appropriate balance is between contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements in acquisitions associated with development?

Answer. To achieve maximum accountability and results, I believe that the appropriate choice of instrument will vary from activity to activity. The decision to use a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement should be based on a rigorous program design in which intended results, efficiencies, and lessons learned are incorporated.

I understand that USAID has a history of robust use of all three mechanisms with assistance instruments such as grants and cooperative agreements receiving 60–70 percent of USAID obligations and contracts receiving 30–40 percent. I also understand that USAID's official policy states that there is no preference for acquisition instruments over assistance instruments or vice versa.

In addition, I believe it is important to ensure that the choice of instrument is made in accordance with principles found in the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act.

Please be assured that if confirmed, I will ensure that results, efficiencies, and lessons learned are used in each of these implementing mechanisms.

ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE SMITH'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Country ownership

Question. Americans are proud that our country is the world's most generous provider of assistance to save lives in emergencies and help people and countries work their way out of poverty. Over the years this assistance has helped other countries achieve some incredible results—including 1 billion people being lifted out of poverty in this century.

- How do we make sure that our aid is leaving lasting results that countries can build upon, so they can grow their economies, strengthen their institutions and the rule of law, and get to the point where they are eventually funding their needs with their own economic growth?
- What administrative reforms can we expect you to prioritize to ensure that we make sure we are getting the furthest mile on every U.S. taxpayer dollar going overseas—and what can Congress do to alleviate the pressure to burn money too quickly, measure quantitative outputs versus impact, etc.?
- How would you invest to increase the impact of successful efforts like the Local Solutions initiative?

Answer. USAID is committed to creating the conditions whereby countries can lead, resource, and sustain their own development, a commitment that I share and will prioritize, if confirmed. I agree that country ownership—mutually agreed-upon priorities, direct implementation through local systems as the default choice, and domestic resourcing by local governments, civil society, and the private sector—should be at the core of how USAID does business. My understanding is that the Agency is delivering on this commitment through the following organizational and programmatic reforms, which I will prioritize if confirmed:

- The Agency has put in place policies and a program planning process that enable it to project results over a longer timeframe and align its staffing and resources accordingly.
- USAID is ensuring that its country strategies and project designs prioritize and measure sustainability through country ownership, regardless of the sector. This increasingly entails broad local stakeholder involvement in the Agency's planning processes. It also entails analysis (e.g. political economy analysis) and action (i.e. improved governance) on the constraints to sustainability, all of which may not be fully in the Agency's manageable control.
- The Agency has put in place the appropriate controls to prudently invest directly in local governments, civil society, and bolstering the private sector (as relevant) to ensure that those stakeholders are accountable, effective, and can sustain results on their own.
- USAID has introduced new guidance and methodologies for monitoring and evaluating project performance. USAID programs are closely and actively monitored in-country—including through the use of objective, third-party evaluations—to track results at every level (input, output, outcome) and to make room for midcourse correction when changes are needed. In addition, through the use of rigorous methodologies the Agency is able to evaluate the impact of its programs and the extent to which outcomes can be attributed to USAID interventions.
- The Agency has almost doubled its Foreign Service staffing to increase its ability to engage directly with local governments, civil society, and private sector; negotiate policy reforms; leverage the local private sector; build capacity; innovate; and manage its assistance programs.
- USAID is promoting the mobilization of local resources in countries where it works through tax modernization; coinvestments and guarantees with the local private sector; budding philanthropy; and alternative business models such as social enterprises and social impact investment.

Health workforce

Question. What is the overarching vision and strategy for helping the Ebola-affected countries and other developing country partners to build a well-trained, well-equipped and well-supported health workforce that can stop threats like Ebola, and at the same time help achieve other major priorities like ending preventable child and maternal deaths?

Answer. USAID has worked closely with the national governments of the Ebola-affected countries as well as with other U.S. Government agencies and bilateral and multilateral donors to develop a health country plan for each country, which directly supports national strategies and reaches the most vulnerable populations. USAID's

programs focus on restoring non-Ebola essential primary health services delivery while supporting the rehabilitation of health systems, including the capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to future outbreaks before they become epidemics, in line with our Global Health Security Agenda.

To support service delivery, USAID will focus its efforts on health promotion and behavior change and communication at the community level. These efforts will help to reduce the fear of returning to health clinics and promote primary health services, particularly maternal and child health services. Support will also focus on the reopening of community health facilities in USAID-targeted communities which follow new established standards and norms for infection prevention and control, training of health care workers, and ensuring the availability of essential health commodities at the facility level. Additional support will also be provided for service delivery through existing nontraditional, community platforms, such as national health weeks and immunization campaigns,which will help to serve as a stop-gap measure until community-based facilities are up and running.

USAID will focus on a variety of activities to improve health systems in both the short- and long-term in each country. Priority programs will include capacity-building for health care worker training programs to better support the recruitment, training, supervision, and retention of health care workers at all levels. Support will also be provided for curriculum development, training tools and materials, helping to develop a professional training track for community health care workers, and integration of new health workers recruited and trained during the crisis. Significant efforts will also be made to support the supply chain management efforts from forecasting and procurements to storage and delivery at the community level. Additional efforts will be considered to help support the local Ministries of Health on governance, health care financing (to help manage the additional influx of resources from donors), management and oversight. All three affected countries have requested support in setting up an infection prevention and control unit within the Ministry of Health to ensure the quality control and implementation of standards and norms for infection prevention and control implementation throughout all clinical settings.

USAID-supported recovery efforts will build upon systems and activities put in place during the emergency response efforts to further enhance each country's capacity in detecting, preventing, and responding to further outbreaks of Ebola and other infectious disease threats.

These efforts, combined with the efforts of other donors, will collectively support the national recovery strategies in each country and help to support overall efforts to end preventable maternal and child death.

Maternal and child health

Question. In 2012, the United States led on the Survival Call to Action roadmap that identified key barriers that we needed to address to bend the curve on ending child deaths and increase child survival and health.

- How is the United States moving this agenda forward?
- How can you deepen or expand that commitment or vision?
- How will you ensure that we are working with the highest-burden countries and promoting equity for children across the globe to ensure we are reaching all children?

Answer. Since 2009, the Obama administration has been strategically focusing its maternal and child health programs on countries with the highest burdens of maternal, newborn, and child deaths and where the United States had the opportunity to make a difference in this outcome. By focusing on countries and populations with the highest need, U.S. programs have helped save millions of lives, contributing to greater equity and more inclusive development. In USAID's 24 priority countries that account for more than 70 percent of global child and maternal deaths, nearly 800,000 more children survived in 2013 than in 2008, contributing to a cumulative total 2.4 million lives saved.

USAID's 2014 report "Acting on the Call: Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths" outlined an evidence-based plan to accelerate progress in USAID priority countries-sharpening field programs, realizing efficiencies, and improving accountability to yield the greatest number of lives saved, while building systems and partnerships to sustain progress. Building on this momentum, USAID appointed a Child and Maternal Survival Coordinator in 2015, focused on: (1) continuing to sharpen the Agency's work toward Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths; (2) intensifying external engagement with Congress and partners, advocates, civil society, faith groups, and partner country leaders that are critical to progress; and (3) increasing financing for EPCMD.

USAID is working to accelerate its action through a new framework to track success, support missions, and ensure that resources are in place to sustain the effort.

By enhancing existing internal processes such as the annual operational plan development, USAID can improve its performance and ensure that our investments are focusing on the highest priorities. Dashboards have been developed to rigorously measure progress at both the outcome level and input level. The dashboards facilitate a more organized, coordinated system for tracking, and managing progress, and are a supporting tool in a comprehensive approach to measuring progress.

I understand USAID is working to release the second "Acting on the Call" report in summer 2015, following up on commitments and targets set in the 2014 report. Through dashboards and these annual reports, USAID is holding itself and its partners accountable for accelerating our impact on ending preventable child and maternal deaths.

Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths cannot be accomplished by USAID alone. In 2012, the Governments of Ethiopia, India, and the United States, in collaboration with UNICEF, hosted the Call to Action to unite the global community around this achievable goal. The same partners convened again in 2014 to assess progress and identify challenges. This year, the Government of India will host a followup global conference in August, cohosted by the Governments of Ethiopia and the United States, and UNICEF. Since 2012, 20 governments have committed to—and most have developed—national plans to accelerate progress, set clear priorities and costs and scorecards to systematically track outcomes.

Since the beginning of the Obama administration, the U.S. Government has increased investments in global child and maternal survival with the strong, bipartisan support of Congress. Worldwide, government health expenditures and donor contributions have seen meaningful growth. There still remains a gap in financing needed to build on progress to date and bridging that gap will require strategies that incorporate domestic resource mobilization, global engagement, USAID's Health Financing Framework, and targeted country-specific interventions. As countries experience unprecedented economic growth, a new transitional model of aid can better mobilize domestic public, private, and other innovative sources of funding to create a bridge toward equity, sustainability, and self-sufficiency. If confirmed, I am committed to building on the successes of USAID's efforts to end preventable maternal and child deaths.

Question. As you know, land tenure is a critical element of food security. However, smallholder farmers, particularly women farmers, are often at risk of having their land seized without their consent in large land acquisitions. This has been a challenge in efforts to promote food security and helped drive the development of the land tenure guidelines, which I am pleased that the United States supported.

- What are your thoughts on how USAID can ensure a strategy that includes participation of small-scale farmer's organizations and prioritizes their needs?
- Will USAID continue to support policies favoring large agribusiness and large-scale land acquisition in Africa?
- How will USAID avoid being involved in projects that fail to respect the legitimate tenure rights of local people, especially in post-disaster or post-conflict assistance where communities are especially vulnerable?
- What role do you see for the U.S. Government/USAID in fostering increased investments by donor and host governments in the agricultural sector of countries facing food insecurity, specifically investments geared toward benefiting smallholder farmers?

Answer. I fully agree that land tenure is a critical element of food security. Indeed, smallholder farmers, particularly women farmers, are often at risk of having their land seized without their consent in large land acquisitions. This has been a challenge in efforts to promote food security and helped drive the development of the land tenure guidelines you reference.

USAID has taken steps to ensure that land-based investments are responsible, inclusive, and sensitive to the interests and concerns of local communities. USAID supports efforts to combat hunger, poverty, and malnutrition through the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative, which prioritizes improving smallholder farmer access to tools, technologies, and markets as they are the backbone of rural economies. If confirmed, I will ensure that Feed the Future continues to prioritize country ownership, and backs strategies developed by host country governments with input and ongoing engagement across a range of important stakeholders, including smallholder farmer organizations, local private sector, and research organizations, to ensure inclusive agricultural growth.

USAID, through Feed the Future, supports the principles of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, a shared commitment among African governments, donors, development partners, and the private sector that was launched in 2012 to encourage responsible private sector engagement in promoting inclusive growth in

the agriculture sector for sustainable impact against poverty and malnutrition. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Agency continues to reinforce efforts to create an enabling environment for responsible investment that include commitments among participating parties to adhere to the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.

I understand that USAID has developed Operational Guidelines for Responsible Land-Based Investment, which serve as guidance to the private sector on how to ensure that land-based investments protect local communities and do not displace or disadvantage local populations. Through training and technical assistance, research and evaluation, policy reform, and pilot projects, USAID is committed to implementing the principles set forth in the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems and Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests. These international law instruments create important standards of practice that protect people and communities and create an enabling environment that promotes broad-based economic growth and reduces extreme poverty. If confirmed, I will promote the full utilization of these instruments in all USAID's economic growth programs.

USAID plays a lead role globally in promoting agriculture sector and food security investments through development partnerships at all levels. Data indicate that the agriculture sector is more than twice as effective in reducing poverty and increasing food security as other economic growth activities. A focus on reducing poverty and undernutrition requires a clear focus on improving the status of smallholder farmers. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID investments focus clearly on the needs and opportunities of small-scale farming families and communities, where the great majority of the poor and food-insecure live. With its emphasis on sustainability through country-led partnerships, I understand that Feed the Future has helped spur significant increases in host-country investments in agriculture and food security. At their recent summit in Malabo for example, Africa's leaders adopted agriculture and food security as a main development focus, committing to invest 10 percent of national budgets in agriculture. Evidence-based partnerships are occurring in other food-insecure regions as well. Feed the Future is clearly contributing to reductions in both poverty and child stunting in countries where USAID works. If confirmed as USAID's Administrator, I will strengthen partnerships with both beneficiary countries, donor countries, and other investors to ensure that a clear priority on agriculture and food security continues to emphasize gains in small-farm communities.

USAID is uniquely placed to drive gains for smallholder farmers, producers, and rural families that work in goods and services around agriculture-based value chains. Through partnerships with the U.S. university community for example, Feed the Future Innovation Labs are leading the way in developing new technologies and sustainable management practices that focus on increasing productivity and reducing risk in small-scale farming. Through global research alliances that link scientists and students in the United States with counterparts in partner countries and key international research organizations, USAID is leveraging the best of global science to enhance the lives and livelihoods of rural producer communities across Africa, Asia and Latin America. If confirmed, I will continue and enhance a focus on increasing both productivity and profitability of their enterprises and the private sector value chains that depend on them. I will work to ensure that USAID investments continue to drive agriculture and food security gains in ways that also enhance employment opportunities for the young—men and women—both on farm and off.

Countering violent extremism

Question. Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) has emerged as a top White House priority, as evidenced by the February summit. And the State Department just released the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, which highlighted a CVE strategy that stressed the need for good governance and the importance of addressing corruption.

- What were the key outcomes/take-aways of the Kenyan CVE summit?
- How will the strategies discussed there inform broader prevention efforts in sub-Saharan Africa?
- In your view, what are USAID's strongest tools when it comes to CVE? How does USAID plan to utilize tools to address the root causes of radicalization in the West African and Sahel contexts to counter the ideology of groups such as Boko Haram and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)?

Answer. The Kenya Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) summit will be held in Nairobi on June 25–28. This will be one of several regional summits held in the

wake of the White House summit in February and in the leadup to the Senior Leader summit to be held in New York around the U.N. General Assembly.

This summit builds on a foundation of existing engagements aimed at building cooperation in the East Africa region, such as the Global Counter Terrorism—Horn of Africa Working Group and the Partnership for Regional Counterterrorism in East Africa. The participants for the Kenya CVE summit will represent a broad spectrum of government and civil society from throughout the region. The objective is to enhance further regional cooperation and coordination, as well as develop a joint understanding of how violent extremists gain and sustain support among some local populations. By sharing knowledge and best practices, the conference will help strengthen the response to violent extremism in the East Africa region and beyond. USAID is a key member of the U.S. delegation to the Kenya summit and will participate in all the other planned regional summits.

The White House CVE summit and the regional summits have highlighted the value of USAID's approach to addressing violent extremism as part of a whole-of-government response to terrorist threats in Africa and worldwide. In 2011, USAID released an agency-level policy, the Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency, that outlines best practices from several years of CVE programming, as well as from research on the factors that drive violent extremist recruitment and how development assistance can help mitigate these root causes. A critical aspect of effective CVE programming is building community resilience, which is particularly key in areas at recurring risk of exploitation by violent extremist groups. At its core, USAID's approach is based on understanding the legitimate concerns of minority populations in areas most at risk to violent extremism; working with local community organizations and government officials to address those concerns; building respect for human rights and the rule of law among all parties; and promoting respected, moderate voices who can encourage peaceful solutions to expressed grievances. I understand that based on evaluations of USAID programs in Chad, Niger, Mali, and Kenya, these programs have made a measurable impact among local populations by undermining support for violent extremist rhetoric and activities.

It is my belief that the United States needs a broad array of tools in its toolkit to counter terrorism effectively. USAID's programs attempt to address problems at their source by decreasing the momentum and rationale behind violent extremist recruitment while reducing local sympathies and support for extremists. These efforts complement our Nation's ongoing diplomatic, defense, and intelligence assets aimed at reducing the terrorist threat to ourselves and our partners.

The Europe and Eurasia Bureau

Question. With the rise of a belligerent Russia, the E&E Bureau has taken on new prominence and significant budget responsibilities especially with respect to Ukraine, yet the E&E Bureau does not have offices in the main headquarters building. This sends a bad message and hampers the Bureau's ability to coordinate with the rest of USAID.

- What can be done to address this issue?
- Would you consider at least moving the leadership of the E&E Bureau into the main USAID building?

Answer. I have not been involved in any decisions related to space within USAID's headquarters. If confirmed, I look forward to receiving a briefing from the relevant personnel on the Agency's plans with respect to the allocation of space and will ensure that our plans are consistent with Agency priorities and staffing requirements.

MENA

Question. In 2011 the Arab Spring protests and calls for nonviolent reform offered tremendous hope for the potential of the Middle East region. Four years later we face a long, cold winter with many states reverting to old bad habits of closing off all avenues for nonviolent political expression or economic opportunity. Worse yet, we are facing failed or close to failing states in Yemen, Libya, and Syria. In the face of such unpredictability, instability, and violence the U.S. diplomatic presence and USAID field offices have been forced to draw down or close. In other areas, governments are actively confronting USAID funded programs and projects.

- How are you thinking about U.S. assistance and development engagement in the Middle East and North Africa against this depressing and alarming backdrop?
- Do we need to change the way we do business, or the missions we pursue, in the region?

Answer. USAID works with local and international partners to address the tremendous needs in the Middle East and North Africa. USAID recognizes that capable and accountable governance institutions are crucial to the sustainability of our development investments, which is why the Agency seeks to integrate democracy, human rights and governance principles and practices across all programming.

USAID's approach in the Middle East is twofold; the Agency works not only with governments, but also at a grassroots level, changing the lives of individuals and transforming communities. USAID works closely with national governments where that is possible, and where national-level governance institutions are lacking, USAID works at the local level, with municipal councils or local civil society, to help meet the immediate needs of the people in the region as well as build sustainable local governance structures that can support a move to resilient democratic societies. Local- and municipal-level governance issues are an increasingly important component to USAID's work in the region, especially in communities affected by conflict and crisis. Key elements in all USAID programs are a deep analysis of the political context, supporting citizen engagement in policymaking and service delivery, and promoting the rights of all citizens and groups to ensure equitable development gains. USAID programs represent a long-term investment in the people and communities of the Middle East and North Africa and build on the Agency's mission to partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing our own security and prosperity.

USAID is constantly reassessing the way it does business and the specific programs in which it invests. Each country and regional program begins with a careful assessment of local needs and capacity for reform. Once programs are implemented they are carefully monitored and evaluated for effectiveness and lessons learned. Security concerns remain a significant challenge, and the security of USAID staff and implementing partners is paramount. In places where USAID has no direct-hire staff on the ground, the Agency uses local and international partners as well as remote management techniques to continue and ensure close oversight of USAID programs.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Agency personnel, the Congress, and our implementing partners to ensure our programming is achieving maximum impact and effectiveness.

Humanitarian response (Syria)

Question. In addition to the recently closed $10 million USAID/DCHA/OFDA Annual Program Statement to support local capacity-building and emergency response efforts in Syria, in what other ways can USAID best support long-term efforts to more effectively reach the over 12.2 million IDP's inside Syria that are in need of humanitarian assistance?

Answer. USAID continues to work through all channels—including the United Nations (U.N.), international organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and local Syrian organizations and networks—to maximize the reach of critical, lifesaving assistance to conflict-affected populations throughout Syria. This includes assistance that originates in Syria as well as cross-line and cross-border assistance. By using all means possible to get lifesaving assistance to those in need throughout the country—including in regime, contested, and opposition—held areas—USAID is reaching all 14 governorates of Syria.

The aministration's ultimate humanitarian priority is to provide lifesaving assistance to all that we are able to reach and continue to push for consistent, safe, and secure access for humanitarian aid workers. As part of ongoing efforts to address the increase in humanitarian needs in an extremely fluid conflict, USAID continues to identify and support opportunities to strengthen and maximize the reach of humanitarian assistance throughout Syria. As part of all humanitarian programs, including USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) Annual Program Statement, USAID partners provide technical assistance to local organizations to strengthen their ability to meet the needs of affected populations. USAID works with other donors and implementing partners to identify opportunities to transition from emergency response to longer term early recovery and development programs. The Agency's humanitarian experts coordinate closely with development counterparts to help ensure that, when humanitarian assistance programs end, basic social services can be maintained.

The needs in Syria are significant and USAID has had to balance these needs with those of other crises around the world, prioritizing the most immediate lifesaving assistance first. I understand that USAID is working closely with the State Department as well as other international donors to encourage countries to follow through on pledges made at the Kuwait conference, especially Gulf States.

Egypt

Question. President Sisi has made economic stabilization a priority for his administration and has committed to creating employment through megaprojects like the expansion of the Suez Canal. U.S. assistance has focused supporting education, entrepreneurs, and small and medium-sized enterprises, most notably through the Higher Education Initiative and the Egyptian American Enterprise Fund.

♦ In what ways do U.S. assistance and Egyptian economic development initiatives complement each other?

Answer. U.S. economic assistance to Egypt is designed to work across all sectors to support and strengthen Egyptian actors who advance democratic ideals. Improved employment and economic opportunity are cornerstones of stability in Egypt. Poverty and economic exclusion, when unaddressed, inhibit the ability of individuals to invest in their own future and make them vulnerable to forces of instability as they struggle to provide for their daily needs.

I understand that USAID supported Egypt's Ministry of Planning in developing the country's Sustainable Development Strategy, released in March 2015. The strategy has four principal goals: (1) improved economy, including macroeconomic, tax, and subsidy reforms to reduce the deficit and lower inflation; (2) improved business enabling environment through regulatory and institutional reforms; (3) better access for all Egyptians to services and employment opportunities; and (4) increased investment in human capital, specifically reforming education and health systems. The strategy also emphasizes improving social safety nets and promoting opportunity for women and youth.

USAID is positioned to support the Government of Egypt's vision outlined in its Sustainable Development Strategy. USAID programs in economic growth, education, health, and democracy and governance are designed to address the core development issues identified in the Government of Egypt's strategy. USAID supports major themes of the strategy, including macroeconomic policy reform, small and medium enterprise development, vocational and technical education, and social justice and inclusion.

For example, building skills in Egypt's private sector workforce, particularly in small business, tourism, and agriculture, is a key component of USAID's development approach. USAID also recognizes the need to work within the health care system to provide better care in rural community clinics and promote infection control programs in hospitals.USAID's technical and vocational school interventions and programs that support science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education promote private sector growth and enterprise development. Many of USAID's activities target underserved areas, mainly in rural Egypt. All of these interventions are supportive of the Government of Egypt's Sustainable Development Strategy.

♦ How can U.S. assistance help to promote political reform, in addition to economic reform?

Answer. Consistent with U.S. foreign policy objectives, assistance activities in Egypt are designed to promote both political and economic reform. U.S. assistance focuses on various aspects of the enabling environment needed both for inclusive economic growth and improved governance. Support also assists in making public institutions more accountable and effective, and in empowering Egypt's citizens.

If confirmed as Administrator, I will ensure USAID's continued commitment to promoting essential democracy and governance principles in Egypt. While advancing certain democracy, rights and governance issues is a challenge in the current environment, the Agency is moving forward with support to civil society organizations to combat gender-based violence, promote women's empowerment, counter trafficking in persons, promote religious tolerance, and support rights of people with disabilities. Many international and Egyptian civil society organizations remain committed to working with USAID. The Agency also works to empower Egyptian civil society actors across its assistance programs, including in education, economic development and health.

The Egyptian Government has also specifically requested USAID assistance in key areas such as election administration reforms, training Egyptian judges, and decentralizing Egypt's Government in line with provisions of Egypt's new Constitution. USAID also has mechanisms in place to support parliamentary strengthening once a new Parliament is elected.

Question. There is solid evidence that early malnutrition, especially during the 1,000 day window from pregnancy to age 2, is an obstacle to cognitive and physical development. It affects long-term health, learning and earning potential. Malnutrition, in other words, is a constraint to economic growth.

Malnutrition is also the underlying cause of half of all deaths of children before they reach their 5th birthday. Having the benefit of the recently launched USAID Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategy and the soon-to-be launched U.S. Whole of Government Nutrition Coordination Plan, how would you build upon global momentum on maternal and child nutrition to achieve and increase U.S. nutrition commitments and high impact interventions that help children to survive and thrive?

Answer. USAID's multidisciplinary approach to addressing malnutrition works across the Agency's programs, including the U.S. Government's Feed the Future and Global Health activities, the Office of Food for Peace development programs, resilience efforts, and nutrition investments through economic growth, water and sanitation, and other sectors. USAID's focus is primarily on the prevention of undernutrition during the first 1,000 days—from pregnancy through a child's second birthday—through comprehensive programs in health, humanitarian assistance, and food security. Last year, the Agency's efforts reached over 12.5 million children under 5 with nutrition interventions. Over the past 18 months, USAID has led the development of a consolidated U.S. Government Nutrition Coordination Plan to harness the power of the diverse investments across the U.S. Government through better communication and collaboration, and to create stronger links between research and program implementation. This plan is expected to be launched this fall.

The Agency's high level goal to End Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths has nutrition at its core with renewed investments to promote breastfeeding, improve maternal nutrition for mothers' health and for the healthy growth and development of babies, and for better feeding practices for infants and young children. Better nutrition includes clean water, better hygiene and sanitation to prevent the vicious cycle of infection and chronic undernutrition.

Multisectoral attention in nutrition interventions is producing positive results. In Bangladesh, 2014 survey results show an almost 15 percent average reduction in stunting during the past 3 years across priority geographical areas where Feed the Future programs are concentrated. In Ethiopia, through Feed the Future and Food for Peace development and emergency programs, USAID is supporting progress toward achieving real reductions in stunting, with rates declining by 9 percent over the past 3 years, resulting in 160,000 fewer stunted children despite a growing population.

If confirmed, I will continue to scale up USAID's successful multisectoral programs and exercise strong leadership, including through its critical role in the global Scaling Up Nutrition—or SUN—Movement, to leverage the combined efforts and commitments of multiple donors and countries to drastically reduce chronic malnutrition globally. SUN is a global movement comprised of 55 country governments, civil society, private sector, and donors and provides a global spotlight on the challenges and progress in eliminating undernutrition.

ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE SMITH'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR BOXER

Question. Supporting Women Globally.—This year marked the 20th anniversary of the 4th World Conference on Women. Over the past 20 years, the international community has made important progress on advancing the rights of women worldwide. However, as long as women and girls around the globe continue to face violence and discrimination and are denied the opportunity to exercise their most basic rights, the United States must continue to focus on women and girls as a cornerstone of its foreign policy and development.

- How do you see the role of women and girls in development?
- If confirmed, how will you work to ensure that USAID programs continue to advance women's equality, health, political participation, and rights globally?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have been dedicated to initiatives that empower women and girls. Gender equality and women's empowerment must be at the core of all of our development programs. Water, energy, agriculture, health, and education all affect men and women differently. These differences are not barriers but opportunities to maximize the impact of our work by delivering development in a more targeted, effective and sustainable way.

Over the past several years, the Agency has made important strides to elevate women and girls in its approach and programming. The U.S. National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security (2011) and the subsequent USAID Implementation Plan are an integral part of the Agency's architecture for advancing gender equality and female empowerment. In 2012, USAID released the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy, which mandates that gender equality be inte-

grated throughout all programs and initiatives. To help facilitate integration, USAID developed accompanying policy implementation guidance, a series of in-person and online gender training courses to build staff capacity, and a suite of technical resources and tools that have been disseminated to staff worldwide.

Now that the foundation has been established, the remaining challenge is to ensure that gender is truly integrated across all of the sectors in which the Agency works, including global initiatives such as eradicating extreme poverty, resilience, countering violent extremism, and responding to climate change. Doing so will require a deeper understanding of the challenges in each sector through in-depth gender analysis and impact measurement as well as the necessary resources to advance the solutions.

USAID has a major role in the White House's new Let Girls Learn initiative, which addresses the complex and varied barriers preventing adolescent girls from attending and completing school, and from realizing their potential as adults. USAID's Let Girls Learn approach is comprised of three main pillars: Increasing Access to Quality Education; Reducing Barriers such as school fees and the threat of violence; and Empowering Adolescent Girls.

If confirmed, I will work with Congress and with the talented men and women of USAID to build on this important progress.

Question. Improving Education for Adolescent Girls.—Globally, 62 million girls are not in school and approximately 17 million will never go to school. Of these girls, 35 million are adolescents who should be in or nearing secondary school. Statistics show that increased levels of girls' education support improved health, economic status, and political participation.

In 2013, I introduced legislation, named for Malala Yousafzai, which was designed to expand scholarship opportunities for disadvantaged young women in Pakistan through USAID's Merit and Needs Based Scholarship Program. In response to this legislation, I was pleased that USAID committed to provide 50 percent of all future program scholarships to women and is on track to meet that goal in calendar year 2015.

♦ If confirmed, how will you work to continue to expand educational opportunities for women and girls in Pakistan?

Answer. Pakistan's ability to educate its population is critical to the country's long-term stability and prosperity. I understand that, despite recent measures taken to expand Government of Pakistan spending and performance in this sector, Pakistan's challenges remain daunting. School-aged girls, specifically, face additional challenges; 55 percent of children out of school are girls. For those who do attend school, many are not learning what is needed to find employment and function in Pakistan's economy.

In line with Pakistan's Vision 2025, U.S. assistance helps Pakistan address obstacles to accessing quality basic and higher education, including for women and girls. Programming also provides ample opportunity to build collaborative relationships between U.S. and Pakistani individuals and institutions, which will have a long-term impact on Pakistan's trajectory and U.S.-Pakistan cooperation. If confirmed, I will ensure USAID's basic and higher education programs will continue to work to improve access to education for young Pakistanis, including women and girls. For example, I understand that in basic education, the Pakistan Reading Project (PRP) is USAID/Pakistan's flagship reading program, and will continue to support Pakistani-led efforts to introduce and institutionalize improvements in reading instruction and reading assessment in the first and second grade levels in public schools across Pakistan. The project will train more qualified female teachers for girls' and mixed gender primary schools, and will reach approximately 754,000 students, of which half are girls and, of the girls, 27 percent are adolescents.

In Sindh, I understand that USAID's Sindh Basic Education Project will continue to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Sindh to deliver quality education and empower communities to become more involved in their children's education. To improve educational outcomes and increase community involvement in education, the project will help construct schools, train teachers in early grade reading and mathematics instruction and provide basic reading and math skills to students. The program is projected to benefit over 82,000 adolescent girls.

In higher education, I understand USAID has seen an increase from 48 percent to 58 percent of university scholarships under USAID/Pakistan's Merit and Needs-Based Scholarship Program awarded to women. To date, 507 scholarships have been awarded to students; of these, 293 were given to female students. Pakistan also remains the largest Fulbright Scholars program country in the world, with half of all scholarships going to women.

♦ Will you commit to make girls' education—especially adolescent girls' education—a priority during your tenure at USAID?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID will remain strongly committed to ensuring that girls succeed and stay in school. Advancing girls' education can unlock human potential on a transformational scale. Girls' education is key in the global effort to end extreme poverty. Investing in girls' education could boost agricultural output in sub-Saharan Africa by 25 percent, and if 10 percent more girls attend school, a country's GDP increases by an average of 3 percent.

Advancing girls' access to, and success in, education is integrated throughout the Agency's education portfolio. By integrating gender considerations across all USAID's education programs, the Agency has the potential to transform gender norms and achieve equality for all learners in a scalable and sustainable manner. USAID provides substantial support and funding aimed at ensuring that girls and adolescent females have increased equitable access to quality education, particularly in crisis and conflict-affected environments. Specifically in education, I understand that promoting gender equality remains a top priority in each of the three Education Strategy goal areas: increasing primary grade reading; youth and workforce development; and education in crisis- and conflict-affected areas.

One of the first USAID programs announced under Let Girls Learn is the one the First Lady announced during her trip last week in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where USAID has partnered with the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) to provide girls who are not in school with access to accelerated and alternative learning programs in the conflict-affected areas of North Kivu, South Kivu, and Katanga. This program aims to benefit more than 755,000 girls ages 10 to 18 over the next 5 years, providing up to $180 million (up to $125 million by USAID and £36M committed by DFID). Through programs like this, and throughout the Agency's portfolio, USAID supports adolescent girls in getting the education they deserve.

Question. U.S. Efforts to Support International Family Planning.—Statistics clearly show that a woman's ability to decide when, whether, and how many children to have is fundamental to her ability to thrive and fully realize her rights and potential.

♦ How do you see access to voluntary family planning services as part of broader efforts to support women's health and rights?

Answer. Access to voluntary, affordable, and high-quality family planning services is an essential part of USAID's broader effort to support women's health and rights. When women are able to delay their first birth until at least age 18 and to space subsequent births at least 2 years apart, both mother and baby are more likely to survive. Some 225 million women in the developing world say they want to delay their next pregnancy or stop childbearing altogether but are not using a modern method of contraception. Fully meeting this unmet need by expanding access to, and use of, voluntary family planning would result in 52 million fewer unintended pregnancies, 70,000 fewer maternal deaths, and 500,000 fewer infant deaths annually. In addition, girls who can avoid pregnancy while in school are more likely to finish school.

Question. U.S. Efforts to End Preventable Maternal and Child Deaths.—In your testimony, you mentioned that continuing efforts to end preventable child and maternal deaths would be a priority for you if you are confirmed to be the Administrator of USAID.

It is more important than ever that the United States continue to make robust investments in maternal and child health. As a result of U.S. leadership, real and measurable progress has been made. In the 24 countries where U.S. involvement has been the greatest, maternal mortality has declined an average of 4 percent each year, faster than the global average.

♦ With this progress in mind, if confirmed, how will you work to continue and expand these effective investments to work toward achieving the global goal of ending preventable maternal and child deaths by the year 2035?

Answer. Since 2009, the Obama administration has been strategically focusing its maternal and child health programs on countries with the highest burdens of maternal, newborn, and child deaths and where the United States had the opportunity to make a difference in this outcome. By focusing on countries and populations with the highest need, U.S. programs have helped save millions of lives, contributing to greater equity and more inclusive development. In USAID's 24 priority countries that account for more than 70 percent of global child and maternal deaths, nearly 800,000 more children survived in 2013 than in 2008, contributing to a cumulative total 2.4 million lives saved.

USAID's 2014 report "Acting on the Call: Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths" outlined an evidence-based plan to accelerate progress in USAID priority countries—sharpening field programs, realizing efficiencies, and improving accountability to yield the greatest number of lives saved, while building systems and partnerships to sustain progress. Building on this momentum, USAID appointed a Child and Maternal Survival Coordinator in 2015, focused on: (1) continuing to sharpen the Agency's work toward Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths; (2) intensifying external engagement with Congress and partners, advocates, civil society, faith groups, and partner country leaders that are critical to progress; and (3) increasing financing for EPCMD. USAID is working to accelerate its action through a new framework to track success, support missions, and ensure that resources are in place to sustain the effort. By enhancing existing internal processes such as the annual operational plan development, USAID can improve its performance and ensure that our investments are focusing on the highest priorities. Dashboards have been developed to rigorously measure progress at both the outcome level and input level. The dashboards facilitate a more organized, coordinated system for tracking, and managing progress, and are a supporting tool in a comprehensive approach to measuring progress.

I understand USAID is working to release the second "Acting on the Call" report in summer 2015, following up on commitments and targets set in the 2014 report. Through dashboards and these annual reports, USAID is holding itself and its partners accountable for accelerating our impact on ending preventable child and maternal deaths.

Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths cannot be accomplished by USAID alone. In 2012, the Governments of Ethiopia, India, and the United States, in collaboration with UNICEF, hosted the Call to Action to unite the global community around this achievable goal. The same partners convened again in 2014 to assess progress and identify challenges. This year, the Government of India will host a followup global conference in August, cohosted by the Governments of Ethiopia and the United States, and UNICEF. Since 2012, 20 governments have committed to—and most have developed—national plans to accelerate progress, set clear priorities and costs and scorecards to systematically track outcomes.

Since the beginning of the Obama administration, the U.S. Government has increased investments in global child and maternal survival with the strong, bipartisan support of Congress. Worldwide, government health expenditures and donor contributions have seen meaningful growth. There still remains a gap in financing needed to build on progress to date and bridging that gap will require strategies that incorporate domestic resource mobilization, global engagement, USAID's Health Financing Framework, and targeted country-specific interventions. As countries experience unprecedented economic growth, a new transitional model of aid can better mobilize domestic public, private, and other innovative sources of funding to create a bridge toward equity, sustainability, and self-sufficiency. If confirmed, I am committed to building on the successes of USAID's efforts to end preventable maternal and child deaths.

ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE SMITH'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

On democracy, rights, and governance

Question. What guarantees can you give the committee that you will consult the democracy, rights, and governance (DRG) community on USAID's strategic objectives and program implementation? Are you willing to provide the committee with periodic reports on your consultations with the DRG community?

Answer. The community of implementing organizations—including grantees, contractors, universities, private sector organizations, labor, human rights and women's rights advocacy groups and other organizations—is essential to accomplishing USAID's mission to promote prosperous, resilient democratic societies. I believe that consultation with international and local partners is fundamental to the successful implementation of the Agency's programs. In developing strategies, programs, and implementing strategies, USAID policy calls for consultation with stakeholders and if confirmed, I will strongly support these efforts and will commit the Agency to providing periodic reports to the committee on our consultations with the democracy, rights and governance community.

Question. The United States has developed a strong nonprofit sector to implement, through cooperative agreements, programs in support of those seeking freedom and

genuinely participatory governance. How will you ensure that funding for DRG programming will be maintained through the cooperative agreement mechanism?

Answer. I understand that cooperative agreements, as one form of assistance, are widely used and represent a successful approach for accomplishing objectives across many development sectors, particularly in the Democracy, Rights and Governance (DRG) sector. I further understand that contracts also have an appropriate role to play in implementing DRG assistance. My understanding is that the Agency is currently working to develop supplemental guidance for the DRG sector to assist field officers in determining the choice of mechanism in light of what they are trying to achieve and what in their judgment will produce success in that country setting. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress and our implementing partners to ensure we are getting this mix right.

Question. USAID has attempted to "mainstream" democracy and governance by claiming to incorporate it into traditional development programs (e.g., health, education, environment), yet the record is mixed on whether that actually works. What are your intentions to work with the DRG community on the incorporation of participatory mechanisms in traditional development programming?

Answer. "Mainstreaming" or what the Agency has defined as "Democracy, Rights and Governance (DRG) integration" involves the use of DRG approaches across other development sectors. This initiative is based on the understanding that technical solutions alone may be ineffective or unsustainable without a strong foundation based on good governance and effective, transparent, and accountable institutions. Indeed, the Agency's programs in health, food security, climate change, economic growth all need to have components of citizen participation and government accountability to be successful.

If confirmed, I am committed to consulting partners in the DRG community on an ongoing basis to maximize the effectiveness and impact of our programs and ensure that democratic principles underpin all of our work.

Question. Specifically in the case of closed societies or countries where space for political activity and civil society is closing, what is your vision for USAID's role in providing support in those instances? What specific steps would you implement to achieve your vision?

Answer. I believe that USAID has a critical role to play in supporting reform within closed societies. In doing so, however, the Agency must maintain an appropriate balance between the transparency of USAID's programming on the one hand and the security of our implementing partners and program beneficiaries on the other hand. It is my understanding that over the past year, and in consultation with Congress and implementing partners, USAID has formulated and begun to implement a new policy in this area, which is available on its public Web site. The new guidance sets out core principles and detailed processes to govern the Agency's work in this small set of countries. For example, USAID will work with prospective partners to identify all possible sources of risk to a proposed program. And the Agency will undertake senior-level quarterly reviews to ensure that all of our programs in these countries are sufficiently addressing risk and sufficiently fulfilling our obligation to transparency.

I think this represents a sensible approach, and if confirmed, look forward to working with the Agency, Congress, and our implementing partners to provide careful stewardship of these critical programs.

On Central America

Question. The State Department is asking for $1billion dollars for 1 year to improve security, advance good governance and stimulate the economy of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras which are collectively known as the Northern Triangle Countries.

♦ What programs does USAID currently have in Central America?

Answer. Much of USAID's assistance in recent years has focused on crime and violence prevention through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). Results from a Vanderbilt University impact evaluation of USAID's CARSI community-based interventions in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama show that USAID's programs are reducing crime victimization and residents' sense of insecurity. For example, in communities with USAID interventions, compared to control communities with no USAID intervention, there was a 51-percent decrease in residents' awareness of murders in their own neighborhoods, 51-percent decrease in residents' reports of extortions, 25-percent decrease in residents' reports of illegal drug sales, and 19-percent decrease in residents' reports of robberies.

USAID's governance programs focus on strengthening institutions at the national and subnational levels and improving citizens' and civil society's public participation. USAID has supported efforts to improve delivery of basic services, to incorporate citizen participation into public policy, to increase citizens' access to justice, to decrease impunity, and to improve governments' capacity to generate and collect their own revenue. For example, USAID/El Salvador's tax administration and expenditure management programs set up automated audits, one-stop shops for taxpayers, improved enforcement of tax policies, which have resulted in a 30-percent overall increase in revenue collections from 2010–2013. In terms of revenue collected as a percentage of GDP, USAID has helped El Salvador achieve an increase from 13.5 percent in 2010 to 15.5 percent in 2014.

Current USAID economic growth programming in Central America is limited in scope. In Guatemala and Honduras, USAID's Feed the Future programs promote food security, increase incomes, and enhance nutrition by improving production of staple and higher value crops, linking producers to markets, and supporting targeted nutrition interventions. In Honduras, over 3 years, USAID has helped to double incomes (from $0.62/day to $1.21/day) of over 22,000 farming families or 125,000 people in one of the poorest regions. Programs in El Salvador support the Partnership for Growth Joint Country Action Plan and include improvements to the business enabling environment, support to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and efforts to boost market relevant skills in the labor force. In El Salvador, over 3 years, USAID has helped SMEs generate over $57 million in new sales and exports. Central America Regional programs are helping to reduce the time and cost to trade goods across borders. The Central America Strategy envisions greater investments in areas such as promoting regional integration, improving the business climate, supporting SME development, creating a productive workforce, and reducing poverty.

The Strategy for U.S. Engagement in Central America broadens USAID's vision for how it achieves security. USAID will balance its previous and ongoing citizen security-focused investments with proportional investments in prosperity and governance. USAID has prioritized three interconnected objectives: prosperity, governance, and security. A secure, democratic, and prosperous Central America will provide an environment in which all of its citizens choose to remain and thrive.

Question. Considering the history of corruption in some Central American countries, how does the administration plan to account for the $1 billion dollars?

Answer. My understanding is that all foreign assistance programs administered by USAID are required to have oversight processes in place to ensure the effectiveness of activities, to monitor funds spent by our partners, and to ensure compliance with federal regulations. USAID regularly evaluate its activities. Nearly all of its current resources are programmed through nongovernmental organizations and development companies, which are audited on a regular basis.

Going forward, I understand the Department of State and USAID intend to calibrate assistance in response to real reform efforts to send a clear message at the outset that resources will follow reform, and that they will reward the countries that are the most serious about reform. In my view, USAID programming cannot succeed without the right policy environment. Funding flexibility will enable the Department and USAID to support programs with the greatest potential and to ensure senior U.S. Government officials can press partner governments on the needs to make tough reforms.

USAID is developing a results framework for the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America that identifies the key goals the strategy will advance. The framework will assess progress on three levels: programmatic, political will, and national level trajectory. USAID will prepare regular reports for U.S. Government principals to inform ongoing policy discussions.

Programmatic: The Department and USAID use both formal and informal methods to continuously monitor and evaluate the performance of its programs. A program tracker will allow USAID to determine what works and where its programs face obstacles. If necessary, principals will be able to intervene in order to accelerate or adjust implementation and to remove obstacles.

Political Will: While the United States is investing significant resources, success in Central America is first and foremost dependent on the Central American governments themselves taking ownership for creating the conditions for positive change in their countries. U.S. engagement and the possibility of a new U.S. approach to assistance has already leveraged greater efforts by Central American nations, and they are solidifying their 2016 budget plans to include significant financial contributions to programs. Initial political will indicators are derived from the March 3, 2015, Joint Statement between the Vice President and the Presidents of El Sal-

vador, Guatemala, and Honduras as well as from the "Alliance for Prosperity." This category will reflect an ongoing conversation with senior U.S. officials and leaders from the region; new indicators will be added based on these conversations.

National Level Trajectory: I believe it is important to bear in mind the desired outcome of a deepened and sustained U.S. engagement in Central America. While national-level indicators will not likely change on a quarterly basis—and may not change year to year—USAID is ultimately seeking to advance the most important indicators such as GDP growth, poverty rates, homicide rates, and perceptions of corruption throughout the region.

USAID measures good governance in a number of ways, and over the long term will rely on indicators from respected organizations such as Transparency International, Freedom House and the World Bank. Citizens' trust in state institutions, increased collection and effective and transparent use of public revenue, and actions by the government that hold officials accountable are all indicative of the strength of government institutions.

USAID's prosperity interventions will be measured by such illustrative indicators as income levels and the ability of citizens to participate in the formal economy.

On Haiti

Question. The planned funding by USAID for Haiti in fiscal year 2015 is $274 million. According to foreignassistance.gov, approximately $64 million has been obligated in the first 9 months of the year.

- Why has less than a quarter of the aid budgeted been spent when many Haitians continue to sit in emergency camps and desperately need our help?

Answer. As with all of our assistance programs, I believe it is critical that we strike the right balance between ensuring that our interventions are carried out in a timely manner while also performing appropriate due diligence, oversight and planning. I understand that as of March 31, 2015, USAID had approximately $1.8 billion available for long-term reconstruction and development in Haiti, of which $1.5 had been obligated; with disbursements totaling $1.3 billion or 72 percent of overall funds provided. In addition, I am told that 100 percent of the $1.2 billion provided for humanitarian assistance has been disbursed.

Regarding internally displaced persons, it is important to note that, as of March 2015, nearly 94 percent of the 1.5 million internally displaced people have left temporary camps for alternative housing options. USAID, for its part, provided shelter solutions to more than 328,000 people through transitional shelters (t-shelters), repairs to damaged houses, financial support to host families who housed displaced people, and provided short-term rental vouchers to affected families. USAID's long-term strategy for the shelter sector is to support cost-effective ways to increase durable housing stock through private sector engagement and urban planning. This includes providing low-income households with access to housing finance and better infrastructure, and working in existing neighborhoods, and the Government of Haiti to expand access to basic services.

Question. As Haitian nationals are being repatriated by the Dominican Republic, is the aid currently being sent sufficient to help Haiti resettle these nationals? Or will additional funds be requested?

Answer. The administration continues to press for a diplomatic solution to the repatriation issue that will mitigate the need for a humanitarian response related to repatriated persons.

I understand that USAID is closely monitoring this situation but is not at the point of requesting additional funding.

Palestinian steps at the United Nations and the ICC

Question. On April 1, 2015, the Palestinians formally became a member of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Under current U.S. law, the administration is required to cut off Palestinian aid if the Palestinians pursue or support charges against Israel in a judicially authorized ICC case at the ICC.

The Palestinian Authority has also taken a series of detrimental steps at the United Nations over the past year, including an effort last year to push for a one-sided United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution that called for a final agreement within 12 months requiring total Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines by 2017, regardless of Israeli security concerns.

- If confirmed, will you continue to oppose the ICC's politicization of these issues, as is current U.S. policy?
- What impact do you think President Mahmoud Abbas's move should have on current U.S. aid to the Palestinians and America's willingness to provide future assistance?

- What role is USAID currently playing in Gaza and what do you believe is the appropriate role for USAID going forward?
- There are troubling reports that some of the money that has made it into Gaza for reconstruction has been diverted for continued construction of Hamas terrorist tunnels. Is this true? If confirmed, what mechanisms will you put in place to ensure U.S. aid reaches its intended recipients?
- What steps will USAID take to employ proper auditing requirements on aid to the Palestinians? Will you ensure proper strict procedures are in place to ensure U.S. aid reaches its intended targets and is not abused to support Hamas or other Palestinian entities that support violence?

Answer. I understand that USAID, in conjunction with the State Department, continues to review U.S. assistance to the Palestinians. Although the administration's view is that the legislative restrictions related to Palestinian initiation or active support for an ICC judicially authorized investigation have not been triggered to date, we are deeply troubled by Palestinian action at the ICC and continue to voice our opposition to further actions to both the Palestinians and the international community.

The administration continues to believe that U.S. assistance to the Palestinian people is an important tool in promoting regional stability, economic development, and increased security for both Palestinians and Israelis.

Since the onset of the July–August 2014 conflict in Gaza, the United States has committed more than $231 million in humanitarian assistance to Gaza. This assistance has been provided to established U.N. and nongovernmental organizations, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the World Food Program, the United Nations Development Program, UNICEF, the International Committee for the Red Cross, and others. My understanding is that USAID is not currently aware of any reports that U.S. assistance for humanitarian aid in Gaza, including reconstruction, has been diverted for other purposes. The United States takes very seriously any reports of diversion of its assistance, and USAID has long required its partners in Gaza to take appropriate steps to prevent U.S. funding from being diverted for nonintended purposes.

Consistent with statutory requirements, USAID has appropriate procedures in place to ensure that Economic Support Fund (ESF) assistance for the West Bank and Gaza is not provided to or through, or diverted to, any individual or entity that is known to be involved in or advocating terrorism, including Hamas. USAID's vetting process checks non-U.S. individuals and entities within certain thresholds against law enforcement and intelligence community systems prior to local prime or subaward issuance. Worldwide, USAID requires grantees to sign its Certification Regarding Terrorist Financing in order to receive funds. In the West Bank and Gaza specifically, the annual Appropriations Act requires annual audits of all USAID direct awardees, as well as an annual Government Accountability Office audit of the use of all ESF assistance. USAID will continue providing humanitarian and other assistance to Palestinians in Gaza, in line with the administration's national security objectives, and in compliance with U.S. law.

I am committed to strong oversight of and accountability for the administration of foreign assistance funds entrusted to the Agency and preventing waste, fraud, or abuse, and if confirmed, this will be a top priority.

Egypt

Question. What is the current status of U.S. economic aid to Egypt? How can our aid to Egypt be better targeted to strengthen Egyptian actors that support democratic ideals? How will economic assistance to Egypt be used? Do you support current conditions on U.S. aid to Egypt, including the maintenance of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty?

Answer. U.S. economic aid to Egypt is designed to work across all sectors to support and strengthen Egyptian actors who advance democratic ideals. Poverty and economic exclusion, when unaddressed, inhibit the ability of individuals to invest in their own future and make them vulnerable to forces of instability as they struggle to provide for their daily needs.

Economic assistance to Egypt aims to help foster rapid, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth. USAID's economic growth programs focus on supporting sound macroeconomic management, improving the climate for private sector businesses, developing small and medium enterprises to create jobs, and promoting bilateral trade. Assistance in the education sector will strengthen basic skills in elementary school and adult literacy to increase the employability of young Egyptians. The U.S.-Egypt Higher Education Initiative provides scholarships to economically disadvantaged men and women and builds the capacity of Egyptian higher education institutions to meet the demands of a modern global economy. Programming across sectors

in Egypt supports access to quality social services, including those related to education and health. Funding also aims to strengthen democratic governance in Egypt by working with civil society, improving the rule of law and enhancing efficiency of service delivery and transparency in government.

U.S. aid to Egypt across all sectors is targeted to strengthen Egyptian actors and institutions that support democratic principles, transparency and offer access to government services inclusively to Egyptian citizens. USAID works with the Government of Egypt on institutional reform initiatives in several sectors in order to improve transparency, accountability, and access. For example, to support more inclusive economic growth—essential for a stable and democratic Egypt—the Agency works with public and private actors to strengthen the enabling environment to allow Egyptian firms, particularly smaller ones, to take full advantage of profit opportunities in the market. At the request of the Government of Egypt, USAID also supports decentralization of the Egyptian public sector through work reforming Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning systems to increase transparency and allow for inclusion of Egyptian citizens at the local levels, including in budget oversight.This program seeks to identify reform leaders in the legal sector in order to build capacity and provide Egyptian citizens improved access to justice.

Support for a vibrant civil society is a cornerstone of any strong democracy, and an important priority across the USG, in line with President Obama's Stand with Civil Society agenda. USAID works to empower Egyptian civil society actors across all sectors of its assistance programs, including in education, economic development and health. Education programming supports the active leadership role of parents in communities through parent teacher associations which allow for engagement and advocacy with schools and the government. Through a one-stop-shop model piloted by USAID and managed by Egyptian business associations, businessowners can register businesses with local government in a transparent and efficient manner, which minimizes opportunities for corruption. USAID also supports advocacy groups working to facilitate the enabling environment for small and medium entrepreneurs.

All of this work helps the USG build productive relationships with key public and private actors while supporting the foundations for an inclusive, democratic society. If confirmed as Administrator, I will ensure USAID's continued commitment to promoting stability through fostering rapid, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth and essential democracy and governance principles in Egypt.

On Cuba

Question. Recent media reports indicate that the Cuban Government has objected to the use of free Internet and the training of independent journalists, pursuant to USAID's democracy programs, at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana. Moreover, that this is one of the current obstacles in the establishment of diplomatic relations.

- a. Can you ensure the committee that the legally mandated U.S. democracy programs will not be restricted or readjusted pursuant to the ongoing negotiations with the Cuban Government?
- b. Can you ensure the committee that the legally mandated U.S. democracy programs will not be subject to any preapproval or collaborative process with the Cuban dictatorship?

Answer. As I mentioned in my testimony, I remain committed to programs that promote democracy, empower civil society, and foster independent media in Cuba. As you know, the Agency helps facilitate the free flow of uncensored information to, from, and within the island, as well as provide connectivity to the Internet for the millions who remain without access.

USAID works to promote free expression by supporting independent journalists around the world, particularly in closed countries where freedom of the press is lacking or independent journalists are under threat.

USAID democracy programs in closed societies around the world, including in Cuba, are not and will not be subject to preapproval by governments.

Question. As you are aware, Section 109 of the LIBERTAD Act authorizes the use of funds "to support democracy-building efforts for Cuba." These include:

(1) Published and informational matter, such as books, videos, and cassettes, on transitions to democracy, human rights, and market economies, to be made available to independent democratic groups in Cuba.
(2) Humanitarian assistance to victims of political repression, and their families.
(3) Support for democratic and human rights groups in Cuba.
(4) Support for visits and permanent deployment of independent international human rights monitors in Cuba.

♦ Can you ensure the committee that none of these funds authorized for "democracy-building efforts" will be used to support business promotion activities, of any sort, in Cuba?

Answer. USAID will continue with its traditional program areas of humanitarian assistance to political prisoners, marginalized groups, and their families, support for civil society and human rights, and the free flow of uncensored information to, from and within the island.

It is my understanding that the Agency does not anticipate supporting any new programs focused on business promotion activities. If confirmed, I commit to continuing to work with your office as well as others in the Congress to ensure the effectiveness and impact of these programs.

Supplementary question

Question. Do you believe that USAID has a role to play in supporting a democratic transition in Cuba? If so, what types of programs in Cuba would you support as Administrator?

Answer. My understanding is that USAID will continue to support efforts to promote democracy in Cuba, which is in keeping with the USG's enduring objective—the emergence of a democratic, prosperous, and stable Cuba.

If confirmed as Administrator, I will support programs for democracy, civil society, and independent media in Cuba. These programs are consistent with the administration's desire to empower the Cuban people to exercise their fundamental civil and political liberties by providing humanitarian assistance and support to civil society, and through promoting the increased flow of information to, from, and within Cuba.

If confirmed, I commit to continuing to work with your office and others in the Congress to further our shared goal of enabling the Cuban people to freely determine their own future.

On family planning

Question. If confirmed, can you guarantee there will be no change in USAID's policy toward family planning services? In particular, continued strict adherence to the Helms amendment?

Answer. As you know, this is a complex issue and there are deeply held views among a diverse array of stakeholders. This administration and I are committed to improving the health and safety of women and girls around the globe, including survivors of sexual violence. If confirmed, I can guarantee that I will listen to your concerns.

Supplementary question

Question. Can you clarify your views on existing law? If confirmed, will you faithfully execute the law as it pertains to the Helms amendment?

Answer. Let me assure you that, if confirmed as Administrator, I will listen to your concerns, I will consult with you and other Members of Congress, and I will faithfully execute the law across the full range of my responsibilities, including all laws pertaining to restrictions on the use of foreign assistance funds.

Supplementary question

Question. Please elaborate.

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID fully abides by U.S. law, including the Helms amendment, which precludes USAID from using its resources to pay for the performance of abortion as a method of family planning or to motivate or coerce any person to practions.

ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE SMITH'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. U.S. Assistance is not a blank check, especially not to the Palestinian Authority. I am concerned that our assistance seems to continue as usual, when the reality is that Palestinian leaders will still not commit direct negotiations for a two-state solution and even undermine them through maneuvers at the U.N. and the International Criminal Court.

♦ What will be your approach to U.S. assistance for the Palestinian Authority and how you will address this with your Israeli and Palestinian counterparts, if confirmed? What changes can I expect to see in how we are reprogramming our assistance in FY15 to make clear that this is not business as usual?

Answer. Let me begin by saying that the administration is deeply troubled by Palestinian action at the ICC and we continue to voice our opposition to further actions to both the Palestinians and the international community.

I understand that USAID, in conjunction with the State Department, continues to review U.S. assistance to the Palestinians. In FY 2014, I understand that a majority of USAID assistance for the West Bank and Gaza went to programs that directly support the Palestinian people, including humanitarian assistance following the conflict in Gaza. In FY 2015, USAID programs will focus on sectors that the administration believes support our national interest and benefit average Palestinians such as education, healthcare and water infrastructure programs.

Building the institutions of a viable future Palestinian state is a core U.S. national security objective and the long-term focus of our programs. The administration continues to believe that U.S. assistance to the Palestinian people is an important tool in promoting regional stability, economic development, and increased security for both Palestinians and Israelis.

Question. Last year Congress unanimously passed the Ukraine Freedom Support Act, which authorized assistance in support of democracy, civil society, and energy security to Ukraine and throughout in the region. The bill authorized $50 mil to help improve Ukraine's energy security; $20 mil to strengthen civil society, support independent media, and reduce corruption; $10 mil for Russian language broadcasting throughout the region; and $20 mil to support democracy and civil society in Russia. I would urge the appropriators to fully fund these efforts as we look to bolster Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression. I've seen reports that there is some apprehension, especially in Europe, but perhaps within our own government, to provide more robust assistance to Ukraine for fear that it will fall victim to endemic corruption. As the lead on this important legislation, I am supportive of this critical assistance but it must be held accountable.

♦ How will you work to ensure that our assistance to Ukraine is accountable and transparent?

Answer. Ukraine remains the USAID'S top priority in the Europe and Eurasia region. The Agency continues to allocate resources to support the reforms that the Ukrainian Government and civil society have prioritized, including anticorruption, local governance and decentralization, and deregulation and competitiveness of the private sector, especially agriculture and energy reform. USAID integrates anticorruption activities into every project design in Ukraine. For example, anticorruption measures are included in programs to support the judiciary, education, health/pharmaceutical procurement, e-governance, permitting, financial disclosure, and energy.

USAID is starting to see progress on implementation of anticorruption reforms in Ukraine. More than a dozen key pieces of legislation have been passed, including laws to establish the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) and the National Anti-Corruption Prevention Agency (NAPC). The Ukrainian Government is in the process of standing up these two agencies, which are critical to fighting corruption.

USAID has bolstered monitoring and independent evaluations in the region by organizing monitoring workshops for implementing partner staff, and contracting for independent evaluations of its programs to ensure intended impact, including three such evaluations in Ukraine last year. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that USAID continues to build on its efforts to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of the Agency's programs, including in Ukraine.

Question. In light of the recent news reports of human rights and labor rights in Southeast Asia, in particular the modern slavery camps along the Thai-Malaysian border, and the anticipated completion of negotiations on TPP, please provide an account of any USAID labor capacity programs and funding that are currently in place to raise the labor standards in Malaysia and Vietnam, anticipated TPP partners, and Thailand, a prospective TPP partner.

Answer. USAID works across the Asia-Pacific region to protect and promote fundamental human rights, such as the freedoms of expression and assembly, to ensure that citizens have a voice and the ability to choose their own leaders and influence the decisions that affect their lives. These efforts help ensure that the solutions to the challenges facing the region ultimately come from the people of the region.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) offers the United States Government an opportunity to make progress in human rights, but to also help reduce poverty and promote environmental and labor safeguards in the Asia-Pacific, a region that is inextricably tied to our own future stability and prosperity.

In Vietnam, the TPP is both strategically important to U.S. Government relations with Vietnam, and also very important to Vietnam's own development, as it serves as a force for important reforms and improved accountability and transparency. As

part of broader TPP-related assistance, USAID's work complements robust technical assistance provided by other U.S. Government entities, such as the Department of Labor. USAID provides technical assistance to the Government of Vietnam and the legal community to increase understanding of TPP commitments including international labor standards and the enforcement of laws and decrees in areas such as social dialogue, while also supporting civil society efforts. USAID continues to closely coordinate with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and the interagency to assess and identify future labor-related assistance needs.

Additionally, through USAID's Global Labor Program, the Agency is supporting labor rights across the broader Asia region through programs that work to reduce child labor, improve industrial relations, support labor monitoring and training in apparel factories, and promote freedom of association and collective bargaining. For example in Cambodia, USAID supports union leaders and activists and works to improve working conditions and protect freedom of association for vulnerable workers in the garment, hotel and hospitality, and construction industries. In part due to USAID facilitation, garment worker unions negotiated a 28-percent increase in the minimum wage that was approved in November 2014. In addition, a new health project in Cambodia focused on garment factory workers will improve worker-management dialogue on factory compliance with health standards.

USAID also works to combat labor trafficking, a significant issue for the Asia-Pacific, where incidents of migrants on land and sea in need of humanitarian protection remain a serious concern for the U.S. Government. The Asia-Pacific region also suffers from the largest forced labor and sex trafficking market in the world. USAID is working to address these issues on several fronts. Through its assistance to regional institutions, the Agency stands ready to help Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states meet the standards for protection of victims and other areas outlined in the ASEAN combating trafficking in persons convention—expected to be endorsed in November 2015.

USAID is also addressing issues surrounding labor trafficking in the fishing industry through assistance for repatriation and victim support services for fishermen, many of whom have spent years working on boats in harsh conditions and without pay. Last month, the Agency provided such assistance to 59 Cambodian fishermen, who, along with hundreds of others from Cambodia, Burma, Laos, and Thailand, were rescued after being stranded in Eastern Indonesia. These efforts will be supplemented by the new USAID OCEANS project, which will improve the conditions of workers in the fishing industry.

Finally, through regional programming to counter trafficking in persons, USAID is continuing a partnership with the International Office of Migration to support a project that builds upon years of successful interventions to prevent trafficking in persons through the use of social media and information and communications technology. This project will raise awareness among the general public and inspire social action to prevent the most vulnerable from being trafficked.

All USAID antitrafficking efforts are closely aligned and coordinated with prosecution and law enforcement efforts implemented by the U.S. Department of State and other governments.

Question. In light of the anticipated completion of TPP negotiations, are any plans in place to meet increased demands on the Global Labor Program?

Answer. I understand that USAID is currently working with the State Department to identify any gaps related to programmatic needs and resource requirements in this area, and that new activities will depend in part on proposals received in response to a solicitation for a new 5-year program.

With respect to the USAID Global Labor Program specifically, since 2011, the program has supported country programs in 10 countries (Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, Honduras, Liberia, South Africa, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Ukraine, and Georgia), as well as regional and subregional programs in Central America/Latin America, southern Africa, south Asia/Asia, and Eastern Europe. It has strengthened capacity of trade unions and other labor-focused CSOs, supported legal representation for workers to promote access to justice, and facilitated advocacy on gender, labor migration and countertrafficking. If confirmed, I will recommit the Agency to ensuring that there will be no gaps in programming, the follow-on will be awarded competitively and budget permitting, the program will be funded robustly.

Question. Please provide an outline of the current Global Labor Program activities administered by USAID, by country and expenditure—no detail requested at this time.

Answer. USAID has a strong tradition of supporting global labor programs designed to foster democratic development and inclusive economic growth. The

Agency's labor programming directly serves these priorities by strengthening independent and democratic worker organizations and other labor-related civil society organizations, and promoting international labor standards. The current Global Labor Program is a 5-year (2011–2016) award implemented by Solidarity Center. In FY 2015, USAID is programming $7.5 million for work in nine countries and also regional and subregional programs in Latin America, southern Africa, and South and Southeast Asia. This funding supports four thematic research and advocacy programs on gender, migration and trafficking, informal work, and rule of law. This core programming is supplemented by an associate award in Colombia, administered by USAID/Colombia.

The breakdown of expenditures for FY 2015 by country, region and for the global thematic programs is as follows:

Africa regional: $332,661; Liberia: $325,905; South Africa: $810,249; Americas regional: $187,570; Brazil: $626,200; Mexico: $592,708; Honduras: $392,230; Central America subregional: $91,623; Georgia: $562,262; Ukraine: $654,611; Asia regional: $181,620; South Asia subregional: $207,836; Cambodia: $527,427; Bangladesh: $516,102; Global Technical: $816,343; Operating Expenses: $674,653.

Question. As you know, the labor and environmental chapters of our free trade agreements are particularly important to me and a lot of my Senate colleagues. But I am afraid that USAID does not take the issue of trade capacity-building seriously enough. With the exception of a few places where Congress requires it, USAID has chosen to spend little or no money called for in our trade agreements to support labor capacity-building. USAID has an opportunity to use trade capacity-building funds to support labor capacity-building within its Global Labor Program, which is currently funded only with democracy, rights, and governance funding. I need your assurance that trade capacity-building funds will be used as we intended—to support labor rights on the ground with our trading partners who lack the capacity and sometimes the will to take that on themselves. I believe we need to step up and use trade capacity-building funds to increase USAID's Global Labor Program from its current $7.5 million to $10 million.

- If confirmed, will you agree to work with my office to ensure that the appropriate funds are disbursed and included in the Global Labor Program so that we can implement the labor provisions in our trade agreements?

Answer. I strongly share your view of promoting labor rights in the context of our trade priorities and if confirmed, I would be pleased to work with the committee to see that USAID's Global Labor Program is responsive to these priorities.

I understand that in response to congressional direction to provide labor capacity-building support for countries in the Western Hemisphere with which the United States has free trade agreements, USAID has supported projects that have worked with business and civil society to strengthen the demand for effective implementation of labor standards. USAID's review of these programs confirmed that the Agency's strengths are best deployed in demand-side programming with industry to build the case for better labor practices that enhance competitiveness, and with civil society to strengthen the ability of workers to play a constructive role in monitoring and improving labor standards.

If confirmed, I will review the current level of funding with your recommendation in mind and will consult with the committee as we determine the appropriate funding levels for current and future global labor capacity building.

Question. The Review on Antimicrobial Resistance, convened by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, has projected that of all the antimicrobial infections, TB is projected to account for a quarter of the 10 million deaths expected from these infections due to antimicrobial resistance by 2050. The G7 Group of Counties recently highlighted Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) as a top priority, and there is growing momentum for a United Nations High-Level Meeting on AMR to be held at U.N. Headquarters in New York in 2016.

- Will you commit to working to ensure, if confirmed, that drug resistant tuberculosis (TB) has a prominent place on the agenda of this High-Level Meeting as well as any political declaration coming out of the meeting?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed as USAID Administrator, I will commit to working to ensure drug-resistant TB has a prominent place on the agenda. Drug-resistant TB is the one of the largest antimicrobial resistance issues globally. If confirmed, I will ensure USAID, as the lead U.S. Government agency for international TB, continues to lead coordination of U.S. Government global TB efforts, support for global initiatives, and support to countries to ensure the further development and expansion of

quality programs to address TB and drug-resistant TB using the best tools and treatments available.

Question. The White House is leading the development of an interagency action plan on drug resistant tuberculosis as a companion to the White House's National Action Plan for Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria.

- How will USAID's contribution to this plan ensure accountability and specify clear and ambitious milestones for reducing drug resistant TB? Will you commit to ensuring, if confirmed, that the USAID proposal specifies the additional funding necessary to reach these milestones and get ahead of the growing crisis of drug resistant TB?

Answer. The White House action plan on drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR–TB) will have clear and ambitious milestones. The plan will build on the current USAID TB portfolio and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria. TB grants will accelerate progress toward achieving the goals laid out in the U.S. Government TB Strategy and contribute to the global effort to end the pandemic. USAID will be leading the international part of the plan. It will focus on the development and implementation of faster and better quality diagnostics and treatment regimens, prioritizing countries with the highest burdens of drug-resistant TB to maximize limited resources and to end TB as a major cause of morbidity and mortality, and as a global health security threat. The rollout of new drugs and regimens will be critical to saving lives and preventing the development and transmission of deadly drug-resistant TB. The next step in this fast-track process is a stakeholder forum to ensure input from a wide spectrum of partners. While I cannot guarantee future funding levels, I will, if confirmed, help ensure USAID continues its efforts to curb the epidemic by ensuring good quality TB programs that appropriately treat and cure patients of the disease, and prevent the emergence and spread of drug-resistant strains.

Question. According to Freedom House, after a decade and a half of increasing democratic trends, Africa experienced significant backsliding between 2005 and 2013. It is clear the White House is interested in, and committed to, maintaining good relations with Africa as evidenced by initiatives such as Feed the Future, Power Africa, the Young African Leadership Initiative, and the Partnership for Growth, which includes two African countries. I am concerned, however, that we are not focused enough on traditional development priorities, specifically in the area of Democracy and Governance.

- a. To your knowledge, does USAID have a medium to long-term democracy and governance strategy for Africa? If so, what is it, and does it need to be updated or changed in any way in your estimation?
- b. If confirmed, will you commit to work with the committee to devise a robustly funded democracy and governance strategy for Africa?
- c. Elections are an important indicator of the democratic health of a country, but support for elections alone does not build the institutions that support democracy. What has been our approach to ensuring the investments we are making to support key elections in Africa, such as those made in Nigeria earlier this year, are followed by programs and activities that help citizens ensure that those they elect are accountable to the people they are supposed to represent?
- d. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that the elections support we provide in Africa is incorporated into a broader governance strategy?

Answer. USAID has been a leader in supporting the President's policies on human rights and democratic governance as fundamental objectives of a whole-of-government strategy toward Africa. I am aware that during this administration USAID has issued a new strategy on democracy, human rights, and governance. The new strategy codifies a more holistic approach to USAID's programming in this sector by focusing on participation, inclusion, and accountability, while elevating human rights and integration of programming across economic and social sectors.

One of USAID's unique strengths is its field-based orientation, in which its missions abroad are the incubators and operational nerve centers of its work. With policy guidance and technical support from Washington, USAID bilateral missions in Africa develop their own multiyear country development cooperation strategies. They do so in close collaboration with U.S. Embassy counterparts, host-country partners, and often with other donors, foundations, and the private sector. To my knowledge, virtually every USAID mission in Africa has a medium to long-term strategic objective focused on supporting democracy, human rights, and governance. These objectives vary significantly based on the specific challenges faced in each country, while aligning with the new strategy on democracy, human rights, and governance. They can also change over time in response to democratic breakthroughs or backsliding.

For example, in Ghana, one of the models of democratic governance in Africa, USAID works in close partnership with national government officials and civil society to strengthen local district government institutions and improve service delivery. In post-conflict countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, USAID programs reconcile communities separated by war, support key governance reforms, and help extend state authority to the people. In Zimbabwe, under constant threat of closing political space, USAID and its partners provide critical support to human rights defenders and civil society activists who are trying to maintain their basic freedoms.

And in Nigeria, as well as more than a dozen other African countries, USAID focuses and concentrates its resources to ensure that election assistance is embedded in long-term democracy, rights, and governance strategies. Doing so allows USAID to support reformers who can seize the window of opportunity provided by free, fair, and credible elections to promote policy changes, strengthen governance institutions, expand basic freedoms, and improve the systems of checks and balances that hold leaders accountable to the people who elected them.

In my estimation, USAID's current process for achieving its democracy strategy in Africa is appropriate: setting broad policy and strategy goals in Washington, and allowing USAID missions to develop their own country-specific responses to achieving those goals, for which they are then held accountable. I also believe that USAID's election assistance programs are most effective and appropriate as part of a holistic democracy, human rights and governance strategy.

If confirmed, I will make this area one of my priorities and I look forward to working with Congress to maximize the impact and effectiveness of this program.

Question. As I am sure you are aware, I have been working with State Department and USAID to ensure that our Foreign Service adequately represents the diversity of our population. With 18 months left in this administration, do I have a commitment from you that you will make recruitment and retention of diverse candidates a priority at USAID?

Answer. Recruiting and retaining a diverse and skilled workforce is critical to meeting the mission of USAID, and is of great importance to me personally. If confirmed as Administrator, I will work with USAID leadership to strengthen efforts to ensure that USAID's workforce is reflective of our population.

I am pleased that the 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) specifically addresses the need to increase our diversity and provides specific focus areas that I fully support. These areas include enhancing work requirements for USAID managers about the need to foster diversity and inclusion in the workplace, increasing outreach to our veterans, sustaining the numbers of fellowships offered, and initiating an early identification program, focusing on students from underrepresented communities who have an interest in public service.

USAID is engaging in targeted outreach activities and programs that are focused on building a diverse workforce, which I will look to support and expand. This outreach is designed to increase the diversity of applicants who apply for direct-hire positions at USAID, as well as to other qualified applicants who may apply through the Disability Employment Program, the Veterans Employment Initiative, and USAID's Internship Program.

The Donald Payne International Development Fellowship Program (Payne Fellowship Program) has resulted in three classes of fellows with a highly diverse representation. These fellows enter USAID's Foreign Service upon completion of the program.

If confirmed, I will work with USAID leadership to improve retention of diverse employees (and all employees) through several actions including: (1) increasing training for managers and employees tailored specifically to the issues of diversity and inclusion; (2) implementing exit interviews and surveys to provide the Agency with data regarding why employees resign, as well as their impressions of diversity and inclusion at USAID, so that the Agency can take appropriate action; and, (3) piloting programs that focus on diversity and inclusion, such as the Office of Personnel Management's Diversity and Inclusion Dialogue Program.

If confirmed, I am committed to making recruitment and the retention of diverse candidates a high priority of my tenure with USAID.

Question. I am very concerned by the state of civil society in Egypt. At a time when analysts are reporting that the suppression of nonviolent political dissent in Egypt is now worse than at any time during the Mubarak regime, only $5 million out of a total of $150 million in Economic Support Funds to Egypt is designated for democracy and governance in the administration's FY 2016 request. In comparison, the administration has requested $47 million for democracy and governance programming in Jordan, a country whose population is roughly 8 percent of Egypt's.

♦ If confirmed, how would you be able to support democracy and governance in Egypt and counter the erosion of civil society there, given the subject's seemingly low priority in the administration's budget request?

Answer. USAID resources in Egypt are targeted toward supporting democratic principles and civil society across all sectors. The Agency works to empower Egyptian civil society actors throughout its assistance program, including in education, economic development and health. USAID programming works to reinforce democratic principles, transparency and provide access to government services by all parts of Egyptian society. USAID supports decentralization of the Egyptian Government through work reforming the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Planning systems to increase transparency and allow for inclusion of Egyptian citizens at the local levels, including in budget oversight. This program seeks to identify reform champions in the legal sector and provide Egyptian citizens improved access to justice. Education programs support the active leadership role of parents in communities through parent/teacher associations which allow for engagement and advocacy with school principals and local government officials. Through a one-stop-shop model piloted by USAID and managed by Egyptian business associations, businessowners can register businesses with local government in a transparent and efficient manner, which minimizes opportunities for corruption. USAID also supports advocacy groups working to facilitate the enabling environment for small and medium entrepreneurs.

While advancing certain democracy, rights, and governance issues is a challenge in the current environment, USAID is moving forward with a significant direct grants program to advance the role of civil society in promoting human rights. Civil society organizations are working to combat gender-based violence, promote women's empowerment, counter trafficking in persons, promote religious tolerance, and support rights of people with disabilities. Bilateral programs include support to civil society organizations that promote youth empowerment and youth engagement in leadership roles in the communities in which they live. For example, civil society organizations offer students the opportunity to participate in programs that promote youth values of tolerance and peace within the Egyptian identity and teach principles of sustainable development and citizenship.

If confirmed as Administrator, I will ensure USAID's continued commitment to promoting essential democracy and governance principles in Egypt as consistent with President Obama's Stand with Civil Society agenda.

Question. Continued progress in Tunisia's democratic transition is critical and economic reform will be essential to the ongoing success of that transition. Tunisia needs assistance in building a regulatory environment that facilitates both foreign and domestic investment, especially in providing access to capital for small- and medium-sized enterprises.

♦ In your view, how can U.S. assistance most effectively help create this environment? If confirmed, how will you prioritize this assistance?

Answer. I share your interest in ensuring that the U.S. Government provides robust and targeted assistance during this critical period in Tunisia's history. I believe Tunisia demonstrates great potential for a successful transition, and last year, USAID reopened its office in Tunis after 20 years—a clear demonstration of the U.S. Government's continued support for a democratic Tunisia.

USAID is supporting the Government of Tunisia's economic reform agenda in tax and customs policy which will help create a more attractive investment climate for both domestic and international investors. During President Caid Essebsi's visit, Secretary of Commerce Pritzker convened a roundtable of CEOs from top U.S. corporations, including Google, Bechtel, and General Electric. Encouraged by the Government of Tunisia's progress, U.S. companies are poised to take advantage of investment opportunities in Tunisia. Additionally, USAID's work with the Government of Tunisia on customs policy reform will advance the implementation of the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade Facilitation (Bali, 2012) which expedites the movement, release and clearance of goods.

USAID programs support the Tunisian people as they lay the foundation for economic prosperity and democratic governance. USAID is creating job opportunities for Tunisian youth by helping small- and medium-sized enterprises to increase productivity and expand employment; and then matching and coaching young Tunisian men and women to fill these new jobs. USAID is also providing financing to small- and medium-sized enterprises through the Tunisian-American Enterprise Fund.

Question. Hundreds of thousands of Christians, Yezidis, and other religious minorities have been made homeless by ISIL's depravity and continue to live as displaced persons without adequate access to shelter, food, medical care or education.

Many women from these communities have been kidnapped and subjected to horrific sexual violence.

- ♦ If confirmed, how will you work with host governments to ensure that assistance reaches these communities and that survivors of sexual violence at the hands of ISIL are given the help they need to rebuild their lives?

Answer. USAID strives to include and be sensitive to the needs of religious and ethnic minorities in all of its programming. All U.S. Government humanitarian assistance is delivered on an impartial basis and is open to every household and community in acute need, regardless of ethnicity or faith. If confirmed as USAID Administrator, I will ensure that the Agency continues to uphold these principles.

In both Syria and Iraq, USAID humanitarian assistance is provided on a countrywide basis and is focused on the populations in greatest need who can be reached by the Agency's humanitarian partners. USAID has provided over $2 billion in humanitarian assistance for displaced Syrians since fiscal year 2012 and nearly $76 million in humanitarian assistance for displaced Iraqis since the start of FY 2014.

In Syria, USAID humanitarian assistance reaches into all 14 governorates and 63 districts, including those in which religious minority communities reside or are hosted as internally displaced persons (IDPs). In Iraq, the majority of humanitarian assistance is provided to address acute needs among the IDP population in the Iraqi Region of Kurdistan (IRK), which accounts for over 40 percent of that country's total displaced population. For example, approximately 70 percent of all humanitarian aid provided by USAID's Office for U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance since FY 2014 has served Iraqi IDPs in the IRK—where the majority of displaced Iraqi religious minorities are seeking shelter.

USAID humanitarian assistance inside Syria and Iraq is focused on provision to vulnerable IDPs of food and other relief commodities, shelter (including repairs), water and sanitation, health care, education, protection (including specialized services for women, children, and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence), and humanitarian coordination and logistics.

In all its programs in Syria and Iraq, the Agency strives to address the protection needs of the most vulnerable—including women, girls and boys in displaced communities. For example, in Iraq, USAID supports humanitarian assistance programs that both mainstream protection and deliver direct, specialized services to vulnerable communities.

Specific activities include recruitment of female health workers, to ensure health services are equally accessible for women and girls as well as men and boys, mobile "child-friendly" spaces and psychosocial first aid for traumatized children, emergency aid focused on the immediate needs of pregnant women in vulnerable conditions, and provision of specialized counseling and referral services to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

USAID has also provided funding to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to support its wider protection activities, which reached nearly 1 million IDPs in Iraq. As a component of outreach to the wider IDP population, this included direct psychosocial support to Christian and Yezidi IDPs in transit sites in northern Iraq.

In those neighboring countries hosting large numbers of displaced Syrians and Iraqis, USAID's nonhumanitarian programming also seeks to address the needs of religious minority communities within the context of the wider crisis. The Agency views inclusion of minorities as a key component of advancing democracy and stability.

For example, I understand that since 2007 USAID has provided over $40 million in economic and development assistance directly benefiting Iraq's minority communities including Christian, Yezidi, Shabak, and Sabean-Mandaean groups. The Agency's Jordan community engagement program works with communities hosting Syrian refugees, and, in Egypt, USAID works with faith-based organizations to promote religious tolerance and diversity.

In addition, USAID has hosted various delegations of Iraqi religious minorities to discuss and coordinate the U.S. Government humanitarian response to their displacement as a result of ISIL actions. This has included, inter alia, representatives of the Assyrian, Chaldean, Orthodox, Catholic, and Yezidi communities. In the field, USAID humanitarian assistance teams meet regularly with representatives of ethnic and religious minority diaspora and local groups serving displaced communities, as well as with international partners serving IDPs. They also coordinate closely with the U.N. and relevant government institutions in Iraq and those host countries for displaced Syrians and Iraqis in order to ensure all IDP communities' needs are taken into account.

Question. In 2011 the Arab Spring protests and calls for nonviolent reform offered tremendous hope for the potential of the Middle East region. Four years later we face a long, cold winter with many states reverting to old bad habits of closing off all avenues for nonviolent political expression or economic opportunity. Worse yet, we are facing failed, or close to failing, states in Yemen, Libya, and Syria. In the face of such unpredictability, instability, and violence the U.S. diplomatic presence and USAID field offices have been forced to draw down or close. In other areas, governments are actively confronting USAID funded programs and projects.

- How are you thinking about U.S. assistance and development engagement in the Middle East and North Africa against this depressing and alarming backdrop? Do we need to change the way we do business, or the missions we pursue, in the region?

Answer. USAID works with local and international partners to address the tremendous needs in the Middle East and North Africa. USAID recognizes that capable and accountable governance institutions are crucial to the sustainability of our development investments, which is why the Agency seeks to integrate democracy, human rights, and governance principles and practices across all programming.

USAID's approach in the Middle East is twofold; the Agency works not only with governments, but also at a grassroots level, changing the lives of individuals and transforming communities. USAID works closely with national governments where that is possible, and where national-level governance institutions are lacking, at the local level, with municipal councils or local civil society, to help meet the immediate needs of the people in the region as well as build sustainable local governance structures that can support a move to resilient democratic societies. Local- and municipal-level governance issues are an increasingly important component to USAID's work in the region, especially in communities affected by conflict and crisis. Key elements in all USAID programs are a deep analysis of the political context, supporting citizen engagement in policymaking and service delivery, and promoting the rights of all citizens and groups to ensure equitable development gains. USAID programs represent a long-term investment in the people and communities of the Middle East and North Africa and build on the Agency's mission to partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing our own security and prosperity.

USAID is constantly reassessing the way it does business and the specific programs in which it invests. Each country and regional program begins with a careful assessment of local needs and capacity for reform. Once programs are implemented they are carefully monitored and evaluated for effectiveness and lessons learned. Security concerns remain a significant challenge, and the security of USAID staff and implementing partners is paramount. In places where USAID has no direct-hire staff on the ground, the Agency uses local and international partners as well as remote management techniques to continue and ensure close oversight of USAID programs.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Congress and our implementing partners to maximize the efficacy and impact of our work in the Middle East and elsewhere throughout the world.

Question. In response to the question about USAID's contribution to the U.S. Government TB strategy, you mentioned that you would "help ensure USAID continues its efforts to curb the epidemic by ensuring good quality TB programs that appropriately treat and cure patients of the disease, and prevent the emergence and spread of drug-resistant strains." As its contribution to the interagency action plan on drug-resistant tuberculosis, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention submitted recommendations that clearly identify the funding needed to carry out the activities.

- Has USAID identified funding needs, given the objectives of the plan? If not, why not?
- How meaningful can a strategy be unless resources needs are identified, to enable the agency to not only continue efforts but intensify them and rapidly build country capacity to have a much greater impact on TB?

Answer. The White House National Action Plan on multidrug resistant tuberculosis (MDR–TB) will have clear and ambitious milestones. USAID will lead the international component of the plan, building on the current USAID TB portfolio and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. It will focus on the development and implementation of faster and better quality diagnostics and treatment regimens, prioritizing countries with the highest burdens of drug-resistant TB to maximize limited resources and end TB as a major cause of morbidity and mortality and as a global health security threat. The rollout of new drugs and regimens

will be critical to saving lives and preventing the development and transmission of deadly drug-resistant TB.

The process includes critical opportunities to receive feedback from the broader global health community, including a stakeholder forum, on important aspects to include in the plan. Guided by the strategy, stakeholder feedback, and data and evidence, USAID will do its part to identify the resources needed to implement the plan and focus on how to maximize the effectiveness of those resources. However, combating TB is a global problem and a shared responsibility that requires commitments from other donor partners and countries themselves to do more. As I testified, it is also critical to mobilize other countries to do more in this area—both with respect to TB and to health systems more broadly. If confirmed, I will play a leadership role in this regard and ensure that USAID continues its efforts to curb the epidemic by ensuring good quality TB programs that appropriately treat and cure patients of the disease, and prevent the emergence and spread of multidrug resistant strains.

ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE SMITH'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR FLAKE

Question. In addition to the devastating loss of life and breakdown of the affected countries' health care systems, we have seen the economies of these countries near collapse as economic activity ground to a halt, investors and contractors fled, farming ceased, and building and maintaining of key infrastructure projects was suspended. As private investments in airports, roads, seaports, and electricity generation and distribution will be vital to for economic recovery, what is USAID doing in these areas to reinvigorate private economies that will be necessary for the long-term stability of affected countries?

Answer. Having coordinated the USG's international response to the Ebola epidemic while at the National Security Council, I am personally committed to working in the Ebola-affected countries to help reinvigorate their economies, using both Ebola emergency funds and base development assistance funds. If confirmed, I will ensure USAID continues these important efforts. Examples of USAID's support to revive the economies of the Ebola-affected countries include:

- Through the Power Africa Initiative, USAID is engaging in a variety of areas that will improve electricity generation and distribution.
  - USAID/Liberia replicates appropriate scale private models to supply energy to unserved rural areas through the design and build of small-scale facilities that demonstrate renewable energy technologies. This work is buttressed by a cooperative agreement with the National Rural Electrification Cooperative of America (NRECA), which is working with rural communities to manage electrical generation and distribution.
  - USAID/Liberia is working to engage in active diplomacy and dialogue with local governments, other donors, and their implementing partners to encourage and facilitate the rapid completion of work on the Mt. Coffee hydropower station; three new power plants to add 38 MW of affordable electricity to the grid; the extension of the West Africa Power Pool; and other key public sector infrastructure projects.
  - USAID/Liberia is working with local banks to demonstrate the business case for affordable, sustainable, renewable energy solutions beyond the grid. Furthermore, USAID technical assistance has helped with the development of draft legislation that will allow for the entry of private sector actors in generation and distribution.
  - USAID/Guinea is exploring public private partnership (PPP) opportunities in the energy sector in both Guinea and Sierra Leone through collaboration with the member agencies in Power Africa.
- In addition, USAID is supporting efforts to rebuild critical infrastructure in the Ebola-affected countries in order to attract private investment and improve the lives of those impacted by the crisis.
  - USAID/Liberia is working to rehabilitate rural farm to market roads and build the capacity of the Ministry of Public Works to maintain them, which will stimulate broader private sector activity in agricultural value chains, including transportation and marketing.
  - In all three countries, USAID is supporting investments in digital infrastructure by working with donors and partners to adopt a "dig once" strategy for appropriate road construction projects intended to reduce the combined costs of road construction and broadband connectivity access and

advancement. Investments in digital infrastructure support roads, airports, seaports, and electricity generation.
- Through advancement in e-payments platforms, USAID/Liberia is working to enable and increase ease of payments for on-grid electricity, as well as pay-as-you-go models in all three countries using emergency funds. In order to advance infrastructure, policy reforms are required to support the development of public-private partnerships (PPPs) across all infrastructure. USAID is collaborating with multiple teams and stakeholders to define a combined vision and requirements for the affected country governments in order to catalyze and spur PPPs that will create infrastructure growth.
- USAID/Liberia's efforts to increase access to potable water in three cities will contribute to a healthier and more productive workforce attractive to the private sector, as well as facilitate development of industry and agriculture in those locations.
- USAID/Liberia and partners are completing the construction of 85 kilometers of feeder roads in support of other USG-funded agricultural activities designed under the Feed the Future Initiative and food security programs.

♦ USAID is also actively engaging the private sector to leverage their ideas and encourage private sector investment in the three affected countries.
- USAID recently published two new calls for proposals under its Global Development Alliance that focus on all three countries to prioritize co-investment with the private sector to harness ideas, capacity, and private resources to bolster economic activities and investments in infrastructure, improve local health systems, and promote global health security, all of which are aimed at accelerating recovery and building resiliency in the West African communities affected by the Ebola epidemic.
- In addition, the Agency seeks to harness capacity and resources from the local, regional, and international private sector around partnerships that strengthen information and communications technology, energy infrastructure, social programming, health care, and education.
- Through the Feed the Future initiative, the Agency is working to engage the infrastructure, and resources of the private sector, foundations, and other partners, including in-country partners, to foster broad-based food security in the short, medium, and long term.
- The PPP strategy in 2015 focuses on reestablishing private sector confidence to resume business operations through continuous communication and updates about market conditions. USAID is also providing technical assistance to help Liberia develop a PPP policy that will attract investment across a range of industry and infrastructure projects.

ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE SMITH'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

On Smith's priorities

Question. Assuming you are confirmed, you will only have 18 months in office once you come into office, and there are certainly a host of issues you could dive into. Can you talk about some of these priority areas where you would really like to make a change?

Answer. Should I have the honor of being confirmed, I will pursue four priorities.

(1) If confirmed, I will focus the Agency on programs that are achieving results and will be selective about initiating new commitments. I will work with Congress to institutionalize successful programs, including Feed the Future, Power Africa, and our efforts in maternal and child health.

(2) If confirmed, I will provide the leadership, guidance, and tools needed to enable USAID's staff in Washington and the field to deliver against our most urgent priorities. This includes expanding the Agency's work and impact on democracy, rights, and governance. This also means expanding the Agency's impact on human trafficking and corruption, laying the groundwork for the success of a critically important strategy for Central America, and ensuring an equally important transition in Afghanistan.

(3) If confirmed, I will act quickly to ensure that the Agency maintains global leadership and agility in responding to increasingly complex humanitarian crises around the world. When a natural disaster strikes or a humanitarian catastrophe is imminent, the Agency is and should be among the first on the ground to help

those in need, and in a world rife with crises, I believe it is critical to ensure that the Agency remains one step ahead.

I will also work with this committee and other stakeholders to pursue meaningful food aid reform that will enable us to reach more people, more quickly, in times of need—all while maintaining our historic partnership with U.S. farmers and maritime.

(4) If confirmed, I will focus on further strengthening the institution. That means building on the reform agenda launched by Administrator Rajiv Shah. This will involve expanding the capacity of the Agency to mobilize resources and engagement from other partners; to draw on science, technology, and innovation to address development challenges; and to increase investment in effective local solutions.

Strengthening the institution involves tackling some of the management and operational challenges facing an agency that manages resources across over 80 countries, often in complex environments. The Agency must ensure that American taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly. It must identify successful programs, learn from prior mistakes, apply lessons learned, and share best practices—all in an open and transparent way. If progress is not being made, it must take corrective action or terminate projects.

Strengthening USAID also means supporting and listening to its people, both here in Washington and overseas. These are men and women with knowledge, institutional memory, and invaluable insight. It is my goal to give them the visibility, respect, and gratitude that they deserve.

On leveraging partners to make American aid go further

Question. Ms. Smith, how do you recommend we use our leadership to work with other nations to do more?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage other nations to join USAID in addressing the world's development and humanitarian challenges—especially in this time of unprecedented need when no country can—or should—singlehandedly meet global demands.

Leveraging our development resources is a key step to successfully achieving USAID's goals as a 21st century development agency. If confirmed as Administrator, I will work with USAID leadership to more deeply integrate partnership and leveraging of external resources into USAID program design and implementation.

Using U.S. development assistance in a way that catalyzes additional financing for development from other countries, the private sector, multilateral institutions, and foundations is a key pillar of the U.S. approach to development, as is the recognition that sustainable development requires host-country buy-in and leadership. These elements are embodied in initiatives such as Power Africa and Feed the Future. They are also core priorities for the U.S. Government heading into the Third U.N. Conference on Financing for Development in July.

I am aware that USAID has progressed substantially over the last several years in developing closer coordination with a number of other international donors. Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Australia have become even more important partners. If confirmed, I will continue to support and expand these relationships as a priority.

At the invitation of President Obama, the Government of Sweden recently committed $1 billion to Power Africa, an initiative to double access to energy in sub-Saharan Africa. The early success of Power Africa—transactions expected to generate more than 4,100 megawatts have already reached financial close—played a critical role in securing Sweden's commitment. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID uses this power of example to bring in more donors for Power Africa and other successful initiatives.

On effectiveness and efficiency of aid

Question. I certainly understand that if our efforts in assistance are a mile wide and an inch deep, we will not be very effective.

- How do you plan to focus in certain areas to make our aid go the furthest?
- What will your methods be for determining where to double down on American aid so we can achieve maximum impact?

Answer. Focusing resources—both financial and staffing—in priority countries is essential for maximum impact. If confirmed as Administrator, I will strengthen the Agency's Selectivity and Focus process. This process was launched in 2012 in response to Presidential Policy Directive (PPD–6), which mandated that the Agency focus development efforts by being more selective about the countries and sectors in which it works. Since 2010, the Agency's efforts in Selectivity and Focus have

reduced the number of sectoral program areas by 40 percent, enabling country missions to be more focused on top priority activities.

If confirmed as Administrator, USAID will continue to make hard choices about how to allocate attention and resources across countries, regions, and sectors. Under my leadership, if confirmed, the Agency will closely consider issues of fragility and weigh the impact and potential savings of investing in resilience. It will continue to concentrate resources through better alignment of staffing and funding in support of those countries and programs that yield the greatest impact. Further, I will continue to strengthen the use of Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) to ensure analysis of changes in country situations and status in the medium term, and support evaluations and interim Agencywide assessments to inform decisions about adjustments in resource allocations.

Question. A recent Office of Inspector General's report noted that Presidential initiatives—not just Congressional Earmarks—are stymieing USAID Missions from allocating the correct type of funding to meet needs identified in country as the most important. Ms. Smith, as a development expert, you know the importance of "country ownership" and ensuring our assistance programs are actually reflecting the top priorities of the countries in which USAID works.

- ♦ If confirmed as Administrator, what would you do to ensure that priorities identified at the mission level are incorporated into final budget submissions to Congress and that Presidential initiatives—while important—do not distort the type of assistance USAID ends up providing to countries?

Answer. I understand that it is a critical priority at USAID to ensure that its missions receive the funding they need, despite the constrained budget environment in which they operate. If confirmed as Administrator, I will continue to refine our planning and strategy processes and ensure that mission priorities are integrated into our budget development process.

I believe that it is important to the national security of our country that USAID continues to be a global leader in addressing the world's most critical development challenges. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that these efforts are mutually reinforcing with the local priorities specific to a country or region, and reflect the on-the-ground knowledge and expertise of the Agency's field staff.

Question. What percentage of your budget is spent on overhead versus directed to assistance? Are there efficiencies that can be found in overhead savings?

Answer. Based on my initial briefings, I understand that in FY 2015, the Agency's Operating Expense (OE) appropriation accounted for approximately 6.2 percent of its total program budget.

I understand that USAID continues to implement ambitious operational reforms to improve management processes and achieve efficiencies in areas such as information technology, travel, real property disposals, insourcing, and space optimization. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing these as well as other areas where we might identify additional efficiencies.

On increasing transparency

Question. USAID has committed to improving transparency in government.

- ♦ What are your plans for improving the quality and availability of data about USAID spending, so that anyone can trace each dollar right down to the specific project or activity where it is spent?

Answer. Aid transparency is essential for helping recipient governments manage their aid flows, for empowering citizens to hold governments accountable for the use of assistance, and for supporting evidence-based, data-driven approaches to foreign aid.

The administration has placed great emphasis on transparency and openness across the government and USAID is taking a leading role in helping the U.S. Government further its commitment to enhancing aid transparency as a way of increasing the efficacy of development efforts and promoting international accountability. In October 2014, USAID released its first ever Open Data policy and regularly posts datasets to www.usaid.gov/data.

If confirmed as Administrator, I will work with USAID leadership to advance efforts that are currently under way to increase the transparency of our funding and programming, on both the development and humanitarian fronts. In particular, if confirmed, I am committed to increasing the number and quality of evaluations posted online, as well as regularly posting more and improved data to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and ForeignAssistance.gov.

On results-driven aid

Question. Can you tell us what systems should be in place to ensure that foreign aid evaluations are used to feed back into the loop? To be used to guide program design and policy decisionmaking?

Answer. USAID has established systems to ensure that quality evaluations are undertaken and that results are used for program improvements and redesigns. If confirmed as Administrator, I will work to elevate the quality and use of monitoring and evaluations in USAID. I will also ensure that new officers continue training in evaluation, monitoring, and integrating findings to ensure impact.

It is my understanding that between 2011 and 2014, USAID trained over 1,400 USAID staff in sound evaluation methods and practices, created templates and tools to support evaluation design and performance management plans, and worked with missions to implement an approach that allows for collaboration with partners and adaptation of projects based on learning. During that time, over 950 evaluations have contributed to evidence-based decisionmaking by missions and operating units.

I also understand that USAID is undertaking an independent evaluation to examine evaluation utilization across the Agency, which will provide rich data on trends and practices in evaluation use. This study is due to be completed in September 2015.

If confirmed, I will focus on this critically important aspect of USAID programming and ensure that evaluations are used to inform budget decisions, project design changes, and midcourse corrections in development programming.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure that these evaluations are high quality and transparent?

Answer. USAID released an extremely rigorous Evaluation Policy in 2011, which seeks to ensure high-quality and transparent evaluations. The Evaluation Policy established protocols and procedures for ensuring that all USAID evaluations are transparently conducted, unbiased, integrated into project design, relevant for decisionmaking, methodologically sound, and oriented toward reinforcing local capacity.

It is my understanding that the USAID Evaluation Policy has institutionalized several additional safeguards to ensure a commitment to unbiased measurement and reporting, as well as to promote transparency. For both internal and external evaluations, statements of work/terms of reference and draft evaluation reports must undergo a peer review, which is aimed at increasing quality and transparency. In addition, evaluation team members must submit disclosure of conflict of interest forms which are part of the final evaluation report. Lastly, findings from external and internal evaluations must be publicly shared via the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) online data system.

If confirmed as Administrator, I will ensure continued implementation of this policy and periodic assessments to verify its continued effectiveness.

On USAID reforms

Question. As you know, former USAID Administrator Shah initiated reforms in 2010 under a program called USAID Forward. In your view, what have been the most lasting results of the USAID Forward reform effort?

Answer. Although the USAID Forward reform agenda was launched by former Administrator Rajiv Shah in 2010, I understand that many elements of what became USAID Forward were proposed at a conference of career Mission Directors that was conducted with the participation of senior Agency leadership in November 2009. This early investment in, and continuing ownership of, the reforms by USAID's senior career officers is a key ingredient for ensuring the sustainability of these reforms.

I believe that through USAID Forward's focuses on results, partnership, and innovation, the Agency has significantly strengthened its capacity in each of these areas over the past 5 years. USAID now has in place a rigorous and transparent process for designing strategies and projects while evaluating their impact to achieve results in a more focused and selective manner. Its partnership agenda has grown substantially, almost doubling the amount of direct work with local partners, as well as significantly increasing its partnership with the private sector, particularly small businesses. Moreover, USAID has greatly increased its emphasis on innovative approaches through the use of science, technology, and open innovation through such platforms as the Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) and Grand Challenges for Development, which have been incorporated into the Agency's Global Development Lab. Each of these reforms under USAID Forward is already demonstrating a strong, durable impact on USAID's ability to lead the international community in achieving sustainable results.

Question. What further reforms are needed to make USAID more effective?

Answer. While I understand USAID has made significant progress as a result of the reform effort launched in 2010, known as USAID Forward, I believe that USAID can be more effective if the Agency further strengthens its Foreign Service, improves transparency when it comes to results, and bolsters local solutions.

I understand that approximately 50 percent of Foreign Service officers (FSOs) have less than 5 years of experience with USAID. If confirmed, I will make it a high priority to invest in the professional development of new FSOs so they can operate and implement programs effectively.

Second, USAID Forward and its reforms require staff to partner, innovate, and deliver results while transparently reporting on foreign assistance to Congress, the public, and external stakeholders. If confirmed, I will work to streamline these processes to achieve even greater effectiveness and continue to strengthen USAID's commitment to accountability.

Third, if confirmed, I will ensure that USAID continues to invest in local solutions that achieve sustainable results and build local capacity and knowledge. USAID must remain committed to creating the conditions whereby countries can lead, resource, and sustain their own development.

Question. In your view, does the recently released 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) support ongoing USAID Forward reforms?

Answer. Yes. From the outset of the second QDDR process, USAID focused on advancing and institutionalizing the significant initiatives and reform efforts already underway, including USAID Forward. The first QDDR set in motion USAID Forward, a suite of reforms focused on budget management, policy capacity, implementation and procurement reform, monitoring and evaluation, innovation, science and technology, as well as talent management.

The 2015 QDDR emphasizes USAID's commitment to a new way of doing business that brings partnership, local ownership, innovation, and a relentless focus on results to enable transformative change. Through the second QDDR, USAID emphasizes and commits further to building on partnerships to end extreme poverty, prevent and mitigate conflict, counter violent extremism, and work with civil society, religious institutions, and indigenous peoples to promote resilient, open, and democratic societies.

I understand that additional USAID Forward reforms supported by the 2015 QDDR include building a culture of innovation, leadership, and learning, as well as strengthening the ability to assess risks rigorously and comprehensively to strengthen local systems. The QDDR helps institutionalize USAID's focus on innovation exemplified by the Global Development Lab and incorporate these principles into all programming through work on efficiencies in policy, planning, and learning across the entire program cycle. The 2015 QDDR also deepens USAID Forward reforms by bringing greater rigor to evaluations and harnessing data for decision-making.

I am pleased that the QDDR supports ongoing USAID Forward reforms that are vital to strengthening the Agency and enhancing the sustainable impact of its work. If confirmed as Administrator, I will work with the State Department leadership to fully implement the QDDR recommendations.

On operating in corrupt nations/safeguarding taxpayer dollars

Question. USAID conducts operations in many countries experiencing instability and conflict as well as countries characterized by corrupt practices. What are the agency's greatest challenges with regard to physical security in such countries?

Answer. I understand that USAID has presence in approximately 100 countries and that, in roughly 35 of those, the threat from terrorism is rated high or critical by the Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS). I understand that, to supplement the security provided by DS, USAID's Office of Security (SEC) provides a variety of security resources to USAID Missions. Primarily, these include operational security guidance, office building security, armored vehicles, emergency communications systems, and physical and technical security countermeasures.

My understanding is that USAID's greatest challenges regarding physical security are typically the lack of physical setback (distance) and blast pressure from improvised explosive devices. Diplomatic facilities are required to have 100 feet of setback, which is difficult to achieve as most diplomatic facilities are centrally located within congested capital cities. One of the frequently identified challenges is the host nation's willingness and capability to protect U.S. Government resources. I understand that SEC has developed and implemented several programs to mitigate threats to USAID staff and implementing partners through Partner Liaison Security Officers

(PLSO), the Personnel Recovery (PR) Program, and Non-Permissive Environment (NPE) training.

I also understand that the Agency has established an intra-agency working group to determine ways in which the Agency could operate more effectively in NPEs. USAID defines an NPE country as having significant barriers to operating effectively and safely due to one or more of the following factors: armed conflict to which the United States is a party or not a party; limited physical access due to distance, disaster, geography, or nonpresence; restricted political space due to repression of political activity and expression; and uncontrolled criminality including corruption. The challenges with regard to physical security that are faced by officers operating in NPEs vary, but can often include a high security threat negatively impacting their ability to partner, implement and monitor projects, as well as high stress on staff due to the workload and separation from family at unaccompanied posts.

My understanding is that, as a result of these challenges, the NPE working group evaluated USAID's presence across the globe and designated 18 countries as NPE. Officers transitioning to, and out of, these 18 countries will receive tailored training and support beginning this summer. Three 3-day courses will be offered to ensure officers serving in NPEs are better equipped to program, monitor and evaluate projects, as well as enhance attentiveness to staff care and security issues. I understand that additional training and field guides are planned for 2016, contingent upon additional resources.

Question. What steps can USAID take to ensure that U.S. taxpayer funds are spent as intended in countries where its staff may have difficulty directly monitoring its programs, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Libya?

Answer. USAID works in many places around the world where high-threat environments pose challenges to monitoring and the Agency has learned important lessons on how to address those challenges. My understanding is that USAID tailors implementation monitoring plans for activities implemented in high-threat or non-permissive environments like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Libya.

USAID has revised its official policy to address this topic. Specifically, its policy (ADS 202.3.6.4) on "Monitoring in High Threat Environments" holds USAID staff (Contracting Officer's Representatives) accountable for "seeing that the contractors and grantees they manage are performing adequately and accomplishing the tasks they set out to achieve." It further notes that "in high threat environments, USAID recognizes the need to keep mission personnel safe, as well as the need to visit project sites and meet with beneficiaries of development assistance." To ensure sufficient USAID oversight of activities, the policy offers alternative monitoring methods such as requiring photographic evidence; using third-party monitoring; utilizing other U.S. Government agencies; and applying technological approaches.

USAID has learned important lessons over the course of its engagement in Afghanistan, and has drawn on experiences in other challenging environments—including Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, and Colombia—to put in place strong oversight of, and accountability for, U.S. assistance funds. Although there are inherent risks in doing business in a country like Afghanistan, the Agency prioritizes the effective and accountable use of taxpayer dollars and does not assume that there is any level of acceptable fraud, waste, or abuse in our programs. This means that oversight must be a process of continual reexamination of ongoing efforts, and that there must be flexibility to adjust to new circumstances as they arise.

In Afghanistan, USAID has developed a multitiered monitoring approach to collect and verify data to inform decisionmaking. By collecting and triangulating information from multiple sources, the approach helps USAID staff mitigate inherent bias and weaknesses from any given source. Each Project Manager gathers and analyzes monitoring data from various sources, compares data to ensure confidence in the reporting, and use the results to make programmatic decisions. Tiered monitoring levels are:

- Tier 1: USG (USAID and other agencies);
- Tier 2: Implementing Partners;
- Tier 3: National Unity Government (internal M&E systems, observation) and other donors;
- Tier 4: Civil society, local organizations, and beneficiaries; and
- Tier 5: Independent Monitoring Contractors.

Regarding Tier 5, Independent Monitoring Contractors, the Agency is incorporating key lessons learned and themes from countries and programs around the world that have utilized third-party monitoring in environments in which chief of mission personnel face limitations on movement, including Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, and West Bank/Gaza. Independent monitoring, however, is not the sole source of monitoring data and it cannot take the place of USAID staff as project managers.

Instead, it is one tool that USAID can use to validate reporting data from other sources. Should USAID determine that its multitiered monitoring approach cannot provide adequate oversight over project activities, it will not hesitate to descope or terminate projects.

For Pakistan, my understanding is that USAID has procured a new monitoring and evaluation program. A core difference from Afghanistan is that Pakistan relies heavily upon USAID's traditional performance monitoring and oversight practices. While they maintain the capability to provide third-party monitors through their recently procurement M&E support platform, their primary efforts focus on providing strategic direction to the portfolio through studies and evaluations. The Pakistan model has components for monitoring, evaluation, and other analytic products such as targeted assessments, plus learning, capacity-building, and mapping services. Pakistan applies third party monitoring in the most difficult regions (FATA) and technically challenging projects (Infrastructure).

I understand that USAID manages its Libya programs through a combination of D.C.-based and field-based staff. Foreign Service National staff play a critical role in overseeing activities and fulfilling monitoring and evaluation requirements. In addition, USAID holds regular partners' workshops outside of Libya, in which implementing partners and interagency counterparts convene to review progress toward program objectives, suggest programming adjustments when necessary, and ensure overall program coordination.

Further, as noted in my response to a previous question, I understand an intra-agency working group has been convened to determine ways in which the Agency could operate more effectively in nonpermissive environments (NPEs). USAID defines an "NPE country" as having significant barriers to operating effectively and safely due to one or more of the following factors: armed conflict to which the U.S. is a party or not a party; limited physical access due to distance, disaster, geography, or nonpresence; restricted political space due to repression of political activity and expression; and uncontrolled criminality including corruption. The challenges with regard to monitoring that are faced by officers operating in NPEs vary, but can often include a high security threat negatively impacting their ability to conduct site visits.

My understanding is that, as a result of these challenges, the NPE working group evaluated USAID's presence across the globe and designated 18 countries as NPE. Officers transitioning to, and out of, these 18 countries will receive tailored training and support beginning this summer. Three 3-day courses will be offered to ensure officers serving in NPEs are better equipped to program, monitor and evaluate projects, as well as enhance attentiveness to staff care and security issues. Additional training and field guides are planned for 2016, contingent upon additional resources.

Question. How should USAID address corruption concerns in recipient countries?

Answer. Recognizing that corruption is a growing threat to the national security of the United States and its allies, President Obama announced the U.S. Global Anticorruption Agenda in 2014. For over two decades in numerous international fora, the United States has helped develop a strong global consensus that fighting corruption and supporting good governance are essential for the development of people, markets, and nations. It is now globally recognized—as confirmed by the 173 countries that have joined the United States as signatories of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption—that corruption undermines social cohesion, damages economic growth, distorts public services, weakens the rule of law, and erodes property rights.

If confirmed as Administrator, I will work with USAID leadership to strengthen our efforts to combat corruption and promote accountable, democratic governance, which will reduce conditions that allow conflict, organized crime, and other transnational threats to thrive. These efforts include adoption of rigorous fiduciary tools to ensure that funds are being well spent, such as the requirements set out by the Public Financial Management Risk Assessment Framework (PFMRAF). This framework helps ensure that USAID only works with partner governments that are equally committed to accountability and an empowered civil society. In addition, USAID continues to support long-term efforts to develop accountable and transparent institutions through anticorruption programs, which will ultimately contribute to broad-based, equitable growth.

I am pleased that the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review highlighted successful global initiatives, such as the Open Government Partnership and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and if confirmed, I look forward to taking full advantage of our development resources to promote resilient, democratic societies free from corruption.

On aid recipient nations

Question. How do we encourage countries to take the lead in their own development and move them toward graduation from U.S. foreign assistance programs?

Answer. A core aid effectiveness principle is that every country is responsible for defining and promoting its own social and economic development. A second principle is that external donors provide assistance that supports country ownership and aligns with a country's development priorities. These aid effectiveness principles were initially articulated in the 2005 Paris Declaration and have been reaffirmed by the United States Government and every other major bilateral and multilateral donor several times since then.

It is my understanding that these aid effectiveness principles are a key factor in shaping the way that USAID develops its country-level strategic plans and specific development projects. I understand that an important part of developing a Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) is to consult with the partner government and other local stakeholders about development priorities and desired results.

USAID's approach also emphasizes the importance of developing the capacity of local actors and local systems responsible for achieving and sustaining development outcomes. I understand that the USAID 2014 policy document Local Systems: A Framework for Supporting Sustained Development, emphasizes this approach for reinforcing local capabilities to achieve and sustain the developmental benefits desired by local populations.

A commitment to moving countries toward graduation means that USAID needs to focus on fewer, higher impact programs and be more selective about countries and regions to ensure better and more sustainable results. Ultimately, this approach aims to help prepare countries for graduation, and ensure that progress is sustained even as assistance is phased out. If confirmed as Administrator, I will continue to emphasize focus and selectivity and support for local systems that can take the lead in local development, and hasten the day when countries can graduate from foreign assistance.

Question. Would you plan to continue successful efforts that promote country ownership of their own development?

- How would you invest to increase the impact of successful efforts like the Local Solutions initiative?

Answer. USAID is committed to creating the conditions whereby countries can lead, resource, and sustain their own development, a commitment that I share and will prioritize, if confirmed. I agree that country ownership—mutually agreed-upon priorities, direct implementation through local systems as the default choice, and domestic resourcing by local governments, civil society, and the private sector—should be at the core of how USAID does business. My understanding is that the Agency is delivering on this commitment through the following organizational and programmatic reforms, which I will prioritize if confirmed:

- The Agency has put in place policies and a program planning process that enable it to project results over a longer timeframe and align its staffing and resources accordingly.
- USAID is ensuring that its country strategies and project designs prioritize and measure sustainability through country ownership, regardless of the sector. This increasingly entails broad local stakeholder involvement in the Agency's planning processes. It also entails analysis (e.g., political economy analysis) and action (i.e., improved governance) on the constraints to sustainability, all of which may not be fully in the Agency's manageable control.
- The Agency has put in place the appropriate controls to prudently invest directly in local governments, civil society, and bolstering the private sector (as relevant) to ensure that those stakeholders are accountable, effective, and can sustain results on their own.

USAID has introduced new guidance and methodologies for monitoring and evaluating project performance. USAID programs are closely and actively monitored in-country—including through the use of objective, third-party evaluations—to track results at every level (input, output, outcome) and to make room for midcourse correction when changes are needed. In addition, through the use of rigorous methodologies the Agency is able to evaluate the impact of its programs and the extent to which outcomes can be attributed to USAID interventions.

The Agency has almost doubled its Foreign Service staffing to increase its ability to engage directly with local governments, civil society, and private sector; negotiate policy reforms; leverage the local private sector; build capacity; innovate; and manage its assistance programs.

USAID is promoting the mobilization of local resources in countries where it works through tax modernization; coinvestments and guarantees with the local private sector; budding philanthropy; and alternative business models such as social enterprises and social impact investment.

Countering violent extremism

Question. The White House summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) devoted significant energy to community-based efforts to decrease radicalization and prevent youth and other groups from engaging in these movements. USAID is one of the only agencies with its own CVE strategy—dating back to 2011.

- What role do you see for USAID in the U.S. Government's increasing efforts to counter violent extremism?
- What kind of policy and resources would the agency need to be able to meaningfully contribute to a decrease in support for violent extremism among at-risk populations, particularly youth?

Answer. The White House Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Summit and the regional summits have highlighted the value of USAID's approach to addressing violent extremism as part of a whole-of-government response to terrorist threats worldwide. The 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) also highlights USAID's role in countering violent extremism. This affirmation and elevation is linked to the recognition both in the CVE Summit agendas and the QDDR that to be effective, the response to violent extremism cannot focus just on security. It also must focus on many of USAID's core areas of work: education, economic opportunity, good governance, as well as empowering national and local governments, youth, women, community secular and religious leaders, civil society, and the private sector.

It is my belief that the United States needs a broad array of tools in its toolkit to counter violent extremism effectively. A key USAID role is to focus on the issues that drive people to violent extremism and address these problems early by disrupting the momentum and overturning the rationale behind violent extremist recruitment while reducing local sympathies and support for extremists. These efforts complement our Nation's ongoing efforts aimed at reducing the terrorist threat to ourselves and our partners.

I understand that USAID's approach was laid out in its 2011 agency-level policy, "The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency." The policy is drawn from best practices from several years of CVE programming, as well as from research on the factors that drive violent extremist recruitment and how development assistance can help mitigate these root causes. At its core, USAID's CVE approach is founded upon an understanding of the concerns of vulnerable populations in areas most at risk to violent extremism, which then allows us to work with local community organizations and government officials to address those concerns.

USAID's policy is based upon more than 10 years of experience, which demonstrates that flexible resources are required to address violent extremism. USAID's approach has concentrated on youth empowerment, social and economic inclusion, media and messaging, improved local governance and in some cases reconciliation and conflict mitigation. Activities are tailored to meet the specific threat levels, political environments, and material needs of each community. USAID's CVE efforts often target distinct populations, for example at-risk young men, and increasingly recognize the unique role of women in promoting peace and security. I understand that an evaluation of USAID programs in Chad, Niger, Mali, and Kenya has helped affirm both the positive role development tools can play in efforts to address violent extremism and USAID's approach. It found that these programs have made a measurable impact among local populations by undermining support for violent extremist rhetoric and activities.

USAID provides funding for CVE programs out of its current budget streams, including Economic Support Funds (ESF), Transition Initiatives, Development Assistance (DA), and ESF/Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). In the FY 2016 budget request, the administration requested $390 million for the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF), which would create a specific funding stream for CVE programs to help build on existing efforts. As outlined in the administration's FY 2016 budget request, having additional funds that can be utilized in a flexible manner is critical to meaningfully address the local drivers of extremism and contribute to a decrease in support for violent extremism among at-risk populations, particularly youth. Reaching individuals and communities before they are radicalized is a key component in effectively reducing violent extremism. With the flexible funds that the administration requested, our assistance programs would be better positioned to program more effectively in these fragile communities.

Democracy, rights, governance

Question. As highlighted in the Department of State's 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, efforts to strengthen global capacity for good governance and credible elections underpin the potential impact of all other types of aid (transparent and open democracies can better respond to pandemics, economic challenges, food insecurity, gender inequality, and peacekeeping operations).

- As USAID Administrator, how would you improve support to vital democracy and governance programming? I share your commitment to promoting democracy, human rights and governance (DRG). I believe that it is central to development, and an integral part of the U.S. national security strategy.

Answer. USAID recently issued a new strategy on democracy, human rights, and governance, which codifies a more holistic approach to our programming in this sector by focusing on participation, inclusion, and accountability, while elevating human rights and integration of programming across economic and social sectors.

With respect to funding for these programs, I am pleased that the President's FY 2016 request includes a 20-percent increase in democracy, human rights, and governance for USAID. If confirmed, I will make this area one of my priorities, and I look forward to working with Congress to ensure appropriate resources are available for this critical area.

It is important for USAID to be innovative in supporting islands of reform—pockets of greater participation and accountability—in countries that have yet to break through in implanting democratic values, institutions, and processes. It is in these countries that our efforts in poverty reduction, human rights and democratic governance need to be further joined and more tightly integrated. Our programs in health, food security, climate change, economic growth all need to have components of citizen participation and government accountability.

If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID continues to develop the evidence base needed to demonstrate successes of these approaches. This includes improving measurements and evaluating impact as well as improving practices by conducting cross-sector roundtables; creating practice guides; and providing funding guidance to the field to enhance integrated programming.

Microfinance

Question. I understand that the E3 Bureau has been reorganized and the Office of Microenterprise and Private Enterprise (MPEP) at USAID has been renamed and refocused on investment.

- Is USAID still committed to supporting microfinance and microenterprise?
- Particularly, how will USAID continue to reach vulnerable groups, including women with support for microenterprise?

Congress has repeatedly encouraged USAID to ensure microfinance activities target the extreme poor.

With the reorganize of the MPEP office, who will be in charge of ensuring USAID continues to target those most in need?

If confirmed, as the Administrator, how would you prioritize microfinance within USAID?

Answer. Microenterprise development has become deeply integrated throughout USAID's programming and the Agency remains committed to support microenterprise. I understand that the realignment and renaming of the Microenterprise and Private Enterprise Promotion (MPEP) Office in the E3 Bureau is still underway and will have no impact on microenterprise programing.

I understand USAID has been pivotal in shaping the microfinance industry, particularly by transforming it into a market-driven model that attracts private capital, which has dramatically lessened reliance on donor support and has expanded access to financial services for millions of poor households in the developing world. It is a prime example of USAID partnering with the private sector to find market-driven solutions to end extreme poverty.

It is my understanding that while USAID once developed stand-alone microenterprise and microfinance projects, these efforts are now integrated into other USAID programs in order to advance key initiatives, such as Feed the Future, and PEPFAR. I understand that the majority of microenterprise activity takes place through USAID Mission-level obligations, and that during the past year, the vast majority of USAID Missions reported involvement in microenterprise development.

I understand microfinance is now integrated throughout the Agency as a means to achieve broader goals, including food security, value chain development, improved health and nutrition, access to housing, and enterprise development. If confirmed, I will ensure the reorganized office will continue these efforts.

The reorganized office must also provide thought leadership for the Agency on effectively engaging and leveraging private capital for development? enhance collaboration within USAID and among U.S. Government agencies and donor partners; and provide advisory support to USAID Missions and Bureaus. Congress will receive notification of this realignment before any changes are finalized in the Agency.

If confirmed, I will ensure the office will continue to fulfill all congressional requirements for Microenterprise programming and ensure programming targets the extreme poor. I will also ensure that USAID will have an office for microenterprise development with a Director, and the Office will continue to oversee an annual data call on microenterprise obligations, prepare the annual Microenterprise Results Report, and maintain a help desk to assist partners in the monitoring of their activities. For FY 2015, I understand that USAID's Microenterprise Results Report will showcase the continuing role of USAID's microenterprise and financial inclusion activities as pathways to ending extreme poverty, increasing food security, and building resilient households and communities.

Prevention

Question. Of any of our recent Administrators you would have some of the most valuable experience to share on how to ensure we are preventing conflicts in Africa and other parts of the world.

♦ How do you envision reforming USAID to better focus on conflict prevention?

Answer. As the 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) makes clear, development plays a critical role in preventing, mitigating, and responding to threats such as instability, armed conflict, and the spread of violent extremism in both stable and fragile countries. Effective conflict prevention and mitigation is essential to avoid the destructive potential of armed conflict to reverse development investments.

Since the September 11 attacks in 2001, USAID has worked to develop a sound capacity for assessing and addressing the causes and consequences of conflict. I understand that, as the Agency looks forward to delivering on the vision set by the 2015 National Security Strategy and the QDDR, it will be mindful about how this capacity will need to evolve and be strengthened to address new needs and priorities.

I understand that USAID is also seeking opportunities to strengthen funding for conflict and atrocity prevention through funding streams such as the Complex Crises Fund and the Transition Initiatives account. Doing so gives USAID the flexibility to respond quickly in crises and to devote resources where they can have the greatest impact.

Armed conflicts emerge in fragile states, where long-standing challenges to legitimacy and effectiveness weaken state institutions and the relationship of people with their governments. One of the primary challenges of conflict prevention and mitigation is a long-term one—tackling the sources of fragility in countries that are vulnerable to conflict. The approach for upstream conflict prevention works to build strong, legitimate institutions and political processes in fragile countries that are capable of managing internal tensions and transnational threats.

If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that USAID continues to work with counterpart agencies and departments to implement a framework for more effective engagement with fragile states. We will work to ensure that analysis of root causes is applied to decisionmaking processes, and provide guidance on how to achieve results in these challenging environments.

If confirmed, I will also support and promote the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. The New Deal, endorsed by the United States and nearly 40 countries and multilateral organizations in 2011, establishes peace and state-building goals and action plans, all of which sets a long-term approach to enable countries' transition out of conflict. The New Deal focuses on proven areas of need and impact, such as inclusive politics, enabling effective and equitable service delivery, reforming security and rule of law sectors, and combating corruption.

Question. Under your leadership, would the FY 2017 budget better reflect the importance of conflict prevention and include an increase in this important type of programming?

Answer. Effective conflict mitigation and prevention requires policy tailored to each country context, careful program implementation in close coordination with our partners on the ground, and appropriate resourcing. While the administration is still formulating the FY17 budget request, I understand that USAID requested modest increases in FY16 (over FY15 enacted) in some of its core funding accounts. Specifically, I understand that this includes slight increases in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) core funding including for the

Complex Crises Fund (CCF), Transition Initiatives (TI), as well as the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM), USAID's analytic shop that is shaping policy in this area. CCF, TI, and CMM initiatives will strengthen the response capacity of country missions to better address conflict, and the Agency anticipates additional funding (Economic Support Funds, Development Assistance funds, and other) will be directed toward programming that mitigates the causes and consequences of conflict.

Given the constrained budget environment, I will, if confirmed, recognize the need to be prudent and thoughtful in Agency budget requests. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to ensure appropriate resources are available for this critical area.

Resilience

Question. Ms. Smith, you have been a leader in the administration pushing for better responses to humanitarian emergencies, including during the food crises in the Horn and the Sahel. We greatly appreciate the previous Administrator and your support for building the resilience of communities to withstand shocks and stresses like drought and conflict.

- What will you do as AID Administrator to ensure the important work on building resilience continues and is institutionalized within USAID?

Answer. In 2012, USAID launched its first-ever policy and program guidance on "Building Resilience to Recurrent Crisis," which commits USAID to put more development focus on the most vulnerable, to build the adaptive capacity of these populations, and to improve the ability of communities, countries, and systems to manage and mitigate risk. I understand that USAID has expanded upon its initial focused resilience efforts in Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, and Burkina Faso and that similar efforts are now underway in Somalia, Uganda, Mali, and Nepal.

If confirmed, I will support the Agency's development of additional guidance later this year that reflects resilience challenges and opportunities in Asia. As part of the Country Development Cooperation Strategy planning processes, the Agency will work to embed resilience into overall assistance strategies for focus countries in Africa and Asia, as well as other countries where risk and vulnerability are prominent threats and undermine development gains. I also commit, if confirmed, to maintaining the Agency's long-term investments in resilience in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.

I understand that USAID's resilience investments are supported by bureaus and offices across the agency, including Africa Bureau; Asia Bureau; Bureau for Food Security; Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance; Bureau for Global Health; the General Counsel; and Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and the Environment. If confirmed, I commit to sustaining this whole-of-agency effort to build resilience to recurrent crises.

Tuberculosis

Question. As we saw last year with the Ebola crisis, a disease in a remote part of the world can quickly become a global problem. Drug resistant tuberculosis (TB) has been referred to as "Ebola with wings." Drug resistant TB requires a strong U.S. response since it is spread simply by coughing, there is no effective vaccine, and the costs of treating it are enormous. The latest case to grab the headlines, of a young woman from India with XDR TB (Extensively Drug Resistant TB) who traveled to the United States, has alarmed the public. USAID's role is to help countries improve the quality of care and respond to drug resistance, but, for several years in a row, the Obama administration has proposed a large cut in USAID's TB budget. The White House has stated that it is drafting an Action Plan on drug resistant TB.

- Will this plan be comprehensive at the scale needed to get ahead of drug resistant TB?
- Under your watch, will USAID's TB program get full support?

Answer. I understand that the White House action plan on drug-resistant tuberculosis (DR–TB) is currently under development and will build on the current USAID TB portfolio and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria TB grants. This will accelerate progress toward achieving the goals laid out in the USG TB Strategy and contribute to the global effort to end the pandemic.

I understand that USAID will be leading the international part of the plan. It will focus on the development and implementation of faster and better quality diagnostics and treatment regimens, prioritizing countries with the highest burdens of drug-resistant TB to maximize limited resources and end TB as a major cause of morbidity and mortality. The rollout of new drugs and regimens will be critical

to saving lives and preventing the development and transmission of deadly drug-resistant TB. I understand the next step in this fast-track process is a stakeholder forum to ensure input from a wide spectrum of partners.

I also understand that USAID focuses TB resources through an evidence-based exercise that determines the best approach for continuation of TB funds based on burden of TB, drug-resistant TB, TB coinfection with HIV, and other contributing factors.

♦ Under your watch, will USAID's TB program get full support?

Answer. While I cannot guarantee future funding levels, I will, if confirmed, help to ensure that USAID continues its efforts to curb the epidemic by working closely with partners such as the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria, ensuring high quality TB programs that appropriately treat and cure patients of the disease, and prevent the emergence and spread of drug-resistant strains. I would support USAID's leadership role in its coordination of U.S. Government global TB efforts, support for global initiatives, and support to countries to ensure the further development of quality programs to address TB and DR–TB using the best tools and treatments available.

ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE SMITH'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR ISAKSON

Question. As you know, Sen. Casey and I introduced the Global Food Security Act which would formally authorize Feed the Future.

♦ What are the challenges that Feed the Future has currently and how will you make it stronger in your role as USAID Administrator?

Answer. First, let me thank you for your support of the Feed the Future initiative and the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, which have together elevated food security on the global agenda, registered direct impact on reducing poverty and improving nutrition, and mobilized billions of dollars in direct assistance and private resources. In 2013 alone, Feed the Future reached more than 12.5 million children with nutrition interventions and helped more than 7 million farmers and food producers use new technologies and management practices on more than 4 million hectares of land.

Among the major challenge we face with respect to Feed the Future is closing the gender gap in agriculture. Women are the key players in the agricultural sector, but they own fewer assets and have less access to inputs (for example, seeds and fertilizer) and services. We have made considerable progress in this area, thanks in large part to USAID's development of a Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, a survey-based monitoring tool. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that FTF uses this data to identify the specific impediments to women's empowerment in agriculture (such as lack of control over productive assets or access to finance), to develop and implement new programs in our focus countries that better integrate women farmers into agricultural value chains, and give them greater access to credit, inputs, and services.

Question. Part of what we are trying to accomplish with the Global Food Security Act is to make the strategy and processes behind Feed the Future more transparent, so that we can more fully understand the effectiveness of our government's efforts.

♦ In the event that you are confirmed before the passage and enactment of the bill, will you commit to making the strategy and process for Feed the Future more transparent?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will commit to build upon the accountability measures in place to make Feed the Future as transparent as possible. As you may know, this year FTF is conducting population-based surveys of 17 of its 19 focus countries, which will document our progress in poverty and child stunting reduction, as well as other high-level indicators across our geographic implementation zones. In addition, I understand that USAID is conducting more than 15 independent impact evaluations that help show whether positive changes—such as increases in farmer income or improvements in children's nutritional status—are caused specifically by U.S. assistance. If confirmed, I will ensure the reports and data sets from these evaluations are made publicly available, along with financial and annual country performance data. If confirmed, I will ensure that these data sets are provided to the Congress and made public. In addition, it is my understanding that in 2016, the Agency will conduct an independent external evaluation of FTF that will review all aspects of the initiative. If confirmed, I commit to making the results of

this evaluation public and to instituting any necessary course corrections to maximize the impact of this critically important work.

ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE SMITH'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PAUL

Question. In a recent GAO report on foreign aid (GAO–15–377), GAO recommended that USAID should strengthen accountability for government-to-government (G2G) assistance. If confirmed, what additional steps would you take as USAID Administrator to improve the accountability on this form of aid?

Answer. It is my understanding that USAID has addressed the concerns raised in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report regarding its government-to-government (G2G) assistance. I also understand that the GAO report commended USAID for completing detailed risk assessments and for using audits to further identify areas in which a partner country's public financial management practices could be strengthened to further ensure capacity to manage USAID funds.

If confirmed, I will ensure that the Agency continues its efforts to build upon the GAO report and its recommendations to strengthen accountability for G2G assistance. My understanding is that these efforts are focused on fully supporting a more efficient and effective enabling environment for USAID's overall Local Solutions initiative, including for G2G assistance, and consist of:

- Strengthening and simplifying policies, procedures, templates, and tools to improve accountability;
- Improving risk management techniques, procedures and tools for designing, implementing and monitoring G2G activities;
- Providing the needed support and resources to USAID staff in order to strengthen G2G capacity-building, accountability, and transparency;
- Continuing to improve implementation, timeliness and monitoring of annual financial audits of G2G funds in collaboration with USAID's Office of Inspector General and GAO; and
- Enhancing and coordinating development partner collaboration and harmonization.

Question. The U.S. taxpayers have given billions and billions of dollars to support aid work in Afghanistan over the last decade, yet there have been questions on both the accountability and the effectiveness of this money. For example, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) recently has called on USAID to respond to allegations that progress data related to Afghan education system was falsified.

- If confirmed, what are your top three priorities for improving the accountability and effectiveness for any aid to Afghanistan?

Answer. Regarding SIGAR's Letter of Inquiry related to data on education, I understand that USAID's formal response is due by June 30 and USAID will share its response with the committee when submitted.

If confirmed as Administrator, my top three priorities for enhancing accountability and aid effectiveness in Afghanistan will be: (1) working to ensure full implementation of the accountability and sustainability measures already put in place for assistance to Afghanistan; (2) working to ensure there is a regular review of our existing accountability and sustainability policies in order to regularly assess current policies and procedures, develop any new ones that may be necessary, implement any new ones that are necessary, and communicate those new policies and procedures internally in the agency and externally to Congress and others; and (3) working to ensure that USAID's culture empowers staff to alert leadership to any significant issues disclosed by the Agency's monitoring of projects in Afghanistan, or anywhere.

If confirmed, I will support USAID staff to take action when they identify projects in need of such measures.

USAID has learned important lessons over the course of its engagement in Afghanistan, and has drawn on experiences in other challenging environments—including Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, and Colombia—to put in place strong oversight of, and accountability for, U.S. assistance funds. Although there are inherent risks in doing business in a country like Afghanistan, the Agency prioritizes the effective and accountable use of taxpayer dollars and does not assume that there is any level of acceptable fraud, waste, or abuse in our programs. This means that oversight must be a process of continual reexamination of ongoing efforts, and that there must be flexibility to adjust to new circumstances as they arise.

Operationally, USAID has adjusted its implementation model to improve sustainability and meet the challenges presented by changes on the ground in Afghanistan, as follows:

- Developing a multitiered monitoring strategy to address reduced mobility and decreased field staff that, along with other monitoring and evaluation efforts, will continue to ensure appropriate oversight of projects;
- Transforming USAID's approach in Afghanistan to one of mutual accountability that incentivizes Afghan reforms by conditioning an increasing percentage of our assistance to the government on progress on reforms and that continues to increase government involvement and ownership of development needs; and
- Focusing on long-term sustainability through implementing three key principles of: (1) increasing Afghan ownership and capacity; (2) contributing to community stability and public confidence in the Government of Afghanistan; and (3) implementing effective and cost-efficient programming.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2015

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

Glyn Townsend Davies, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand
William A. Heidt, of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia
Jennifer Zimdahl Galt, of Colorado, to be Ambassador to Mongolia
Atul Keshap, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and to the Republic of Maldives
Alaina B. Teplitz of Illinois, to be Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal
David Hale, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
Sheila Gwaltney, of California, to be Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Cory Gardner, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch, Gardner [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Murphy, and Kaine.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CORY GARDNER, U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO

Senator GARDNER. This hearing will come to order.

Let me welcome you all to today's full Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on nominations.

I want to thank Senator Cardin for working with this date and the witnesses today supporting this important hearing today.

We will have two panels today, the first on nominees from East Asia and Pacific region, and then at 11 a.m., Senator Risch will take over for a second panel of nominees from the South and Central Asia region.

I first want to welcome all the family members who are here today for this distinguished panel this morning.

In the first panel of witnesses, we will hear from three nominees: Mr. William Heidt to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia; Mr. Glyn Davies to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand; and Ms. Jennifer Galt to be Ambassador to Mongolia.

I had an opportunity to meet personally with all of these well-qualified nominees, and I want to warmly welcome them and their families to this hearing today.

Thailand is the longest standing U.S. ally in Asia. The Kingdom of Siam and the United States concluded a Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1833 when our Nation was still in its infancy.

In 1954, modern day Thailand and the United States became military allies under the Treaty of Manila, and in 2003, the United States designated Thailand as a major non-NATO ally.

Despite the historically tumultuous domestic politics in Thailand, the commercial and military relationship between our nations has blossomed. The United States is Thailand's third-largest bilateral trade partner. Our militaries have averaged 40 joint exercises per year. We cooperate actively on issues as wide-ranging as humanitarian disaster assistance to law enforcement to disease control.

However, the 2014 military coup in Thailand threatens to set back the positive trajectory of our relationship unless Bangkok moves decisively to restore democracy.

So I look forward to hearing from Mr. Davies today on how we can maintain and grow our strong relationship while exerting efforts to see Thailand successfully move back to the democratic path.

Cambodia represents an opportunity for the United States to build another long-standing partnership in Southeast Asia. After the unparalleled brutality of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge regime and the civil war that ensued in the 1970s and the 1980s, Cambodia seems to have finally found a semblance of stability and a democratic footing.

The July 2013 elections and the 2014 power-sharing agreement between the ruling Cambodian People's Party and the main opposition groups, unified as the Cambodian National Rescue Party, are hopeful steps forward, although progress remains fragile.

Cambodia is the poorest country in Southeast Asia with GDP at about $2,600 per person, and the country is heavily dependent on overseas development assistance, including from the United States.

So I look forward to hearing from Mr. Heidt on moving the democratic process forward, but also assisting Cambodia with its economic and development challenges.

Next but certainly not least, we will move to East Asia and Mongolia. Sandwiched between two world powers, Russia and China, Mongolia has major strategic importance for the United States. Since transitioning from socialism to democracy in 1992, Mongolia has held six direct Presidential elections and six direct parliamentary elections.

The country possesses vast mineral wealth, although corruption and economic development remain serious issues in that country.

Despite the difficult geopolitical environment, Mongolia has been a strong ally to the United States. Mongolian troops were part of the coalition during the Iraq war and continue to serve alongside U.S. troops in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

So I look forward to hearing from Ms. Galt on how we can strengthen this critical partnership between our nations.

And now I will turn it over to Senator Cardin for this hearing.

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

Senator CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, first of all, thank you for holding this hearing so that we can consider these three nominees.

I want to thank all three of them, as you already have, and their families. This is an incredible service to our country that you are willing to perform in a place far away from where we are today. So we know it is a sacrifice. We know your families are making those sacrifices, and we thank you for your willingness to represent the United States in these foreign policy posts that are strategically important to U.S. security and economic interests.

Glyn Davies is well known to many members of this committee for his recent service as the Special Representative for North Korea Policy, but he has also served as U.S. Representative to the IAEA and senior positions in the East Asia Bureau and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. This experience will provide an important background for his service in Thailand, if confirmed, particularly given recent events there.

William Heidt is currently the executive assistant to the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment at the Department of State, a position which will be invaluable given the economic and development opportunities we have in Cambodia. Mr. Heidt also has held a senior post in Warsaw, at the U.N., Indonesia, and in Cambodia. So he brings a great deal of experience to this position.

And finally, Jennifer Galt, who currently serves as our counsel general in China. She has been a senior advisor in the Department of Public Affairs and also served NATO, as well as previous posts in China and India.

So, Mr. Chairman, we are very fortunate to have three career diplomats before us who have devoted their professional life to serve our country. And I thank them again for their willingness to serve in three important posts in the United States foreign policy.

You already mentioned Thailand is one of our longest friendships, 180 years of cooperation in public health, trade, in security and education. But as you also pointed out, the recent coups have presented tremendous challenges to Thailand and its relationship with the United States. The restoration of democratic governance must be our top priority. And I must tell you it is taking too long, and we must push for early elections so that we can move forward with this democratic country.

I also want to point out that it is a Tier 3 country in our Trafficking In Persons Report and that is unacceptable. So we need to continue to push Thailand to do the right thing on behalf of ending modern day slavery.

In Cambodia, they are on a Tier 2 Watch List for trafficking. That is unacceptable, and they will need our help again in dealing with this. As you pointed out, it is the poorest country in the region and has huge challenge, but lots of potential, potential in economics. The environmental issues are challenging, but there is a great prospect there. And certainly expanding their democratic institutions will present a full array of opportunities for the U.S. mission in Cambodia.

And Mongolia. It is one of the youngest democracies. It has been supportive of our military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and is a country that is the newest member of the OSCE, an organization where I have devoted a good deal of my attention.

So I think all three of the posts offer important strategic partnerships with the United States and a great opportunity, but also challenge and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.

Senator GARDNER. Mr. Glyn Davies is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and currently serves as senior advisor in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs at the Department of State.

Previously, Mr. Davies served as Special Representative for North Korea Policy; Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations Office in Vienna, Austria; Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Deputy Assistant Secretary, East Asia and Pacific Affairs Bureau; Senior Advisor, Foreign Service Institute Leadership Management School; Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs; Political Director for the U.S. Presidency of the G8 with rank of Ambassador; and Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in London, United Kingdom.

Mr. Davies earned an M.S. at the National War College in 1995 and a B.S. from Georgetown University in 1979. He has been the recipient of numerous Senior Foreign Service performance and honor awards, fluent in French.

Welcome, Mr. Davies and your family. And we look forward to hearing your comments this morning.

STATEMENT OF HON. GLYN TOWNSEND DAVIES, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND

Ambassador DAVIES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. Thank you for the chance to appear before you today.

I am honored to be President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand. I thank both the President and Secretary of State Kerry for their support.

I also thank all members of the committee for this opportunity to speak to my qualifications. Throughout my career, I have worked to develop the experience to lead my colleagues in strengthening America's security and advancing its prosperity. If confirmed, serving as chief of mission in Bangkok would draw on all of my 36 years as a Foreign Service officer.

My family is my greatest strength. I would like to express my love and gratitude to my wife, Jackie; daughters, Ashley and Teddie; son-in-law, Chapin; and granddaughters, Josie and Cybbie. Josie and Cybbie and my wife and daughter are sitting behind me today.

Thailand and the United States share a long and a deep friendship. Thailand is, as you said, our oldest treaty ally in Asia. We work together to advance regional security, expand trade, improve public health, assist refugees, counter human trafficking, illegal narcotics, wildlife trafficking, and protect the environment. Few bilateral relationships are as broad and beneficial.

Over the past decade, Thailand's internal political divide has polarized Thai society. We do not take sides in this, but we do stress our strong support for democratic principles and our commitment to our historic friendship with the Thai people.

Since the coup, the United States has publicly and privately made clear our concerns about the disruption of Thailand's democratic traditions and the limits placed on civil liberties, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Democracy can only emerge when the Thai people freely and fairly elect their own government. As required by law, the United States suspended certain assistance until a democratically elected civilian government takes office. When that occurs, our relationship can return to its fullest capacity.

Our call for restoring democracy does not advocate for a specific constitutional blueprint. That is for Thailand's people to decide through an inclusive political process. If confirmed, I will support their democratic aspirations.

Mindful of our long-term strategic interests, we remain committed to our security alliance. Thai and U.S. troops fought side by side in both Vietnam and Korea, and together we hold many bilateral and multilateral exercises, including Asia's largest, Cobra Gold. These allow us to increase coordination and cooperation to respond to humanitarian and natural disasters. We collaborate extensively on public health issues, including research on a vaccine for HIV/AIDS.

The United States is Thailand's third-largest trading partner. Our companies are major investors there. Our Embassy in Bangkok, supported by our consulate general in Chiang Mai, is a regional hub for the U.S. Government and one of our largest missions in the world.

Our people-to-people ties are strong. Thousands of Thai and American students study in each other's countries. The Peace Corps has been in Thailand for over 50 years. Americans have long admired and respected Thailand's traditions and culture. His Majesty King Bhumibol has led his people with compassion for close to 70 years and has worked tirelessly for their advancement.

Thailand is a founding member and leading voice in all of the region's multilateral institutions. We work with Thailand and through those bodies to advance regional growth and security.

We also work with government and civil society organizations to address human trafficking. If confirmed, I will encourage Thailand to take robust action to combat it.

Thailand has been a key partner on humanitarian issues, sheltering thousands of Burmese refugees, as well as the Rohingya and vulnerable populations from some 50 nationalities. Thailand hosted a regional conference in May on the migrant crisis in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal. We stress the need to save lives and treat vulnerable migrants humanely. We also partner with Thailand to respond to natural disasters such as the earthquakes in Nepal earlier this year.

We care deeply about Thailand and about its people. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee to advance our broad range of interests in that country. While we will continue to do much with Thailand, we look forward to its return to democracy

so our joint efforts can reach their fullest potential. We believe the Kingdom of Thailand can find reconciliation, establish democracy, and fulfill its historic destiny as a great and free nation.

Thank you again for considering my nomination, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Davies follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GLYN TOWNSEND DAVIES

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand. I thank the President for the confidence he has placed in me by putting me forward to the Senate for consideration, and thank Secretary of State Kerry for his strong support. I am grateful to all the members of the committee for this chance to speak to my qualifications and intentions.

I joined the Foreign Service in 1980, and have sought throughout my career to develop the experience and skills to lead interagency colleagues in strengthening our country's security and advancing our prosperity. If confirmed, serving as Chief of Mission in Bangkok would be the culmination of that 36-year effort.

My family is my greatest strength. I would like to express my love and gratitude to my wife, Jackie, daughters Ashley and Teddie, son-in-law, Chapin, and granddaughters, Josie and Cybbie.

Thailand and the United States share a long and enduring friendship. Thailand is one of our oldest treaty allies in Asia. We collaborate on a remarkably wide range of issues, including advancing regional security, expanding trade and investment, enhancing public health, assisting refugees and displaced persons, countering illegal narcotics and wildlife trafficking, fighting transnational crime, and protecting the environment. Despite the limitations we have had to impose on aspects of our engagement after Thailand's May 2014 military coup, few bilateral relationships are as broad and yield as many benefits to both countries.

Over the past decade, Thailand's internal political divide has dramatically deepened, polarizing not just the political class but society as a whole. We have not taken sides in this debate, but have stressed our unwavering support for democratic principles and our commitment to our historic friendship with the Thai people.

Since the coup, the United States has consistently underscored both publicly and privately our concerns about the disruption of Thailand's democratic traditions and accompanying restrictions on civil liberties, including freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. We maintain that democracy can only emerge when the Thai people freely and fairly elect their own representatives and leaders. As required by law, the United States has suspended certain assistance until a democratically elected civilian government takes office. When that occurs, our bilateral relationship can return to its fullest capacity.

Our call for the restoration of civilian government, a return to democracy, and full respect for human rights, including freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly, does not mean we advocate for a specific constitutional or political blueprint. Those are questions for the Thai people to decide through an inclusive political process that allows for an open and robust debate about the country's political future. If confirmed, I will continue to support the democratic aspirations of the Thai people.

Mindful of our long-term strategic interests, we nonetheless remain committed to maintaining our security alliance. Thai and U.S. troops fought side by side during the Vietnam and Korean wars, and together we hold many bilateral and multilateral exercises, engagements, and exchanges, including Asia's largest multilateral military gathering, Cobra Gold. These interactions provide invaluable opportunities to increase coordination and cooperation, including on providing humanitarian assistance and responding to natural disasters.

The United States is Thailand's third-largest trading partner, and American companies are major investors in Thailand. Our Embassy in Bangkok, supported by our consulate general in Chiang Mai, is a regional hub for the U.S. Government and remains one of our largest missions in the world. We collaborate extensively on public health issues, a cornerstone of our bilateral cooperation, including promising research on a possible vaccine for HIV/AIDS.

Our people-to-people ties are strong and growing. Educational linkages help thousands of Thai and American students study in each other's countries. The Peace Corps has deployed volunteers across Thailand for over 50 years. The American people have long admired and respected Thailand's rich traditions and culture. His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the only monarch ever born in the United

States, has led his people with compassion and integrity for almost 70 years and has been a tireless advocate for the advancement of the Thai people.

Thailand is a founding member and a leading voice in all of the region's multilateral institutions, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the East Asia Summit, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, and the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI). The United States will continue to work with Thailand and through the region's institutions to further our mutual goals of stimulating trade and economic growth and promoting regional security.

We work with the Thai Government to strengthen its efforts to address the country's human trafficking problem. We also support civil society organizations that help identify and protect victims and promote the rights of migrant workers. If confirmed, I will encourage Thailand to take robust action to combat human trafficking.

For many years, Thailand has been an important partner on humanitarian issues. It hosted hundreds of thousands of refugees after the Vietnam war. Today, Thailand shelters some 110,000 Burmese refugees and asylum seekers in nine refugee camps along the Thailand-Burma border, as well as the Rohingya and vulnerable populations from some 50 nationalities. Thailand hosted a regional conference in May on the migrant crisis in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal. We continue to work closely with Thailand and other affected countries to address the sensitive issue of irregular migration with a priority on saving lives and urging humane treatment of vulnerable migrants. We also work closely with the Thai to respond to natural disasters, including the devastating 2008 cyclone in Burma and the earthquakes in Nepal earlier this year.

We care deeply about our bilateral relationship and about the people of Thailand. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee to advance our broad range of interests in Thailand. While we will continue to do much together, we look forward to its return to democracy so that our joint efforts can reach their fullest potential. We believe the Kingdom of Thailand can find reconciliation, establish democracy, and fulfill its historic destiny as a great and free nation.

Thank you again for considering my nomination. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Davies.

Mr. Heidt is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and currently serves as Executive Assistant, Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment in the Department of State. Previously, Mr. Heidt served the Department of State as Deputy Chief of Mission in the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw, Poland; Counselor for Economic and Social Affairs, U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York; economic counselor, U.S. Embassy, Jakarta, Indonesia; Special Assistant, Office of the Under Secretary for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs; also as finance and development officer, Embassy Jakarta in Indonesia; and economic and commercial officer, U.S. Embassy Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Mr. Heidt earned a B.A. at Pennsylvania State University in 1984 and an M.A. at George Washington University in 1986. His awards include Department of State Senior Foreign Service performance, superior honor, and meritorious honor, as well as joint Department of State and Department of Labor award for excellence in labor diplomacy. He speaks fluent Cambodian, as well as Polish, Indonesian, and German.

Welcome, Mr. Heidt, to you, your family and friends.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM A. HEIDT, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

Mr. HEIDT. Thank you very much, Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Cardin, and Senator Kaine.

It is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary

Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee to advance the United States broad range of interests in a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous Cambodia.

I am accompanied today by my wife, Sotie, and son, Allen, who are sitting right behind me to my right, and who have served overseas tours with me in hot cities and cold ones too, ranging from Cambodia, Indonesia, Poland, and New York City.

I have spent the bulk of my 28-year Foreign Service career working on the interlinked challenges of promoting America's prosperity overseas and helping developing countries enact the policies and build the institutions they need to improve living standards, protect the environment, and compete in a global economy.

One of my most memorable Foreign Service tours was in Phnom Penh from 1997 to 1999 where I worked on a number of the most critical issues facing the country, including illegal logging, food security, and building a sustainable garment industry with decent and dignified conditions of work.

Cambodia has changed dramatically since that time. GDP growth has exceeded 7 percent annually for the past decade, and as a result, the national poverty rate has fallen from well over 50 percent in 2000 to 17 percent in 2012. Life expectancy has increased substantially as well. If confirmed, I plan to make growing the trade and investment relationship between the United States and Cambodia a top priority.

Cambodia's performance on human rights and democracy issues has been more uneven. The most recent national elections in 2013 drew unprecedented public involvement but were also marred by allegations of fraud. After a yearlong post-election standoff, the ruling party and opposition reached agreements on power-sharing in the National Assembly and reforming the country's election law and National Election Committee.

But despite these negotiated agreements, concerns remain about provisions that appear to limit the activities of NGOs in the democracy area and that open the door for increased influence by the Cambodian military and other government officials in election campaigns. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to work with the government, opposition, and civil society to strengthen Cambodia's democratic institutions.

The building of a vibrant, homegrown civil society is one of Cambodia's most impressive achievements since the 1993 Paris Peace Accords, but NGOs in Cambodia today face deep uncertainty in the form of a draft law on associations and nongovernmental organizations that is soon to be considered in the National Assembly. Provisions in this draft law would appear to limit the activities NGOs may engage in and create burdensome registration and reporting requirements for them. The United States has spoken about these concerns and the lack of public consultations to date on the law. If confirmed, I will work closely with civil society and the government to encourage the creation of stable and supportive conditions for a vibrant civil society in Cambodia.

Cambodia has also made progress in recent years on several crucial humanitarian and justice issues. With assistance from the United States Government and a number of NGOs, Cambodia has

made great strides in reducing child sex trafficking, one of the saddest and most pernicious social problems the country has faced. The State Department and USAID continue to work with Cambodia to reduce labor trafficking, which remains a significant problem in Cambodia and its neighbors.

The United States supports the work of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal to help the people of Cambodia find justice and hold accountable those most responsible for the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge. If confirmed, I will work with fellow tribunal supporters and the Cambodian Government to ensure that the tribunal completes its critical mission.

The United States supports Cambodia's reemergence on the world diplomatic stage and has encouraged it to play an independent, principled role in ASEAN and other regional institutions. We have supported Cambodia's integration into the ASEAN Economic Community and collaborated with it in the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, or YSEALI. Through YSEALI, the United States is engaging young Southeast Asians and encouraging them to view their country's goals and challenges in a regional context. The program has been enormously popular in Cambodia, and if confirmed, I will make youth engagement a top priority.

Mr. Chairman, it is fitting to conclude with a few words about Cambodia's young people. It is one of the youngest nations in Southeast Asia, with 70 percent of the population under the age of 30. Young Cambodians today are very favorably disposed toward the United States. Like young people everywhere, they want good jobs, a chance to engage in the political and social life of their country, and the opportunity to build a family. They are one of the main reasons I am optimistic about the country's future today.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before the committee today. I would, of course, be happy to answer any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Heidt follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF WILLIAM A. HEIDT

Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, it is an honor and privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee to advance the United States broad range of interests in a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous Cambodia.

I am accompanied today by my wife, Sotie, and son, Allen, who have served overseas tours with me in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Poland.

I have spent the bulk of my 28-year Foreign Service career working on the interlinked challenges of promoting America's prosperity around the world and helping developing countries enact the policies and build the institutions they need to, improve living standards for all, protect the environment, and compete in the global economy.

One of my most memorable Foreign Service tours was in Phnom Penh, from 1997–99, where I worked on some of the most critical issues facing Cambodia—controlling rampant illegal logging, feeding the 10-percent of the country who went hungry every dry season, and helping the Cambodian Government build a sustainable garment industry with decent and dignified conditions of work. I am proud that in 2000, after my return from Phnom Penh, I was awarded the joint Department of State—Department of Labor award for labor diplomacy for my work strengthening workers' rights in Cambodia's garment sector.

Cambodia has changed significantly since that time. Cambodia's GDP has grown more than 7 percent annually for the past decade on the strength of increased agri-

cultural production, a booming tourism industry, investment in real estate and construction, and growth in garment exports. As a result, the poverty rate fell from well over 50 percent in 2000 to just over 17 percent in 2012, and is surely lower today. Life expectancy has increased from 67 years in 2006 to 71.2 years in 2013, due to improved food security and health care. If confirmed, I plan to make growing the trade and investment relationship between the U.S. and Cambodia a priority. I also hope to advance our cooperation on health issues, which make a direct impact on the Cambodian people.

Cambodia's performance on human rights and democracy issues has been more uneven than its economic progress. The most recent national elections in 2013 drew unprecedented public involvement and were the most peaceful in Cambodian history but were also marred by allegations of fraud. After a year-long, post-election standoff, the ruling party and opposition reached an agreements on power sharing in the National Assembly and to reform the country's election law as well as Cambodia's National Election Committee, which oversees elections.

But despite these negotiated agreements, concerns remain, including with regard to provisions that appear to limit the activities of nongovernmental organizations in the democracy area and open the door for increased influence by the Cambodian military and other government officials in election campaigns. The United States has a long history of supporting Cambodia's democratic development through foreign assistance funding and people-to-people contacts. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to work with the government, opposition, and civil society to strengthen Cambodia's democratic institutions and raise the level of public confidence in them. Conducting free and fair communal elections in 2017, and national elections in 2018, will be a key test for the Government.

The building of a vibrant, home grown civil society is one of Cambodia's most impressive achievements since the 1993 Paris Peace Accords ended years of conflict. Cambodian and international NGOs deliver crucial social services, educate the public on issues ranging from health to information technology, build people-to-people contacts with countries around the world, and develop the skills of thousands of Cambodian workers. It is no exaggeration to say that NGOs are one of Cambodia's finest faces to the world.

But NGOs in Cambodia today face deep uncertainty in the form of a draft Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations that is soon to be considered in the National Assembly. Provisions in this draft law would appear to limit, in vague terms, the activities NGOs may engage in, and create burdensome registration and reporting requirements for NGOs. The United States has spoken about these concerns, the lack of public consultations to date on the law, and the law's overall intent. If confirmed, I will work closely with civil society and the Government to encourage the creation of stable, and supportive conditions for a vibrant civil society in Cambodia.

Cambodia has also made progress in recent years on several crucial humanitarian and justice issues. With assistance from the U.S. Government and a number of NGOs, Cambodia has made great strides in reducing child sex trafficking—one of saddest, and most pernicious social problems the country has faced. The State Department and USAID continue to work with Cambodia to reduce labor trafficking, which remains a significant problem in both Cambodia and neighboring countries. The United States supports the work of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal to help the people of Cambodia find justice and hold accountable those most responsible for the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge. We will continue to work with fellow Tribunal supporters and the Cambodian Government to ensure the Tribunal completes its critical mission. And as one of the few Asian countries that is party to the Refugee Convention, Cambodia has made important progress in developing procedures to identify and protect refugees. At the same time, if confirmed, I will strongly urge it to apply those protections to people seeking asylum on its territory, including the Montagnards from Vietnam.

Cambodia is playing an increasingly active role in the Southeast Asia region. The United States supports Cambodia's reemergence on the world diplomatic stage, and has encouraged it to play an independent, principled role in ASEAN and other regional institutions. We have supported Cambodia's integration into the ASEAN Economic Community and collaborated with Cambodia in the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative or YSEALI. Through YSEALI, the United States is engaging with the 65 percent of Southeast Asians under the age of 35 and encouraging them to view their countries' goals and challenges in a regional context. The program has been enormously popular in Cambodia, and if confirmed, I will make youth engagement a priority.

Mr. Chairman, it is fitting to conclude my testimony with a few words about Cambodia's young people. Cambodia is one of youngest nations in Southeast Asia with

70 percent of the population under 35. Most Cambodians were not even born during the brutal Khmer Rouge period and years of civil war, events that continue to define our perceptions of Cambodia. Young Cambodians today are very favorably disposed toward the United States, and like young people everywhere, want good jobs, a chance to engage in the political and social life of their country, and the opportunity to build a family. They are one of the main reasons I am optimistic about the country's future.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee might have.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Heidt.

And finally, let me extend a special welcome to a fellow Coloradan, Ms. Jennifer Zimdahl Galt, our nominee for Mongolia. Ms. Galt is a proud graduate of Colorado College in Colorado Springs, and her father is a professor emeritus at my alma mater of Colorado State University.

Ms. Galt is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, currently serves as principal officer at the U.S. consulate general in Guangzhou, China, a position she has held since 2012.

Previously, Ms. Galt served in the Department of State as Senior Advisor in the Bureau of Public Affairs from 2011 to 2012; Public Affairs Advisor at the U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Brussels, Belgium; and Deputy Director, Office of Public Diplomacy, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs from 2008 to 2010. She also served as public affairs officer, U.S. consulate general, Shanghai in China; assistant cultural affairs officer, U.S. Embassy in Beijing; assistant public affairs officer, U.S. consulate in Mumbai; and information officer, American Institute in Taiwan.

Ms. Galt earned a bachelors of the arts, as I mentioned, from Colorado College; M.A. from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies; and an M.S. from the National Defense University.

She has won numerous awards from both the Department of State and earlier from the United States Information Agency. She speaks Mandarin Chinese, French, Italian, Spanish, and Serbo-Croatian.

Welcome, Ms. Galt. I look forward to your comments today.

STATEMENT OF JENNIFER ZIMDAHL GALT, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO MONGOLIA

Ms. GALT. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, Senator Kaine, it is an honor to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to Mongolia.

I am deeply grateful for the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me, and if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee to build on the already strong ties between the United States and Mongolia.

My career in the Foreign Service spans 27 years, most of them spent in Asia. I joined the Foreign Service out of a commitment to serve my country and have consistently sought assignments where I felt I could make a difference and contribute to advancing an important relationship.

The love and support of my family has sustained me throughout. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my husband, Fritz, and my children, Phoebe and Dylan, who have traveled the globe with me, and to my father, Bob Zimdahl, and my brothers, Randy, Bob, and Tom. I am enormously proud that my daughter Phoebe, a rising college junior, is here with me today.

This is an exciting year for United States-Mongolia relations, as we mark the 25th anniversary of Mongolia's decision for democracy, a milestone that the Senate recognized in its June 1 resolution. Our partnership has grown stronger since then-Secretary Baker first visited the newly democratic Mongolia in 1990. As the only former Soviet satellite in East Asia to choose democracy, Mongolia is an important model in the region and, as the saying goes, punches above its weight on issues of strategic interest to the United States, including coalition military efforts, peacekeeping, and the promotion of democratic principles and values. Our relationship is one of shared interests and is characterized by enormous potential.

There are many opportunities for the United States to deepen our partnership with Mongolia. I would like to highlight a few where I would focus my attention, should I be confirmed as Ambassador.

Mongolia and the United States share a common interest in promoting peace and stability. Mongolia is a stalwart partner in Afghanistan and deploys capable peacekeepers wherever they are needed, including currently in Sudan and South Sudan. Just last week, the United States and Mongolia conducted our yearly multinational peacekeeping exercise, Khaan Quest. Mongolia demonstrates leadership in international fora to promote democracy and human rights, such as the Freedom Online Coalition and the Community of Democracies. Mongolia is a model of democracy and has demonstrated a willingness to mentor others in the region, offering training and exchanges with leaders from Burma to Kyrgyzstan. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with Mongolian officials to advance our shared interests in these critical areas.

Recent high-level engagement in Mongolia has demonstrated our commitment to enhancing commercial opportunities for U.S. companies. In the last 6 months, we resumed trade and investment framework agreement talks, launched a new economic policy dialogue, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation began the process of developing a second compact with Mongolia. Each of these initiatives is an opportunity to expand economic growth, model responsible business conduct, promote trade and investment, and create opportunities for U.S. companies. The Mongolian Government demonstrated its interest in attracting foreign investment by signing and ratifying the U.S.-Mongolia Transparency Agreement in December 2014. The Mongolian Prime Minister is traveling to Washington and New York this week to deliver the message that Mongolia is open for business, our business.

Mongolia's recent progress on a major copper and gold mine with a Western company signaled to the international community its renewed seriousness of purpose in attracting foreign direct investment. With large reserves of coal, copper, gold, uranium, and other

minerals, there are many opportunities for U.S. companies in mining and related sectors. If confirmed, I would support these opportunities by actively informing potential U.S. investors about the investment climate and advocating on their behalf.

I believe that two key components of U.S. support for Mongolia's democracy and its independence and leadership in the region are engagement with its nascent civil society and deepening people-to-people ties. If confirmed, I would continue the work of my predecessors in areas such as the rights of persons with disabilities. I would, if confirmed, continue our robust subnational cooperation as well, including the Alaska-Mongolia State Partnership and the sister city relationship between Ulaanbaatar and Denver in my home State of Colorado. If confirmed, I would also look forward to supporting one of our largest Peace Corps programs anywhere, with over 150 volunteers in country. Peace Corps Volunteers work side by side with Mongolians in English teaching, health care, and community youth development.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it would be the highest honor for me to serve our country as Ambassador to Mongolia. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to ensure that the United States delivers on the strategic and historic opportunities of the next century of Mongolia's democracy.

Thank you for considering my nomination, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Galt follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JENNIFER ZIMDAHL GALT

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to Mongolia. I am deeply grateful for the confidence that the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Senate to build on the already strong ties between the United States and Mongolia.

My career in the Foreign Service spans 27 years, most of them spent in Asia. I joined the Foreign Service out of a commitment to serve my country and have consistently sought assignments where I felt I could make a difference and where I could contribute to advancing an important relationship. My career has taken me to the former Yugoslavia, Taiwan, India, the U.S. Mission to NATO, and, multiple times, to China.

The love and support of my family has sustained me throughout. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my husband, Fritz, and my children Phoebe and Dylan, who have traveled the globe with me, and to my father, Bob Zimdahl, and my brothers Randy, Bob, and Tom. My father, in particular, has demonstrated his support by visiting us at every overseas post. I am enormously proud that my daughter, Phoebe, a rising college junior, is here with me today.

This is an exciting year for U.S.-Mongolia relations, as we mark the 25th anniversary of Mongolia's decision for democracy, a milestone that the Senate recognized in its June 1 resolution. Our partnership has grown stronger since then-Secretary Baker first visited the newly democratic Mongolia in 1990. As the only former Soviet satellite in East Asia to choose democracy, Mongolia is an important model in the region and, as the saying goes, punches above its weight on issues of strategic interest to the United States, including coalition military efforts, peacekeeping, and the promotion of democratic principles and values. Our relationship is one of shared interests and is characterized by enormous potential.

There are many opportunities for the United States to deepen our partnership with Mongolia. I would like to highlight a few areas where I would focus my attention, should I be confirmed as Ambassador.

Sustaining our strong partnership across sectors: Mongolia and the United States share a common interest in promoting peace and stability. Mongolia is a stalwart partner in Afghanistan, and deploys capable peacekeepers wherever they are needed, including currently in Sudan and South Sudan. In April 2014, the United

States and Mongolia signed a Joint Vision Statement that articulated the parameters for our security relationship, acknowledging the important role Mongolia plays as a stabilizing influence in Asia and commending Mongolia's support for U.N. peacekeeping operations around the world. Just last week, the U.S. and Mongolia conducted our yearly multinational peacekeeping exercise, Khaan Quest. Mongolia demonstrates leadership in international fora to promote democracy and human rights, such as the Freedom Online Coalition, hosting a successful annual conference in May; and the Community of Democracies, hosting the Ministerial in 2013. Mongolia is a model of democracy and has demonstrated a willingness to mentor others in the region, offering training and exchanges with leaders from Burma to Kyrgyzstan. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with Mongolian officials to advance our shared interests in these critical areas.

Strengthening economic ties and creating opportunities for U.S. businesses: Recent high level engagements in Mongolia have demonstrated our commitment to enhancing commercial opportunities for U.S. companies. In the last 6 months, we resumed Trade and Investment Framework Agreement talks, launched a new Economic Policy Dialogue, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation began the process of developing a second compact with Mongolia. Each of these initiatives is an opportunity to expand economic growth, model responsible business conduct, promote trade and investment, and to create opportunities for U.S. companies. Mongolia Government demonstrated its interest in attracting foreign investment by signing and ratifying the U.S.-Mongolia Agreement on Transparency in Matters Related to International Trade and Investment (the Transparency Agreement) in December 2014. The Mongolian Prime Minister is traveling to Washington and New York this week to deliver the message to U.S. companies and Members of Congress that Mongolia is open for business, our business.

Mongolia's recent progress on a major copper and gold mine with a Western company signaled to the international community its renewed seriousness of purpose in attracting foreign direct investment, which has declined 85 percent since 2012. With large reserves of coal, copper, gold, uranium, and other minerals, there are many opportunities for U.S. companies in mining and related sectors. If confirmed, I would support these opportunities by actively informing potential U.S. investors about the investment climate and advocating on their behalf. I would also continue our efforts to promote a more diversified economy in Mongolia and to generate increased commercial opportunities for U.S. companies, including support for Department of Commerce efforts such as the U.S.-Mongolia Business Forum, which this year will focus on agriculture. I would encourage good governance, transparency, and responsible business conduct, including through working with the Mongolian Government to implement the Transparency Agreement.

Enhancing civil society and people-to-people ties with Mongolia: I believe that two key components of U.S. support for Mongolia's democracy and its independence and leadership in the region are engagement with its nascent civil society and deepening people-to-people ties. If confirmed, I would continue the work of my predecessors in areas such as the rights of persons with disabilities, where, thanks to exchanges between government leaders and civil society, we are working with Mongolian parliamentarians on draft legislation that may include lessons learned from our Americans with Disabilities Act. I would, if confirmed, continue our robust subnational cooperation as well, including the Alaska-Mongolia State Partnership, which began with cooperation between the Alaska National Guard and the Mongolian Armed Forces, and has grown to include economic and social ties. I am particularly pleased that Mongolia's ties to the United States also include a sister city relationship between Ulaanbaatar and Denver, in my home State of Colorado. If confirmed, I also would look forward to supporting one of our largest Peace Corps programs anywhere, with over 150 volunteers in country this year. Peace Corps volunteers work side by side with Mongolians in English teaching, health care, and community youth development. The efforts of these volunteers—our grassroots ambassadors in Mongolia—have been extremely effective.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it would be the highest honor for me to serve our country as Ambassador to Mongolia.

America's security and prosperity are closely and increasingly linked to the Asia-Pacific. One of the most important tasks of American statecraft over the next decade is to lock in the increased investment—diplomatic, economic, strategic, and military—from the administration's sustained rebalance to the region. I welcome the opportunity to be on the front lines of this endeavor. If confirmed, I will lead a diplomatic mission of approximately 200 U.S. and Mongolian employees, representing five agencies. I will do my very best to ensure that all members of that community and their families have the leadership, security, and support they need to engage on behalf of the United States, so that Americans continue to sustain and benefit

from the growth and dynamism in the Asian region. If confirmed, I will also do my utmost to ensure that the United States delivers on the strategic and historic opportunities of the next century of Mongolia's democracy.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Ms. Galt, and thanks to all of you again for your comments this morning.

And since I cannot just talk to you the entire time about Colorado, we will have to spread out the conversation a little bit.

Mr. Davies, 38 years in the Foreign Service, your experience. Thank you for your commitment. What is the biggest change that you have seen over that time, starting from your first experiences to today in terms of public diplomacy?

Ambassador DAVIES. In terms of public diplomacy, I think the explosion in—let us call it—the globalization of media has been the biggest change. When I came into the Foreign Service, the United States of America was reaching hearts and minds overseas in very traditional ways, publishing millions of copies of magazines for young Indians every month, for instance, using radio, touring music stars, and so forth. Today, we can reach young people in most countries in their shirt pockets through their mobile devices, and it requires a much more considered approach to how we get the word out to peoples all around the world, in particular young people, about America, what it stands for, and why it is that they should look to the United States as a friend and ally. So the challenge has become much more complex. But I think we are making the changes necessary to step up.

Senator GARDNER. And specifically to Thailand, in terms of the length of the military coup, do we have any idea how long we are looking at this lasting, this military exertion of power? Is there a way that the United States can influence the length of that or the timing or speed up the reforms for democracy, free elections, and sort of adding a third component to that with the support and loyalists to the former Prime Minister, is it even possible to have free and fair elections in Thailand?

Ambassador DAVIES. Well, I believe that it is possible for Thailand to have free and fair elections. They have done it in the past. In recent generations, they have had decades' worth of experience of democracy. They can get back to that. The current junta, the coup government, claims that that is their aspiration. They have set up a very lengthy, somewhat elaborate process to get back to it. You are right. The goal post does continue to recede. That is a big concern. We want them to get back to democracy as soon as possible. We would like to see elections very soon.

But at the end of the day, the truth is this is up to Thailand, its leadership, and its people to work out. But I have confidence they can do it. And if confirmed, I am going to bend every effort to convey to them the views of the United States and would encourage them to get back on that democratic path.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

Mr. Heidt, Hun Sen has ruled Cambodia since the mid-1990s basically without interruption. What do you see as Cambodia's likely political future, should Hun Sen move toward retirement? Are there scenarios where there could be military interference if there is a retirement there as well? What do you do in such a scenario?

Mr. HEIDT. Thank you for the question, Senator.

There has been a lot of stasis at the top of Cambodia's ruling elite in the last 20 years. Of course, in 2013, we had a very good and meaningful election for Cambodia. It was the most open election in Cambodian history. Public participation was very broad, very enthusiastic. The opposition party did much better than anyone expected and even despite some pretty deep-seated irregularities in the election process.

So it left many observers with the feeling that with a reformed National Election Commission and some additional support from the international community, Cambodia can take another step forward in the next election just as they took a step forward in 2013. So there is optimism that with continued support, we could see a better democratic future for Cambodia.

I do not deny, of course, that there are also concerns about increased military—the possibility under the new law for increased military activity in the campaign. That law does permit, for the first time in Cambodia, the military and senior government officials to be involved. And that is a concern and it is something we are going to have to monitor very closely. If confirmed, I hope to do that.

Senator GARDNER. You mentioned the opposition party. How is the power-sharing arrangement working between the two parties, the CPP, the CNRP?

Mr. HEIDT. Senator, that is a $64,000 question with respect right now to Cambodia. Both the Prime Minister and Sam Rainsy—they have both spoken publicly about their desire to start this culture of dialogue. The relationship is clearly more cooperative than at any time in the 20 years since I have been following Cambodia. Of course, as a general rule, we encourage dialogue in Cambodia. We think that is very important to have constructive dialogue, peaceful dialogue that can help Cambodia put forward the reforms and policy changes they need to improve the lives of ordinary Cambodians. Whether this new collaboration between the two will lead to that kind of genuine change, I think it is much too early to say, very honestly, and I think it is something that if confirmed—it is definitely something we are going to keep a very close eye on.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Heidt.

Ms. Galt, in your opening remarks, you talked about Mongolia being the only former Soviet satellite state that had moved or transitioned toward democracy. Yet, in preparing for this morning's hearing, the background briefings on Mongolia—the corruption challenges to—corruption at the local level throughout the government. Yet, we have had six Presidential elections, open elections there. What more can the United States do to address the full transition to a democracy, reducing corruption, but strengthening and building democracy?

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

Indeed, Mongolia is a democracy but it is a young democracy, and it shares many of the same challenges as other young democracies in terms of solidifying the rule of law.

And I think there are two areas where we can continue our work with Mongolia—and if confirmed, I would look forward to doing

that—to solidify and strengthen some of their institutions to combat corruption.

One is to support Mongolia's leadership in international fora to promote democracy. Mongolia has shown a willingness to reach beyond its borders, to export both democracy and security. And we continue to work with Mongolia to strengthen its own institutions. And recently our increased economic engagement is very important in that regard. So with its signing of the U.S.-Mongolia Transparency Agreement, Mongolia has indicated its willingness to improve its own institutions to combat corruption and to combat transnational crime as well. Our Trade and Investment Framework Agreement talks and our new Economic Policy Dialogue gives us other platforms to talk about institutional reforms.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation is another tool that we can use to enhance Mongolia's democratic behavior. MCC leadership tells me that based on the successful completion of their first compact, they believe very strongly that Mongolia has learned many lessons from working with us on the first compact. And, if confirmed, I would look forward to working with Mongolia and working with the Millennium Challenge as they develop a second compact for Mongolia.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Ms. Galt.

Senator Cardin.

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

Once again, thanks to our witnesses.

In each of your countries, I think to a large extent the success of our mission depends upon us standing strong on the principles of our country, the universal principles that we espouse on human rights, good governance, anticorruption, rights of all individuals. That to me is the bedrock of America's foreign policy. And we have seen too many places in the world where we have deviated from that commitment. The stability that we hoped for did not exist and will not exist.

So in all three of the countries, there are challenges in trafficking in persons. Thailand is probably the worst. It is a Tier 3 country, which means that it has failed. There are reportedly tens of thousands of victims in Thailand, mainly from other countries, that have been trafficked into Thailand for labor abuse and for sex trafficking. Obviously, that cannot continue.

It is more of a challenge because in Thailand we are now past the 1-year anniversary of this coup, and it was not the first coup in modern history. And I must tell you my patience is running thin with Thailand. We talk about a commitment to early elections, and when a country is operating under a coup government, human rights are always going to be challenged, as we have seen.

So, Mr. Davies, I appreciate your view that we cannot intercede into the internal politics of a country, and I agree with that. But for the sake of the rights of the people of Thailand and for U.S. principles, there must be an urgency in Thailand proceeding with democratic elections and dealing with its human rights issues.

Your comments?

Ambassador DAVIES. Thank you very much, Senator. I think that is exactly right, and I think that is job one for anyone who represents the United States in Thailand to bring home to, in par-

ticular, the current leadership the importance of moving quickly, swiftly, allowing for, if need be catalyzing an open, inclusive public debate about the way forward for Thailand. I believe most Thais do want to get back to democracy. The situation now is untenable. It is not good for Thailand, first and foremost, to have a suspension of civil liberties, of sending civilians through the military justice system, and so forth.

So for me, if confirmed, this would be something I would lean into very hard to convey publicly and privately the importance we attach to Thailand's getting back to the democratic path, breaking this cycle of periodic military coups that, quite frankly, goes all the way back three generations to the 1930s, and putting Thailand once and for all firmly and finally on the path to democracy.

So I take your words to heart. I want to work with this committee to see this through. I do think it is not a job that is going to be done in an instant because they are a divided society, divided polity. There are serious issues that have to be worked out domestically, which is why I said it really is, first and foremost, their challenge to confront. But I think you are right. We have a role to play. They listen to us. We are going to use that bully pulpit.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you for your answer. We recognize it will not happen overnight. But it is already over a year since this coup, and I think many of us expected further progress than we have seen to date. So there is an urgency here. I just hope that you will transmit that to the people of Thailand that we are with them, but we will not tolerate the suspension of civil liberties.

Ambassador DAVIES. Yes, sir.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Heidt, in regards to Cambodia, they are not doing much better in trafficking. They have been downgraded to a Tier 2 Watch List country. As has already been pointed out, they are a poor country. So it is interesting that they are also designated because they are a source of trafficking. So it is not only that they are victimized by people in Cambodia being trafficked out, there are also people that are being victimized within Cambodia. So they have human rights issues.

The most recent concern that has been expressed by human rights groups is the draft NGO law, which has serious concerns among NGOs about whether they are going to be able to operate effectively in Cambodia.

So would you just share with me and this committee your commitment to advance the basic human rights as our representative, if confirmed, in Cambodia?

Mr. HEIDT. Thank you very much, Senator.

Of course, promoting democracy and human rights has been a central part of our program in Cambodia since I was there before, ever since the 1993 Paris Peace Accords.

In the area of trafficking in persons, it is an area where U.S. involvement has made a real difference. Both directly and through NGOs, we have really been able to give Cambodia good assistance, and as a result, as I mentioned in my statement, they have been able to make substantial progress on the issue of child sex trafficking. Now, that of course, is a particularly pernicious and dreadful problem, and I think it is important to give them credit for that progress.

At the same time, as you mentioned, there is a pretty substantial labor trafficking problem in Cambodia flowing out to neighboring countries, flowing into Cambodia from its neighboring countries. And so certainly there is much more work to be done in that area in terms of building cooperation between Cambodia and the labor-receiving countries, especially Malaysia. There is some evidence of complicity by government officials in trafficking—that is a big problem—and as well as pretty much a complete lack of victim assistance. When we find victims of trafficking, the government has very little assistance that they can offer.

So that is something I am absolutely committed to working on that issue while I am out there, if confirmed. Like I say, it has been an area where we have great success before that we can be proud of, and we will continue to do that.

On the NGO law, of course, the concern there is that it will limit the ability of the NGOs to do some of the good work they are doing. NGOs perform a range of important services in Cambodia. We have spoken to the government and publicly about this law, and we frankly do not really see a need for it. We do not think there is a giant problem that needs to be solved by that. But if the government goes ahead with the law, as it appears very likely—they considered it in the National Assembly today in Phnom Penh—today, their time. They considered it and pushed it out to three separate National Assembly commissions. So it appears that it is going to move forward. We have counseled them to consult widely when they do it and to do it with a light touch, to focus on basic transparency issues, not to make it a giant problem that really squelches civil society in Cambodia.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for that answer.

If the chair would indulge me for one remaining question. Ms. Galt, Mongolia is an encouraging country. There is a lot of progress being made. They are Tier 2 on trafficking, which means they still are not meeting the minimum standards, although the report does point out they are making progress. So they are moving in the right direction.

As I also pointed out, they are one of our allies. But there are challenges regarding human rights and concerns about internationally recognized freedom for its citizens.

I want to get your response to a potential issue, and that is, Mongolia is resource-rich, which can become a problem for a country if it is not managed properly. We have seen it as a source of corruption in other countries. We have seen it as a source of environmental problems in other countries. We have seen it as a management issue creating problems with democracy in other countries.

My question is, How will you focus on our mission in Mongolia as to how they handle their resources to make sure that it is used for the benefit of the people of Mongolia and not used as a source that could be problematic for funding corruption or antidemocratic principles, which we have seen in too many countries around the world?

Ms. GALT. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

First, on the issue of trafficking, indeed, this continues to be a concern in Mongolia, and if confirmed, I would work very closely

with the Government of Mongolia to combat trafficking. We have a U.S. Government program working with an NGO in Mongolia to raise public awareness of trafficking and to work to implement Mongolia's antitrafficking legislation. So I would look forward, if confirmed, to continuing on that front.

I think on the corruption issue, you are absolutely right. This is very much on Mongolia's radar and very much on our radar, as Mongolia develops its rich resources.

I think there are, again, two areas, as I said earlier, where we can continue to work closely with Mongolia to encourage them to develop these resources in a transparent and fair way. And if confirmed, I would look forward to doing that.

The first is to continue to support Mongolia's leadership in international institutions, including the Freedom Online Coalition and the Community of Democracies, which are fora in which Mongolia can learn best practices and develop its own mechanisms and techniques for combating corruption domestically and for developing its economy.

And then the second is our economic engagement. I think through working with the Government of Mongolia to implement the recently signed and ratified Transparency Agreement, that gives us an opportunity to work very closely with them to develop procedures, develop their institutions, and strengthen their institutions to combat corruption. So I would look forward to working with them on both of those fronts in that challenge area.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator GARDNER. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And to the witnesses and to the entire panel of the seven nominees who are before us today, I am only able to be here for the first panel. And I regret that because you all really do a credit to the Nation with your extensive service. And I thank each of you and I also thank your families and friends who are here and who have been supportive.

Ms. Galt, if I could start with you since we are just finishing on Mongolia, I am fascinated by a number of aspects of the country and its transition from socialism to democracy. In the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index for 2014, Mongolia was ranked 61st out of 167 countries ranked in the democracy index. For a democracy this new that has transitioned from socialism, that is not bad. If you dig into the ranking, the EIU classifies Mongolia as a, quote, flawed democracy with high marks for electoral processes and civil liberties but lower marks for government functioning, political culture, including a high degree of corruption in local politics.

Talk a little bit about your game plan if you are confirmed to go in and accelerate the pro-democracy trends and institutional improvements that Mongolia seems to be embracing but that need improvement.

Ms. GALT. Indeed, if confirmed, this would be one of my highest priorities to work closely with the Government of Mongolia to strengthen their institutions, to combat corruption, and to ensure a transparent and free market for external investment. And I think

encouraging and advocating for more U.S. investment in Mongolia is one way that would be very useful and productive for encouraging transparent economic engagement in Mongolia. So that is one area that I would work on, if confirmed.

The second area is through the Millennium Challenge Corporation. As I mentioned earlier, the Millennium Challenge leadership tells me that they feel very strongly that Mongolia has learned some good lessons from the first compact. And as they are engaging in their constraints analysis and negotiations on a potential second compact for Mongolia, that will be a tool that we can use to further influence the institutional development and to ensure that Mongolia's economic growth going forward is equitable and fair.

I think a third area I mentioned before, but we have an ongoing engagement and plans for a new program with the Government of Mongolia working with them on justice reform. And that is a third area that I would have a high priority in terms of improving their institutions and their capacity to handle corruption and to deal transparently with corruption issues.

Senator KAINE. There have been some high profile cases in Mongolia where foreign investors have been caught up in business disputes and then blocked exit visas to leave, Canadians, in one instance an American. Those have to create challenges in terms of encouraging more investment.

What is the progress of the Mongolian Government in putting reforms in place that would avoid those unless absolutely necessary?

Ms. GALT. Indeed, I think investor confidence is at a low point right now in Mongolia. But, again, our recent economic engagement gives me a lot of encouragement as to potential for a positive trend in the future. And if confirmed, I would continue to work very closely on our economic front. So, number one, implementing the Transparency Agreement is one very important platform. A second is our Trade and Investment Framework Agreement and our Economic Policy Dialogue, which gives us another opportunity to engage. And then finally, the Millennium Challenge would be another opportunity to grow Mongolia's capacity in terms of its institutions. So those would be three areas where I would work very closely were I to have the opportunity.

Senator KAINE. And finally, the United States is sort of deemed by Mongolia as the most important of its, quote, "third neighbors," so the neighbors that do not have borders with Mongolia. As we are dealing with so many issues on this committee and in the Senate generally about bilateral relations between the United States and China and the United States and Russia, I am interested in how Mongolia handles those bilateral relationships and what are the current kind of temperature in those sets of bilateral relationships between Mongolia and China and Russia.

Ms. GALT. Indeed, Mongolia is in a tough neighborhood. I think the chairman mentioned sandwiched between Russia and China. And so it is very much in Mongolia's interest to maintain a stable, positive relationship with both Russia and China. Russia and China are both strong economic partners to Mongolia. China purchases 80-plus percent of Mongolia's resources. So it is very important for Mongolia to maintain a positive economic trade and political relationship with China.

However, I think there is room for all of us. There is room for Russia and China and for Mongolia's third neighbors. And so if confirmed, I would look forward to continuing to enhance both our political, economic, and military partnership with Mongolia.

I think in addition to the strength of those aspects of our partnership, U.S. soft power is a very powerful force in Mongolia. Young people are looking to the United States. Young people are studying English, thanks in large part to our Peace Corps over the years, and studying in the United States and returning to Mongolia. So the influence of the United States as a fellow democracy and our shared values is a powerful offset to the economic power of Mongolia's neighbors.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for those answers.

One question for you Mr. Heidt. I noticed that there are analysts that are concerned about the Prime Minister's placement of his sons in political positions of power within Cambodia and what that might portend in the future. We have seen in other nations around the world, whether it is Libya or Egypt or Syria, once a structure of a ruling family starts to be kind of perpetuated, that can lead to really significant internal dissent.

What is the likelihood of that or your assessment in Cambodia? What can the United States do to promote a more vigorous democracy, not confined just to a single family?

Mr. HEIDT. Thank you very much, Senator, for that question.

Of course, Hun Sen's sons, as you mentioned—several of them are active, very active in the CPP. Our sense is looking at that, that it is like many political parties. It is a complex structure. There are lots of people who want to move to the top. The folks that I have talked to—there is not a sense that there is some preordained path for the two of them. It is not North Korea. It is a big competitive party with lots of ambitious people in it. And so even despite the obvious birth advantages the two have, my sense is that there is no guaranteed route to the top for them.

Of course, the other issue is, as we saw in 2013, electoral politics in Cambodia are getting more competitive. And the extent to which the opposition is able to rally and unify around strong candidates, promote good candidates from below, the extent to which, with international help, Cambodia's election institutions get stronger and can deliver better elections, those things also make it less likely that some sort of family system develops in Cambodia. So I do think it is a very competitive situation and one, of course, if confirmed, I will keep an eye on.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you. And thank you to the witnesses today for your testimony, your comments, and your willingness, again, to serve.

And in breaking with Senate tradition, we are going to stay on schedule and stand in a short recess until Senator Risch joins us and we reconvene at 11 o'clock.

[Pause.]

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES RISCH, U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO

Senator RISCH [presiding]. Thank you all for coming. This Subcommittee on Near East, South and Central Asia of the Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

And today we have for hearing four nominees for different positions around the world.

First of all, I want to thank all of our nominees for being here today and your families and for your willingness to serve. The countries you are nominated to are tough posts, to say the least, and it really highlights that you and your families are willing to make the sacrifices to go and to serve in those posts. We really do appreciate your efforts in that regard.

First, I am going to introduce all of you at once. I want to talk about each of the countries very briefly and talk about where we are with them, and hopefully, you will correct me if I am inaccurate or add to that if you think that is appropriate.

Obviously, Mr. Hale is going to Pakistan. And while the official U.S. policy toward Pakistan is to assist the creation of a more stable democratic and prosperous Pakistan, the United States-Pakistan relationship is an important but equally frustrating relationship, as we all know. Support for U.S. presence in Afghanistan has been vital, but over the years, Pakistan's support for the Taliban in Afghanistan and the safe havens in the FATA has set back efforts to move Afghanistan and the region forward. The idea of a new Silk Road across South and Central Asia would bring economic prosperity to many, especially in Pakistan, but border disputes with India cripple the cooperation.

Recently this spring, a number of us had the opportunity to meet a delegation from the Pakistani governing body, the Parliament that were here. And I have to say I think all of us were impressed with their sincerity and their commitment to do the things that would better the United States-Pakistan relationship.

The June 2014 operation against militant groups in FATA was a good effort to bring more stability to the border with Afghanistan, and hopefully the United States-Pakistan strategic dialogue can produce more tangible results politically and economically.

The past several years have shown us that despite enormous U.S. aid, Pakistan will only prosper when the country can create a stable environment for trade and foreign direct investment. To achieve this kind of success, the international community needs a serious partner in the Pakistan Government that can deepen its political institutions and work through its relationship with India and others. After our meeting with the delegation from Pakistan, I think all of us believe that they have a sincere commitment to attempt to do that.

Regarding Nepal, the recent earthquake in Nepal has been tragic and the international commitment to Nepal has shifted accordingly. The outpouring of support from around the world requires a sustained focus on rebuilding the country, but donor coordination is going to be a daunting task and we must make sure both U.S. assistance and other aid is timed appropriately and not wasted on projects that are neither needed nor helpful for the people of Nepal. These kinds of things happen, of course, when you do get a flood

of cash that comes in after a serious problem as has taken place in Nepal.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, I also hope there will be a renewed sense of unity that can help Nepal move forward and find the political consensus necessary to finally draft a new constitution which, as we all know, they have been struggling with for some time.

In addition, you will have a particularly important job taking care of our people. While Embassy Staff work to help Nepal build, they are also rebuilding their own lives and making sure they get their own support, and that will be crucial.

Regarding Sri Lanka and the Maldives where Mr. Keshap is headed, the January election and change in power has created a substantial shift for the region. The government's efforts to tackle corruption, deepen reconciliation, and rebalance its position among the other regional powers provide an enormous opportunity for Sri Lanka. The new President, we hope, will maintain his commitment to change, and if indeed he follows through on that, it is going to be a sea change for the region.

Ms. Gwaltney is going to the Kyrgyz Republic. Central Asia, as we all know, has been a hard place for the United States. English is often the fourth or fifth language spoken, if at all, in the region. The dominance of Russia and the proximity of China, as well as the Soviet legacy, presents significant challenges and tempered expectations. The Kyrgyz Republic clearly embodies all of these intersecting challenges. However, there is still a lot of work we can do leading up to the parliamentary elections in October, and hopefully we can find some success helping to develop their economy. But I worry about the destabilizing role that Russia can play for its own strategic interests.

With that said, I look forward to all of your testimony.

First of all, I would like to briefly introduce each of the nominees here starting with Mr. David Hale, who has been nominated for the Pakistan posting. Mr. Hale is a native of New Jersey who also received his undergraduate degree from the Georgetown School of Foreign Service and joined the Foreign Service in 1984. Mr. Hale has extensive experience in the Middle East, serving at posts in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain, and others, including his most recent as U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon. He is clearly experienced in tough postings and jobs that might make Pakistan look like an easy assignment.

Ms. Gwaltney is going to the Kyrgyz Republic. Ms. Gwaltney is from Woodland, CA, with a B.A. from UC-Davis, a masters from George Washington University. Again, her extensive experience working in and around Russia. Ms. Gwaltney has substantial experience to support her in this new role.

Ms. Teplitz, appointed to Nepal, was born in Chicago, IL, and received her B.A. at Georgetown University. She has served in numerous positions at the State Department and the region. With her management background and the current challenges in Nepal, she is well suited to assume this position.

Mr. Keshap, who has been appointed to serve in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, was born in Nigeria, educated at the University of Virginia with both a bachelors and masters degree. Mr. Keshap has

extensive experience with Southeast Asia, including his current post as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs at State. He has won numerous awards for his work and, at the same time, has found time to well raise his four children.

So in any event, thank you all again for the willingness to serve and your families likewise for the willingness to serve.

Now we would like to hear a few minutes from each of you. We will start with Mr. Hale, who has been nominated for Pakistan.

STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID HALE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

Ambassador HALE. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the introduction and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next American Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. I am humbled by the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me, and if I am confirmed, I look forward to working with the Senate on how best to advance U.S. interests in Pakistan.

I have had the privilege of serving in the Foreign Service for 31 years, and most of my career has been spent advancing U.S. interests in the Middle East and the Muslim world as Ambassador to Lebanon, as U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East, and earlier as Ambassador to Jordan.

During my previous tours as Ambassador, my highest priority was the safety and security of all American personnel, information, and facilities, as well as the safety and security of American citizens. And if confirmed, I will have no higher priority in Pakistan.

Pakistan is a strategically important country for achieving U.S. national security interests. We have a strong stake in Pakistan's ability to combat militancy and strengthen its democratic institutions. And broadly speaking, the United States has four core interests in Pakistan: first, defeating al-Qaeda and countering militancy; second, nonproliferation and nuclear security; third, political and economic stability which includes respect for human rights; and fourth, regional stability, including improved relations with Afghanistan and with India.

And while there is more to be done on all fronts, the last few years have witnessed progress toward these goals as the United States and Pakistan have built a more stable, forthright relationship. With regard to counterterrorism, Pakistan has taken important actions that have brought to justice several senior al-Qaeda leaders. It launched a significant military operation in North Waziristan last June, capturing large weapons caches and closing safe havens for multiple terrorist groups. We welcome Pakistan's commitment to target all militant groups on Pakistani soil equally, an objective that is absolutely in the interest of the United States and one on which, if confirmed, I will work closely with the Pakistan Government to advance.

We and the Pakistanis also share deep concern and must remain vigilant for any sign that ISIL is gaining a foothold in Pakistan. Our shared strategic interests extend well beyond any particular group. It is from the ungoverned spaces in remote parts of the border region that spring a multitude of threats, both militant and

criminal, affecting Pakistan, the region, and the broader world, including America.

We are also actively engaged with Pakistan on strategic stability and nonproliferation issues. While our governments do not see eye to eye on all issues, we share a number of common interests, including the high importance of ensuring nuclear security and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Relations with its neighbors play an important part in Pakistan's security and prosperity. Pakistan has undertaken important outreach to Afghanistan following the Afghan election, and the two countries have made some progress toward terrorist safe havens on both sides of the border. Given the drawdown in United States forces in Afghanistan, it is all the more critical that relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan be strong and cooperative and that Pakistan continue to put pressure on the Taliban to join an Afghan-led peace process. Pakistan's relationship with India is critical to Pakistan's future, and the normalization of relations between those two countries is vital both to them and to the region.

Experience has demonstrated that sustained, consistent engagement with Pakistan provides us with the best chance to address challenges and advance our core interests. The United States-Pakistan strategic dialogue is the mechanism that underpins our cooperation in areas of shared interest, from counterterrorism to energy, from economic growth to defense and security. All six of the strategic dialogue working groups have met within the last year.

U.S. civilian assistance to Pakistan has delivered impressive results and must continue. Our signature projects in Pakistan have added 1,500 megawatts to Pakistan's electric grid and built over 1,100 kilometers of road.

U.S. security assistance to Pakistan is equally important. It directly supports Pakistan's ability to conduct counterinsurgency operations, clear terrorist safe havens, and stem the flow of deadly improvised explosive devices, which have killed far too many civilians and security personnel.

Should I be confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and this committee, with our extraordinary team in both Washington and Pakistan, with the government and people of Pakistan and with the community of Americans of Pakistani descent here in the United States.

And, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, let me reiterate how deeply honored I am to be here today and to be nominated as the Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Thank you very much for considering my nomination. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Hale follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR DAVID HALE

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next American Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. I am humbled by the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If I am confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working with the Senate on how best to advance U.S. interests in Pakistan.

I have had the privilege of serving in the Foreign Service since 1984. Most of my career has been spent advancing U.S. interests in the Middle East and the Muslim world, including most recently as Ambassador to the Lebanese Republic. Before

that, I served as the U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace, and earlier, as Ambassador to Jordan.

During my previous tours as Ambassador, my highest priority was the safety and the security of all American personnel, information, and facilities, as well as the safety and security of American citizens. If confirmed, I will have no higher priority in Pakistan.

Pakistan is a strategically important country for achieving U.S. national security interests. We have a strong stake in Pakistan's ability to combat militancy and strengthen its democratic institutions. Broadly speaking, the United States has four core interests in Pakistan: first, defeating al-Qaeda and countering militancy; second, nonproliferation and nuclear security; third, political and economic stability which includes respect for human rights; and fourth, regional stability, including improved relations with Afghanistan and India.

While there is more to be done on all fronts, the last few years have witnessed progress toward these goals as the United States and Pakistan have built a more stable, forthright relationship. With regard to counterterrorism, Pakistan has taken important actions that have brought to justice several senior al-Qaeda leaders. It launched a significant military operation in North Waziristan last June, capturing large weapons caches and closing safe havens for multiple terrorist groups. We welcome Pakistan's commitment to target all militant groups on Pakistani soil equally—an objective that is absolutely in the interests of the United States, and one on which, if confirmed, I will work closely with the Pakistani Government to advance. We and the Pakistanis also share deep concern and must remain vigilant for any sign that ISIL is gaining a foothold in Pakistan. Our shared, strategic interests extend well beyond any particular group; it is from the ungoverned spaces in remote parts of the border region that spring a multitude of threats, both militant and criminal, affecting Pakistan, the region, and the broader world, including the United States.

We are also actively engaged with Pakistan on strategic stability and nonproliferation issues. While our governments do not see eye to eye on all issues, we share a number of common interests including the high importance of ensuring nuclear security and preventing the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. We are pleased that Pakistan is fully engaged with the international community on nuclear safety and security issues, including as an active partner in the Nuclear Security Summit process.

At the same time, Pakistan is an often boisterous democracy of nearly 200 million people with a growing economy. In 2013, it completed its first democratic transition from one elected civilian government to another. The Government of Pakistan has made real strides in unlocking Pakistan's growth potential, and is working to advance an economic reform program in close collaboration with the International Monetary Fund. Just last week, Moody's recognized the government's progress by raising its sovereign credit rating. Still, there is work to be done. Rule of law, tolerance, and respect for the rights of all citizens are guiding principles for all thriving democracies.

Relations with its neighbors play an important part in Pakistan's security and prosperity. Pakistan has undertaken important outreach to Afghanistan following the Afghan election, and the two countries have made some progress against terrorist safe havens on both sides of the border. Given the drawdown in U.S. forces in Afghanistan, it is all the more critical that relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan be strong and cooperative, and that Pakistan continue to put pressure on the Taliban to join an Afghan-led peace process. Pakistan's relationship with India is critical to Pakistan's future. The normalization of relations between the two countries is vital, both to them and to the region.

Experience has demonstrated that sustained, consistent engagement with Pakistan provides us with the best chance to address challenges and advance our core interests. The U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue is the mechanism that underpins our cooperation in areas of shared interest, from counterterrorism to energy, from economic growth to defense and security; all six of the Strategic Dialogue working groups—law enforcement and counterterrorism; economics and finance; energy; defense; strategic stability and nonproliferation; and education, science, and technology—have met within the last year.

U.S. civilian assistance to Pakistan has delivered impressive results and must continue. Our signature projects in Pakistan have added over 1,500 megawatts to Pakistan's electric grid, and built over 1,100 kilometers of road. Each year, the United States sponsors thousands of Pakistani exchange students to the United States—including a larger investment in the Fulbright Program than anywhere else in the world. These are long-term investments which advance bilateral people to

people exchanges, Pakistan's stability and growth, and help promote a pluralistic and tolerant society.

U.S. security assistance to Pakistan is equally important and is directly supporting Pakistan's ability to conduct counterinsurgency operations, clear terrorist safe havens, and stem the flow of deadly improvised explosive devices (IEDs) which have killed far too many civilians and security personnel. Our security assistance, like our civilian assistance, is geared directly toward meeting critical U.S. national security objectives.

Should I be confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and this committee, our extraordinary team in both Washington and Pakistan, who are dedicated and accept risks in order to achieve the goals of the American people, with the government and people of Pakistan, and with the community of Americans of Pakistani descent here in the United States. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy and members of the committee, let me reiterate how deeply honored I am to be nominated as the Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Thank you very much for considering my nomination. I would be pleased to answer your questions.

Senator RISCH. Mr. Hale, thank you very much.

We have been joined by Ranking Member Murphy, and if you do not have opening statement, we will move on.

Senator MURPHY. Keep going.

Senator RISCH. Ms. Teplitz, you are next. We would like to hear what you have to say.

STATEMENT OF ALAINA B. TEPLITZ, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF NEPAL

Ms. TEPLITZ. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee for the U.S. Ambassador to Nepal. I am grateful for this opportunity to serve our country.

And I would like to recognize some of my family who are with me today, my sons, Max and Miles Mellott. And a shout-out to those who could not be here because I would not be at this table without them and their support.

Mr. Chairman, as you noted in your remarks, right now when people think of Nepal, they invariably think of the horrific earthquake of this past April and the tremendous damage it wrought. That tragedy has brought together the people of Nepal, the country's neighbors, and the international community to help the victims recover and the country rebuild.

And while much has changed in Nepal since the earthquake, our overall priorities for the country remain the same: to strengthen its democracy, advance its economic growth, and improve its resiliency. If confirmed, I will work to advance these goals and build on the achievements of my predecessors and our 60 years of positive engagement with Nepal.

I will speak first about the last objective, improved resiliency, and then discuss the other two priorities. At the top, I would like to extend the Department's profound gratitude to Congress for its support for seismically safe housing for U.S. Embassy personnel in Kathmandu. It saved the lives of our mission personnel and enabled them to immediately assist with rescue and relief efforts, thus saving more lives and reducing the quake's impact on Americans, Nepalese, and others.

The first responsibility of every U.S. Ambassador is to ensure the safety and security of American citizens, and if confirmed, I will

continue to prioritize investments that will protect our personnel and citizens.

And as Nepal moves to the reconstruction phase, we will work with its government and its neighbors in Asia to help it build back better, to provide protection to the most vulnerable, to improve resiliency against future disasters, and to ensure that investments in Nepal's infrastructure are economically sound and environmentally stable. And as you pointed out, if confirmed, I will share your focus on donor coordination throughout this effort.

Turning now to the second priority, advancing Nepal's economic growth. As we work to help Nepal's economy grow and advance, we must look to leverage its location among the booming economies of South Asia. With more investments in infrastructure, the creation of a business- and investment-friendly environment, and a more integrated regional market, Nepal's entrepreneurs could harness the region's economic potential and create tremendous prosperity for their nation. Nepal's recent eligibility for a Millennium Challenge Corporation—MCC— compact should help it develop some of that economic potential. If confirmed, I will actively look for opportunities to improve the business environment and support American investment in Nepal.

I would lastly like to discuss our priority of strengthening Nepal's democracy. In 2006, the country emerged from a decade of civil conflict with a commitment to creating a constitution that would seal a lasting peace. The American people can be proud of the role they have played in Nepal's transition from violence to peaceful politics. That process is still underway. And there has been some significant progress lately. Nepal became eligible for an MCC compact because of its democratic progress. But much remains to be done, and our Government will help Nepal where we can to advance its constitutional process and cement a hard-won peace.

Maintaining that peace will require a firm commitment to human rights, and if I am confirmed, the promotion and protection of human rights will remain a central priority for Mission Kathmandu. This particularly includes protections for Tibetan refugees, for women, for disadvantaged populations, and for those vulnerable to trafficking.

Mr. Chairman, I am aware of the many challenges we will face in these efforts, from maintaining good coordination with Nepal's Government and our international partners, to ensuring our resources are being spent effectively.

My career in the Foreign Service has been dedicated to the efficient management of resources, whether for our missions in Kabul, Dhaka, Belgium, or here in Washington at the Foreign Service Institute or in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. My experience, it would seem, is very timely for this posting.

With the support of Congress, our Government is preparing for a large recovery and reconstruction effort in Nepal, and if confirmed, I hope to draw on my management experience and expertise to help ensure the people of Nepal get the best assistance we can give and that the U.S. taxpayers get the biggest bang for their buck.

As that assistance effort progresses, I would, if confirmed, look forward to working closely with this committee and others in Congress to ensure our work reflects our shared priorities.

Thank you again for the opportunity, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Teplitz follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALAINA B. TEPLITZ

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Nepal.

I would like to recognize some of my family who are with me today and without whom I would not be at this table before you: my sons Max and Miles Mellott.

Mr. Chairman, right now when people think of Nepal, they invariably think of the horrific earthquake of this past April, and the tremendous damage it wrought. That tragedy has brought together the people of Nepal, the country's neighbors, and the international community to help the victims recover and the country rebuild.

And while much has changed in Nepal since the earthquake, our overall priorities for the country remain the same: to strengthen its democracy, advance its economic growth, and improve its resiliency. If confirmed, I will work to advance these goals and build on the achievements of my predecessors and our 60 years of positive engagement with Nepal.

I will speak first about the last objective, improved resiliency, and then discuss the other two priorities. At the top, I would like to extend the Department's profound gratitude to Congress for its support for seismically safe housing for U.S. Embassy personnel in Kathmandu. It saved the lives of our mission personnel and enabled them to immediately assist with rescue and relief efforts, thus saving more lives and reducing the quake's impact on Americans, Nepalese, and others.

The first responsibility of every U.S. Ambassador is to ensure the safety and security of American citizens, and, if confirmed, I will continue to prioritize investments that will protect our personnel and citizens in Nepal.

And as Nepal moves to the reconstruction phase, we will work with its government and its neighbors in Asia to help it to "build back better"—to provide protection to the most vulnerable, to improve resiliency against future disasters, and to ensure that investments in Nepal's infrastructure are economically sound and environmentally sustainable.

I will now turn to the second priority, advancing Nepal's economic growth. As we work to help Nepal's economy grow and advance, we must look to leverage its location among the booming economies of South Asia. With more investments in infrastructure, the creation of a business- and investment-friendly environment, and a more integrated regional market, Nepal's entrepreneurs could harness the region's economic potential and create tremendous prosperity for their nation. Nepal's recent eligibility for a Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact should help it develop some of that economic potential. If confirmed, I will actively look for opportunities to improve the business environment and support American investment in Nepal.

I would lastly like to discuss our priority of strengthening Nepal's democracy. In 2006, the country emerged from a decade of civil conflict with a commitment to creating a constitution that would seal a lasting peace. The American people can be proud of the role they have played in Nepal's transition from violence to peaceful politics. That process is still underway, and there has been some significant progress lately—Nepal became eligible for an MCC Compact because of its democratic progress. But much remains to be done, and our government will help Nepal where we can to advance its constitutional process and cement a hard-won peace.

Maintaining that peace will require a firm commitment to human rights, and, if I am confirmed, the promotion and protection of human rights will remain a central priority for Mission Kathmandu. This especially includes protections for Tibetan refugees, for women, for disadvantaged populations, and for those vulnerable to trafficking.

Mr. Chairman, I am aware of the many challenges we will face in these efforts, from maintaining good coordination with Nepal's Government and our international partners, to ensuring our resources are being spent effectively.

My career in the Foreign Service has been dedicated to the efficient management of resources, whether for our missions in Kabul, Dhaka, or Belgium, here in Washington at the Foreign Service Institute or in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

With the support of Congress, our government is preparing for a large recovery and reconstruction effort in Nepal, and, if confirmed, I hope to draw on my manage-

ment experience and expertise to help ensure the people of Nepal get the best assistance we can give, and that the U.S. taxpayers get the biggest bang for their buck.

As that assistance effort progresses, I would, if confirmed, look forward to working closely with this committee and others in Congress to ensure our work reflects our shared priorities.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

Ms. Gwaltney?

STATEMENT OF SHEILA GWALTNEY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

Ms. GWALTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy.

It is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic. I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee and their staff to promote and protect U.S. interests in the Kyrgyz Republic.

I have had the privilege of serving our country for 31 years as a Foreign Service officer. I have served as Deputy Chief of Mission in the Kyrgyz Republic, Ukraine, and Russia and have worked on issues related to this region for most of my career. I can think of no higher honor than to return to represent the American people as Ambassador of the United States to the Kyrgyz Republic, a country I know and respect for its rich culture, natural beauty, and warm and hospitable people. I deeply appreciate the love and support of my family and friends throughout these years.

The principles that have guided U.S. policy toward the Kyrgyz Republic remain as relevant today as they were when the country attained independence 23 years ago. Our long-term focus has always been to support and respect its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. Our strategic goals are to facilitate and strengthen the Kyrgyz Republic's stability, prosperity, and democracy.

The Kyrgyz Republic is Central Asia's leader in democratic development. In 2011, following the election of President Atambayev, the Kyrgyz Republic accomplished the first democratic transfer of Presidential in Central Asia. The Kyrgyz Republic has an independent Parliament and a vibrant and active civil society, with thousands of nongovernmental organizations working in a wide variety of fields. If confirmed, I would work with the government and people of the Kyrgyz Republic to strengthen the country's democratic institutions, support the continued growth of civil society, and promote respect for human rights.

Our security cooperation with the Kyrgyz Republic is focused on the common goals of countering terrorism, improving border security, and stemming the flow of illegal narcotics. The United States and the Kyrgyz Republic need to work together to fight human trafficking and other transnational threats. If confirmed, I would work to strengthen our existing partnership and continue our joint efforts to address regional and global security challenges.

Expanding markets and opportunities for American business is a top priority worldwide. As Secretary Kerry says, "Foreign policy is economic policy." If confirmed, I would work with the Kyrgyz Republic to bolster private sector-driven economic growth, including the promotion of American economic and business interests. The Kyrgyz Republic has been a regional leader in pursuing market reform and our two nations can work together to expand prosperity for both our countries.

People-to-people contacts remain the bedrock of our diplomatic efforts. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging people throughout the Kyrgyz Republic and strengthening ties between the American and the Kyrgyz people. Public diplomacy efforts promote a positive understanding of the United States and help build deep and lasting ties between our countries.

If confirmed, it would be my honor to ensure that our mission continues to provide U.S. citizens resident in or visiting the Kyrgyz Republic the highest quality service and utmost protection.

Mr. Chairman, one of the great privileges of my career has been the opportunity to help lead teams of Americans serving at our embassies overseas that are dedicated to the advancement of U.S. interests. If confirmed, I would do my best to ensure the safety, security, and well-being of my colleagues and their family members who serve at our Embassy. I would maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct and moral values for our mission, including ensuring that the principles of nondiscrimination and respect for diversity are respected by all in our mission.

If confirmed, I would always be available to this committee, its members, and staff, to discuss and work together in pursuit of U.S. national interests in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you and the other members of the subcommittee and look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Gwaltney follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHEILA GWALTNEY

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic. I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee and their staff to promote and protect U.S. interests in the Kyrgyz Republic.

I have had the privilege of serving our country for 31 years as a Foreign Service officer. I have served as Deputy Chief of Mission in the Kyrgyz Republic, Ukraine and Russia and have worked on issues related to this region for most of my career. I can think of no higher honor than to return to represent the American people as Ambassador of the United States to the Kyrgyz Republic, a country I know and respect for its rich culture, natural beauty, and warm and hospitable people. I deeply appreciate the love and support of my family and friends throughout these years.

The principles that have guided U.S. policy toward the Kyrgyz Republic remain as relevant today as they were when that country attained independence 23 years ago. Our long-term focus has always been to support and respect its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. Our strategic goals are to facilitate and strengthen the Kyrgyz Republic's stability, prosperity, and democracy.

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thousands of nongovernmental organizations working in a wide variety of fields. If confirmed, I would work with the government and people of the Kyrgyz Republic to strengthen the country's democratic institutions, support the continued growth of civil society, and promote respect for human rights.

Our security cooperation with the Kyrgyz Republic is focused on the common goals of countering terrorism, improving border security, and stemming the flow of illegal narcotics. The United States and the Kyrgyz Republic need to work together to fight human trafficking and other transnational threats.If confirmed, I would work to strengthen our existing partnership and continue our joint efforts to address regional and global security challenges.

Expanding markets and opportunities for American business is a top priority worldwide. As Secretary Kerry says, "Foreign policy is economic policy." If confirmed, I would work with the Kyrgyz Republic to bolster private-sector-driven economic growth, including through the promotion of American economic and business interests. The Kyrgyz Republic has been a regional leader in pursuing market reforms and our two nations can work together to expand prosperity for both our countries.

People-to-people contacts remain the bedrock of our diplomatic efforts. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging people throughout the Kyrgyz Republic and strengthening ties between the American and Kyrgyz people. Public diplomacy efforts promote a positive understanding of the United States and help build deep and lasting ties between our countries.

If confirmed, it would be my honor to ensure that our mission continues to provide U.S. citizens residing in or visiting the Kyrgyz Republic the highest quality services and utmost protection in times of need.

Mr. Chairman, one of the great privileges of my career has been the opportunity to help lead teams of Americans serving at our embassies overseas that are dedicated to the advancement of U.S. interests. If confirmed, I would do my best to ensure the safety, security, and well-being of my colleagues and their family members who serve at our Embassy. I would maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct and moral values for our mission, including ensuring that the principles of nondiscrimination and respect for diversity are respected by all in our mission.

If confirmed, I would always be available to this committee, its members and staff, to discuss and work together in pursuit of U.S. national interests in the Kyrgyz Republic.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

We are now going to have a series of questions. I am sorry. I did not mean to pass you up, Mr. Keshap. Your turn. I apologize.

STATEMENT OF ATUL KESHAP, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA AND TO THE REPUBLIC OF THE MALDIVES

Mr. KESHAP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, Senator Shaheen.

It is, indeed, an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and to the Maldives. I am grateful to President Obama for his trust and confidence in nominating me and to Secretary Kerry and my State Department colleagues, particularly Assistant Secretary Nisha Biswal, for their support.

Permit me to begin, Mr. Chair, by thanking my wife, Karen Young Keshap, who is also a Foreign Service officer, for her love and support throughout the two decades we have served our country and for raising our four wonderful children, Carolyn, Emily, James, and Charlotte, who are here today.

I am honored to be here as well with my respected mother, Zoe Antoinette Calvert, who served in the U.S. Foreign Service in the 1950s and 1960s in our Embassies in India and the United Kingdom. I also pay tribute to my late father, Dr. Keshap Chander Sen,

an immigrant to this country from India, who served the United Nations as a development economist.

Mr. Chairman, due to my father's U.N. service, my early years were spent at schools overseas, where the children of American diplomats were my earliest friends. My parents' service and my upbringing instilled in me a firm dedication and commitment to American values and led me to a career in the Foreign Service.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, my top priorities will be to ensure the safety and security of American citizens and to advance the interests and values of the United States and the American people.

In Sri Lanka, our primary interest is to help the people of that island succeed as a prosperous, unified, reconciled, peaceful, and democratic nation.

At the beginning of this year, the people of South Asia's oldest democracy courageously chose a new path of hope and renewal. Since January, Sri Lanka has made progress on challenging issues from fighting corruption and media censorship to beginning the long process of healing after decades of war.

We want to help the Sri Lankan people strengthen democracy, civil society, and human rights, including media freedom and freedom of religion. We want to help build a lasting peace and fellowship among Sri Lanka's ethnic and religious communities, including credible justice, accountability, and reconciliation that can facilitate closure for those who suffered and lost loved ones during the war. It is important to get this right, and the U.N. and the international community can lend useful insight to the efforts of the Sri Lankan people.

Economically, the United States is Sri Lanka's largest export market. While our trade volume is currently relatively low, I believe there is great potential to expand our partnership.

In the security realm, our de-mining efforts have helped farmers return to once war-ravaged land. There is also room for closer cooperation on disaster response and maritime security. Sri Lanka is a regional leader in the fight against cybercrime, a contributor to U.N. peacekeeping operations, and is focused on disrupting drug trafficking and fighting maritime piracy. As we look to advance our interests across the Indo-Pacific, Sri Lanka can be a critical partner.

I will now turn to the Maldives where a young and dynamic populace is on the front lines of climate change. This island nation also faces challenges with youth unemployment, rising extremism, and social unrest. We are worried, however, about the current state of rule of law, due process, and human rights. All citizens should be allowed to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We must remain engaged, however, on several important mutual interests, including countering violent extremism, reducing the impact of climate change, and as with Sri Lanka, ensuring security in the Indian Ocean. We want a better relationship with Maldives so that we can deepen that cooperation. And we want to help it return to the democratic path on which it courageously embarked a few years ago and look forward to strengthening our relationship when that happens.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, Senator Shaheen, the democratic progress, economic growth, and security of Sri Lanka

and Maldives affect not just their own countries, but the broader Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, I will consult closely with this committee and others in Congress to advance U.S. values and interests.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Keshap follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ATUL KESHAP

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and to Maldives. I am grateful to President Obama for his trust and confidence in nominating me, and to Secretary Kerry and my State Department colleagues, particularly Assistant Secretary Nisha Biswal, for their support.

Permit me to begin by thanking my wife, Karen Young Keshap, also a Foreign Service officer, for her love and support throughout the two decades we have served our country, and for raising our four wonderful children. I am honored to be here with my respected Mother, Zoë Antoinette Calvert, who served in the United States Foreign Service at our Embassies in India and the United Kingdom. I also pay tribute to my late father, Dr. Keshap Chander Sen, an immigrant to this country from India, who served the United Nations as a development economist.

Mr. Chairman, due to my father's U.N. service, my early years were spent at schools overseas, where the children of American diplomats were my earliest friends. My parents' service and my upbringing instilled in me a firm dedication and commitment to American values, and led me to a career in the Foreign Service.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, my top priorities will be to ensure the security and safety of American citizens and to advance the interests and values of the United States and the American people.

In Sri Lanka, our primary interest is to help the people of that island succeed as a prosperous, unified, reconciled, peaceful, and democratic nation.

At the beginning of this year, the people of South Asia's oldest democracy courageously chose a new path of hope and renewal. Since January, Sri Lanka has made progress on challenging issues, from fighting corruption and media censorship, to beginning the long process of healing after decades of war.

We want to help the Sri Lankan people strengthen democracy, civil society, and human rights, including media freedom and freedom of religion. We want to help build a lasting peace and fellowship among Sri Lanka's ethnic and religious communities, including credible justice, accountability, and reconciliation that can facilitate closure for those who suffered and lost loved ones during the war. It is important to get this right, and the U.N. and international community can lend useful insight to the efforts of the Sri Lankan people.

Economically, the U.S. is Sri Lanka's largest export market. While our trade volume is relatively low, there is great potential to expand our partnership.

In the security realm, our de-mining efforts have helped farmers return to once-war-ravaged land. There is also room for closer cooperation on disaster response and maritime security in the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka is a regional leader in the fight against cybercrime, a contributor to U.N. Peacekeeping Operations, and is focused on disrupting drug trafficking and fighting maritime piracy. As we look to advance our interests across the Indo-Pacific, Sri Lanka will be a critical partner.

I will now turn to Maldives, where a young and dynamic populace is on the front lines of climate change. This island nation also faces challenges with youth unemployment, rising extremism, and social unrest. We are worried, however, about the current state of rule of law, due process, and human rights. All citizens should be allowed to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We must remain engaged, however, on several important mutual interests, including countering violent extremism, reducing the impact of climate change, and, as with Sri Lanka, ensuring security in the Indian Ocean. We want a better relationship with Maldives, so that we can deepen cooperation. And we want to help it return to the democratic path on which it courageously embarked a few years ago, and look forward to strengthening our relationship when that happens.

Mr. Chairman, the democratic progress, economic growth, and security of Sri Lanka and Maldives affect not just their own countries, but the broader Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, I will consult closely with this committee and others in Congress to advance U.S. values and interests.

Thank you for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

Now we will go through a round of questions from each of us. Since I tried to short you, Mr. Keshap, I will start there.

Your description of what has happened recently in Sri Lanka with the election of the new President certainly reflects, I think, all of our hopes and our good wishes for the people of that country.

I hear your description of it. What is happening today? Is that movement increasing? Is it decreasing? Has it leveled off? Where are we today as far as the movement from the January election?

Mr. KESHAP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I take great heart and confidence in the significant desire of the people of Sri Lanka to embark upon a new path in their country. The election of January 8 reflected a broad-based decision by the people of Sri Lanka to improve relations with the international community, to strengthen democracy and human rights, to reinforce civil society, and to really put Sri Lanka on a path toward a process of reconciliation that can yield a unified peaceful country. If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I would work very hard toward helping the people of Sri Lanka to achieve that vision. Secretary Kerry was in Sri Lanka on May 2, and he spoke very eloquently about the United States desire to help the Sri Lankan people with this.

Obviously, the politics in any democracy are going to be robust and at times messy. There is a lot that needs to be worked out. There are some significant issues that have stemmed from three decades of conflict and post-conflict period. But I think that the United States can be a good friend to the efforts and the vision of the people of Sri Lanka and really contribute to the achievement of that vision. And if confirmed, I look forward to adding my energy to that.

Senator RISCH. We appreciate that.

Regarding the Maldives, you made brief reference to the fact that there is this growing extremism in the country. Recent media reports indicate that about 200 of the young people there are radicals who have left and gone to fight with ISIS. For a small country like that, 200 is a pretty substantial number, particularly in light of the fact that if that is what it is, it is usually underreported. So it is probably higher than that.

What are your thoughts on that?

Mr. KESHAP. Mr. Chairman, it is a matter of concern. And we have an ongoing conversation with the Maldives about this issue and others.

From my perspective, I think that what we want to do is try to encourage the people of Maldives and the Government of Maldives to ensure greater freedoms and democracy for their people. That is the key to ensuring stability, to attracting quality investment, to ensuring economic growth, to giving people opportunity, and hopefully also to countering violent extremism. This is an issue that is very much on the radar, and I appreciate your perspectives on this as well. And if confirmed, I would work very hard with the Government of the Maldives and with partners in the United States who work on countering violent extremism to address this issue.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much. Appreciate that.

Ms. Teplitz, we both made reference in our previous comments to the donor coordination. Tell me a little bit about your thoughts in a little more detail how you plan to attack that.

Ms. TEPLITZ. Thank you, Senator.

I think the donor coordination issue is actually one of the most critical for the success of our programs and assistance to the Nepalese people in this recovery phase. My colleague, Ambassador Bodde, has been leading the donor coordination effort in Kathmandu, and if confirmed, that is something that I intend to do as well. And I think it is essential for the United States to be in front of that effort, both with bilateral donors and multilateral donors, to ensure that assistance is well targeted, not duplicative, and well aligned with the needs of the people of Nepal.

Senator RISCH. Have you found that the people of Nepal are open to the U.S. assistance in that regard as far as donor coordination is concerned?

Ms. TEPLITZ. Sir, my understanding through consultations is that we have a very excellent relationship with the government, with other actors, civil society, nongovernmental organizations. We have had a very productive relationship there, and I see no reason why that would change and look forward, in fact, if confirmed, to engaging in a dialogue with an array of people to best serve the people of Nepal.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. Appreciate that.

Ms. Gwaltney, the country you are going to is an interesting country. And of course, they have the tremendous influence of Russia because of the years that they spent there under their thumb.

Tell me a little bit. The fact that we have withdrawn from the Manas Air Base and the fact that the Chinese are attempting to increase their influence there—what are your thoughts on our prospects for hanging onto our ability to exert hopefully some U.S. influence there?

Ms. GWALTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I agree with your assessment that the Kyrgyz Republic is located at the intersection of many challenges.

First, I would like to state that we are grateful to the Kyrgyz people for the Manas transit center and for the support that they provided to the ISAF forces in Afghanistan. It was never intended to be a permanent facility, and we cooperated very closely with the Kyrgyz Government for an orderly transition to that facility.

More broadly, Senator, to your question about regional influence of Russia and China, for the most part Chinese influence is economic. China is Kyrgyzstan's largest trading partner, and it has made clear that it has an interest in expanding trade and expanding linkages throughout the region. There may be some complementarities between the Chinese view and our view on the importance of increasing economic linkages among the countries of Central Asia and between the countries of Central Asia and other regions.

With regard to Russia, it is true that the Kyrgyz Republic and Russia have a shared history. They have a number of economic linkages. But as recent as the April bilateral consultations that we had with the Kyrgyz Government here in Washington, the Kyrgyz made clear to us their interest in having a strong and productive

relationship with us. We think it is very important that Kyrgyzstan have the space to make its own decisions about its political autonomy, about its economic linkages, about the future of the country. We do not think that it is appropriate for any country to impose a zero sum approach on the Kyrgyz. We think the Kyrgyz should have the right to make decisions for themselves. And if confirmed, Senator, I intend to work very hard to deepen and expand our cooperation with the Kyrgyz Republic.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Finally, Mr. Hale, tell me a little bit about the relationship between the Special Rep for Afghanistan and Pakistan and the Assistant for South and Central Asia and yourself. How do the three of you work as far as that country is concerned? We know the complexity of it, and as I said, those of us who met with the Members of Parliament here in April were impressed with their stated purposes. But tell me how the three of you work in that regard?

Ambassador HALE. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have, obviously, just begun my consultations. I am still serving at the embassy in Beirut. But if confirmed, I look forward to a very close working relationship with both the Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia and the Special Representative.

I myself served as a special envoy. So I can stress from firsthand experience the importance that there be very much a whole-of-government approach to any problem that a special envoy is focused on. A special envoy representative brings a higher level of focus and energy to a particular issue, but success very much depends upon a cooperative relationship with all of the entities in the government, including the Assistant Secretary, for watching the bilateral relationships and the geopolitical and strategic picture in the region.

As Ambassador to Pakistan, if confirmed, I would report to the Special Representative and to the Secretary of State ultimately, but I expect very close integration with the Bureau.

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

Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to all of you. I am sorry that I missed the very beginning of your opening remarks.

Ambassador Hale, thank you for your service after very difficult and tumultuous service in Beirut. I am glad that you are going to get a few years off in Islamabad. I do not know how you managed that, but we are grateful that you accepted the appointment.

We are having a debate here about what constitutes our national security budget. Right now, there is a proposal that the Senate and the House exceed the budget caps for the Defense Department, but that we do not exceed the caps for other spending that many of us would consider to be instrumental to national security. On that list would be our foreign assistance programs.

One of the most important jobs you are going to have is to oversee the implementation of the Kerry-Lugar-Berman act. Can you give us your understanding as to the update of its implementation? I know a little bit of a rocky start in terms of getting the money to the right partners on the ground. But how important is that pro-

gram, is that funding stream to our ability to influence events on the ground inside Pakistan today?

Ambassador HALE. Well, I think it has proven to be critically important. Obviously, our primary goal is to enhance Pakistan's cooperation with us in the counterterrorism field. But I think we have all learned over time that simply relying and focusing on a traditional military-to-military assistance approach is not going to get the full results that we require. Pakistan needs to have stability. It needs to have a government that is addressing the needs of its people. It needs to ensure that the citizenry can turn to the traditional leaders for energy, for education, for all of the things that countries expect to receive from their state. This is a challenge in Pakistan. It is a poor country. It is an emerging democracy.

But the resources that the Kerry-Lugar-Berman process has brought to Pakistan I think have shown results already. They are focused in several key areas. I mentioned energy, but also education, economic growth, health. And a very important category is stabilization so that when Pakistan is clearing out certain areas, like they are today in North Waziristan, of insurgents, that there is an ability and resources to rush in in that golden hour with the kind of services that citizens expect.

Also, I think there is an important point to bear in mind. This relationship serves best our two sides when it is predictable, when the Pakistanis and the Americans who are looking at this relationship can see for years out what the expectations are, what the deliveries will be. And I think for Pakistan to sustain what we feel they must for their interests and ours in terms of security cooperation, it is critical that we be helping them in these developmental fields as well.

Senator MURPHY. We watched video and reports yesterday of Taliban attacks on the Parliament building in Kabul. Very disturbing to watch. There are other advancements that the Taliban has made, taking control of several towns in the north and in the west. And yet, there are also reports of the facilitation of a dialogue between the Taliban and the Afghan Government.

So let me ask a specific question. What is your understanding today of the disposition of ISI with respect to its coordination with some of these elements within Afghanistan? I know we have made a lot of progress there and there were reports of commitments made in Secretary Kerry's last bilateral meetings with respect to the Haqqani network I know separate and aside from some of the issues surrounding the Taliban. But as the situation seems to get more unstable inside Afghanistan, are the Pakistanis able to help us try to address some of those security concerns inside Afghanistan?

Ambassador HALE. Well, Senator, this is a crucial area. It will be one that I will be very much focused on if I am confirmed.

I do think that there has been progress. We have seen, I think, a change in direction by the Pakistani leadership itself. There are opportunities posed by the election of President Ghani in Afghanistan, the emergence of new leaders in Pakistan. And they are talking and beginning to coordinate a strategy.

In May of this year, we saw that Prime Minister Sharif and President Ghani met, and they pledged joint efforts to crack down

on the very groups that you have mentioned based in each state's territory. And they are talking about coordinate operations that will be undertaken to basically eliminate these safe havens along the border area.

Obviously, words are one thing. What we need to see beyond these commitments, important as they are, is actual action on the ground and effective steps to be taken. And I think that that is something we will be, obviously, pressing for, in addition to targeting the militant groups, pushing them and pressurizing them into the political reconciliation process that ultimately is the best means for stabilizing Afghanistan.

Senator MURPHY. To Ms. Teplitz and Mr. Keshap, the same question. You are going to be in countries that have to balance themselves between two great powers, between China and India. Could you just speak to what the U.S. interests are with respect to which way those two countries lean or attack? Why would we care about the direction of either of those countries is having in terms of trying to manage their alliances with those two countries? Mr. Keshap first and then Ms. Teplitz.

Mr. KESHAP. Sure. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

I think the overarching U.S. goal is to try to help the Sri Lankan people strengthen their democracy to the greatest extent possible. By doing that and by fostering the real culture of accountability and meaningful reconciliation for the past, it can lay the foundations for a really prosperous and unified democracy going forward that can be a real platform for stability not only in its region, in the Indian Ocean region, but across the Indo-Pacific.

I do believe that America's most enduring partnerships are with democracies, and so if confirmed, I would very much want to direct my energies and efforts and those of my team toward intensifying the U.S. bilateral relationship in a way that is helpful and relevant to the people——

Senator MURPHY. So you are saying let us just focus on the quality of democracy, or is that a way of saying we should be agnostic as to the question of their balance of allegiance between China and India?

Mr. KESHAP. Senator, I think the issue here is to make sure that Sri Lanka can be a robust and contributing partner to security in the Indian Ocean. And in that regard, they obviously will need to make their own choices, but I do feel that the United States should always be the preferred partner in advancing democratic values, rules-based order, transparent norms, and peaceful settlement of disputes. And I do think we can work in concert with democracies in advancing those strategic goals.

Senator MURPHY. Ms. Teplitz.

Ms. TEPLITZ. Thank you, Senator.

And while I echo many of the sentiments of my colleague here about the situation with Nepal, I think the U.S. interests are for a prosperous and stable South Asia. Nepal is a part of and a partner in achieving that. It does have to balance its two neighbors, China and India, as you have pointed out. And I think our role in that is ensuring at this stage that there are positive and coordinated contributions to the earthquake recovery effort. This actually gives us an opportunity to work very closely not only with the Gov-

ernment of Nepal, with whom we have a very strong relationship, but also with these neighbors to have a very productive outcome and what happens on the ground in Kathmandu is going to be crucial in contributing toward a positive outcome. And if confirmed, I definitely plan to make this careful balance a priority.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. I have a hard stop and I have to go to another meeting. But I wanted to give Senator Shaheen a chance to ask questions and also, Senator Murphy, if you have any more questions. If not, if you would close the meeting for me when we are done.

The record will remain open until close of business on Thursday for questions. So we will put that into the record.

With that, Senator Murphy, I am going to turn this over to you and Senator Shaheen for questions.

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

And thank you all for your willingness to continue to serve. For many of you, you have served for many years, and we very much appreciate that.

I want to pick up, Ambassador Hale, where Senator Murphy left off in terms of the renewed efforts to improve negotiations with Afghanistan and Pakistan and the possibility that that might help with moving the dialogue with the Taliban and hopefully moving towards peace. Can you talk a little bit about what your assessment is of whether they are making progress and whether you see the potential and what the United States can do to help with that effort?

Ambassador HALE. I think it is at an early stage, frankly, to make sweeping judgments, but it does appear that they are on the right path. President Ghani's commitment is very clear. He is staking a lot on this. It is going to require cooperation from Pakistan, and I think, again, Prime Minister Sharif has made the right commitments, said the right words. It has been followed up by travel by General Rahil, the military chief of staff, and by intelligence officers as well.

There has to be actually, as I said earlier, actions that follow up on these commitments, and so we will be judging that. Will there be actions against the safe havens? Will they be cutting off the terrorist financing links? Will they be really putting their influence behind the effort to do what you just said, to encourage meaningful participation in the Afghan-led reconciliation process?

We have talked about this for a while. I think that there is a new opportunity here and a new atmosphere because these are new leaders who are doing this. And I think that the fact that Pakistan itself has suffered so greatly from terrorist attacks, most recently the tragedy in Peshawar, also the Karachi airport attack, that may have contributed to the shift and understanding that Pakistan's national security interests really are at stake here and that the stability and the security and building a democracy in Afghanistan is every bit as important to the people of Pakistan as it is to those in Afghanistan.

All I can say, Senator, is that if confirmed, my job will be primarily to focus on this endeavor, given the stakes for the United States here, and I will put my full effort behind that.

Senator SHAHEEN. And do you see, as Prime Minister Sharif has taken over, any progress on the effort to be more inclusive in Pakistan to reduce what we would call hate crimes in the United States against people who are against non-Muslims?

Ambassador HALE. I believe I will have to get out there myself, if I am confirmed, and make a judgment and come back to you and your staff. But there is a long way to go. So I hope democracy will be more inclined to be respectful of minorities and of its people. I do not know for sure, but you look at the record, and there is, as I said, a tremendous task ahead. Religious minorities, women, other vulnerable segments of that society definitely need protection, and the United States needs to stand up, speak loudly about that, but also work behind the scenes with quiet diplomacy so that Pakistan's elected leaders understand what is at stake here and also to use the tools in our assistance program, which Congress has been so generous in providing so that NGOs and other groups are able to provide all kinds of programs, can help not just with protections but to advance recognition of the importance of the rights of minorities.

Senator SHAHEEN. I visited in Pakistan several years ago right after they had gone into the Swat Valley and were responding to terrorist attacks there and was very impressed with the effort of the government and the military to take on—really to fight against their own citizens to address the terrorism threat. But recent reports have suggested that those efforts have been less successful than I certainly would have hoped based on that effort several years ago. And I wonder if you have any reports on the commitment there and the extent to which the military has been able to take on some of these terrorist elements.

Ambassador HALE. Well, again, I think it is important to remember the context, which is that Pakistanis themselves are suffering greatly from the attacks and threats posed by these groups. That is point one.

Point two. I think any rational analyst of Pakistan and the situation there would recognize that tolerating one group of extremists or insurgents on your soil while just targeting another group is not going to create a stable environment at all. So that is, I think, a very important lesson for any leader in that region to understand.

Third, I think it is important to remember where the successes have been. Pakistan's military leadership and its soldiers have done admirable work in countering the al-Qaeda threat and doing maximum effort to eliminate that. Always gaps, but there have been arrests. There have been some substantial activities. Countering IED's is another area where they export the manufacture and the export of these IED's into Afghanistan. Wrapping that up, again not completed, but substantial efforts have been invested in that.

Working on these areas of insurgents and militants is the next big project, and obviously, there has been progress. I do not have the firsthand experience that you have, Senator, in observing this. I am concerned by your observation and I will want to look into that myself when I get out there. But right now, the campaign in North Waziristan has produced results. It has cleared out substantial areas. It is soaking up safe havens. It is critically important

that other groups not come in now and exploit those areas and that the state remain present not just with the constabulary in the army but, as I said earlier in response to a question, that the whole of government is rushing in there and providing the services and the economy that any Pakistani should expect of their government.

Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MURPHY [presiding]. Thank you, Senator.

I just have two more questions.

Ambassador Hale, there are different reports about the effectiveness of ISIS in establishing a foothold within Pakistan. Many suggest that there is a lot of factors that are going to inhibit their ability to grow more than a handful of activists there.

What is your understanding heading into Islamabad as to how much time you might be spending on this question of ISIS presence inside Pakistan?

Ambassador HALE. Well, again, I will need to get there, if I am confirmed, to judge for myself. But the briefings I have had suggest that so far the ISIS threat is relatively small and contained. But having served, as I have, so many years in the Levant, complacency is the last thing I am taking with me to Pakistan on this front. ISIS has shown that it is potent and it can exploit areas that are ungoverned quite rapidly, and we all know there are ungoverned spaces in Pakistan. So while there may be cultural and other factors that have reduced ISIS's ability at least initially to make inroads, I think we have to be very vigilant about that and make sure that the Pakistani leadership knows, as I think those in the Levant do, that moderate Muslim leaders themselves are the first targets of this phenomenon and therefore have an extra responsibility to preempt them.

Senator MURPHY. Ms. Gwaltney, should we care about the Kyrgyz Republic's joining the Eurasian Union? Is this an economic body that presents any kind of real threat to the United States without membership on the western edge of Russia? Is this something that you think you are going to be spending time on, or should we just let it lie and not worry too much about it?

Ms. GWALTNEY. Thank you, Senator, for you question.

The Kyrgyz Republic is poised to join the Eurasian Economic Union in the upcoming weeks. And one thing that we have made very clear is, of course, first and foremost, our support for free trade, and secondly, equally importantly, is the fact that as a member of the WTO—and the Kyrgyz Republic was the first former Soviet Republic to join the WTO in 1998—but that in its accession to the Eurasian Economic Union, the Kyrgyz Republic needs to be mindful and to uphold its obligations under the WTO.

I think it is early days, sir, to be able to calibrate exactly what the economic impact of accession to this organization will be, but if confirmed, it is certainly something that I will pay a great deal of attention to not only because of Kyrgyzstan's WTO commitments but because I am committed to the promotion of American exports and support for American business. And we will want to keep that space open.

Senator MURPHY. Well, thank you to you all. I am tempted to ask my staff to do some quick research on what parliamentary maneuvers I can use now that I am in charge of the subcommittee. [Laughter.]

But instead, I will just note that the record does stand open. So if you do get followup questions from members of the subcommittee who are not here, I hope you will turn them around quickly.

And with that, using bottled water, this hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:15 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF GLYN TOWNSEND DAVIES, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DAVIES'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. If the Thai junta by the start of 2016 fails to remove restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, and schedule elections, what steps do you think are appropriate to increase pressure on General Prayuth? Do you think it's appropriate to cancel the military exercises known as Cobra Gold? Why not? If Cobra Gold was to continue in 2016, do you agree that it should be kept at a scaled-back level, or scaled back even further?

Answer. Following the coup, we suspended, as required by law, $4.7 million in military assistance funds (FMF, IMET, PKO) until a democratically elected civilian government takes office. We have also cancelled some high-level engagements, military exercises, and training programs with the military and police. We continue to thoroughly review all our engagements with Thailand. If confirmed, I will closely monitor political developments and continue actively to urge the military government to remove restrictions on civil liberties and return Thailand to democratic governance as soon as possible. I will also encourage the military government to make the political reform process as inclusive as possible to reflect the broad diversity of views within the country.

The United States decided to proceed with Cobra Gold 2015 because of the importance of the annual, multilateral exercise in fulfilling the U.S. commitment to regional stability. Bringing together nearly 30 nations, Cobra Gold is the largest such exercise in Asia and has for 30 years been an integral part of the U.S. commitment to strengthen our security engagement in the region. Cancelling the exercise would make it more challenging to sustain our military's interoperability with regional allies and partners.

Cobra Gold 2015 was significantly refocused and scaled down in light of the Thai military's ouster of the civilian government, with an increased focus on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. We have decided to proceed with planning for Cobra Gold 2016 due to its importance in expanding regional cooperation and capacity building. As in 2015, the exercise will be scaled down and focus on building regional cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

If confirmed, I will evaluate the scale and focus of the exercise and seek necessary adjustments in light of political developments in Thailand.

Question. Will you continue to use public diplomacy, as the State Department has since the May 2014 coup, to raise concerns about censorship and arrests of Thai citizens for exercising their rights to free speech and assembly?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will continue to urge Thailand, both publicly and privately, to remove undue restrictions on civil liberties, including limits on fundamental freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly. My priority will be to urge Thailand to institute a genuinely inclusive reform process that reflects the broad diversity of views within the country. As part of this effort, I will continue to use all tools at our disposal, including public diplomacy and diplomatic engagement, to encourage Thailand to lift restrictions on civil liberties and swiftly return to a democratically elected civilian government that respects human rights.

Question. Thailand was designated a Tier 3 country for trafficking in persons in the State Department's 2014 Trafficking in Persons Report. What new ideas do you

have for motivating the Thai Government to get serious about cracking down on human trafficking—not just with isolated raids and written action plans, but serious, sustained, and comprehensive efforts to clamp down on trafficking networks—not just sex trafficking but trafficking of migrant labor and refugees from Burma?

Answer. If confirmed, my arrival as the new Ambassador will provide a fresh opportunity for the United States to highlight both publicly and privately our principled stance against human trafficking. Thailand's Tier 3 ranking in 2014 reflected the shortcomings in the Thai Government's efforts to address the country's vast human trafficking problem. In the 2014 TIP Report, we outlined a series of recommendations for the Thai Government to improve its antitrafficking response.

If confirmed, I will encourage Thailand to conduct thorough investigations of reports of trafficking, including in cases with alleged government complicity, and to bring trafficking offenders to justice. I will also continue to advocate for proactive government efforts to identify and protect victims, and support international and civil society organizations that play a role in identifying and assisting victims and promoting the rights of migrant workers.

The Department's TIP Office currently provides approximately $1 million in funding for three projects in Thailand that are focused on trafficking prevention, protection for victims, raising awareness, promoting access to justice for victims, and increasing investigations and prosecutions of traffickers. Additional project funding for FY15 is currently under consideration.

We will continue to provide specific technical assistance requested by the Thai Government related to trafficking investigations and prosecutions as well as general support for building the capacity of their law enforcement and rule of law institutions. We welcome the efforts made by Thailand to stand up a Human Trafficking in Persons Division in the criminal courts system that will focus exclusively on human trafficking cases. We also welcome reports that the Royal Thai Police has issued over 100 arrest warrants related to migrant smuggling and abuses against migrants—which may include human trafficking, including the warrant for a three-star Army official.

If confirmed, I will continue to encourage Thailand to take robust action to combat human trafficking and eliminate forced labor.

Question. What role do you see for the private sector—for U.S. companies and Thai companies—in fighting the use of forced labor in Thailand?

Answer. The private sector has a key role to play in combating the use of forced labor in Thailand. A significant proportion of trafficking victims in Thailand are found in the seafood industry. For several years, the international community has expressed its concern over the forced labor of foreign migrants in the Thai fishing and onland seafood industries. The United States continues to call on the Thai Government to take significantly greater steps to protect foreign migrants in the fishing and shrimp industries and to punish those who are enslaving foreign workers.

Thailand is the world's third-largest seafood exporter and its products are sold at major retailers around the world. As a result, U.S. and Thai retailers have significant economic influence over the Thai seafood industry and play a vital role in ensuring that supply chains are free from the use of forced labor.

Recently, several large U.S. retailers have engaged major Thai seafood producers to address issues in their supply chain in an effort to combat human trafficking in Thailand's seafood sector. If confirmed, I will encourage private companies to comprehensively address forced labor in their supply chains and help bring together various stakeholders to develop concrete action plans to address this important issue.

RESPONSES OF WILLIAM A. HEIDT, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HEIDT'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. If you are confirmed, the most important event that is going to take place during your tenure is the 2018 elections. Are you prepared to be as outspoken as your predecessor, Bill Todd, in publicly criticizing human rights abuses and restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, and calling out politically motivated misuses of power for what they are? Do you agree that public diplomacy—and outspoken defense of human rights principles—is an important and ultimately essential diplomatic tool in the Cambodia context?

Answer. The 2018 elections will certainly be an important event for Cambodia and represents an opportunity for it to take another step forward toward an enduring and principled democracy. If confirmed, I will advocate both publically and privately for the Cambodian Government to stage free and fair elections, including a free election campaign period in which human rights and the freedoms of speech and assembly are respected. I will also urge and offer assistance to the government to address the irregularities, including voter registration issues, which marked the last election. Public diplomacy is also an important tool, and we will use it, along with other programs including direct diplomacy with government officials and the opposition, targeted assistance aimed at strengthening Cambodia's democratic institutions and people-to-people programs that impart American values to Cambodians. Ambassador Todd has been a tireless advocate for human rights and democracy in Cambodia. If confirmed, I will continue in that tradition.

Question. Do you agree that the 1991 Paris Agreements remain binding and that the United States, as a signatory, continues to have specific obligations to promote democracy and human rights in Cambodia, pursuant to the agreement's terms?

Answer. The United States, both as a signatory to the 1991 Paris Peace Accords and as a matter of principle, places democracy and human rights promotion as one of our top foreign policy goals in Cambodia. If confirmed, I will continue to support the wide variety of programs that help build a stronger civil society, will continue to emphasize the importance of democracy and human rights with both the government and opposition, and will continue to promote educational and cultural exchanges which expose young Cambodians to American values.

Question. The Cambodian Parliament, in the control of Prime Minister Hun Sen, is currently considering a troublingly restrictive new law governing nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). If that law passes in current form, will you work to ensure that the government does not abuse or misuse it to harass or persecute NGOs for their legitimate operations, including reporting and advocacy on human rights issues?

Answer. We are very concerned about the draft NGO law. We have spoken out publicly about the law on a number of occasions and have questioned the need for such a far-reaching law. Our Embassy in Phnom Penh continues to lobby the Cambodian Government to pursue full consultations with civil society as the draft law is debated in the National Assembly. If the law passes in its current form, if confirmed, I would closely monitor the treatment of all NGOs, international and domestic, to ensure that the new law is not used to suppress their rights of freedom of association, assembly, and speech. As appropriate, we will also share best practices from the U.S. and other countries on regulating the NGO sector in a way that facilitates the empowerment of civil society while addressing any concerns the government may have about terrorism or coordination between NGOs and the government. Any NGO law should have a light touch and require minimal governmental oversight so that civil society can flourish and play its essential role in a transparent, rights-respecting democracy.

RESPONSES OF DAVID HALE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HALE'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. I have ongoing concerns about Lashkar-e-Taiba and the threat that it poses to the region. I hope that we will see some progress in countering this group and progress in holding its members accountable for the 2008 tragedy in Mumbai. How will you specifically increase pressure on the Pakistani Government to take action against LeT and its counterpart organization Jamaat-ud-Dawa?

Answer. I share your concerns regarding Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and believe it is critical that the Mumbai trial move forward and that the Government of Pakistan take steps to dismantle LeT. Pakistan's relations with India will continue to be challenged as long as LeT continues to retain any operational capacity. I understand that this issue has been raised specifically by senior officials in this administration, and if confirmed, I absolutely plan to continue our efforts to engage the Pakistani Government.

Question. Several international NGOs have faced challenges in legally registering in Pakistan. Over the past week, Save the Children has been ordered to leave, only to have that order rescinded. This uncertainty has made it very difficult for these

organizations to work in what is already a challenging environment. This is unacceptable. Pakistan needs to understand that undue pressure on these organizations and civil society more broadly will have significant implications for our bilateral relationship. How will you protect the interests of U.S.-funded NGOs in Pakistan?

Answer. The work of international and local NGOs to carry out their development objectives is critical to achieving Pakistan's and our own goals that we have agreed upon with the Government of Pakistan. We respect the Government of Pakistan's need for transparency from INGOs involving their activities within the country. We also agree INGOs must operate within a relevant legal and regulatory framework. However, if confirmed, I will continue to urge the Government of Pakistan to establish a transparent and credible process that will allow INGOs, including Save the Children, to work in Pakistan legally.

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. During my assignments as Ambassador to Jordan and Lebanon, I took specific steps to promote democratic institutions, including through promoting political reforms and elections in Jordan with U.S. Government programming, and by taking active steps to strengthen democratic institutions and civil society in both countries.

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 our previously published Human Rights Reports, the most serious human rights problems in Pakistan remain attacks on religious minorities, extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture, poor implementation and enforcement of laws, gender-based violence, violence against journalists and media organizations, governmental practices and laws which limit freedom of religion (particularly for religious minorities), a weak criminal justice system, widespread forced and exploitative child labor, and human trafficking. I believe that our ongoing rule of law programming in Pakistan has the potential to strengthen the capacity of Pakistani police, prosecutors, and courts—as well as strengthen their relationships with civil society—and is one of the most effective tools we have to promote and protect basic human rights and counter attacks on all Pakistani citizens, including minorities. Our democracy and human rights programming is also very important, especially our support to Pakistani elections and for improving journalist standards and increasing media safety. If confirmed, I plan to advocate for these programs and to engage directly with Pakistani officials on issues of rule of law, democracy, and 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 Pakistan in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. I will assess the situation on the ground in Pakistan once I arrive, but I understand that the security environment is a major challenge to our access to many areas of the country. Moreover, I understand it often takes time to receive approval for some of our programs. If confirmed, I plan to engage directly and consistently with the Government of Pakistan to ensure that we can implement important rule of law, democracy, and human rights programming.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Pakistan?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to regularly meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Pakistan.

Question. If confirmed, please describe steps that you will take to enhance effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly known as the Leahy amendment, within the Embassy as well as steps you would take to accomplish the goal of the law, namely, helping the Government of Pakistan end impunity for human rights violations by security forces.

Answer. If confirmed, I will be personally involved in ensuring robust Leahy vetting occurs, as I have as Ambassador in Lebanon and Jordan. Furthermore, I plan to ensure that the country team, especially officers from the Departments of State and Defense, continue their active engagement in the Leahy vetting process, ensuring that units which have committed gross violations of human rights do not benefit

from U.S. assistance and also helping the Government of Pakistan address and prevent human rights violations. Coordination with our colleagues in Washington will also be critical to ensuring the success of our vetting process.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HALE'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RISCH

Question. A lot of policy decisions regarding Pakistan are currently made by the SRAP (Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan), but the one issue you will be most responsible for is crisis management if there is some incident like the Raymond Davis case or the Mumbai attacks. While there are certainly many other scenarios that could occur, how would you handle these situations?

Answer. I will be absolutely focused on ensuring Embassy Islamabad and the constituent posts in Pakistan are fully prepared to manage a crisis, whether related to policy, a terrorist attack, a natural disaster, or other scenarios, as you rightly note are very possible. Recognizing that no two situations are identical, I have had significant crisis management experience in my career, including during my tenure as Ambassador in Jordan and Lebanon. I understand there is close coordination between Embassy Islamabad and SRAP, as well as with other relevant Department of State offices, including Diplomatic Security, the Office of the Under Secretary for Management, and with interagency partners, including the National Security Staff and the Department of Defense. I will prioritize maintaining these relationships as part of a strong, sustained contingency planning program. Above all I would use my relationship with senior Pakistani officials as needed to manage the situation.

If confirmed, I will work assiduously to build upon and strengthen the critical relationships with the Pakistani leadership that the current Ambassador and Country Team have established—and to ensure that the U.S. has the broadest possible set of contacts with senior Pakistani counterparts that could be drawn upon when needed. Finally, I would like to note that as I have stressed throughout my remarks, I believe the best contingency planning with host governments comes through sustained engagement, and increasing cooperation on areas of mutual interest. I believe this is the path our relations with Pakistan are currently on, and I look forward to working to further strengthen that engagement in support of our national interests.

Question. China is increasingly active in Pakistan, more than they have ever been. What do you believe is their goal in the Pakistan and the region? Do you think they will succeed and how would that success affect the U.S. relationship with Pakistan?

Answer. China and Pakistan have long shared close ties. We and China share a concern about Pakistan's stability, and wish to see the elimination of terrorist safe havens and support networks. We also share a desire to see a Pakistan that is economically stable, which will require a resolution to Pakistan's long-term energy crisis and an expansion in Pakistan's regional economic integration with its neighbors, especially India and Afghanistan. The administration believes the best approach is to expand engagement with both China and Pakistan on all issues, and seek to cooperate in areas of common interest. At a basic level, we do not view Pakistan as a theater for zero-sum competition between the United States and China. We believe China's engagement in Pakistan potentially can contribute to peace and stability in Pakistan and the broader region. This would help to achieve U.S. national security objectives in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the broader region.

Question. What success have we seen come from the Strategic Dialogue beyond formally banning the Haqqani network from Pakistan?

Answer. The Strategic Dialogue provides a comprehensive framework for our engagement with Pakistan, ensuring that the issues of most importance to our two governments are addressed in a significant and sustained manner, by senior officials from each side. There have been a number of notable successes: a greater focus on nuclear security and nonproliferation; progress on countering improvised explosive devices ("C–IED"); close cooperation on counterterrorism objectives and delivery of the hardware needed to achieve those objectives; increased trade, investment opportunities, and reform efforts; improvements in the energy sector; and greater access to educational opportunities.

However, I would note that the most important outcome of the Strategic Dialogue, as relaunched by Secretary Kerry in August 2013, is that it has put the bilateral relationship on a firmer foundation, grounded in our respective interests, and characterized by a more regular, forthright exchange of views—often in private. This

progress is carried forward by our daily engagements in Pakistan, involving a robust Country Team representing the full range of U.S. departments and agencies.

Question. Can Pakistan truly grow economically and reduce its dependence on Western aid without a rapprochement with India? How do you assess the potential?

Answer. We absolutely believe that greater regional trade is important for the stability, prosperity, and security of the region. We will continue to encourage India and Pakistan to find ways to increase trade and cross-border connections. However, Pakistan has a significant number of domestic reforms that are required to grow its economy, regardless of its international trade. Many factors, including reform and energy sector investments can help Pakistan grow economically. This is why we have supported PM Nawaz Sharif's economic agenda, the government's engagement with the IMF, and used our assistance funds and our Strategic Dialogue to promote reform. As a result Pakistan is in better macroeconomic health than when it began the IMF program.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HALE'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Pakistan is one of the worst violators of religious freedom in the world, in particular due, to the combination of government persecution through the blasphemy and anti-Ahmadi laws and government inaction by not arresting perpetrators of mob violence or cracking down on militant groups. However, the State Department never has designated Pakistan as a "country of particular concern" for its particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

♦ How can this be explained?

Answer. Human rights and religious freedom are among our highest objectives worldwide and in Pakistan. If confirmed, I will plan to raise these issues at the highest levels of the Pakistani Government and will use all the tools at my disposal to promote progress in these areas, recognizing that we also have many other critical foreign policy objectives in Pakistan. If I am confirmed, once I am in Pakistan I will make my own assessment of what may be effective and will consult closely with SRAP, DRL, the Secretary, and others—including Congress—on any consideration of a CPC designation.

Question. Sadly, no religious community is immune from violence in Pakistan. Recent months have witnessed an attack on two churches in Lahore, a brazen attack on the busload of Ismaili Muslims in Karachi, ongoing violence against Ahmadi Muslims, and targeted attacks against Shia Muslims. Despite the Pakistani Supreme Court ordering the government to create special protection forces for religious minorities, no such actions have been taken.

♦ What will you do to press the Pakistani Government to better protect religious minorities and crack down on militant groups that target religious communities? How can the U.S. Government provide support toward this effort?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to raise protection for religious minorities at the highest levels of the Pakistani Government. Our immediate priority should be to identify the obstacles to improving religious freedom conditions in Pakistan and think creatively about ways to work with the Government of Pakistan to change those circumstances for the better. I believe the U.S. Government should continue to consult with the Government of Pakistan on how to prevent further atrocities against religious minorities, including by sharing information about attacks, designating the leaders of the organizations as terrorists both domestically and at the U.N., and assisting with rule of law and investigations training for Pakistani law enforcement officials.

Question. While Pakistan overwhelmingly meets the country of particular concern (CPC) threshold, the U.S. Government can take other steps. For instance, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has recommended that the U.S. Government create a special bilateral engagement with the Pakistan Minorities Commission and religious minorities in Parliament. There are other possibilities for positive engagement, such as training for provincial minority affairs offices.

♦ What actions will you take to positively engage Pakistan on these issues? Would you support a special U.S./Pakistan bilateral engagement around issues of religious tolerance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will look closely at the USCIRF recommendations. Upon initial review, I see no impediment to establishing a deeper dialogue with the Gov-

ernment of Pakistan to explore ways to promote religious freedom and protect religious minorities. The IRF Act gives us several tools to promote religious freedom, CPC designations being only one of them. Additional tools include bilateral and multilateral engagement, denying visas to the United States to foreign government officials who are responsible for severe violations of religious freedom, and implementing programming to promote religious tolerance. The Government of Pakistan has engaged us more vigorously in the aftermath of the attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar, the Government of Pakistan has engaged with us on issues related to countering violent extremism. I believe, given Pakistan's stated recognition of the threat posed to its citizens by those who foment sectarian tension, that there is reason to expect greater cooperation in this critical area.

Question. Pakistan leads the world in jailing people for blasphemy. According to USCIRF, almost 40 people either are on death row or serving life sentences for the "crime" of blasphemy, a statistic unmatched anywhere else in the world. People like Aasia Bibi continue to be jailed, while others are killed by mobs—such as the Christian couple that was lynched to death in November and their bodies were thrown into a brick kiln. Pakistanis brave enough to confront blasphemy risk their lives including Salaman Taseer, Shahbaz Bhatti, and more recently human rights lawyer Rashid Rehman.

- As Pakistan is considering adding much-needed procedural safeguards to the blasphemy law, how will you work to proactively encourage Pakistan to see that these changes are made? How can you press the Pakistanis to arrest and aggressively prosecute participants in mob violence, as oftentimes they are charged but never prosecuted?

Answer. The Government of Pakistan's consideration of adding procedural safeguards to protect against abuse of the blasphemy law is a positive step, and one that I will support actively in my engagement with senior Pakistani officials, if confirmed. All too often, the blasphemy laws are abused by private citizens with other objectives in mind, such as to gain an advantage in land disputes, or as retribution for other disputes. I understand that as a matter of current policy, we regularly express our concerns to Pakistani authorities about the state of religious freedom in Pakistan. We continue to encourage the Pakistani Government to repeal the blasphemy law, and to hold accountable those who commit acts of violence in the name of religion. The administration urges fair and transparent proceedings where defendants and lawyers can safely argue their cases.

If confirmed, upon my arrival it will be a personal priority in Pakistan to see that more can be done to encourage the change that we seek.

Question. In recent weeks, Pakistan has been taking actions to heavily regulate NGOs operating in their country, including temporarily shutting down Save the Children's offices. The government is considering new NGO law which would require NGOs to operate under the Ministry of Interior.

- If this law is passed, will you work to ensure that the government does not abuse or misuse it to harass or persecute NGOs for their legitimate operations, including reporting and advocacy on human rights issues?

Answer. The work of international and local NGOs to carry out their development objectives is critical to achieving Pakistan's and our own goals that we have agreed upon with the Government of Pakistan. NGOs must operate within the regulations of the host government. If confirmed, I intend to work with the Government of Pakistan to ensure that NGOs are able to operate legally and effectively.

RESPONSES OF SHEILA GWALTNEY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE GWALTNEY'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RISCH

Question. U.S. policy has sought to support regional integration as a way to improve economic success. Given the withdrawal of the U.S. from Manas Air Base, the deep relationship with Russia, the growing influence of China in the region, and difficult relations with neighbors, what prospects do you have for U.S. policy in Kyrgyz Republic? What can we realistically accomplish?

Answer. Geographic proximity, economic links, and historical ties give Russia and China strong influence in the region. The Kyrgyz people have long had complex relationships with both of those nations. We fully support the aspirations of the Kyrgyz Republic to pursue a multivector foreign and economic policy, and we do not

accept any assertions that the Kyrgyz Republic must choose between the United States and Russia or China.

Since Kyrgyzstan's independence nearly 24 years ago, our bilateral relationship has been based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. The basis of our engagement is to support a sovereign, independent, stable, and secure state that has good relations with its neighbors and is able to provide opportunities for its people. For example, we welcomed the strong support of the Kyrgyz Republic for the CASA–1000 energy project as an example of better regional integration and cooperation. As recently as April bilateral consultations, the Kyrgyz Government has made clear its strong interest in maintaining a cooperative, productive relationship with the United States.

U.S. engagement since 1991 has made an important impact on the Kyrgyz Republic. Our assistance programs have made significant contributions to help build democratic institutions, to promote stability and prosperity in the country, to support educational exchanges, and to enhance opportunities for U.S. businesses through an improved investment climate.

The Kyrgyz Republic has a talented population with half of its citizens under the age of 25. Over 1,000 of these young men and women have traveled to the United States through the Future Leaders Exchange Program, and many more have experienced the people and values of the United States through our public diplomacy programs and through interaction with the over 1,000 Peace Corps Volunteers who have served in the Kyrgyz Republic. If confirmed, my team and I will work energetically to strengthen, deepen, and broaden the relationship between the United States and the Kyrgyz Republic.

Question. While U.S. policy has focused on support for democratic institutions in the country, how do you see the upcoming parliamentary elections proceeding? Will we see active participation from civil society or should we be concerned about undue influence?

Answer. The United States is committed to supporting the Kyrgyz Republic's continued democratic development. While democracy is broader than just elections, they are a critical component. We encourage the Kyrgyz Republic to strengthen its democratic gains by holding free and fair elections in conformity with international standards. The Kyrgyz Republic has held three successful national elections since the 2010 revolution—the constitutional referendum in 2010, the parliamentary elections in 2010, and the Presidential election in 2011. The upcoming 2015 parliamentary election and Presidential elections in 2017 will be key indicators of the country's democratic progress.

The Kyrgyz Republic has a vibrant civil society, whose active participation helps reinforce the country's young democracy. In previous elections, the national NGO Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society played an exceptional role monitoring the voting process. There remain, however, significant administrative capacity challenges in the Kyrgyz Republic's ability to manage elections. If confirmed, I plan to work closely with civil society and the Kyrgyz Government to assist that nation to solidify its democratic institutions.

Question. With the drawdown in Afghanistan what concerns do you have regarding an increase in terrorism and drug trafficking in the country? Are we seeing an actual increase or is the government overstating what is occurring?

Answer. As noted in the Department of State's Country Report on Terrorism, there were no reported terrorist attacks in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2014, although security forces arrested several individuals suspected of affiliation with terrorist organizations and terrorist activities abroad. Drug trafficking routes through Central Asia are a long-standing concern and, if confirmed, I intend to work with the Kyrgyz Government and international partners to increase local capacity and enhance regional cooperation to combat this problem.

Our security cooperation with the Kyrgyz Republic focuses on enhancing border security, strengthening regional counternarcotics efforts, countering terrorism and violent extremism, promoting professional conduct and respect for human rights by security forces, and working toward a stable, secure Afghanistan. We have developed the Central Asia Counternarcotics Initiative (CACI) in coordination with the Drug Enforcement Administration, to intensify efforts against drug trafficking in the region. Expanding our cooperation in this arena not only helps the Kyrgyz Republic deal with security challenges, it helps solidify our diplomatic ties and deepen and broaden our partnerships.

The government of the Kyrgyz Republic is increasingly aware of the threat of terrorism in the region and the dangers of recruitment of Kyrgyz citizens by violent extremist organizations. The Kyrgyz Republicsent a high-level delegation to attend

the White House summit on countering violent extremism in February. With respect to Afghanistan, in April 2015, a U.S interagency Afghanistan Briefing Team traveled to the Kyrgyz Republic to share assessments and explore avenues for better cooperation with top officials in the Kyrgyz Government. The Kyrgyz Government has voiced its support for the current Afghan Government and has embraced the CASA–1000 project that is planned to supply electricity in support of Afghanistan's development.

RESPONSES OF ATUL KESHAP, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA AND TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KESHAP'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. What is the extent of U.S. security cooperation with Sri Lanka? What are the specific conditions under which the U.S. would enhance our security relationship with Sri Lanka? What specific progress on accountability and reconciliation will the U.S. require from the Sri Lankans before moving forward on the security relationship?

Answer. U.S. security assistance for Sri Lanka remains limited by the policies that were in place during the previous government and focuses on four areas key to our national interests: maritime security, disaster response, peacekeeping training, and educational support. Examples include the provision of demining equipment and training to help clear mines remaining after the civil war. For the expenditure of approximately $500,000 in the last year, Sri Lankan students have attended courses including International Law of Military Operations, Gender-Based Violence and Women's Health, Law of Armed Conflict and Human Rights, Legal Aspects of Combating Corruption, and Approaches for the Re-integration of Ex-Combatants.

We can envision benefits to both our countries, and to peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region as a result of a strengthened military relationship contingent upon progress on accountability, human rights, and reconciliation. Future security assistance and programming will be greatly influenced by successful initiatives to credibly hold individuals accountable for human rights violations or violations of international humanitarian law as well as greater institutional reforms. We will continue to vet those security force units that seek U.S. assistance, and consistent with U.S. law and policy, we will not provide assistance to a unit if we have credible information that it committed a gross violation of human rights.

If confirmed, I will continue to urge reforms to ensure the Sri Lanka military functions as a professional and accountable peacetime force, dedicated to human rights, rule of law, and democracy.

Question. What are the obstacles to reaching reconciliation with Tamil communities in Sri Lanka? How might the United States best assist in this process? Do you support the release of the UNHRC on war crimes in Sri Lanka report this year?

Answer. Reconciliation will not happen all at once; it requires time and concrete actions. The current situation in Sri Lanka developed over 30 years of conflict and several difficult post-conflict years. The Sirisena government is working to restore mutual trust and confidence, for the benefit of all Sri Lankans of all ethnicities and religions. For the sake of future peace and prosperity, it is vitally important to get this right.

The Sirisena government has made a public commitment to take credible steps to promote justice, accountability, and reconciliation in relation to human rights abuses and conflict-related crimes. Such processes are never easy, but the United States will continue to support credible efforts to address these important and difficult issues in a way that facilitates reconciliation as well as a durable and lasting peace for the Sri Lankan people.

We support the release of the U.N. investigation's report as part of building a peaceful, prosperous, inclusive Sri Lanka. Our assistance program over the last 5 years has sought to strengthen the participation of Tamil and other minority and marginalized communities. Moving forward, our expanding program would continue those efforts, including through economic empowerment, strengthening civil society, fostering inclusion of diverse religious and community leaders, and helping support the rule of law.

Question. Democratic backsliding in the Maldives is very concerning and is potentially damaging to the U.S.-Maldives bilateral relationship including military to military activities. How will you emphasize the importance of the rule of law in the

Maldives? What levers does the United States have to encourage a more democratic course in the country?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to express our government's concern at the lack of appropriate criminal procedures during recent trials of political figures, including reports that the trials fell well short of Maldivian and international standards for due process. We are also concerned about actions that undermine democratic institutions and fundamental freedoms, including freedoms of expression and assembly.

If confirmed, I would work with the government, civil society groups, and international partners to urge the Maldivian Government to uphold its commitments to rule of law, democratic principles, and human rights.

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to promote human rights and democracy? What is the impact of your actions? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. I place the highest emphasis on advancing American values of human rights, religious freedom, and democracy. As human rights officer at our Embassy in Morocco early in my career, I learned how crucial it is to help ensure strong protections for religious and ethnic minorities and NGO and political activists.

In assignments working on South Asia spanning the past decade, I engaged with governments across the region to urge greater protection for women, religious minorities, civil society, human rights defenders, and labor rights activists, and worked to raise awareness of the perniciousness of trafficking in persons.

While progress in these areas can be slow, I am most gratified by efforts undertaken by the United States, including at the United Nations in Geneva, to highlight the need for a credible process of reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

As Office Director for U.N. Human Rights from 2008–2010, as Office Director for Sri Lanka 2010–2012, and as Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asia, 2013 to present, I contributed to efforts by the U.S. and other countries to highlight this matter in the U.N. Human Rights Council, including the passage of three important resolutions on Sri Lanka.

The political transition brought about by the January election has provided the opportunity for Sri Lanka to achieve enduring peace and prosperity, and true reconciliation if the government continues to advance democracy, human rights, accountability and political inclusion.

If confirmed, I would strive fully to advance the cause of democracy and human rights in Sri Lanka and Maldives.

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

Answer. We want to help the Sri Lankan people strengthen democracy, civil society, and human rights, including freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief. We want to help build a lasting peace and fellowship among Sri Lanka's ethnic and religious communities, including credible justice, accountability, and reconciliation that can facilitate closure for those who suffered and lost loved ones during the war.

It is important to get this right, and the U.N. and international community can lend useful insight to the efforts of the Sri Lankan people. We would assess how best to focus resources, including our assistance budget and Mission Colombo's expertise, to helping Sri Lankan-led efforts to facilitate closure.

In Maldives, we are worried about the current state of human rights, rule of law, and lack of due process. All citizens should be allowed to exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

If confirmed, I would continue to urge the Maldivian Government to take steps to restore confidence in democracy and the rule of law, including through social media, a powerful vehicle for information-sharing in Maldives. I would continue to encourage and support democracy, judicial independence, and the rule of law in Maldives, joined by regional and international partners who share our strong concerns.

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 Sri Lanka and Maldives in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. In Sri Lanka, for any justice and accountability process to be meaningful, it needs to be led and owned by the Sri Lankan people and needs to be credible

and transparent. This is too complex a process for any country to tackle by itself. Sri Lanka can benefit from the assistance of the international community, and we stand ready to support those efforts.

In Maldives, the challenges include politically motivated prosecutions against critics of the courts and government as well as attacks on independent institutions and civil liberties. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Maldivian Government to take steps to restore confidence in its hard-fought democracy.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Sri Lanka and Maldives?

Answer. Yes, absolutely; I welcome such opportunities for dialogue. In my previous assignments I have cultivated robust consultation with local and international human rights organizations. If confirmed, I will further this commitment as I believe maintaining this dialogue is crucial to informing U.S. Government policies, advancing our values, and ensuring all voices are heard.

Question. If confirmed, please describe steps that you will take to enhance effective implementation of Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly known as the Leahy amendment, within the Embassy.

Answer. Human rights vetting consistent with the Leahy amendment is an integral and essential part of U.S. assistance programs worldwide. The Leahy amendment helps safeguard against perpetrators of gross violations of human rights from benefiting from our training and assistance programs. If confirmed, I will ensure Embassy Colombo will continue scrupulously to adhere to the requirements of the Leahy amendment, and the Department will vet all potential security assistance recipients.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KESHAP'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RISCH

Question. Given the new government how do you see Sri Lanka's rebalance toward China, the United States, and India? What policies should we be considering to assist their reforms? Do you believe their shift is sustainable?

Answer. Our overarching goal is to see Sri Lanka become more prosperous, stable, and secure to the benefit of all of its citizens and to the broader region. The United States promotes regional integration and supports Sri Lanka's cooperation with its neighbors across the Indo-Pacific region, particularly with democracies such as India, with which Sri Lanka shares bonds of history, culture, and traditions of democracy and rule of law. To the extent that India, China, and others in the region lend their energy and support to the efforts of Sri Lanka to strengthen their democracy and enhance their productivity, we welcome those efforts. To the extent that countries in the region contribute to and uphold a rules-based order, commit themselves to peaceful resolution of disputes, and defend freedom of navigation and commerce, we welcome those efforts. To the extent that countries in the region engage in trade and investment that meets the highest ethical and environmental standards, as exhibited by American companies, it can have a positive impact on living standards and prosperity.

We welcome the new Sri Lankan Government's professed desire to partner more closely with the United States, the United Nations, and the international community. It is for the people of Sri Lanka to determine their politics, but the international community can and should help the Sri Lankan people strengthen democracy, civil society, and human rights, including freedom of expression, including by the media, and freedom of religion.

If confirmed, I would work with the government, civil society, and other partners to play a constructive role in helping Sri Lanka achieve its potential and deliver on the ambitions of its people, including meaningful, concrete steps to address outstanding concerns related to democratic governance, respect for human rights, reconciliation, justice, and accountability.

I do believe the shift is sustainable. The Sri Lanka voters turned out in record numbers to send a clear signal that they want to return their country to its roots of democracy, inclusiveness, and rule of law. I believe the people of Sri Lanka will continue to insist that the government move in that direction, and, if confirmed, I would seek to add my energy to U.S. efforts to help them realize their positive vision.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KESHAP'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. President Maithripala Sirisena is positioned to lead his country in a new direction that respects religious diversity and freedom. He said in a February 2015 speech, "While protecting the country's main religion Buddhism, we also protect the rights and freedom of Hindu, Muslim, and Catholic people in practicing their religion and create consensus among them to build up this country." Since coming into office, he has created three new ministries to handle religious affairs for the Muslim, Christian, and Hindu communities respectively. In addition, the special police unit created by the former government has been disbanded.

- How can the U.S. Government strongly encourage the positive movement that has occurred in recent months? What programs can be undertaken to deepen respect for religious diversity and religious freedom?

Answer. The United States promotes respect for religious diversity and freedom of religion or belief and strongly supports the Sri Lankan Government's recent steps to foster reconciliation between Sri Lanka's religious communities. In a welcome departure from the politics of the recent past, President Sirisena and his administration have exhibited in word and deed a genuine desire to achieve the pluralistic society voters demanded in January.

It is for the people of Sri Lanka to determine their politics, but the international community and the U.S. can, and should, help the Sri Lankan people strengthen civil society and human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. If confirmed, I would work with the U.S. Congress, the Sri Lankan Government, civil society, religious leaders and others to promote respect for freedom of religion or belief and religious diversity, and would work to further U.S. Embassy programs aimed at bringing religious communities together.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KESHAP'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR COONS

Question. Reconciliation Efforts.—The government of President Sirisena, elected in January 2015, has made reconciliation one of its primary goals. What concrete steps has the government taken toward reconciliation and what more do you think needs to be done? For instance, the Tamil National Alliance said right after the election that the release of political prisoners, return of land, and demilitarization were immediately actionable to show steps toward reconciliation. Have these been accomplished? Will Tamils, Muslims, and other minority groups be given equal opportunities under this new government?

Answer. The Sirisena government has made a public commitment to take credible steps to promote justice, accountability, and reconciliation in relation to human rights violations and abuses. Such processes are always challenging, but the United States will continue to support credible efforts to address these important and difficult issues in a way that facilitates reconciliation as well as a durable and lasting peace for the Sri Lankan people. We have welcomed important steps taken by the Sirisena administration, including releasing political prisoners on bail and returning some land in the North and East, as well as gestures of conciliation, such as allowing the singing of the National Anthem in Tamil.

The Sri Lanka voters turned out in record numbers to send a clear signal that they want to return their country to its roots of democracy, inclusiveness, and rule of law. While it is for the people of Sri Lanka to determine their politics, the administration wants to help the Sri Lankan people strengthen democracy, civil society, and respect for human rights and to pursue an inclusive government that allows for meaningful participation by all Sri Lankans of all ethnic and religious groups. If confirmed, that will be my goal as well.

Question. UNHRC Role.—Since the United States joined the U.N. Human Rights Council in 2012, we have led three resolutions on Sri Lanka regarding accountability for crimes committed during and after the war, and on ongoing human rights abuses. Should Sri Lanka stay on the agenda of the UNHRC? Does the United States plan to lead a fourth resolution on Sri Lanka before the end of our term in December 2015? What are the dangers inherent in allowing Sri Lanka to slip from international attention, such that accountability is pursued unchecked by international actors through domestic efforts on the island?

Answer. We welcome the new government's professed desire to partner more closely with the United States, the United Nations, and the international commu-

nity. We are heartened by the new government's engagement with the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner in Geneva.

Over the past 5 years, the United States has been steadfast in pursuit of justice, accountability, and reconciliation. The new government in Sri Lanka presents an opportunity for a more collaborative approach. Our focus is on urging a credible process. It is too early at this juncture to determine what our position will be later this year. If confirmed, I will work to encourage Sri Lankan engagement with the U.N. on these vitally important issues, consistent with the attention and focus we have dedicated in recent years.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2015

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

Hon. Michele Thoren Bond, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Consular Affairs)
Dr. Sarah Mendelson, of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Representative on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Corker, Isakson, and Cardin.

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

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

We thank you for being here.

Today the committee will consider two nominees, the Hon. Michele Bond to be Assistant Secretary of State of Consular Affairs, and Dr. Sarah Mendelson to be the Representative of the United States on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations with the rank of Ambassador, as well as to be the Alternate Representative of the United States to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs is responsible for issuing passports to Americans looking to travel abroad, issuing visas to people around the world trying to emigrate or to visit the United States, and assisting American citizens abroad in emergency and nonemergency situations. These duties also include the facilitation of international adoptions, and we certainly are very interested in that, and thank you for your work relative to that in the past.

Ambassador Bond is an accomplished consular officer and currently the Acting Assistant Secretary. I look forward to hearing her views on how to improve the passport and visa issuance processes and better serve Americans abroad. I appreciate Ambassador Bond's efforts regarding the suspension of exit permits and the DRC, especially with her visit this spring to press the Congolese

to issue permits to U.S. citizens who have adopted children there. One of our staffers, Sarah Downs, has spent inordinate amounts of time traveling there herself, and again we thank you for your efforts on behalf of so many people. I look forward to hearing about the Bureau's strategy to work to resolve this issue as the DRC Government reviews and approves adoption cases and embarks on implementing adoption reform legislation.

The U.S. Representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations—that is a mouthful—ECOSOC, represents the United States on intergovernmental bodies which oversee the U.N.'s work on economic, social, and human rights issues, and the U.N.'s field operations in the areas of development, post-conflict peace-building, and humanitarian assistance.

The Council's functions and powers include initiating studies and reports on human welfare and the quality of life which drives action at the U.N. General Assembly. Modern slavery is inflicted on as many as 27 million men, women, and children around the globe. Senator Cardin and myself and others have passed unanimously out of this committee a bill that we think can have transformative effects on this issue if we can all make it happen in the appropriate way, so we obviously are very interested in your nomination. It is obviously a very important issue. I look forward to hearing and learning more how you will address this in your new role, if confirmed.

Lastly, with the U.N. General Assembly voting on the Sustainable Development Goals in September, the United States will require strong representation. I hope you can provide some insights on how this process will affect U.S. interests.

I thank you for being here. I know you are going to introduce your families in just a moment. We welcome them.

And with that, I will turn it over to our ranking member.

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

Senator CARDIN. Well, let me thank Senator Corker for arranging this hearing on two very important nominations. I thank you very much for accommodating this hearing. I know it is a very busy time for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, but one of our principal responsibilities is to timely consider President Obama's nominees, so thank you very much for scheduling these hearings.

And, Mr. Chairman, I want to welcome two nominees that I have adopted and represent in the United States Senate, along with Senator Mikulski. You see, they are from the District of Columbia, and we have not seen fit to give them full representation here in the United States Congress. So Senator Mikulski and I, recognizing that the District is former Maryland land, we have adopted the residents.

The CHAIRMAN. Actually, I think that is a resolution to the issue, to become a part of Maryland and be done with it. [Laughter.]

Senator CARDIN. One of the problems that we talk about is adoptions, so maybe this is an issue that we will be able to take up.

Welcome to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I thank both of you for your public service and your willingness to serve our country in two very important positions during a very trying

time. And I thank your families, because this truly is a family sacrifice. I know at least in one case it has been a family effort; both serve in the Foreign Service. So thank you both, and thank your families for what you are doing.

The mission of the Bureau of Consular Affairs is to protect the lives and interests of American citizens abroad, and we thank you for that. There are a lot of challenges there. Foreign Service officers perform incredible service to our country. They deal with Americans who have trouble abroad, and that become a major problem for Foreign Service officers. They deal with foreign-sourced adoptions, which is an area that Senator Corker raised that we are very concerned about where some heart-rendering challenges have been imposed to prevent the completion of adoptions. And the visa processing system.

Mr. Chairman, I was just, last week, in Havana meeting with our Foreign Service officers as they were handling applications. I must tell you, that is an incredible chore. They are undermanned from the point of view of the resources that they have, and there is a lot of pressure that they get everything right, and I thank them very much for their service.

In regards to hostage situations, I just want to mention that, because President Obama came out last week with a comprehensive rewrite of how we are going to handle circumstances such as the Weinstein situation we had in Maryland where a USAID worker was kidnapped and ultimately he lost his life. The administration is reorganizing that. I have introduced legislation, along with Senator Cornyn, so that we have a single-point person in order to deal with it, and I am hopeful that we can adopt the administration's proposal but improve it with a single point of contact person that we can hold accountable for coordinating all activities, but it also gives the family an opportunity to have a single-point contact, which was very much missing in the Weinstein case. So we might want to talk about that also during the nomination confirmation process.

It is also a pleasure to welcome Ms. Mendelson to today's hearing. The U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Economic and Social Council plays an important role in the multilateral diplomacy to advance the U.S. interests in strengthening human rights, sustainable development, and effective humanitarian assistance.

I particularly want to focus on the Millennium Development Goals because that is very timely right now. I have had a chance to meet with Helen Clark of the United Nations. I also represent the United States Senate, along with Senator Johnson, at the U.N. as part of our mission, and I must tell you, I was encouraged and disappointed.

The Millennium Development Goals have been incredibly successful, saved millions of lives. It has produced a worldwide effort to use all resources, including nongovernmental resources, to achieve demonstrable progress on saving young people, babies, helping women, et cetera.

So the next Millennium Development Goals I hoped would get the same serious attention. Instead, I saw a list, I think it was 17 proposed goals, which is too many. I agree, there are too many. But number 16 is the one I think should probably be number 1, and

I am concerned it is getting lost in the shuffle, and that is the concern about corruption and good governance which is so corrosive globally and so responsible for so many of the problems that we face.

So I would hope that I will get a commitment here to make sure that we fight hard to make that part of the Millennium Development Goals and that we elevate its importance in our efforts to try to deal with that issue.

There are many other issues I could talk about. I will mention one other that concerns me, the United Nations Family Planning Association. I say that because the Senate Republican appropriators this week inhibited funding to the United Nations Family Planning Association. I mention that because that is a source of funding right now for what we do in Syria and Jordan that provides normal childbirth delivery services to refugee camps that I am concerned could be cut off that could affect the safety and lives of many maternal cases. I would hope that we would find a strategy to make sure that that type of vital link to child safety is maintained, and I would welcome Dr. Mendelson's comments on this issue and many others.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to our discussion.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin. I appreciate the way that we were able to work together and make things happen, and certainly coordinating this meeting is much appreciated, so thank you.

I will now turn to our nominees, the Hon. Michele Bond and Dr. Sarah Mendelson.

Our first nominee is Michele Bond, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister Counselor with nearly 40 years of experience. She currently serves as Acting Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs. Ambassador Bond has served in a range of posts at home and abroad, including Ambassador to Lesotho from 2010 to 2012.

Our second nominee is Sarah Mendelson, who currently serves as Senior Advisor and Director of Human Rights Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Prior to joining the CSIS, Dr. Mendelson was Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance at USAID.

We want to thank you very much for being here and sharing your thoughts. Your full statements will be entered into the record without objection, and if you would just give us about a 5-minute introduction, we will ask a few questions. I know you want to introduce your families, but thank you for being here, and we will start with Ambassador Bond.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MICHELE THOREN BOND, NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Ms. BOND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the Foreign Relations Committee. It is the honor of a lifetime to be here with you this morning. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they placed in me by selecting me for this position.

I am proud to introduce three of our four children, Robert, Elizabeth, and Lillian Bond. My family is the center of my life. I could not have been successful without their love and support. My family is also one of dedicated public servants, and that is why my husband and our younger son cannot be with us today. My husband, Ambassador Clifford Bond, is a retired Foreign Service officer currently working at the U.S. Embassy in Kiev, Ukraine, coordinating U.S. aid to Ukraine. Our son, Matthew, is a Peace Corps Volunteer, teaching English in Indonesia.

My mother was the earliest and most influential inspiration for my life and for my career. She worked for the Department of State in post-war Stockholm when she was only 21, and years later at NATO and in Washington. She introduced me to public service. Through her, I met smart, dedicated Foreign Service officers and began to understand how diplomacy affects the lives of individuals and benefits our country.

I began working at State as a college student during summer breaks and served on my first crisis task force in 1974, the invasion of Cyprus. Our resources were rudimentary compared to what we have now, but the issues would be familiar to any of my colleagues today. Desperate families called seeking information about loved ones in Cyprus and Greece. We scribbled details and contact information on 3-by-5 cards. It is an extraordinary honor to lead a Bureau that has the same dedication and focus today that I first experienced more than 40 years ago.

Fortunately, we now have far more sophisticated tools, thanks in part to Congress' recognition of the vital importance of our work. The services we provide matter deeply and personally to our customers, your constituents. At its heart, Consular Affairs is about service. We provide assistance in small emergencies like lost passports, and large ones such as natural disasters. We are keenly aware that what we do is never routine for the people we serve. Given tens of thousands of daily opportunities to assist our customers, we are committed to meeting the highest standards of transparency, efficiency, and professionalism, creating lasting positive impressions of the United States and its government.

This week I was named the recipient of the 2015 Thomas Jefferson Award by American Citizens Abroad. I am honored and humbled by this award which recognizes commitment to the Department of State's highest priority, the protection of American citizens overseas. I am proud, too, of the values it represents, openness, listening and responding to the needs of our citizens, and meeting those needs with friendly, professional efficiency, values I pledge to uphold should I be confirmed.

Adoption, as you mentioned, Senator, is one of the most personal and sensitive issues in which we become involved, and it is one that matters to me deeply and has been a focus of my work for many years. My grandmother and her sister were adopted. I have worked on adoptions from behind the interview window overseas and at the policy table in Washington. I carry with me the stories of the families and children I have met. They inspire in me an abiding passion to bring greater transparency and accountability to intercountry adoptions. I am proud to have contributed to the United States leading role on the Hague Adoption Convention and,

if confirmed, I will intensify our efforts to make intercountry adoption a real option for vulnerable children everywhere who need a family.

Through careful adjudication of U.S. passport and visa applications, consular officers strengthen border security while facilitating legitimate travel that promotes economic growth, generates jobs across the country, and fosters good will and understanding about the United States across the world. If confirmed, I will ensure we continue to provide secure, efficient passport and visa services to protect our Nation, grow our economy, and unite families.

In Consular Affairs, we are one team with one mission. But, of course, we do not work alone. I am committed to a whole-of-government approach to serving our citizens. I take tremendous pride in leading a dedicated, talented team of over 13,000 professionals working in nearly 300 offices around the world. We come from all walks of life and all corners of our Nation. We proudly include hundreds of veterans, and my team works hard to ensure that we are a diverse one. We work closely with Congress on every issue in our portfolio. We engage with your staff daily on issues that impact your constituents and their communities. If confirmed, I will sustain and build on Consular Affairs' reputation as a model for cooperative, productive relations with Congress.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Bond follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHELE THOREN BOND

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the Foreign Relations Committee, it is the honor of a lifetime to be here today. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they placed in me by selecting me for this position.

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I began working at the Department of State as a college student, during summer breaks. I served on my first crisis task force in 1974—the Cyprus invasion. Our resources were rudimentary compared to what we have now, but the issues would be familiar to any of my colleagues today—desperate families called seeking information about loved ones in Cyprus and Greece. We scribbled details and contact information for each family on 3x5 cards. It is an extraordinary honor to lead a Bureau that has the same dedication and focus today that I first experienced more than 40 years ago. Since then, I have had the privilege of serving in places as varied as the Netherlands, Guatemala, Russia, and Lesotho. The positions I held over the course of my tenure prepared me well to lead the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

Bureau of Consular Affairs

My Bureau, CA, directly touches lives across the globe. We serve on the front lines of U.S. diplomacy, and our work is central to the advancement of U.S. foreign policy. We guard against foreign and domestic threats by assisting U.S. citizens overseas and safeguarding our borders at home. We are committed to protecting the integrity of our processes and decisions. We are there for our citizens during the best and worst days of their lives abroad—assisting with overseas adoptions, aiding

those who have lost a loved one, or organizing an evacuation to get our citizens to safety. We open up the world to our citizens with one of the world's most coveted travel documents—the U.S. passport. The impact of our work is felt across the Nation. Our work affects the lives of everyone in this room and every one of your constituents.

Our most valuable asset, by far, is our staff. The members of the consular team are incredible public servants. I have seen how the Bureau has met the challenges of 21st century diplomacy, adapted technology to improve the speed, scope, and quality of our service, learned from experience and embraced innovation. Investment in CA's human capital is vital to engage, develop, and retain these talented professionals. If confirmed, I will build on the hard-won achievements of my predecessors by sustaining a well-trained, motivated, dynamic, and efficient workforce.

I pledge that the Bureau of Consular Affairs will continue to protect our citizens abroad and provide all available assistance for any U.S. citizen in need overseas. We will continue to vigilantly protect our Nation from those who wish to harm our citizens. We will further our efforts to make international adoption a real option for children who need permanent families, knowing they will be welcomed into American hearts and homes. Today I will discuss a few of the many achievements of our great team and how we develop leaders and innovators in foreign policy by furthering the vibrant culture of the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

Overseas citizens services—CA's number 1 priority

The safety and protection of U.S. citizens overseas is among the U.S. Government's highest priorities, and CA's number one priority. CA has assisted U.S. citizens affected by a number of recent crises, including earthquakes in Nepal, political strife in Burundi, and the influx of those fleeing Yemen to Djibouti and other countries. In FY 2014, CA evacuated U.S. citizens from areas affected by hurricanes, typhoons, and Ebola; continued our engagement on detainee and hostage cases; visited 8,600 prisoners; performed 30,000 welfare and whereabouts checks; documented 66,000 U.S. citizen children born abroad; and consoled 10,200 bereaved families. We assisted thousands of U.S. citizens affected by abuse, mental illness, and crime abroad.

We promote intercountry adoption as a viable option throughout the world. We work to prevent international parental child abduction and to seek the return of abducted children.

Over a third of U.S. citizens hold a U.S. passport. Increasingly, they travel to destinations off the beaten path and engage in more adventurous activities. Our job to protect their safety and welfare remains the same, but is now more challenging. We proactively reach out to citizens to deliver the information they need to travel safely and responsibly. Our Consular Information Program, including Travel Alerts, Travel Warnings, and the Worldwide Caution, is the Department's primary tool for providing U.S. citizens with timely, accurate information about potential threats to their safety abroad.

We continuously harness new technologies to keep information flowing during rapidly changing circumstances or crises overseas. We are on duty 24/7 to respond immediately as crises arise. Our Office of Policy Coordination and Public Affairs works with colleagues overseas to send messages out through social media outlets including Facebook and Twitter. Constant engagement with the public through these venues allows us to get the message out quickly in times of crisis. Our goal is to provide our citizens with the information and resources they need to make their own appropriate decisions in real time.

CA understands the gravity of our responsibility to U.S. citizens traveling overseas, and we consult closely with interagency partners and Congress on policies and issues affecting our citizens' safety abroad. We have steadily increased our ability to inform and assist families during intercountry adoptions, for example.

U.S. Citizen Hostages Policy: CA played a key role in the interagency group tasked with a Presidentially directed, government-wide review of the management of overseas hostage cases. Based on the hostage policy review, the President has established a Washington-based, FBI-led interagency Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell (HRFC), a National Security Council-convened Hostage Response Group (HRG) providing policy guidance to the HRFC, and a Special Envoy for Hostage Affairs at the State Department who will lead diplomatic engagement on U.S. hostage policy and coordinate all diplomatic engagements in support of hostage recovery efforts. CA has assigned a consular officer fulltime to the HRFC as well as staff to support the Special Envoy's Office and to support hostage victims' families.

U.S. Detainees Abroad: In the Bureau of Consular Affairs, we continually monitor the cases of citizens detained abroad and work to obtain the release of those wrong-

fully held overseas. U.S. citizen detainee cases can be highly visible, resource-intensive, and difficult to resolve, especially in countries without U.S. embassies.

Three U.S.-Iranian citizens—Saeed Abedini, Amir Hekmati, and Jason Rezaian—are currently imprisoned in Iran. Abedini and Hekmati have been charged, tried, and sentenced; Rezaian has been charged but not tried. President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Under Secretary Sherman have raised these cases with their Iranian counterparts. Department officials also regularly raise the case of Robert Levinson, a former FBI agent who has been missing in Iran since March 2007.

International Parental Child Abduction (IPCA): CA is the U.S. Central Authority for the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Parental Child Abduction. We work closely with 73 Hague partner countries, and with authorities in non-Hague countries, to prevent situations where one parent wrongfully removes or retains a child away from his or her habitual residence, and to help left-behind parents seek return of, or access to, children who have been wrongfully removed or retained. CA recently released its first annual report under the Sean and David Goldman International Parental Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2014. In 2014, 781 abduction and access cases were resolved. CA continues to encourage non-Convention partner countries to become party to the Convention. After years of diplomatic effort, CA and colleagues across the Department celebrated Japan's accession in April 2014.

Universal Accreditation Act (UAA): We are delighted Congress passed the UAA. CA has engaged adoption service providers, advocacy groups, and national adoption organizations to inform them of the changes UAA introduced, to train on practical aspects of implementation, and to address issues and concerns as they arose before and after the UAA entered into force last July. Before the UAA, the standards of ethical conduct embodied in the Hague Adoption Convention applied in fewer than half of all intercountry adoption cases. Now, all U.S. citizens adopting abroad benefit from uniform standards governing the conduct of all U.S. adoption service providers. UAA also provides for universal monitoring and oversight of service provider adherence to those standards. The UAA closed a critical gap in protection for U.S. adoptive families.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Adoptions: The Department is seeking to unite nearly 600 Congolese children adopted, or in the process of being adopted, by U.S. citizens with their new families. The Congolese Government abruptly suspended issuance of exit permits almost 2 years ago. Without exit permits, these children cannot join their families in the United States. We are addressing this issue on multiple levels. In addition to constant engagement by Embassy Kinshasa and Ambassador Swan, the Department's Special Advisor for Children's Issues, Ambassador Susan Jacobs, led a delegation to the DRC in December and pressed the Congolese Government on these issues. I visited Kinshasa in March, where I met government and parliamentary representatives, and some of the American parents who are living in Kinshasa with their children. I continue to follow this issue closely.

Secretary Kerry urged President Kabila to lift the suspension in May, August, and October 2014. Last August, President Kabila and Secretary Kerry agreed to establish a joint commission to discuss options to allow children with finalized adoptions to depart and to consult on adoption reforms. Some progress has been made; 10 children with life-threatening medical conditions have received exit permits and several other cases are waiting to be reviewed by DRC officials. We are working with the other countries affected by this suspension, including Canada, Italy, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands, to press the DRC to resolve this protracted situation. We have met numerous times with congressional staff to keep them informed about this situation. If confirmed, I commit to you that I will continue to push for urgent resolution of these cases. These children belong with the loving families who have adopted them. We will continue to keep lines of communication open.

Passports—safeguarding the most coveted travel document

The Bureau of Consular Affairs opens the world to millions of U.S. citizens. Our passport agencies unlock the gate to global experiences and mutual understanding for U.S. citizen travelers. By accurately and efficiently adjudicating U.S. passport applications, U.S. passport agencies and fraud prevention teams reliably provide U.S. citizens with the world's most coveted travel document, and keep that document out of the hands of criminals. We know Congress shares our goal of continually improving the integrity of the passport issuance process, and in this regard, we trust Congress and staffers will do everything possible to ensure that we have access to all needed databases, including the full Social Security Administration death file, access to State driver's license information, and both Federal and State level incarceration information.

CA operates 27 domestic passport agencies, two document print centers, and two passport information and call centers across the United States. We have established 12 new passport agencies since 2008 to handle rapidly increasing demand. We adjudicated 14.1 million passport applications in FY 2014, delivering more than 99 percent of those products within their targeted timeframes. There are currently nearly 1 million applications in the system—the highest volume since 2009. In the last 2 fiscal years, passports generated nearly $3 billion in revenue. There are approximately 123 million valid passports in circulation.

Foreign Terrorist Fighters: CA initiated policies and streamlined procedures to deny or revoke passports of U.S. citizens engaged in activities as Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) who pose significant threats to U.S. national security and foreign policy. CA works diligently with our federal partners to ensure that appropriate passport denial or revocation helps to keep the United States safe. We work closely with the FBI's Counterterrorism Division and other government departments and agencies to ensure broad familiarity with the availability and use of passport denial and revocation to prevent travel. We engaged with the Terrorism Screening Center and partnered with Diplomatic Security (DS) to provide assistance to the National Joint Terrorism Task Force.

To address the potential threat posed by other FTFs using the identities or passports of "unreported deceased" individuals, we implemented procedures to cancel the U.S. passports of deceased FTFs and of hostages killed by terrorists. Cancelled passport information is available to all overseas posts and passport agencies, and is provided in real time to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Interpol. We continue to work with the intelligence community and the National Counter Terrorism Center on potential passport revocation of suspected U.S. citizens serving as FTFs, and will facilitate revocation appropriately where sufficient evidence exists and the action is appropriate.

Our domestic passport agencies and overseas posts remain on alert for terrorism-related information in conducting adjudications and work with DS to share relevant information with our federal partners.

Passport Surge: The projected demand for passport applications for FY 2015 was recently revised to 14.5 million. We expect an unprecedented passport renewal surge in the coming years. To prepare for this, we are modernizing our information systems, including planning for online passport renewals, automated refunds, and additional payment options, to improve customers' overall experience and manage our workload more efficiently.

Next Generation Passport: CA will begin systemwide deployment of the Next Generation Passport in FY 2016. This upgraded document features security enhancements designed to prevent counterfeiting and fraudulent use of lost or stolen passports. The most prominent enhancement is a laser-engraved polycarbonate data page.

Visas—uniting families, growing the economy, securing our Nation

Secretary Kerry believes that foreign policy is economic policy and this is particularly true when it comes to visa policy. The Bureau of Consular Affairs directly affects businesses across the country by facilitating international tourism and helping local entrepreneurs recruit the world's innovators to help them develop the next generation of technology. Demand for visas to visit the United States has skyrocketed worldwide.

Others have recognized our achievements as well: the United States Travel Association awarded the Bureau's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services the "Distinguished Partner Award" in March 2015, writing that he "helped create an environment that welcomes international visitors to the United States, who bring with them spending dollars and good will that have helped advance the U.S. economy and American public diplomacy." In 2014, a record 75 million international visitors traveled to the United States, a 7-percent increase over 2013; they spent over $220 billion. Tourism is America's largest services export and one that can't be outsourced.

Our investments to increase visa processing capacity and decrease visa interview wait times worldwide create jobs across the United States. International travelers support 1.1 million U.S. jobs. In a January 2012 Executive order, President Obama directed State to increase visa-processing capacity in China and Brazil by 40 percent in 2012 and to ensure 80 percent of applicants worldwide wait less than 3 weeks for their visa interviews. We exceeded both goals. CA reached the global target for wait times in August 2012, and wait times in key markets such as Brazil, China, India, and Mexico have rarely exceeded single digits since 2012. More than 95 percent of visa applicants requiring an interview receive an appointment in less than 3 weeks.

The United States will continue to attract tourists, businesses, students, and talent from around the world—in fact, President Obama's goal is to welcome 100 million international visitors annually by 2021. The vast majority of visitors travel to the United States with no malicious intent. However, some visa applicants are criminals or terrorists. Every visa decision we make, thousands of times a day, is a national security decision. Each of our consular officers understands this. CA is diligently working with DHS to expand visa reciprocity, the Visa Waiver Program, and the Interview Waiver Program, as appropriate, because these efforts allow us to focus our resources where the risks are highest.

Afghan and Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Programs: We could not do our jobs overseas without the dedication and expertise of our locally engaged staff. Working for the U.S. Government sometimes comes at a personal cost to our staff and their families. In Iraq and Afghanistan, this work has placed some local colleagues in grave danger. CA works with the interagency to adjudicate and efficiently issue Special Immigrant Visas to colleagues in Iraq and Afghanistan who worked alongside our soldiers and diplomats.

As of December 14, 2014, we had issued all 4,000 Afghan principal applicant SIVs authorized for use by the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY 2014 (3,000 SIV numbers, available through September 30, 2015) and the Emergency Afghan Allies Extension Act of 2014 (1,000 SIV numbers, available through December 31, 2014). The FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act authorized 4,000 additional Afghan SIVs for use by March 31, 2017. To date, we have issued more than 800 of these SIVs. As of June 26, more than 13,000 Afghans are at some point in the SIV application review process. The Iraqi program has enough visa numbers available to respond to demand. Although we issued record numbers of SIVs in FY 2014, there remain some long-pending cases undergoing security vetting. We are working with the interagency to speed processing and resolve cases while steadfastly maintaining the security of our immigration system and of the United States.

Visa Waiver Program and Interview Waiver Pilot Program: The Visa Wavier Program is essential to achieve the administration's policy and security goals, and maximize efficiency for our customers. We work with DHS to expand the Visa Waiver Program as appropriate, with Chile joining in 2014. With DHS concurrence, we indefinitely extended the Interview Waiver Program, which allows us to waive interviews for applicants in certain low-risk populations—over 1 million applicants in 2014—allowing us to focus on higher-risk applicants. We continue to work with our partners to determine the feasibility of expanding the Visa Waiver Program, the Interview Waiver Program, and reciprocal visa validities in support of the President's goal to attract 100 million visitors to the United States annually by 2021.

Foreign Fighters and the Visa Waiver Program (VWP): The protection of U.S. borders is of the utmost importance to CA. We collaborate closely with DHS to support its mission of protecting the United States by promoting effective aviation and border security screening with our foreign partners through enhanced information-sharing. To travel without a visa under the VWP, an applicant must obtain authorization through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) prior to boarding a U.S.-bound air or sea carrier. Should standard ESTA screening indicate that a traveler might be ineligible, that individual's ESTA application is denied, and the traveler is directed to the nearest U.S. Embassy or consulate to apply for a visa. In November 2014, ESTA enhancements went into effect that allow the U.S. Government to more effectively identify travelers who might pose a risk to the United States, including foreign fighters.

Ten-Year Validity for Chinese Visas: The Bureau of Consular Affairs was instrumental in negotiating and shepherding the expansion of Chinese visa validity, which President Obama announced in November 2014. Visa demand in Mission China has risen by more than 53 percent in the wake of the announcement and the Chinese are issuing visas with the same reciprocal validity to U.S. citizens. This has a significant impact on travel and tourism in both countries and helps boost people-to-people engagement. It will be a tremendous boon to U.S. businesses and have a significant effect on our economy. From January to May 2015, CA issued 1.5 million visas to Chinese travelers.

Modernized Immigrant Visa: As a global service organization, CA must constantly ensure that our processes meet the needs of our customers. We are working with DHS, private and nonfederal public actors, and technology experts to implement a streamlined, electronic immigrant visa process that will save time and money.

Fraud prevention—facilitate travel, maximize security measures

Fraud prevention and detection are a critical part of our operations. As the demand for our services increases, so do efforts by criminal elements, or those who think they can catch us off guard. We must remain vigilant in our work while still

maintaining efficiency. New tools and technologies help identify and malafide applicants. One of CA's priorities for 2015 is to develop programs and techniques to prescreen applicants prior to their interviews. Our global fraud tracking database allows us to more efficiently document and analyze fraud research. Our fraud prevention and detection efforts are successful in part because of increased collaboration across the U.S. Government, and access to better information and technology.

CA systems—keeping up with demand in a changing world

Stable technological systems are a top priority for CA. This is key to improving customers' overall experience and managing our workload efficiently.

Systems modernization: The growing demand for our services puts unrelenting strain on our aging systems. A systems outage in June disrupted service and caused considerable hardship for some customers across the globe.

A June 9 hardware failure halted the flow of biometric data for visa application security checks to posts overseas, preventing posts from issuing visas and processing new visa applications. The effort to switch to the standby system failed due to corrupted data. CA collaborated with private sector experts and the White House's U.S. Digital Services team and worked around the clock to restore service by taking a database with 6-month old data and merging the data from the failed production system into the new one. CA then reconnected posts to the central biometrics database in a staggered worldwide rollout, beginning with our largest nonimmigrant visa and immigrant visa processing posts. All visa-issuing posts were reconnected by June 26.

Taking into account the legal requirements to conduct security screening for visa applicants, CA explored every available option to facilitate legitimate travel during the outage. We secured strong cooperation with DHS/CBP on port of entry (POE) document waiver requests for cases with humanitarian or high-level U.S. national interest and for more than 250 critically needed temporary agricultural workers. We issued more than 3,500 visas for urgent and humanitarian travel in cases that did not require fingerprints, including visas for adopted children, diplomats on official travel, and some temporary workers. After the systems were restored, consular sections overseas worked extended hours and through the weekend to rapidly return to normal processing times.

CA is committed to modernizing consular systems to prevent future recurrences of these problems. We are migrating our databases to a significantly more robust combined hardware and software Oracle Exadata platform. We recently installed new servers in Beijing, Guangzhou, and Shanghai that can handle up to four times the workload. We will install the same servers in our busiest missions over the course of the year.

ConsularOne: We are in the development phase of ConsularOne, a major IT initiative to consolidate all consular applications into one integrated system. This will reduce inefficiencies and data duplication, improve our ability to track demand, and help us to better detect trends and anomalies across all consular services. ConsularOne is a key component of online passport renewal, which we plan to introduce next year.

CA Budget and Resources—Responsibly Use Public Resources Without Burdening Taxpayers

If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring we are fiscally responsible and shrewd stewards of our funds. CA is funded by consular user fees, not by taxpayers. In FY 2014, CA generated $3.6 billion in revenue, which supports all consular operations in the Department and provides border security-related funding to some interagency partners.

CA funds: CA is fully fee funded, and collects and retains fees for certain visa and passport services pursuant to specific statutory authority. We do not collect fees for every service we perform. Under current fee statutes, we are allowed to retain approximately 80 percent of the fees we collect, with the balance going to the Treasury. Currently, CA has 12 Partner Bureaus with programs or positions directly supported through retained consular fees. If confirmed, I would ask your consideration in enhancing our ability to retain and spend the funds generated through consular fees. With added flexibilities, we can improve and expand our work to secure the safety and security of U.S. citizens abroad.

Cost of service model: CA's cost of service model uses activity-based costing methodologies to calculate the true cost of consular services, to recommend appropriate fees for services, and to inform CA's funding strategies so CA appropriately administers the Department's Consular and Border Security Programs (CBSP). Fee flexibilities included in the FY 2016 President's Budget Request will ensure future efficient and responsible disbursement of CBSP funds that is in line with how fees

are set. We will also create, implement, and institutionalize an authoritative CBSP plan and overarching governance process to guide budget planning, execution, and monitoring.

Consular leadership—developing the workforce of the 21st century

CA is a global operation with a significant footprint. We have a workforce of over 13,000 highly trained professionals including Civil Service employees, Foreign Service officers, and Locally Employed staff, in more than 300 domestic and overseas offices.

Our colossal and growing workload can only be managed by a first rate workforce that leverages cutting-edge technological and management tools. I have every confidence in my team and in CA's senior leaders. I am committed to fostering the culture of leadership, management, and innovation excellence that is a hallmark of the Bureau.

We run our operations as effectively and efficiently as possible. I would like to say that the Bureau of Consular Affairs is a well-oiled machine, but we are not machines. We are a compassionate, disciplined, and highly trained corps of individuals dedicated to the dual mission of protecting U.S. citizens overseas and protecting our Nation's borders.

To build a team of consummate, compassionate professionals and prepare the next generation of FSOs, we developed 1CA: one Consular Affairs team. 1CA is the Bureau's office of leadership, management, and innovation, a proactive effort to promote excellence in an environment of budgetary restraint and increasing demand for our services. 1CA created a management framework based on private industry leading practices but customized for consular professionals. 1CA has introduced a practical set of tools and resources that promote collaboration and help consular teams identify, prioritize, and resolve management and leadership challenges. Through these tools, our consular sections across the globe have increased adjudication numbers and reduced processing times and customer wait times.

It is my hope that CA will continue to foster a culture of leadership, sound management, and performance principles which exerts a broader influence across the Department. CA is proud to be the training ground for the next generation of Foreign Service officers. All entry-level officers serve in Consular Affairs on their first or second tours. The capabilities and skills of our diplomats are greatly enhanced by the tools they learn during their consular tours.

1CA has become a model for how the Department approaches the development of human capital. Recently, State rolled out the Department's Leadership and Management Principles, tracking closely to CA's tenets. Our success has inspired the creation of Teamwork@State, the Department-wide initiative that provides toolkits and resources on teamwork across bureaus, posts, and offices.

If confirmed, I will do my utmost to continue to equip my team with the tools and resources necessary to fulfill their duties. I will also continue to work with the Department to prepare our new diplomats for future global challenges.

Relationship with Congress

The work of Consular Affairs often touches our citizens on a deeply personal level. I am committed to ensuring your constituents receive the assistance they require from CA in a timely manner and that information is presented clearly and transparently. If confirmed, I am committed to strengthening the relationship between Congress and the Bureau of Consular Affairs. In FY 2014, CA conducted more than 150 legislative briefings, testified at three hearings, and cohosted the annual Immigration and Consular Conference for all congressional staff. We conducted domestic agency and border post tours for constituent services staffers. We want Congress to be well informed of our issues and wish to be available to you for any inquiries you may have. Two consular liaison officers have offices on the Hill to respond to congressional inquiries, connect you with our subject matter experts, and engage on consular matters via webinars, conferences, and briefings. We have a dedicated Web site for congressional staff—travel.state.gov/congress—and dedicated congressional contacts at every overseas post, domestic passport agency, the National Visa Center, and the Kentucky Consular Center. During overseas crises, we establish a dedicated congressional email address for inquiries concerning constituents in the affected area.

Whole of government approach

If confirmed, I hope to amplify the cooperation among agencies, and with Congress, to use our resources as efficiently as possible, bringing a whole-of-government approach to serving the needs of our citizens. I will continue the close collaboration we enjoy with other bureaus across the Department and other government agencies

to fulfill our mission of protecting U.S. citizens abroad and facilitating legitimate travel to the United States.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work with the Secretary to ensure consular support for America's foreign policy objectives. If confirmed, I will continue to keep you informed of our resource needs, and work with you to ensure that the Bureau of Consular Affairs continues to meet its obligations to our citizens and to our Nation.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Mendelson.

STATEMENT OF DR. SARAH MENDELSON, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE U.N.

Dr. MENDELSON. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. I am grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for this opportunity and for their confidence in me.

I would like to acknowledge my husband, John Harvey, who is here with me today and whose own career has been defined by public service and the safeguarding of U.S. national security interests. I depend every day on his love and support.

I also want to acknowledge my family and friends watching from many different parts of the globe. As a first-generation American, it is truly an honor and privilege to be here. In my office I have a photograph of the shtetl in Lithuania where my father was born, which serves as a reminder of how far and how fast my family's journey has been.

Virtually my entire professional career has focused on advocating for democracy and human rights internationally. This work is not easy, nor does it bring quick results. I keep close a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In a world filled with cynicism, it is an important reminder of the United Nations' potential.

I know firsthand about the United Nations' imperfections. While at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, my intellectual home for many years, I investigated the trafficking of women and girls in and around peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Kosovo. But this work also brought me into contact with brave U.N. officers dedicated to advancing gender equality and human rights.

I have seen firsthand that when the United Nations works best, we can effectively work with partners to promote our interests and values. During the 4 years I served at USAID in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, my colleagues and I responded to multiple Level-3 humanitarian assistance crises. I was exposed on a daily basis to the development, human rights, humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding, and democracy promotion challenges confronting various U.N. agencies, nearly all of which depend on vital U.S. leadership and support.

My service in government also coincided with the expansion of the digital era. From Brazil to Indonesia, from Mexico to South Africa, the spread of affordable information and communication technologies has helped to expose corruption and driven demand for

governments to be more transparent and accountable to their citizens. Initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership, launched by President Obama and seven other heads of state at the U.N. in 2011, reflect this growing international movement of civic-based activism.

This digital era has been met also with a backlash, a closing of public space around civil society where governments are threatened by the increased empowerment of citizens. There are many dimensions to closing space including onerous requirements on non-governmental organizations, the targeting of journalists, national legal measures targeting the LGBT community, the rise of anti-Semitism and targeting of religious minorities, and the murder of activists dedicated to exposing abuse.

I know from my travels around Africa, Asia, Europe, Eurasia, and Latin America just how much members of vulnerable and marginalized populations look to the United States and the United Nations for leadership and pushing back on such repression. If confirmed, I pledge to work with U.N. agencies and like-minded member states to mobilize support for and address this issue and give voice to those who have been silenced.

If confirmed, I will also continue the work I began over 15 years ago on human trafficking, elevating the need to combat modern slavery as a vital 21st century development challenge. The global movement has made great strides, yet as this committee has recognized under the chairman's leadership, there is more work to be done to strengthen international efforts to address human trafficking. The U.S. role, as this committee has also noted, is critical. The United Nations has an important role to play as a platform to expand and broaden constituencies engaged in ending slavery.

If confirmed, I will work with the leadership of U.N. agencies in New York to combat human trafficking, and support smart investments that lead to sound development outcomes and elevate the focus on women and girls. I will work with colleagues across the U.N. system to deliver assistance to those experiencing food insecurity and displacement, and join others in the quest for greater resilience in the face of disaster.

As the world finalizes its commitments for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, I will work with the leadership of U.N. agencies, funds, programs, and member states for meaningful implementation of the goals. We must never forget that inclusion, sound governance, sustainable environmental practices, and respect for human rights are the essential foundations for achieving and sustaining development.

And finally, across the full spectrum of the issues and activities in my portfolio, I will contribute actively to this administration's fight against the disproportionate bias that remains persistent in the U.N. system targeting Israel.

If confirmed, I would be honored to join the administration's commitment and efforts to make the United Nations live up to its potential and further American values and ideals. Working with this committee and others in the administration, I would do my utmost to help the U.N. address humanitarian challenges and meet opportunities to make the world more secure.

Thank you. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Mendelson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SARAH E. MENDELSON

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, distinguished members, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. I am grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Ambassador Power for this opportunity and for their confidence in me.

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My service in government also coincided with the expansion of the digital era. From Brazil to Indonesia, from Mexico to South Africa, the spread of affordable information and communication technologies has helped to expose corruption and driven demand for governments to be more transparent and accountable to their citizens. Initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership, launched by President Obama and seven other heads of state at the U.N. in 2011, reflect this growing international movement of civic-based activism.

This digital era has been met with a backlash, a closing of public space around civil society where governments are threatened by the increased empowerment of citizens. There are many dimensions to closing space including onerous requirements on nongovernmental organizations, the targeting of journalists, national legal measures targeting the LGBT community, the rise of anti-Semitism and targeting of religious minorities, and the murder of activists dedicated to exposing abuse. President Obama addressed government restrictions on civil society during the high-level week at the U.N. General Assembly in 2013 and 2014. The U.N. Human Rights Council adopted resolutions on the issue in 2013 and 2014. I know from my travels around Africa, Asia, Europe, Eurasia, and Latin America just how much members of vulnerable and marginalized populations look to the United States and the United Nations for leadership in pushing back on such repression. If confirmed, I pledge to work with U.N. agencies and like-minded member states to mobilize support for and address this issue and give voice to those who have been silenced.

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Thank you. I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both very much.

We will now have 5 minutes of questioning by each of the Senators who wish to do so.

Ambassador Bond, a number of American families adopting Congolese children are stuck in the DRC exit permit suspension. I know you are very aware of that. Yesterday there was an announcement where numbers of cases were going to be approved. They are waiting on authorization by President Kabila, I guess, at this moment.

Can you tell us a little bit about what you think the best strategy will be for you to deal with this issue with the DRC and getting adopted children out of the country?

Ms. BOND. Thank you for that question, Senator. As you may know, I visited Kinshasa in March and had an opportunity to meet with several of the waiting families who have actually moved to the DRC in order to live with their children while they wait for action by those officials. But there are hundreds of other families who are not able to do that and who are waiting in the United States to be able to bring their children home.

While I was in Kinshasa, I met with a Member of their Parliament and with a number of senior officials in the government to press them to take action now on these cases, and I emphasized to them the fact that it is not a matter of indifference. Every single day that passes is a cost, a real cost, and in some ways an irreparable one, to the children who are losing ground because they are not in the families that are waiting for them, who have adopted them and would give them the kind of love and support that every child needs.

As you say, there was a meeting yesterday between U.S. Embassy officials and the head of the DRC Adoption Inter-Ministerial Commission, and a member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also there. They reported that the Commission has approved a number of cases of children adopted by citizens of the United States, and also families from Canada, France, Italy, and the Netherlands. They say that those have been reviewed by the Commission and passed to President Kabila for his action.

They suggested that a decision could come as early as next week, and we are pressing that administration hard to make a decision on these children, the first tranche, but on every single case to get those kids home to their families.

It has been suggested by one of the members of the Commission that they believe that having succeeded in creating this first

tranche and moving those names and files to the President, that they will be able to move more quickly on subsequent cases. They have established their process now, and I hope that is true, but we are indeed going to be pushing them to recognize that this is an urgent matter. This is something that needs to be done in a matter of hours or days, not weeks and months.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Dr. Mendelson, can you tell us a little bit about ECOSOC's role in combating slavery and talk to us a little bit about how you plan to pursue this issue when confirmed?

Dr. MENDELSON. Thank you, Senator, and thank you for your leadership on combating trafficking. It is widely appreciated, and that of the committee.

ECOSOC is a broad portfolio. Trafficking is a global problem. We need a global platform to address it, and I think ECOSOC presents an excellent opportunity.

Very specifically, we need, as you have widely recognized, we need every Ambassador to be engaging on this issue. We need every mission to be thinking about this and being champions for this. The SDG process, the Sustainable Development Goals process, actually provides an opportunity. There is a lot of language particularly focused around ending the trafficking of minors, and I have seen how when countries commit to the goals, assistance follows. It is my expectation that, and I would be a champion if confirmed, to make sure that those commitments include a focus on combating child trafficking and raising this issue, using the convening power to bring missions together and leadership.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there some specific countries that you think would be best for us to work with? Name some of them. I know you cannot name all of them, but obviously we want to put together a global effort. Hopefully we have the beginning stages of that now. But what are some of the other countries around the world that you think care deeply about this issue which would be great partners for the United States?

Dr. MENDELSON. We have very close relations with the United Kingdom, with many Nordic countries. Surprisingly, those development agencies are not already committed to combating trafficking. In my travels in my job at USAID, I met with foreign officials many times urging that this be a focus, and there was some resistance. So I think there is work to be done. I think this platform will be, if confirmed, a wonderful opportunity to work with missions again through the commitment that is involved with the Sustainable Development Goals.

I think you are going to find that countries are going to turn to say, yes, we are going to commit to this, and it will come on to their radar, come on to their agenda. So Sweden, with whom we have very close cooperation, would be a target, other Scandinavian countries, and certainly the United Kingdom.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Again, I thank both of you for your service.

Dr. Mendelson, you mentioned the vital U.S. leadership and support. That was particularly true in the Trafficking in Persons, the

TIP report, the gold standard. I look at that foreign beat with guests from other countries to see how they are doing, and the United States has really provided, I think, the international leadership to make a huge difference in trafficking.

I want to see us do the same thing on corruption. I was proud that in the State Department reauthorization that this committee took up, we started to take steps to require the State Department to analyze the status of corruption in countries around the world.

So I want to focus on the Millennium Development Goals just for one moment. If I had Ambassador Bond's husband, spouse here, I think he would tell us the problems in Ukraine was not so much the relationship with Russia and the European Union, it was more about corruption. After the revolution, people were very optimistic, but then they got a corrupt government, and that caused many of the problems. If we look at the deep problems in Russia today, the motivation there is more corruption than anything else, and I could go through so many other countries around the world.

So we have a chance with the Millennium Development Goals, and there is a commitment to deal with human rights and corruption, but it seems buried. So I would like to get your commitment to be a fighter on this issue. You have a great tradition on human rights. This is our opportunity.

So, are you going to be a fighter to make sure that we have this as a visible goal under the Millennium Development to make sure that we can make some progress internationally on this corrosive human rights issue?

Dr. MENDELSON. Thank you, Senator, for the focus on corruption. I very much share your sense of urgency on this issue. I think it is one that the human rights community in general is gradually beginning to spend more attention to. I note also that there is a large transparency and accountability community that does not always talk to the human rights community. You mentioned Ukraine and, of course, the Dignity Revolution. The Euromaidan was about precisely demanding transparency and accountability, and I think that there are very brave people today who are still working on these issues.

I promise you that in Sustainable Development Goal number 16, that has good governance, sound governance and anticorruption in it, it will be an enormous priority. It is something that I spoke to Ambassador Power about when we were talking about this possibility, and I know she shares the commitment. So, yes, I promise.

Senator CARDIN. How about getting in the top five rather than number 16? I hope that you will work for that.

Ambassador Bond, people who want to come to the United States, spend money, learn about our way, advance U.S. goals which are basically global values, we make it so tough. It costs a lot of money. It takes a lot of time. What vision do you have to make it easier for people who want to visit the United States to be able to get through the bureaucratic process of obtaining a visa?

Ms. BOND. Thank you, Senator. What a good question, because that is one of our primary goals too. We have to screen visitors who are applying to come to the United States because we need to know who they are before we can give them permission to come. However, we also want to do everything we can to facilitate legitimate

travel. We want to bring those travelers to the United States, and we want to encourage them to come back again and again.

So one of the things that we do is we try to make sure, and we have invested significant resources—people, training, real estate—into making sure that if someone notifies us that he is interested in getting a visa to the United States, we interview that person as quickly as possible at a date that is convenient for them.

As you may know, in November, President Obama and the President of China jointly announced that they were going to extend the validity of visas for tourists and business travelers from 1 year to 10. And since then, just in the months since November, we have seen a 53-percent increase in the number of new applications for visas to come to the United States. Millions of people are traveling to the United States, and because they will have a 10-year visa, they can plan ahead. They can say, hey, next year is our anniversary, and let's plan to go to San Francisco. Next year is whatever, 5 years from now is whatever.

So we are doing everything we can to encourage travelers who have been vetted and examined so that we know that they are not a risk to the United States. We want them to come and we want them to see as much of the country as they can and spend their money.

Senator CARDIN. Also take a look at your computer system. It has broken down many times. You need to have a more reliable way to be able to handle this. If it is not working, a person may have traveled overnight to get to one of our locations only to find they have to come back another day. It just makes no sense, and we have to provide better service.

I want to do the screening—we have to do that—but we could do it in a more friendly way, and I would just urge you to make that the highest priority.

Last point, Mr. Chairman, just to comment.

Thank you for mentioning your commitment for Israel. There is no question that there is only one country that will stand up to the discriminatory actions that the international community in this international organization has focused on Israel, and the United States must remain firm against those discriminatory actions taken in the international community. So, thank you very much for mentioning that today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Isakson.

Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much for calling this hearing today. I know U.N. Ambassador Power is very interested in Dr. Mendelson getting to New York as fast as she can, particularly with the U.N. session beginning this summer, so I hope we can move this forward, and I appreciate very much your willingness to call it.

I want to follow up on what Senator Cardin said, Dr. Mendelson. Your statement says, "I will contribute actively to this administration's fight against the disproportionate bias that remains persistent in the U.N. system targeting Israel," and I want to thank you for including it both in your printed remarks as well as your verbal remarks today, because there are significant biases against

Israel in the U.N. If we do not stand strong with our partner Israel, we could have some big problems.

In particular, I think it is U.S. policy, at least my recollection is it is our stated policy of this administration that any recognition of a Palestinian state should be negotiated between the State of Israel and the State of Palestine, not determined by a third party. Is that correct?

Dr. MENDELSON. Thank you, Senator, for raising this issue. It is, again, a key issue that Ambassador Power and I discussed when this opportunity arose.

You are correct, and I will fight vigorously to oppose any possibility that erodes a two-state solution. I will fight for the inclusion of Israel in various fora and to normalize Israel's status at the United Nations. I will fight tirelessly to oppose the bias that you see across the system, including in one-sided biased resolutions.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, thank you very much for that commitment, because it is absolutely necessary. I know Samantha Power, Ambassador Power, feels exactly the same way.

Ms. Bond, you are going to be in charge of all passports. Is that right?

Ms. BOND. Yes, sir.

Senator ISAKSON. I have a question for you. Every time I turn on the television or read anything about ISIL and about lone wolves, I read about Americans going to Syria for training with ISIL or going into Iraq for training with ISIL. What is the State Department doing and what role can the State Department have through passports, visas, and the like to track people who are doing that, or to curtail the access to be able to do that for American citizens going to that part of the world for that purpose?

Ms. BOND. Sir, you have raised a very serious concern. We recognize fundamentally the right of U.S. citizens to travel and the importance of citizens who are interested in traveling abroad to be able to apply for a passport and get one quickly and efficiently.

At the same time, we also are carefully vetting every application for a U.S. passport for us to make sure that that person qualifies, is that person a U.S. citizen, and there are screens in place. We work very closely with law enforcement, with the intel community, in order to be able to identify travelers who may be planning to travel for illegal purposes, travel for terrorism purposes.

So there is a lot of coordination within the government to track known or suspected terrorists, and whether they are foreigners applying for visas or Americans who are traveling abroad on passports to make sure that we try to identify those people and try to interdict their travel if we can.

Senator ISAKSON. I hope you are successful at accomplishing exactly that, because it is a worrisome fact that as many Americans as are expected or that we anticipate are trying to find their way to Syria or to ISIL to be trained and come back to be a threat to this country. So your role in that will be critically important to our country's security, and I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors as far as Assistant Secretary of State, as I do with Dr. Mendelson at the U.N.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Look, I cannot imagine having two more highly qualified people for these positions, and we thank you both for your willingness to serve in this capacity and your commitment to the kinds of issues you are going to be dealing with for a very long time.

So, thank you for being here and having your families here. We will make this as painless as possible, getting ready to adjourn, and we hope other members will ask questions. We hope that those questions will be in by noon Monday, and then you would respond promptly to those.

But we thank you for being here. Again, we thank you for your commitment to these issues, to our country, and your willingness to serve in this capacity.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:45 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF DR. SARAH MENDELSON, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE ON THE U.N. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

REPRESENTATIVE-DESIGNATE MENDELSON'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. Given the multitude of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which ones should the United States prioritize?

Answer. From the outset of the process, the U.S. Government has prioritized a universal Post-2015 Development Agenda to ensure it can drive real impact and results on the ground. The United States is supportive of the draft Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because they address a range of issues that were left out of the Millennium Development Goals yet which are critical drivers of development such as the role of sound governance. The United States also recognizes that this more robust understanding of development means having a larger set of goals and targets to work toward. The 17 goals and 169 targets articulated in the current draft SDGs document include U.S. Government priorities—such as the unfinished business of the MDGS; gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; sustainable energy; oceans and natural resources; inclusive and sustainable economic growth; governance and peaceful societies. The Department has prioritized 13 areas for the Post-2015 Agenda: including Goal 16 on peace and governance but also poverty, food security, health, education, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, economic growth, water, energy, natural resources, oceans, and global partnerships.

Question. How will the SDGs affect the way the United States approaches international development?

Answer. Policy decisions, priorities, and budgets of the United States will always be made by the United States. The SDGs offer global targets to help guide national development priorities while leaving individual countries the space to determine their own policies about how to meet those priorities. The draft SDGs and targets reflect issues that have long been components of U.S. foreign assistance, including combating human trafficking and modern slavery, fighting poverty and hunger, promoting education and gender equality, improving access to safe water and affordable and reliable energy, and support for transparent, responsive and accountable democratic institutions. As the agenda has not yet been adopted, it is too early to say how the final agreement will impact U.S. priorities and policies, and the allocation of U.S. resources.

Question. What is ECOSOC's role in the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) development agenda and how will the Council contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

Answer. The Millennium Development Goals were introduced in 2000 and span a 15-year period that concludes this year. The Post-2015 Development Agenda,

including the Sustainable Development Goals, are currently being negotiated through an intergovernmental process under the auspices of the General Assembly. The importance of a robust followup and review framework is one of the key lessons learned from the experience with the MDGs, and as the U.N. organ mandated to conduct followup and review of conferences and summits relating to development, economic, social, and environmental issues, ECOSOC will play a key role in monitoring implementation of the SDGs. Analysis of specific areas of the SDGs will occur throughout the year in ECOSOC's functional commissions and subsidiary bodies (e.g., Commission on the Status of Women or the U.N. Forum on Forests). ECOSOC will also conduct an annual review of the SDGs at the High Level Political Forum (except every 4 years when the High Level Political Forum will meet under the auspices of the General Assembly).

Question. What were the biggest hurdles to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and what lessons can be learned as the U.N. transitions to the Sustainable Development Goals?

Answer. In addition to being a powerful symbol of a global commitment to eradicating extreme poverty, hunger, and disease, the MDGs served as a motivating set of goals to drive common action and have helped reap remarkable progress for global development. Even when particular MDG targets were not met, such shortcomings served to catalyze additional global action. For example, on child survival, the 2012 Child Survival Call to Action, which resulted in a new pledge to end deaths of children under 5 by 2035, stemmed from a recognition that MDG 4 (reducing child mortality) would not be reached by 2015.

It is worth noting that overall, since 1990, extreme poverty has been cut by more than half with nearly 900 million people rising above the $1.25-a-day line. Per capita incomes in the developing world more than doubled. A child born today is twice as likely to survive into adolescence as in 1990; malnutrition has been cut by 40 percent; youth literacy has been cut by 39 percent, and lack of access to modern energy services has fallen by a third.

The Millennium Development Goals helped advance the U.S. development agenda in a number of key areas. The MDGs helped pull people out of extreme poverty, especially those who were just below the extreme poverty line, but often not the most marginalized and extreme poor. In the follow-on effort, the United States will be working to incorporate additional areas considered key to the U.S. development agenda, including a focus on sound governance, institutions and peace, particularly in fragile and post-conflict states, in generating sustainable development, and on gender and environmental issues. One criticism of the MDGs was that they were too narrowly defined in that they did not take into account development writ large. In some cases, this led to siloed approaches rather than a more holistic, integrated approach. In the Post-2015 development agenda, the United States will work to ensure that issues that cut across multiple areas of focus, such as health, gender, transparency and accountability, and education, are addressed in an integrated manner.

Question. If confirmed, what will be your role in determining the success of the SDGs and more specifically, how do you think they should be measured and evaluated?

Answer. The United States is closely engaged in the efforts of the U.N. Statistical Commission to develop a comprehensive multilateral framework to measure, evaluate, followup, and review progress on the SDGs. The U.S Government supports an indicator and monitoring framework that is science-based, with an elevated focus on data. It should also be practical and achievable; one that enables evidence-based decisionmaking in support of the agenda at all levels. Because implementing the SDGs will mean different things in different contexts, the monitoring and evaluation framework needs to be flexible rather than overly prescriptive, focused on outcomes, and one that accommodates different structures and challenges. Reporting and evaluation of progress should occur at the national, regional, and global levels, and it should be a collaborative effort between the U.N., its member states, and various subnational public and private actors, including nongovernmental organizations. The objective of follow up and review is to support decisionmakers, inform policy choices, and mobilize partnerships for implementation, thereby supporting the successful implementation of the goals.

The administration hopes to build on and improve its experience with the MDGs regarding followup and review, including by disaggregating data appropriately according to key demographic variables including sex, age, and disability status, and sharing data in an open, dynamic, real-time manner to maximize its relevance and the decisionmakers' ability to act on it. Increased availability and more effective use

of data to monitor and drive sustainable development in real time, including on issues that have not previously benefited from an elevated focus on data such as sound governance or combating human trafficking, have the potential to be the game-changing innovation of the next decade. If confirmed, I would actively participate in how implementation and evaluation decisions are shaped and contribute to decisionmaking about how to measure the success of the SDGs.

Question. ECOSOC Resolution 2008/33, "Strengthening coordination of the United Nations and other efforts in fighting trafficking in persons" urged ". . . all States, individually and through international cooperation, as well as the United Nations system, to increase, in a coherent, comprehensive and coordinated manner, efforts to counter trafficking in persons."

- Given that ECOSOC is on record with regard to combating human trafficking, what specific followup has ECOSOC taken with regard to this resolution and what additional steps can ECOSOC take to address human trafficking?

Answer. Thank you for the question, Senator. As you point out, the Economic and Social Council has been active on the issue of combating human trafficking and, if confirmed, I will continue that effort as I recognize we all have a long way to go in addressing this critical human rights issue. In 2006, the United Nations General Assembly set up an Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons ("ICAT"), comprising 17 U.N. agencies and related organizations, with ECOSOC coordinating on this issue within the U.N. system. The ICAT includes agencies such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labor Organization (ILO), UNICEF, the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Attention to trafficking issues through the ICAT and at ECOSOC, its subsidiary bodies, and other U.N. organizations has provided a useful way to highlight best practices in addressing trafficking in persons. For example, earlier this year, the United States and other delegations cosponsored a panel discussion with the ILO on forced labor, the vulnerability of workers to exploitation, and the impact on national and global development.

Numerous other initiatives to counter trafficking in persons have occurred throughout the U.N. system. If confirmed, I will continue this sustained engagement, using the platform of the USUN mission to elevate the issue and highlight the need for additional action to combat trafficking. I appreciate very much the efforts of this committee to address the problem of human trafficking and modern slavery and, if confirmed, look forward to working closely with you to achieve impact on this important issue.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2015

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

Laura Farnsworth Dogu, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Nicaragua
Hon. Roberta S. Jacobson, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the United Mexican States
Perry L. Holloway, of South Carolina, to be Ambassador to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana
Peter F. Mulrean, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Haiti

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:52 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Marco Rubio presiding.

Present: Senators Rubio, Flake, and Menendez.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARCO RUBIO, U.S. SENATOR FROM FLORIDA

Senator RUBIO. The hearing today is to consider the U.S. Ambassador nominees to Guyana, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Haiti. All of these countries face different challenges, and I look forward to discussing them with our nominees today.

I want to thank all of our nominees for their dedication to public service, and welcome their families and friends who are present here today.

In a moment, I will recognize Ranking Member Boxer upon her return for opening remarks. The Senate is currently in the middle of a series of votes, and in a moment, I want to address that with each of you. But she will be here in a moment.

Our nominees are Mr. Perry Lee Holloway. He is the nominee to Guyana. He is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service who most recently served as political military counsel to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Ms. Laura Farnsworth Dogu is the nominee to Nicaragua. She is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and currently serves as the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

Ms. Roberta Jacobson is the nominee to Mexico, and she is also a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and is currently the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere.

I would add that I am sorry to hear about your son's recent accident, but we pray that he will have a speedy recovery, and we know it has been a difficult few days for you.

And Mr. Peter Mulrean is the nominee to Haiti, and he is also a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and currently serves as deputy chief of mission of the U.S. mission to the United Nations in Geneva.

Let me just say at the outset, I was hoping we might just dispense today with opening statements, unless any of you feel passionately about making them. They are written and in the record. The problem is that at 5 o'clock, there is an all-members meeting on the Authorization for Use of Military Force, so we will have to stop this hearing in less than about an hour and 5 minutes. And with votes going on, we are going to have members coming in and out.

So unless any of you feel passionately about the need to read your opening statements in the record, they have been duly noted, and I will just begin with questions.

I will start with Ms. Jacobson.

Mexico, as I know you believe and understand, is an important friend and ally in dealing with a wide range of bilateral and hemispheric issues. We share close cultural and economic and security ties with them. And that is why I think all Americans are very concerned about the events of this past week.

On Saturday, their most notorious drug lord, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman broke out of a high-security prison on Saturday night for the second time, escaping in a tunnel built right under his cell despite, according to press reports, the Mexican authorities having been warned by the DEA as early as 2014 about his escape plans. So given this and given El Chapo's history of escape, his reported limitless resources, and the known corruption within the justice system and parts of Mexico, are you aware if the Department of Justice formally submitted an extradition request to the Department of State for El Chapo Guzman?

Ms. JACOBSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you for your good wishes on my son. I greatly appreciate that.

We are incredibly frustrated and disappointed by the escape of Chapo Guzman. We obviously, along with the Mexican Government, will work in support of the Mexican Government to recapture him as quickly as possible.

What I can say is that obviously we are always interested in the extradition of criminal suspects in other countries who face charges in the United States. And there were pending charges against Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman in the United States. And further detail, I cannot get into in terms of pending or possible extradition matters. Those are matters that the Justice Department would have to respond to that. But we can say that we are always interested in the extradition of those who face multiple serious crimes in the United States.

Senator RUBIO. Let me switch to another topic. According to the International Christian Concern and Christian Solidarity Worldwide, religious intolerance frequently characterized by violence and forced displacement are common in the states of Oaxaca, Guerrero,

Puebla, Hidalgo, and Chiapas. These religious freedom groups have pointed out that state government officials tasked with dealing with these kinds of issues and cases often have little or no training in human rights or religious freedom, leading to the proliferation of these types of abuses in violation of Mexico's Constitution.

So, if confirmed, will you prioritize the issue of religious freedom and tolerance in Mexico? And what approach will you take to engage the Mexican Government on the state and federal levels to support efforts to train government officials on religious freedom and other basic human rights and upholding the rule of law?

STATEMENT OF ROBERTA S. JACOBSON, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES

Ms. JACOBSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Certainly, I would make that a priority, as I think it is one for this administration. I do think that we appreciated your staff bringing these cases to our attention. The Embassy has already raised these issues at the federal and state level, and I would, certainly, prioritize continuing to do so with the Mexican Government as well as with civil society organizations.

Senator RUBIO. Before I pivot to one of the other nominees, I wanted to briefly discuss your existing record of service to our country by examining for a moment the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014, which imposed targeted sanctions on persons responsible for the violation of human rights of antigovernment protesters in Venezuela. As you know, the President eventually signed this bill into law.

Could you tell us a little bit about your role in the administration's decisionmaking about the implementation of this legislation, specifically, which individuals would be sanctioned, et cetera? What role did you play in that process?

Ms. JACOBSON. In the process of developing the names that would be sanctioned under that law, and remember we are talking about two kinds of sanctions, as you well know, of course, both visa sanctions and financial sanctions, visa sanctions, we had already at the time of the passage of the law and subsequently, we have sanctioned a total of, I believe, 62 Venezuelan individuals. And those names were generated by a combination of various offices within the interagency community as well as our Embassy in Caracas.

The same process is used for the list that is developed for financial sanctions, working, in particular, with the Treasury Department as well as other entities of the U.S. Government. And as those names are developed, the Assistant Secretary is not in the position of actually reviewing and saying particular names should go on or off, but a list is presented after the interagency has come up with the most information they can on candidates.

So I did see the list of names once it had been developed by the interagency community.

Senator RUBIO. In specifics, Diosdado Cabello, who is the president of the National Assembly of Venezuela, and perhaps the most corrupt individual in Venezuela, which is a very high mark, was not included in that list.

Is there any insight you can provide as to why he was not included?

Ms. JACOBSON. I really cannot. I know that there is a standard of information that is reviewed, and whether someone is on the list or not on the list depends on the kind of information that various agencies may have. So I cannot say why his name would or would not be on the list when that list would come to me or others to approve it.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jacobson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERTA S. JACOBSON

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Boxer, and members of the committee, it is a great honor and privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Mexico. I am deeply appreciative of the confidence the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me by my nomination. I am also very grateful for the support of my family, beginning with my husband, Jonathan, and our sons, Gil and Daniel.

I have spent my entire 30-year career with the Department of State working on the relationship between the United States and the Americas/Western Hemisphere. As Director of the Office of Mexican Affairs for nearly 5 years, I became acutely aware of Mexico's gravitational pull on the gamut of U.S. interests in Latin America.

That relationship is unique in its enormous breadth and complexity and in its direct impact on the security, prosperity, and well-being of U.S. citizens every day. All evidence points to an even more interdependent future for our two countries. Almost $1.5 billion in trade crosses the U.S.-Mexico border each day, supporting millions of U.S. jobs. Hundreds of thousands of people cross our nearly 2,000-mile long border legally each day and Mexico is, by far, the top foreign destination for American travelers. Fully 10 percent of all Americans—more than 33 million—are of Mexican heritage. The Mexican-American community is a vital part of our culture, our politics, and our values.

I led the team that worked closely with you in Congress to develop the U.S. proposal for the Merida Initiative, negotiated with Cabinet-level Mexican counterparts, and supervised the delivery of U.S. training and equipment over a 4-year period that gave Mexico an equity partnership in supporting our mutual security needs. We now have an unprecedented level of cooperation that is a model for security partnerships everywhere. In my 4 years as Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, I have remained deeply engaged in all aspects of our complex ties with Mexico and I am deeply honored that the President has nominated me to serve as Ambassador to Mexico.

If I am confirmed, I will continue to lead our team in further nurturing U.S. interests in Mexico. And while every nominee looks forward to working with, and seeking the advice and counsel of, this committee and the Congress, Mexico is a special case: This body enjoys its own wealth of experience on Mexico, and I intend to mine that wisdom to advance U.S. interests in all aspects of our relationship. My Job One, of course, is to secure and protect our mission personnel and their families as they serve our country in Mexico.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue this administration's focus on a number of key priorities. The first will be to advance U.S. economic competitiveness and deepening the economic ties that are so central to opportunities, good jobs, and growth. And those ties are indeed impressive: two-way trade in goods and services reached $592 billion in 2014—that is more than $1.5 billion daily. Mexican exports to the United States contain on average 40 percent U.S. content. The United States buys more than 70 percent of Mexican crude oil exports and supplies Mexico with refined products and natural gas. Now, more than ever, there are increased opportunities for close partnerships between the United States and Mexico. In May 2013, Presidents Obama and Peña Nieto established two new mechanisms—the High Level Economic Dialogue and the Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Innovation, and Research—to promote economic opportunities, education and research collaboration, and North American competitiveness. The United States and Mexico are both committed to expanding trade and investment throughout the Asia-Pacific region through the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement.

It will also be essential to reinforce American security through continued cooperation and partnership under the Merida Initiative. The Initiative represents a new chapter in the history of our relationship; one explicitly based on mutual respect and on shared responsibility for combating transnational criminal networks and pro-

tecting our citizens from the crime, corruption, and violence they generate. Neither of us can do this alone—nor, under these two administrations, do we have to. The State Department has forged strong partnerships to improve civilian security in affected areas to fight drug trafficking, organized crime, corruption, illicit arms trafficking, money laundering, and demand for drugs on both sides of the border. The U.S. Government also is accelerating efforts to support and hold accountable the institutions that are essential to a stable society—police, justice systems, and civil society organizations—to adequately protect and defend the rule of law and human rights. If confirmed, I will focus on these efforts as the United States continues to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law through our continued high-level diplomatic engagement

The border is the seam where cooperation is most important to U.S. interests. Improving our ports of entry ensures the safe and efficient flow of people and goods, vital to our economy and that of Mexico. We are committed to bringing our border infrastructure into the 21st century. We have renovated and expanded one of the world's largest border crossings at the San Ysidro port of entry near San Diego, where 50,000 vehicles and 25,000 pedestrians enter the United States each day, as part of ongoing efforts to make crossings as efficient and secure as possible in support of economic growth and development. We are building an innovative pedestrian terminal that will cross the border at the Tijuana Airport to facilitate and expand regional travel for business and pleasure. Nearly 40 percent of the Mexican produce we buy in U.S. supermarkets passes through the Nogales, Arizona, crossing, and our renovations will expedite this vital trade. As we address Mexico's role in legal and clandestine migration to the United States, we must ensure orderly, safe, and lawful migration and protect the most vulnerable migrants. We also must continue close collaboration to address the enomenon of unaccompanied children from Central America.

The United States enjoys robust and historic people-to-people ties with Mexico, to our benefit. We are focused on tapping that great human potential to enrich us both economically and culturally. More than 4,000 U.S. and Mexican students, teachers, and scholars have participated in our binational Fulbright-Garcia Robles program since 1948, and the United States is the top destination for Mexican students studying abroad. The United States and Mexico can accomplish great things together; through educational exchange, English language learning, professional training, and leadership development we can deepen people-to-people ties, develop a 21st century workforce, and expand economic opportunities for our citizens. I will build upon the success of President Obama's 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative and other innovative ways that expand the opportunities for Americans and Mexicans to build a common future.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I will continue to work diligently to cement the U.S. partnership with Mexico. Muchas gracias, and I will be happy to answer any questions.

Senator RUBIO. Ms. Dogo.

Am I pronouncing this correctly? Is it Dogu?

STATEMENT OF LAURA FARNSWORTH DOGU, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA

Ms. DOGU. Yes, sir.

Senator RUBIO. Okay, thank you. I just want to make sure I did not mess it up the first time I said it.

So thank you for your service to our country and for your willingness to continue to serve.

I wanted to ask you your thoughts on the potential of a canal that would act similarly to the Panama Canal and connect the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea through Nicaragua. What are the potential economic and environmental impacts this project can bring to the area?

Ms. DOGU. Thank you for your question, Mr. Chairman.

I have been following the situation with the canal as I have been preparing for this hearing today. Clearly, the United States Government is interested in that, and there are potentially large eco-

nomic and environmental impacts. We are concerned with the lack of transparency as this project has been moving forward at this point, and we are watching that very, very carefully.

At this point, we actually do not see that there are sufficient funds to start the construction of the canal at this time. There have been no investors identified other than one company, and we are not sure how that is going to play out.

But if confirmed, I will continue to monitor that situation carefully.

Senator RUBIO. If you are confirmed, I am sure you are aware that there are a number of outstanding property claims from United States citizens against the Nicaraguan Government.

If confirmed, what will be your strategy or your approach to helping with these claims that U.S. citizens currently have against that government?

Ms. DOGU. Thank you, sir. Yes, I have been monitoring that situation as well.

The 527 claim situation is actually in a very good position at this time. It appears that we may be close to resolving the last of those cases for the continuous claimants. Those are people who were U.S. citizens at the time their property was confiscated. There are, however, still many other cases of people who have become U.S. citizens since their property was confiscated. And if confirmed, I will continue to work on this through the U.S. Embassy, both through support through consular operations and through our property office at the Embassy.

But there has been good progress made in that area, and I will continue to work with the Government of Nicaragua to make sure that we continue to move that forward.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dogu follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LAURA F. DOGU

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

I am grateful for the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry have shown by sending my name to the Senate for consideration. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to protect and support U.S. citizens in Nicaragua. I will also work to promote a Nicaragua with transparent democratic institutions and values and a commitment to human rights, that is more economically integrated with other Central American countries, and that collaborates effectively with us on a growing range of issues.

Growing up, I learned firsthand about the value of serving your country from my father, a career Navy officer who spent a lifetime protecting America with tours of duty across the United States, abroad, and at sea. I would also like to recognize my family, friends, and colleagues who have guided and supported me throughout my life and career.

In preparation for the opportunity to lead our Embassy in Managua, I carefully reviewed White House, Department of State, and Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs guidance related to advancing America's interests in global security, inclusive economic growth, climate change, accountable governance and freedom for all. Two points made by President Obama and Secretary Kerry's stood out as particularly relevant to Nicaragua.

President Obama rightly maintained, no system of government can, or should be, imposed upon one nation by any other . . . however, the United States is committed to governments that reflect the will of the people. Each nation gives life to this principle in its own way, grounded in the traditions of its own people. America does not presume to know what is best for everyone, just as we would not presume to pick the outcome of a peaceful election. But . . . all people yearn for certain things: the ability to speak your mind and have a say in how you are governed; confidence in

the rule of law and the equal administration of justice; government that is transparent and does not steal from the people; the freedom to live as you choose. Those are not just American ideas, they are human rights, and that is why we will support them everywhere.

If confirmed, I will be a strong proponent for these universal values. Nicaragua, in which human rights, democracy, and a vibrant civil society flourish, represents the surest path to attracting direct foreign investment and tackling endemic poverty in the country. More importantly, the universal values reinforce the importance of the people of Nicaragua choosing their own destiny as a people and nation. If confirmed, the Embassy will continue to regularly maintain contact with a wide range of Nicaraguan advocates on behalf of human, civil, and political rights. I will also seek opportunities to make the same case with leaders at the highest level.

Secretary Kerry said, ". . . we have to work together to eliminate extreme poverty through inclusive economic growth—because we know that no society can thrive when entire segments of the population are excluded from opportunity."

From 1991 to 2006, three successive Nicaraguan administrations focused on free market reform as the path to recovery after 12 years of economic free-fall during the period of revolution and civil war. These policies achieved macroeconomic stability, cutting inflation from 33,548 percent in 1988 to 6.43 percent in 2014. Nicaragua also benefited from significant debt reduction through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Since 1995, the economy has expanded at an average annual real growth rate of 4 percent. Even so, with a gross domestic product of $11.8 billion and a per capita income of $1,904 in 2014, Nicaragua remains the second-poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Growth must almost double to significantly reduce the rate of poverty. Such growth is possible only with strong, more accountable public institutions.

If confirmed, I will work hard to promote trade links, transparency, and the rule of law. Trade and investment opportunities are mutually beneficial and open the door for greater engagement on other essential U.S. priorities such as the development of stronger democratic institutions.

Along these lines, the Strategy for U.S. Engagement in Central America promotes prosperity, governance, and security. Key to Central America's success is regional economic integration. Central America must integrate economically in order to compete globally. Our engagement with Nicaragua under this strategy will advance governance, regional integration, prosperity, and security.

The occasion of my nomination as Ambassador leads me to reflect on my Foreign Service career. In posts as far flung as El Salvador, Turkey, Egypt, and twice in Mexico, as well as in Washington, DC, I have led dynamic teams, which have made real progress addressing rule of law, democracy, economic growth, transparency, and the protection of American citizens. Taken together, this extensive experience has prepared me to serve as Ambassador to Nicaragua if confirmed.

Mr. Chairman, committee members, I thank you again for your consideration of my nomination and I welcome your questions.

Senator RUBIO. Mr. Holloway, after the recent discovery of oil off the coast of Guyana, Venezuela has made territorial claims into the Caribbean Sea, including the oilfield discovery that already belongs to Guyana.

So what is our current U.S. policy with regards to this dispute between Venezuela and Guyana?

STATEMENT OF PERRY L. HOLLOWAY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

Mr. HOLLOWAY. Thank you, sir.

In spite of an 1899 decision, which granted most of the territory in dispute to Guyana, Venezuela has historically maintained claims to different parts of up to 67 percent of Guyana and parts of the coastline. Our policy so far to date is that we have been, as we have in many disputes like this, have encouraged both countries to seek out a peaceful resolution, whether it be by the U.N. or any other appropriate international fora.

But at the same time, any country that makes claims still has to respect the Rule of the Sea and other international obligations, so we are monitoring it very closely.

The Venezuelans put out another statement very recently, which replaced the one that had been done a few weeks ago. We are still trying to analyze that and understand it better.

But we are encouraging both sides to reach a peaceful resolution.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Holloway follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PERRY L. HOLLOWAY

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am deeply honored that President Obama has nominated me to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee and all Members of Congress to advance our Nation's interests in Guyana and the broader Caribbean region.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the tremendous support throughout my career from my wife, Rosaura Holloway, who is here with me today, and my daughter Paula, who is also here, and my son Nicholas, who could not be here. They have all benefited and suffered as a result of my career choice, and I want to thank them for their support. I would also like to single out my mom, Peggy Franklin, who is in South Carolina and who laid the basic foundation for me to have the opportunity to appear before you today.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the honor to serve our country as a Foreign Service officer for the past 26 years in nine countries. I have served primarily in countries in the Western Hemisphere, so I am familiar with the types of challenges and opportunities that exist in Guyana. I have worked on programs dealing with security, drug trafficking, democratic values and human rights, energy and the environment, trafficking in persons, corruption, and the exchange of people and ideas. I have extensive experience with interagency partners like USAID, DOD, Peace Corps, DEA, and DHS. If confirmed, I believe that my experience in the region and my work with other agencies has prepared me well to lead the U.S. mission in Guyana.

Guyana is a country with tremendous potential. It has vast pristine rainforests, fertile agricultural lands, proven mineral resources, potentially large oil reserves, and a close affinity with the United States. It is also a country facing challenges from crime, poverty, corruption, HIV/AIDS, natural resource management, and drug trafficking. If confirmed, I will work with the government and people of Guyana to confront these challenges and to continue to bolster economic growth, strengthen democracy and governance, improve the respect for human rights and rule of law, and promote opportunity for all. These are clearly areas of mutual interest.

Guyana is also a key partner in bolstering regional security. Through the President's Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, we are cooperating to counter the threats of transnational crime and terrorism. Improved security for all citizens of the Caribbean is essential to the region's future stability and prosperity, as well as to our interests. I will work closely with the appropriate agencies of the U.S. Government to strengthen our security cooperation with Guyana.

Guyana is one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere. That is why we have historically worked with the government and private sector to support efforts to diversify the economy and create new opportunities in agribusiness, aquaculture, wood products, and ecotourism. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the government and private sector to strengthen Guyana's market competitiveness, build its trade capacity, improve the investment climate, and promote greater two-way trade with the United States.

Guyana is also a leader in efforts to address global climate change through its low carbon development strategy that is helping preserve its vast rain forest. We have worked with the Government of Guyana to develop sustainable forestry and ecotourism and to enhance its capacity to implement the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, or REDD initiative, while also encouraging sustainable economic development. I hope to have the opportunity to continue these efforts.

HIV/AIDS is a problem in Guyana and the United States has made a significant contribution to combating this disease with over $165 million invested since 2004. Our funding has made a difference. Guyana's prevention and care programs, central laboratory, and state-of-the-art logistics system are models for others in the region. The program has also benefited Guyana's health systems by enhancing the country's laboratory capacity, improving the ability to store and distribute medicines, and strengthening the management of broader health services. As a result of these U.S. Government investments, Guyana now is able to respond to the threats from infectious diseases. If confirmed, I will work with the government and other health partners to sustain the gains we have made and transition ownership of the programs to the Government of Guyana.

Mr. Chairman, Guyana recently held national elections and the party that had been in power since the country's first democratic elections nearly 23 years ago was replaced. The elections were deemed free and fair by the international community. This is an important indicator that Guyana is continuing to build on progress it has made since emerging as an independent nation in 1966 and instituting multiparty democracy in 1992. The new President and his multiethnic coalition government have embarked on an ambitious transformative agenda for the county that centers on eliminating racial and ethnic exclusion, countering organized crime, combating corruption, developing infrastructure, broadening economic growth, and establishing sustainable management of the country's natural resources. The government's agenda largely coincides with our own interests, providing us new opportunities to confront long-standing challenges. I look forward to working with all relevant actors to ensure that the bilateral relationship continues to be one based on shared interests and mutual respect. If confirmed, I will continue the work we have been doing with the government and civil society on programs to strengthen governance structures, promote constructive political dialogue, and encourage greater citizen participation in the political process—all necessary for a strong democracy.

The United States has a special link to Guyana through the many Guyanese who live in our country. It is estimated that there are more than 300,000 Guyanese in the United States and maybe another million people here of Guyanese descent. In Guyana itself, estimates are that over 70 percent of Guyana's citizens have family living in the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to collaborating with the hard-working diasporas in New York, New Jersey, Florida, and other states to find ways that they can contribute to a more stable and prosperous Guyana.

Guyana is a Caribbean country located in South America. The Caribbean Community, or CARICOM, headquarters is in Guyana. If confirmed, I would also serve as the U.S. representative to CARICOM, whose 15 member states work together to promote regional integration and cooperation. CARICOM has a vital role in building a secure and prosperous Caribbean, and I look forward to working with the Secretary General and CARICOM states to strengthen the Organization and our relationship with it, while also advancing our common interests throughout the Caribbean with respect to trade, investment, energy, development, and security.

Mr. Chairman, these are just some of the opportunities and challenges that the United States is addressing in Guyana and within the Caribbean. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues to improve the already close and productive partnership between the United States, Guyana, and CARICOM. You can count on me to work hard to protect American citizens, promote U.S. business in the region, manage U.S. programs efficiently, and vigorously advance the goals of the United States of America.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

Senator RUBIO. Mr. Mulrean, in the 2004 trafficking in persons report, Haiti was listed as a Tier 2 Watchlist for Trafficking. The majority of Haiti's cases were identified as children in domestic servitude.

We discussed that a moment ago in a previous hearing. I think you had a chance to watch some of that.

Haiti has been granted a waiver from being placed on a Tier 3 because it had a written plan, which would make significant steps toward combating trafficking. How would you assess the implementation of their plan to combat trafficking, at this point?

STATEMENT OF PETER F. MULREAN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF HAITI

Mr. MULREAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

As you stated, 2014 was a good year on paper for Haiti regarding trafficking in persons. There was passage of the antitrafficking legislation, and they created a plan for the next 2 years, 2015 to 2017, for implementing it.

At the moment, they have begun to take positive steps, and they have set up what looks like a whole-of-government approach, but the proof of it will be in their execution. At this point, the execution is nascent.

I think the government has an understanding of the seriousness of the situation. But at this point, we are waiting to see them take the serious steps. As with so many other issues in Haiti, it is a question both of capacity, having the institutional capacity whether it is with the police, even the NGOs, and the institutional capacity to deal with these, the judicial capacity to prosecute. But it also, sir, a question of political will. And we are hoping, as with many other things, that after the upcoming elections, we will have a President and a Parliament in place that will be willing to put political will into some of these difficult issues.

Senator RUBIO. Trafficking for domestic servitude is one of the issues that receives a tremendous amount of attention, but there has also been extensive media reporting over the last few years of children being sold into sex slavery, including in makeshift brothels that exist on the border region with the Dominican Republic.

How familiar are you with that? What is the status of that over the last 5 years? And would that be a priority for our Embassy in Port-au-Prince, if confirmed?

Mr. MULREAN. Well, let me start off by saying that, if confirmed, it would absolutely be a priority, as I believe it already is for the Embassy in Port-au-Prince.

I am not familiar with the current details of the trafficking on the border area. We have, however, taken significant steps in terms of our assistance programs, both on supporting civil society to do awareness-raising and advocacy as well as to deal with the victims of trafficking. We are also working with the Government of Haiti to increase capacity in identifying awareness.

There are a number of issues that have been stalled by the current political impasse of the last 2 years, but we will give it our utmost to move this issue forward.

Senator RUBIO. As you know, cholera has already taken the lives of over 8,900 Haitians and infected about 744,000 of them. Given the disturbing new spike in cases of cholera in Haiti, what initiatives is the United States undertaking or will the United States undertake to help address ongoing epidemic?

Mr. MULREAN. Thank you, Senator.

The incidence of cholera has seen a recent spike, but this is after a 92 percent reduction in cases in the last couple years. The United States has put $95 million into a program of activities that has both been to deal with the immediate response to the cholera cases, but in some ways even more importantly to build into the national health system the ability to deal with cholera and, in the future, other communicable diseases.

We coordinate closely with other donors, and we do believe that the situation, while troubling given the recent increase, is not out of control.

Senator RUBIO. Well, let me ask you, what will the United States do to ensure that the United Nations is held accountable for those already harmed by the disease?

Mr. MULREAN. Sir, the United Nations, in response to the cholera outbreak, has been heavily engaged in the response through the World Health Organization and others. They are in a position, as the coordinator of a lot of assistance activities, to ensure that the follow-through reduces cholera to a point where it is as close to zero as can be.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mulrean follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PETER F. MULREAN

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Haiti. I am grateful for the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me by nominating me to this important post. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on Haiti, a country joined with the United States by broad and deeply rooted ties, both historical and contemporary, institutional and individual.

I have had the privilege of serving in the Foreign Service for the past 27 years and the great fortune to be a witness to, and occasionally a participant in, significant developments of the past generation. My career has taken me from the former Yugoslavia as it crumbled, to India as it awoke economically. I have helped oversee innovative reform programs during transitions in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Afghanistan. I have worked closely with the U.N. on humanitarian response to a series of crises and on efforts to build peace and to defend the rights of all individuals. Reaching beyond governments, I have learned the power of partnership with civil society, business and the media in advancing common objectives. And as I stand before both the challenges and opportunities in Haiti, I believe all of this experience would serve me well if confirmed.

Throughout its history, Haiti has often been viewed as a symbol of powerful ideas and forces. Having defeated the most formidable military power of the time and definitively thrown off the chains of slavery, Haiti became the second independent nation in the Western Hemisphere. For this, Simon Bolivar praised Haiti for its contribution to the liberation of Latin America. Diplomatic relations between the United States and Haiti stretch back more than 150 years, and among those who have served as U.S. Minister to the Republic of Haiti was the great civil rights leader Frederick Douglass. The United States is also home to a substantial and vigorous Haitian diaspora with strong patriotic feelings. Both in their homeland and abroad, Haitians are rightly known for their energy, resilience, creativity, pride, and strong sense of history.

That history is marked by stirring achievements, but also by periods of violence and misrule, which allowed human rights abuses to go unpunished and left ground for poverty to take root. Although Haiti is a country of vivid images, this does not mean it is always perceived clearly by the international community. Misfortunes such as hurricanes, disease, and the devastating 2010 earthquake are too often what put Haiti on the front pages. But the United States recognizes that while challenges and problems are part of Haiti's reality, they are not the sum of Haiti's reality. Having helped address Haiti's immediate humanitarian needs in the wake of the earthquake, the United States is focused on supporting the country's longer term development, working in partnership through a Haitian-led process to help the country build a more promising future.

The U.S. strategy to help Haiti become a more democratic and prosperous neighbor involves both near term and longer term goals. The most pressing task facing Haiti is, of course, the holding of successful and peaceful parliamentary, local government, and Presidential elections. The United States strongly recognizes the importance of all Haitians being able to go to the polls to participate in representative governance through a credible and transparent electoral process. I know that Congress shares this goal, and your consistent underscoring of the importance of Haitians freely expressing their preferences at the ballot box has been invaluable in moving Haiti forward toward elections.

The United States commends Haitian President Michel Martelly and the members of Haiti's independent Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) for their efforts to prioritize the holding of elections this year. I would emphasize that the United States has no vote in these elections and does not support any candidate or group of candidates. Simply put, we support the democratic process. We are pleased that an electoral decree and calendar have been published, and we are committed to working with the Government of Haiti and our international partners to coordinate appropriate assistance—including the deployment of international observers—to help ensure that elections are inclusive, transparent and credible. As electoral planning continues, the United States supports the CEP, the United Nations, the OAS, and the Government of Haiti (including its national police) in their efforts to coordinate, support, and execute successful 2015 elections. We are encouraging all actors to participate fully in the electoral process, to abide by the rule of law, and to pledge to a high standard of transparency.

Successful elections are the highest priority of our near term engagement with Haiti. The citizens of Haiti choosing their leaders and representatives through fair, democratic means feeds into and reinforces our broader, longer term goal of fostering good governance, which in turn is essential for building capacity. There are no quick fixes or shortcuts; the process requires a long-term commitment on our part. And, while the commitment of the United States is steadfast, Haiti's success will, ultimately, depend on the actions of the Haitian people. We can advise and assist, but Haiti's development must reflect goals and priorities that the government and people of Haiti have identified, and for which they are exercising ownership. In coordination with other donors, the United States is working to equip key Haitian institutions with the skills necessary to manage resources, both financial and human, and to plan and execute projects. The confidence of the Haitian people in their government will in large part depend on its effectiveness in delivering basic services.

That said, sustained capacity-building and effective governance require funds. Regardless of our efforts in other areas, without a healthy economy, Haiti will remain poor and dependent. It is indisputable that no long-term development goals in Haiti can be sustainable without the growth of the private sector. Therefore, helping Haiti strengthen, expand, and diversify its economy is a key element of our strategy. Haiti has seen positive economic growth since the earthquake, but more needs to be done. Unfortunately, political gridlock has hindered progress. The impasse between Haiti's executive and legislative branches has stymied the passage of legislation in such important areas as an updated business code, an updated criminal code, clarification of property rights, and the provision of electronic signatures. Advances in these areas would strengthen investor confidence in the Government of Haiti's pledge that "Haiti is open for business."

Thanks to consistent, broad, bipartisan support in Congress, U.S. Government assistance to Haiti has been substantial. Since the earthquake, $4.1 billion has been made available in immediate humanitarian assistance following the earthquake and for long-term reconstruction. Of the $4.1 billion made available, 80 percent—$1.3 billion for humanitarian relief and $2.0 billion for reconstruction and development has been disbursed. Since 2010, U.S. post-earthquake assistance to Haiti has helped to measurably improve key economic and social indicators and build infrastructure necessary for self-sustaining growth.

In response to Haiti's desire for investments that support economic growth outside of Port-au-Prince, the United States has targeted some of its most significant assistance to one of Haiti's poorest regions in the North. The Caracol Industrial Park (CIP) is a public-private partnership that is funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and is owned by the Government of Haiti. The U.S. Government contribution consists primarily of support for building a modern power plant that is now providing reliable electricity to the CIP as well as more than 7,000 local businesses and households in the community. Caracol was conceived as a long-term public-private investment in Haiti's north and will require time and continued support to reach its full potential. As of July 2015, in just 3 years of operation, approximately 7,500 jobs have been created at the Caracol Industrial Park. More jobs are expected as facilities expand. Anchor tenant Sae-A is projected to eventually create 20,000 jobs, and the Haitian owned Coles Group has announced it will create 2,500 jobs at Caracol once further phases of construction are completed. Apparel accounts for over 90 percent of U.S. imports from Haiti. Thanks to the preferences accorded under the HELP and HOPE Acts, apparel imports from Haiti are up, increasing by over 6 percent in 2014 to a total of $854 million. Also promising is the growth of value-added apparel exports which increased by 43 percent in 2014, signaling a movement toward more complex products that could yield higher wages for Haitian

employees. This growth would not have been possible without congressional action on the HELP and HOPE Acts.

The United States has also helped Haiti increase agricultural productivity by introducing improved seeds, fertilizer, and technologies to more than 70,000 farmers, which have helped increase yields for rice, corn, bean, and plantain crops as well as increase mango exports by 175 percent. Our funding has placed over 33,000 hectares of hillside farmland under improved watershed management. We have supported an innovative business-plan competition that provides matching grants of up to $200,000 to small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) investing their own capital to expand their businesses. So far, 60 businesses have received technical assistance, of which 31 were awarded grants, leveraging over $10 million in private capital for a total investment of over $15 million. Through our assistance programs we have extended Development Credit Authority guarantees of up to $57 million in loans by local commercial banks, microfinance institutions, and credit unions. Working through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Government has also partnered with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to bring $26 million of long-term financing and technical assistance to Haiti for housing finance, as well as working capital loans to SMEs. Additionally, the U.S. Treasury Department is providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Finance to improve budgeting, tax collection, and cash and debt management.

The United States has also increased agricultural productivity in Haiti by supporting more than 300 farmer associations comprising more than 70,000 farmers. This has led to increased crop yields and gross profit margins for maize, beans, rice and plantains by a minimum of five times, and has increased mango exports by 250 percent. Our funding has placed over 33,000 hectares of hillside farmland under improved watershed management. We have supported an innovative business plan competition that provides matching grants of up to $200,000 to small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) investing their own capital to expand their businesses. So far, 60 businesses have received technical assistance, of which 32 were selected to receive over $5 million in matching funds to expand operations; those firms have invested an additional $10 million of their own funds. Through our assistance programs we have extended Development Credit Authority guarantees of up to $57 million in loans by local commercial banks, microfinance institutions, and credit unions. Working through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Government has also partnered with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to bring $26 million of long-term financing and technical assistance to Haiti for housing finance, as well as working capital loans to SMEs. Additionally, the U.S. Treasury Department is providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Finance to improve budgeting, tax collection, and cash and debt management.

The United States is also working to help improve justice and security for Haitians. Since the earthquake our assistance has made possible the training and commissioning of 3,300 new officers in the Haitian National Police (HNP). The capacity and professionalism of the HNP is increasingly important as the U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) draws down. The HNP's performance has indeed vastly improved, most notably in antikidnapping investigations and crowd control capacities. We have helped create a new HNP community policing unit, which has grown to over 80 officers, in partnership with the New York City Police Department and MINUSTAH. Using approximately $54M in FY10 Supplemental funds, the USG completed construction of six commissariats, barracks at the Presidential palace, and a pier; construction of three prisons, a range of facilities for the counternarcotics police (BLTS), and improvements at the HNP School are all underway. Our programs have trained and equipped the BLTS, increasing its size from about 40 to almost 200 officers and adding a 19-dog K–9 unit. The Miami-Dade Police Department trained 74 counternarcotics officers to help ensure sustainability of our counternarcotics efforts. Funding from the U.S. Government has supported the training of 2,392 judicial actors and helped reconstruct more than 32,000 judicial case files following earthquake loss or damage. Much work remains, especially in the judicial and corrections sectors, but with U.S. assistance the Government of Haiti is increasingly providing improved security for its people.

A positive sign is that the number of Haitians attempting to leave Haiti for the United States is down. To help deter dangerous and illegal sea migration and address a localized surge in human smuggling in the waters off of Puerto Rico, the United States resumed in October 2014 the expedited removal of newly arrived Haitian migrants illegally present on U.S. islands in the Mona Passage or on Puerto Rico. At the same time, the United States established a safe, lawful alternative to migrant voyages through the Haitian Family Reunification Parole (HFRP) program, which allows eligible Haitian beneficiaries of family-based immigrant visa petitions to come to the United States and join their families before their immigrant visa pri-

ority dates become current. The resumption of expedited removal operations in the Mona Passage and the opportunities provided through the HFRP program have led to a marked decrease in illegal sea migrant activity, with U.S. Coast Guard migrant interdiction statistics showing a decrease in the number of Haitians attempting to enter the United States illegally by boat in the first quarter of FY 2015 compared to the same period in FY 2014.

One aspect of Haitian security involves the situation along its border with the Dominican Republic. We are deeply concerned by the reports from the Dominican Republic that tens of thousands of people, mostly Haitians and people of Haitian descent, have crossed the border from the Dominican Republic into Haiti since June 17. We are monitoring the situation closely and actively engaging with the Government of the Dominican Republic, the Government of Haiti, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, civil society organizations, and the international community to confirm that the appropriate authorities work to ensure the security and welfare of all who cross the border and the protection of their human rights. The United States is also funding civil society organizations and international organizations, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to assist with these efforts. We continue to encourage the Governments of the Dominican Republic and Haiti to consult and collaborate with each other and with civil society groups and international organizations to develop and duly implement processes that uphold the rule of law, provide procedural safeguards, and are consistent with each country's international obligations and commitments. If confirmed by the Senate, I will do my utmost on this priority issue.

Development work in Haiti has never been easy and we are committed to active monitoring and evaluation of all our assistance activities to maximize their impact in support of our strategy. There are projects on which we have not attained the results initially expected and we have made adjustments accordingly. The three main areas where we have made mid-course corrections have involved new housing construction, a new port facility, and providing more assistance directly to Haitian organizations. Building permanent new homes proved more costly and time consuming than projected. This led to a shift in the permanent housing strategy, to emphasize private-sector housing finance opportunities for low-income Haitians, neighborhood upgrades, and support to help Haitians transition temporary facilities into safe permanent communities. Regarding a new port in the Fort Liberté area in Haiti's north, there is not sufficient interest at this time from the private sector to support construction. Therefore, the Government of Haiti agreed that a more effective strategy would be to modernize and upgrade existing port facilities at nearby Cap Haïtien. We agreed, and this project is currently underway. Finally, in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, which crippled many local Haitian NGOs, the U.S. Government used international NGOs to initiate emergency relief efforts. They had the advantage of being immediately operational and they had vast experience expediting the provision of food, shelter, and security in an unstable environment. Now that Haiti has transitioned to long-term reconstruction and development, U.S. investments support a more sustainable development approach that includes building the capacity of local organizations. Today, the U.S. Government is helping local organizations develop their administrative and financial capacities—in particular accounting, reporting, and audit preparation functions—so that they can better compete to be direct recipients of U.S. funding. I attach great importance to our new approach to increase direct support to Haitian organizations.

We have tried to learn from our course corrections. Despite having fallen short of our original objectives in some cases, we can credit U.S. assistance for genuine positive developments in Haiti. Our funding helped house more than 328,000 earthquake-displaced Haitians by providing transitional shelters, repairs to damaged homes, support to host families, and rental vouchers. Almost 95 percent of displaced persons have left the tent camps, which are all but gone. We have funded the removal of 2.7 million cubic meters of earthquake rubble—36 percent of the estimated 7.4 million cubic meters of total rubble removed. Our support for Haiti's infrastructure includes the reconstruction of Haiti's University Hospital and other damaged health facilities, and the construction of seven police stations and the Presidential security unit barracks. Nearly half of all Haitians have access to basic health services at U.S.-supported health facilities, and we have provided $95 million for cholera treatment and prevention, including clean water and sanitation activities. This has led to improved basic health indicators and a dramatic decrease in the incidence of cholera. Primary school enrollment is up, with the United States funding the construction of more than 600 semipermanent furnished classrooms, enabling over 60,000 children to return to school. We have helped more than 100,000 businesses and households convert cook stoves from charcoal to clean liquefied natural gas, and supported the planting of 5 million tree seedlings.

Welcome as these improvements are, more needs to be done—particularly in the area of effective governance. Haiti's leaders must foster a political, societal, and economic environment conducive to economic development and prosperity. Sustained development will not be possible without responsive, accountable, and transparent governance; without just application of the rule of law and respect for human rights; without new laws and changes in existing ones to attract investment; and without a fully staffed and functioning government in every branch.

In analyzing Haiti's prospects for building a better future, and how the United States can help, we must look realistically at the challenges that country faces, but also not lose sight of factors working in its favor. One of the most important of these is the widespread support Haiti enjoys among the American public in general and here on Capitol Hill in particular. Support from Congress was swift, tangible, and significant, totaling $4 billion in post-earthquake assistance appropriated. No less important has been your sustained attention to that country, particularly at times when steps in democratic progress have needed encouragement. If confirmed as Ambassador to Haiti, I look forward to working with you in addressing our shared goal of helping Haiti move forward, and I would encourage you to visit.

As valuable as American support is, the greatest of Haiti's assets, its ace in the hole, is its people. Although by some economic indices Haiti ranks as the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, in human capital it is rich. Haitians have demonstrated dynamism, resilience, creativity, and courage on a scale far beyond the country's modest size. We seek to help Haitians create the conditions—political, economic, and social—in which these talents can be put to best use.

Much remains to be done in Haiti, and I would not wish to understate the scope of the task or the need for a long-term commitment in order to achieve lasting progress. But the past 5 years have also been marked by measurable improvements in the lives of Haitians and genuine accomplishments in Haiti's recovery and development. Americans can take satisfaction in helping Haitians help themselves. If confirmed by the Senate, I will do my utmost to focus on a realistic and achievable agenda to help make the U.S.-Haitian partnership stronger than ever.

Senator RUBIO. I await the arrival of my colleagues, so I will just keep going for a little while.

I wanted to return to Mexico for a moment, Ms. Jacobson. For a lot of Americans, there has been a lot of discussion the past few weeks and months about the state of affairs in Mexico. I think Mexico has a lot to be optimistic about.

One of the things that people are concerned about, I, certainly, have been, watching both from this committee and from the Intelligence Committee, is the notion that there are regions in the northern part of Mexico that are not fully in the control of their government. In essence that criminal groups have de facto control these areas and, in particular, one of the groups that is controlled by this horrific individual who was able to escape in the last few days and poses a threat to the United States and to his own people.

I would just take an aside to say I have seen some chatter over the last few days that I think clearly understates who it is that we are dealing with here in this individual, El Chapo. He is a murderer, a person who is involved in virtually every nefarious activity one can imagine, including kidnapping, murders, and crimes committed within the United States facilitated by his organization.

How would you describe the challenges the Mexican Government faces in terms of providing security and stability, particularly in those areas where perhaps they do not have effective control over their territory as they would desire to have?

Ms. JACOBSON. I think, Mr. Chairman, in the first place, I think I would want to associate myself entirely with your characterization of El Chapo Guzman. To minimize his role or the horror of what he has wrought with the Sinaloa cartel I think would do a disservice to his victims and to people who have been touched by the trafficking and the violence that the group has wrought.

Clearly, the Government and the people of Mexico face a very complicated and a very difficult security situation. It is much more difficult in about a half-dozen states in the country than elsewhere. It is not nationwide. That is where the majority of the homicides take place, the majority of the drug violence, the majority of the territorial control between and among cartels.

It is important to remember, I think, that during the congressional and gubernatorial elections that took place a little over a month ago, I guess, just about a month ago, 99 percent of polling stations opened and operated normally around the country, even in some of those places that have had high levels of violence. So they were able to undertake the elections and people were able to vote freely even in places where you had rumors that they would not be able to exercise their vote.

So I think that the notion that they have lost control of their territory, while clearly they are under siege in some places and there are places where people are fearful of local authorities, and local authorities themselves are part of the problem, not part of the solution, I think that there are a number of places where it has been turned around, where the Mexican Government at the local, state, and federal level have been able to gain back the control.

That is what the Mexican Government continues to work on and we in support of them, places like Ciudad Juarez in Chihuahua, which for a time was really a no-go area and really has been coming back with levels of violence that have dropped.

My colleague here served in Juarez during a very difficult time as a great leader in our consulate.

So I do think that to continue to work on the institutions of government to make sure that they are transparent, on anticorruption mechanisms as the Mexican congress has just passed, is critical to getting a handle on the full gamut of security problems they face.

Senator RUBIO. Another issue that, of course, is well documented in the United States is the migratory issues that we face across the border. Perhaps what many people are not as aware of over the last few years is the trend now of a growing number of people who are crossing the U.S. southern border, the Mexican northern border, are not from Mexico. In particular, we have seen a large upsurge of people migrating from the Northern Triangle countries, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras.

First of all, what is the approach of the Mexican Government, at this stage, to the reality that you know people pushing up through the country from their southern border? And where are the opportunities to work cooperatively with them on both sides of the border to seal off the opportunities to transit illegally, which, in fact, is a magnet for more people to attempt to do it?

Ms. JACOBSON. Absolutely. I think it is a very important question, Senator.

You know, I think last year's surge in migrants from Central America was an important kind of bellwether not just for the United States in how we are focused on Central America and the root causes of such migration, but also for Mexico, which has seen migrants move through its territory for a long time, but not in those kinds of numbers.

In the last year, the numbers coming into the United States have dropped dramatically, but a big part of that has been the Mexican effort to reduce the number of people coming into Mexico at their southern border and to also reduce some of the most dangerous practices that are being affected on migrants, such as riding on the infamous train north, La Bestia, and shutting that down so that migrants cannot be exploited violently on that trip north, including unaccompanied minors.

So we have worked very closely with Mexico on this, including on their southern border strategy, devoting resources, training so that they can help both gain control over their southern border with Guatemala with new task forces working with the Northern Triangle countries, and then obviously working with Mexico but also with the Northern Triangle countries on the root causes that are causing the migrants to flee in the first place.

Senator RUBIO. Okay, thank you.

Senator Flake.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. I wanted to be here earlier, but votes intervened.

Senator RUBIO. I am going to go now.

Senator FLAKE [presiding]. Okay, now let us get back to Cuba policy. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. Just joking.

Ms. Jacobson, we are very excited, at least I am, certainly, in Arizona to have you headed to Mexico, hopefully, if you are successful in your nomination.

I am sure you talked about some of the border issues. You were talking about some of them when we came in. But what is often overlooked is the tremendous amount of trade that goes on. Mexico is a huge trading partner with the United States and obviously of huge importance to the State of Arizona.

We obviously need border security, better border security than we have. We also need to make sure that we have the infrastructure, not just green uniforms at the border, but blue uniforms as well to facilitate trade.

Can you talk about the importance of that?

Ms. JACOBSON. Absolutely, Senator. Thank you.

I think that what we call the 21st century border strategy that we are working on is so critical to the United States' competitiveness, to North American competitiveness. We know already that many, many goods that we manufacture cross the border many times in that process. We know that $1.5 billion a day in trade crosses the border between the U.S. and Mexico.

But we know that right now our infrastructure is not 21st-century, and we need to get that better. But there are huge improvements being made, whether it is at Nogales, where so much of the winter fruits and vegetables come through to the United States, new crossings that are being opened, the first rail crossing in 100 years.

With our Mexican partners, this is a critical part of our economic strategy for competitiveness of both countries.

We also know that of imports of finished products from Mexico, 40 percent of the inputs to those products are from the United States. The comparable figure from China is 4 percent. So it is good

for American jobs to continue working with Mexico in that partnership.

And frankly, security and legitimate trade are not zero-sum. They have to be pursued in tandem along the border. It is the seam that knits us together. And it is critical for the communities, as you know, all along that border.

Senator FLAKE. Right. You mentioned the improvement in infrastructure. On the Arizona side, certainly the Mariposa port, the international border there at Nogales is important, and we have invested quite heavily. There are also commitments on the part of the Mexican Government to undertake certain infrastructure improvements.

How can you help in terms of advocacy to help them comply with their obligations there?

Ms. JACOBSON. I think that is really important. As you know, the Mexican model is a little bit different from ours. There are often concessions. And we have worked very closely with the Mexican Government to try and make sure that to a much greater extent their own planning and our planning match up, so that you do not have cases where either our side is finished before theirs or vice versa. And I would continue, if confirmed, to advocate very strongly to ensure that our planning is done so that we can make sure that their side finishes up as quickly as ours or vice versa, in some cases.

There are now master plans along the border, in most cases, Texas, Arizona, California. Making sure that we coordinate those things across the border is just critical.

You know that the Arizona-Sonora coordination is critical at the State level, and I would do everything I could from the Federal side and the Embassy leadership side, to push the Mexican Government and through them the concessionaire to make sure that we get things moving in sync at all times.

Senator FLAKE. Great. That will, certainly, be helpful. There is a lot of cooperation that goes on in terms of safety inspections and whatnot. If there is good cooperation on the Mexican side of the border, we can smooth and make this a lot easier.

Ms. JACOBSON. And, as you know, preinspection is coming to cargo, and that is very exciting to reduce wait times at the border for products.

Senator FLAKE. We are very excited about that.

Anyway, thank you, all. Because we have votes going on, and I know that Senator Menendez needs to get back as well, I will turn it over to him. But like I said, we are very excited.

For the rest of you all, I will let the other answers stand.

But, Ms. Jacobson, I have been thrilled to work with you in the past and look forward to working with you in the future.

Thank you.

Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congratulations to you all for your nominations and your willingness to serve our country.

Ms. Jacobson, let me ask you, we are all incredibly, deeply troubled by Joaquin Guzman's escape over the weekend, and I am particularly disturbed by the fact that Guzman was arrested in Feb-

ruary 2014, and from all indications available, the U.S. did not request his extradition until February of this year.

Can you explain why the State Department did not request Guzman's extradition for a year, especially when he is facing charges in at least seven U.S. Federal district courts? He has long served as the overlord of what is considered the most powerful drug cartel on the planet. What happened here?

Ms. JACOBSON. Senator, what I can say, because we do not get into the details, and I cannot since I am not a Department of Justice employee, which basically prepares all of the extradition packages with lawyers at the State Department, what I can tell you is that we always want to extradite or seek extradition of all of those who are detained overseas against whom there are charges in the United States.

We have been discussing extraditions and the pace of extraditions and our desire for greater extraditions with Mexico for a number of years now. But what I cannot tell you is the exact reasons or timing for the particular possible or actual extradition requests.

Senator MENENDEZ. So are you telling me that the State Department's only role in extraditions, whether it be this or any other one, is to act upon the Justice Department's instigation?

Ms. JACOBSON. No. There are, certainly, lawyers within the State Department who work with the Justice Department, but it is the Justice Department that puts together, with the State Department, the extradition requests of other governments.

Senator MENENDEZ. So it is the Justice Department that delayed it?

Ms. JACOBSON. I cannot tell exactly what the delay was. I have to refer——

Senator MENENDEZ. Someone is going to have to tell the United States Senate why it took a year before we even asked for his extradition, when this man is sought in seven Federal districts, has a whole host of charges, one of the most dangerous people in the Western Hemisphere, and we know the risk of him breaking out of a Mexican jail is high.

Ms. JACOBSON. I cannot confirm the exact time when the request was made, Senator, except to refer you to the Justice Department.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay, let me ask you this. Continuing on the line of extraditions, here is something hopefully you can help me with, Joanne Chesimard. You have been negotiating on the Cuba reengagement. I see nothing on Joanne Chesimard. I see nothing on others, such as the killer of the New Mexico state trooper. She is on the FBI's 10 most wanted terrorists list.

So as our top diplomat right now for Latin America and the Caribbean, can you explain the lack of progress for efforts at extraditions, whether it be El Chapo or whether it be Joanne Chesimard or the killer of the New Mexico state trooper?

Is this not a national security imperative for the State Department?

Ms. JACOBSON. Extraditions are an incredibly important tool to fighting crime and getting back people who are high priorities for the United States. We have had significant numbers of extraditions from Mexico in the past and, as you know, from many other coun-

tries in the hemisphere, including Colombian and others. We have also had expulsions from Cuba since 2010 of those that we wanted back in the United States for crimes.

As I said before, Joanne Chesimard's case, in particular, and I am from New Jersey and I know the case well, is raised every time we talk to the Cubans. It has been raised at extremely high levels with the Cuban Government. There has not been a satisfactory response yet, and we will continue to raise it in the law enforcement talks that we will now be having.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I understand the Cubans are going to talk to you about it. They will talk to you about it ad infinitum because they say she has political refugee status in their country, and, therefore, that is not really a bargaining chip.

I just do not understand how we turn over three convicted spies and cannot get one convicted cop killer back from Cuba.

Let me ask you, continuing on the national security threat issues, I have seen that Diosdado Cabello, the head of Venezuela's national assembly, is the target of a series of investigations by U.S. Federal prosecutors and the Drug Enforcement Agency. Putting aside recent meetings by the State Department and pictures with Cabello, I am concerned that the investigations are bringing into greater focus how the drug trade is penetrating the highest levels of the Venezuelan state.

So is the current situation in Venezuela a national security threat to the United States?

Ms. JACOBSON. I think that the current situation in Venezuela is of great concern to the United States. Whether it is a national security threat to the United States, I would not say. We have made clear, as we did in the sanctions——

Senator MENENDEZ. You would say it is not a national security threat?

Ms. JACOBSON. I would say it is a national security threat in the sense that drug trafficking is overall a national security threat to the United States. As we have said in our reports annually, the Government of Venezuela is not cooperating with us on that issue.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay, so what has changed from your testimony on May 8 of last year when I asked you a very similar question and your answer to me was, "I think the answer to that question is that it is a very serious concern to us, a national security threat."

Ms. JACOBSON. Well, as I just said, I think drug trafficking overall is a national security threat to the United States.

Senator MENENDEZ. I was not asking about drug trafficking overall in that question, nor in this question. I was asking you about Venezuela.

You told me on May 8 of 2014 that it was a national security threat. Why is it less so today?

Ms. JACOBSON. Whether the words are exactly the same this day or then, I think the concerns that we have about Venezuela and about drug trafficking are the same. We have concerns about how much drugs may be coming through or out of Venezuela into the United States, and we are going to continue to act to keep them from coming in.

Senator MENENDEZ. I think even the President in his determination cites a national security threat.

One last question, when I have individuals who are brought before the committee for the advice and consent of the Senate, I take it very seriously. And one of the elements that I take very seriously is that I am going to get fair, honest, transparent answers to my questions so that I can make judgments on the issues that I am called upon as a United States Senator and as a senior member of this committee to make judgments on.

When in a hearing on Venezuela, the same hearing where you told me it was national security threat, I asked you whether or not the opposition in Venezuela, as you had stated, was actually opposed to us pursuing sanctions, and your answer to me at that time was that the opposition elements engaged in the current dialogue have suggested we refrain from sanctions against individuals guilty of human rights violations.

Now that was not the case, and you ultimately made it very difficult for me at a moment that I was trying to understand what would be the consequences of sanctions. I thought that the sanctions that the President ultimately signed were the right ones, but you created a doubt in me, a doubt that should not have been there because then I heard a chorus from the opposition in Venezuela who said, no, we never said that.

So if I am going to look to advise and consent and vote affirmatively for someone, I need honest and open and transparent answers. And I do not feel that I got that from you at that time.

So can you explain to me why I should feel that if I were to vote for you to be the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, a country with which we have a critical relationship on a whole host of issues, that I would feel that I was getting open and transparent answers?

Ms. JACOBSON. Senator, I guess one of the things I would say is I would look to the response of the opposition after these sanctions were passed when they publicly rejected those sanctions. And I would suggest that there were different answers from different members of the opposition, and they were in an extremely difficult situation. And what I told you was what I had heard from some of them.

But after it was said publicly, it put them in an extremely difficult position, which I had not intended to put them in. But it was never a misstatement to you of what I had heard.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, you asked to clarify the record, and even your clarification then is not what you are telling me now. When you asked to clarify the record, which I allowed you to do when I was then the chairman, you said I would like to clarify one point I made during the hearing, the opposition elements engaged in the current dialogue have not specifically suggested we refrain from sanctions against individuals guilty of human rights violations.

Ms. JACOBSON. Because those in the dialogue had not. It was others who were outside the dialogue. And that was why I did not want to cause problems for those who were within the dialogue.

Senator MENENDEZ. But you did not even, in your clarification, give me that statement that you gave me now.

So I have a real problem in one of the most important assignments in the Western Hemisphere, other than the one that you presently possess, about whether I am going to get open, honest, and transparent answers. That is a problem for me.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

I think Senator Rubio is on his way back and we have to go vote as well. We will go for a minute.

Mr. Mulrean, Haiti, how are we doing in terms of recovery efforts? And how is the country, the government responding? What do you see as your main challenge there?

Mr. MULREAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think what we see in the last year or two in Haiti is a series of improvements in the general situation, particularly if you look at the post-earthquake situation.

The health and economic indicators are up. The security situation has improved. Private investment has outpaced donor assistance for the last 3 years. And even some polling indicates that Haitians feel that they are better off now than they were preearthquake.

I think what this indicates, Senator, is that Haiti is moving past the post-earthquake crisis relief and into a better place, but a place that will still require long-term development and support by the international community.

There are a lot of things that still need to be done. There has been basically a political impasse between the executive and the legislative branch, which has resulted in the need for elections now coming up this fall.

The problem with this impasse is that it has prevented some very important legislation from moving forward.

So the immediate concern, were I to be confirmed, Senator, is the impending elections that will begin in August. In October, you will have legislative, Presidential, and local elections going on. I think for Haiti to move forward truly into its development phase, you need to have an executive and legislative branch that are willing to work together and take some of the difficult decisions.

Senator FLAKE. What areas is USAID working in, in terms of economic development?

Mr. MULREAN. Senator, Congress has been very generous post-earthquake with Haiti. You have allocated $4.1 billion to Haiti, 80 percent of which has been dispersed. All of the humanitarian assistance is now completed. Where we are is the focus is on the development and recovery assistance that is focused on the economic, social, rule of law, and governance areas.

I think it goes without saying that while things are better in Haiti, economic growth has been in the 3 percent, 4 percent, 5 percent range, the last few years, to make a dent in Haiti in the poverty and unemployment, it needs to be 7 percent or 8 percent. So what needs to really move forward well is economic growth. There needs to be better investment.

Again, this goes back to a certain extent to the need for political will to move forward. They need a new business code. There are critical pieces of legislation on property rights that need to move forward.

Senator FLAKE. Ms. Dogu, with Nicaragua, what are the main areas of focus there for our development assistance?

Ms. DOGU. The main area of focus, Senator, will be strengthening democratic institutions and rule of law in the country. We are also going to be focusing on economic integration with Central America as part of the Central American strategy. We feel that it is very important that Nicaragua integrates itself economically with its neighbors and that all of Central America has a chance to compete together on the global front.

In addition to that, of course, if I am confirmed, one of my top priorities immediately upon arriving in the country would be the safety and security of the people who work with me there in the country, both the official Americans and their families and the private citizens that are in the country. And I would be focused on that immediately upon arrival, just to make sure that we are prepared in case of any emergency.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

I have to run to vote, but let me just say, all four of you are foreign career Foreign Service officers, and one of the great parts of this job is to be able to meet with many. I chair the Africa Subcommittee so I meet with almost all of the career Foreign Service officers going to those countries. But I am so impressed with the professionalism that I see and the commitment to service that all of you exhibit. And I have not had an occasion to work with three of you, but Ms. Jacobson I have, and I have seen that professionalism. I have seen that commitment.

And I just appreciate all that you do and for your service and for your families as well. I know they sacrifice a lot to have you in this position.

So thank you for your service, and I look forward to continuing the process here.

Senator RUBIO [presiding]. Thank you.

Unless more members come, we are going to reach a conclusion here fairly soon, which I am sure none of you will be offended if you are not the subject of a lengthy hearing. But I did have some questions I wanted to touch base. Some are a little bit broader.

I did want to revisit for a moment, Venezuela, Ms. Jacobson. I cut short my questioning because I wanted to get to all of the nominees.

I am not saying that this is something that I have been told. I am just curious, and I think it is important for the record. Are you aware of any assurances that Counselor Shannon or any U.S. official made, including persons in the White House or the NSC, to representatives of the Venezuelan Government that the United States is going to refrain from applying additional sanctions on human rights violators or corrupt persons? Have any such assurances been made by anybody that you are aware of in the U.S. Government?

Ms. JACOBSON. Not to my knowledge, no.

Senator RUBIO. Okay.

I want to get broader, and that may involve a number of the countries involved, but particularly Nicaragua and Mexico. As we look at the Western Hemisphere, there are two competing camps

that seem to have emerged, at least in my view, and I would like to have your comment on it.

One is kind of the pro-American, I would say, but friendlier to our interests, camp of nations, and you see prosperity in these countries. Of course, Peru and Chile, Colombia, Panama, and I would include Mexico in that group of countries that are a key part of a kind of prosperous future for the Western Hemisphere, all of which have made substantial gains. They still have challenges. Colombia has significant challenges. Mexico, we have talked about some of their challenges as well.

And then there is the second group that has emerged and they, on the other hand, are heading in the opposite direction, in many respects. Obviously, Cuba for a long time but Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and oftentimes Nicaragua is in that camp as well.

And so let me begin, and I do not want to make your job any harder than it is going to be, if confirmed, but I do have serious questions and I think many of us do about the legitimacy of the elections that they have conducted there in the past and the general attitude of the Nicaraguan Government towards the United States of America. On the one hand, they do allow U.S. investment of U.S. firms and companies. There is travel there. There is engagement, in that sense. On the other, their government is less than cooperative on a host of issues and, in fact, they have now expressed a willingness, for example, to allow the Russians to increase military cooperation with them and even pay an increased number of port visits, et cetera.

Ms. Dogu, how would you describe our relationship with Nicaragua today? Obviously, they are not an ally in the traditional sense of the word. But how would you describe our current situation when it comes to their government versus the United States, and the relationship between us at this moment?

Ms. DOGU. Mr. Chairman, I think you actually described it quite well.

It is a very complex relationship. We do have some stresses in the relationship, but we also do have areas where we are able to cooperate quite well together.

On the stress side, obviously, we are concerned about some of the things that you mentioned in terms of the lack of free elections and the lack of space for people in the country to have a dialogue about the choice that they would have for leaders of the country.

On the economic side, however, we cooperate well. We are their number one trading partner. They are part of the Central American Free Trade Agreement. Since they joined the Central American Free Trade Agreement and that went into effect, their trade with the United States has increased by about 165 percent. Trade from the United States to Nicaragua has also increased fairly significantly.

Interestingly, even on the law enforcement side and on the counternarcotics side, we have been able to find an opportunity to work together. On the counternarcotics side, we do have cooperation with the Government of Nicaragua, small funding that goes to them through the Department of Defense and through DEA.

So we do have some areas of cooperation on the law enforcement side. They have actually removed from their country two fugitives that were on the FBI top 10 list last year in 2014.

So I think the challenge for me, if I am confirmed, sir, will be to continue to find those areas where we can cooperate together and to go ahead and work very carefully and closely to address the areas of concern where we do not get along so well. And I can commit to you that I will do that and it will be a high priority for me, if confirmed.

Senator RUBIO. And then, Ms. Jacobson, let me just first ask you about the broader region. I described these sorts of competing camps that have emerged.

Mexico I think is a key linchpin to that. In my recollection, they are if not the largest among the largest economies in the region, certainly in comparison to some of the smaller countries. They have always also had a significant influence in the multinational organizations that characterize the region.

As Mexico continues to grow and prosper, do you view them as a nation, as a government, willing to play more in the regional leadership category? Are they prepared, for example, to play a greater role in what is happening with human rights violations and elections that are upcoming in Venezuela? Are they prepared to address some of the challenges that are being faced to their south, which they are impacted by, in the Northern Triangle countries? How would you characterize their willingness to become a more active participant as a regional leader, which is really their role in that region, rightfully?

Ms. JACOBSON. I think that is an incredibly important point for Mexico. Mexico for many, many years had a very, very strong role, especially on the economic side with Central America. I think to some extent during Venezuela's heyday of high oil prices in Petrocaribe, Mexico was pushed out of that sphere a little bit.

They have reasserted their engagement on Central America. They have reasserted it on economic issues in greater engagement with the Central American countries.

They have reasserted it on energy, which is extremely positive. There are gas pipelines being built between Mexico and Guatemala. We know that energy prices in Central America are as much as 10 times higher than they are in the United States. This affects their productivity and all of the other ills that we see reflected in migration.

So Mexico's greater engagement with Central America and its leadership there is critical. But beyond that, I think they can play more of a role. Mexico, as it opened up and began to be more confident as a democracy opening up to U.N. human rights organizations and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights organization system, needs also to play that role regionally. There are Mexican members of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights now, and it would be great if Mexico felt more confident in playing that role regionally with South American countries or elsewhere.

But I also think it is significant beyond regionally that President Pena Nieto talked about Mexicans being involved in peacekeeping for the first time when he was at the U.N. General Assembly last

fall. That is another place where I think Mexico can begin to make a contribution in leadership, including in the region.

Senator RUBIO. The general state of affairs in Mexico, obviously for years some have viewed Mexico as a source of cheaper labor, as a place where businesses move operations because it might be less costly to do business there, as a source of migration to the United States in massive numbers. But over the last few years, all those factors have begun to change. In fact, there is an emerging middle class in Mexico now with significant consumer power and there are significant pockets of prosperity emerging within parts of Mexico as they help continue to try to make this transition to a more prosperous future.

How would you describe the state of affairs in Mexico today? Is it a country headed in the right direction, obviously, with significant challenges? Is it a country that remains the way I just characterized it, that some view as a place that—because, for example, as we have seen in some reports, net migration from Mexico significantly declined. Partially, I would imagine, due to the economic downturn in the United States, but also partially if not primarily due to the fact that now there are income and employment opportunities in Mexico today that did not exist.

So what are the drivers of this growth? And what do they need to do next to continue those trends?

Ms. JACOBSON. I think there are a number of things. One, to be honest, is out of their control. And that is demographics. The Mexican population is aging to some extent, as the U.S. population has. And we know that people do not migrate beyond a certain age, in terms of illegal migration or undocumented migration.

But the other is that the Mexican Government has been extremely focused, as was the Calderon administration, on education. And that is crucial to them sustaining the movement of large numbers of people into that middle class.

And they know that as we work on education jointly—and we have expanded our educational cooperation dramatically. Last year, there were hundreds of Mexican teachers who came to the United States for advanced English studies to go home and teach English in Mexico. This is part of the President's 100,000 Strong in the Americas and a joint bilateral program with Mexico that we have launched.

And I think we are looking at ways to improve the educational exchanges but not just at the very high, top 4-year level. Mexico has developed a series of "politecnicos," which are more akin to vocational training or community colleges, to really educate and train the gap between those who go through K–12 but are not necessarily going to go to a 4-year university, but get involved in manufacturing jobs that now require more than just a high school education in Mexico as well.

And I think that is really the focus of Mexico, on education moving forward, because I would agree with the first characterization you gave of Mexico as an increasingly, I guess it was the second one, an increasingly middle-class country with really important pockets of progress that need to be expanded to the rest of the country.

The economic and structural reforms that this administration passed in Mexico in its first year in office are really critical, but now they have to implement those reforms and keep moving forward with education and with fiscal reforms and telecommunications and energy openings to provide the kinds of jobs that will continue the growth for both our economies.

Senator RUBIO. You signaled demographic trends in Mexico, and it is an interesting point. Their immigration policies are much more stringent than ours. That is correct. In essence, it is a lot easier to immigrate legally to the United States than it is to immigrate legally to Mexico.

So the question then is, on the issue of migration, as they continue to develop in this direction, is it your sense that this is a country more willing, a government more willing, to cooperate with the United States to stem the flow of illegal migration across their northern border than they were 5 or 10 years ago?

There is a sense among some that I partially share that because of the high level of remittances from the United States back to Mexico that there has been interest in the past in not discouraging migration as a source of remittances back to the United States. But is there now a sense that for the first time in a while, the Mexican Government is starting to realize increasingly that the instability on their northern border is attracting migration on their southern border and on their coasts, and present security challenges to Mexico not just to the United States? And if so, do you think now there is an opportunity to work even closer with them to establish the sorts of improvements we need on both sides of the border to solidify that situation further?

Ms. JACOBSON. What I can say, Mr. Chairman, is I think that the Mexican Government does realize the threat to both the economic situation and to the border, both northern and southern, that undocumented or uncontrolled migration creates, both from other people using Mexican territory to traverse to come to the United States as well as Mexicans entering the United States undocumented.

I think the cooperation has been really quite good in recent years. But I will say that it has been amped up recently, and there is a real sense in Mexico, I think, that as others use their territory to try to get to the United States, and their own economic situation improves, they could decide to stay in Mexico. And so it is in their interest to work on orderly and safe and legal migration with protections for people, of course, the same way it is for us.

Senator RUBIO. My final question, because we are nearing 5 o'clock, again, for you, Ms. Jacobson, because we may not see you again in your current capacity before the committee, I know you have been involved in the negotiations that ultimately have led to the announcement of mutual embassies in Washington and in Havana. Ironically, just a few days after that announcement was made, I think the Sunday after the 5th of July, there were once again mass detentions in Nevada. The Ladies in White, there was one peaceful demonstrator who had his nose fractured, and was beaten.

And it goes back to the situation about this Embassy. What kind of Embassy are we going to have in Havana? I know that the argu-

ment has been that we are going to have an Embassy in Havana the way we do in other countries that have unfriendly governments and that approach. But I do think we have now taken this massive step, the President has, of diplomatically recognizing that government as a legitimate form of government. Although we, certainly, have qualms about how they operate, the President has given them diplomatic recognition and opened this Embassy.

What kind of Embassy is this going to be? It appears to me from what has been announced that the employees of that Embassy, other than the American diplomatic employees, the people who clean, the people who do the service work, will always continue to be hired from an agency controlled by the Cuban Government. It is my understanding that there will continue to be a significant security perimeter that could discourage people from coming to the Embassy to appeal for assistance from the United States. It appears that all but two members, and maybe I am wrong about the number, but there will be significant limitations on the ability of U.S. diplomats to use the Embassy to travel throughout the country and engage with people. And there apparently will be significant limitations on the ability to deliver enhancements to the technological capabilities of that facility.

So, in essence, other than the name on the door, what will be different about this facility than the interests section that we have there now?

Ms. JACOBSON. Thank you, Senator.

It was very important, as we discussed this opening of embassies and reestablishment of diplomatic relations, that we be absolutely certain that we can do our jobs under the Vienna Convention as we see them, which include being able to get out into the country and talk to people, certainly more than just two people but others within the Embassy, and that we ensure that the Embassy is a place that people can come to, Cubans can come to, because Americans have never really had great difficulty if they are in Cuba.

And I can assure you that what we will be doing and the way we will be operating is significantly different than we have been operating as an interests section. The security presence outside the interests section has already been reduced and the agreement on that is a significant reduction in security presence outside the future Embassy, such that we hope people will not feel nearly the same kind of presence or threat, and there will no longer be Cuban Government screening or names taken for people to enter the U.S. Embassy. That will be something, as we do all over the world, that we do, not the host government.

The ability to travel is similar to our restrictions in many other places around the world. There are a number of people at the Embassy who will be—it is more than two, as a matter of fact—who will be able to travel without any pre-notification. But others will be able to travel on a certain number of days' notification, but they will no longer have to ask permission. That is quite significant, because we previously had to ask for approval. Now it is only a notification, and then we go.

So that is really quite significant in enabling us to get out and travel.

We also have had almost no ability to get sensitive shipments into our interests section. They had all but stopped. We have made a very good start on reprovisioning the interests section, and we will continue to have talks thereafter about future shipments.

So in many of the ways, all of the ways that we laid out that were important to us to begin to operate more like everyplace else that is a restrictive environment, we made enormous progress from where we are now.

Senator RUBIO. Well, I want to thank all the nominees for being here with us today. I appreciate it very much, and your patience in the back-and-forth of people coming in and out. Again, we look forward to continuing to review your nominations.

You may receive written questions and follow-up from members of the committee, and I encourage you to promptly respond to those as quickly as possible, since a delay in that response could delay a final vote in consideration by the Senate.

So again, I want to thank all of you for your service to our country and for your willingness to continue to serve. And with that the committee stands adjourned.

I apologize, a reminder that the record will be open until Friday at the end of the business day.

Thank you. The committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:54 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF ROBERTA S. JACOBSON, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE JACOBSON'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. Mexico has made significant progress integrating with North American and global supply chains, generating economic opportunities. Deepening and sustaining the benefit of these policies and recent significant policy reforms will require the rule of law.

♦ Where does Mexico stand in implementing its ambitious judicial reform and how can you, as Ambassador, properly support this key step forward for Mexico?

Answer. Mexico's 2008 constitutional mandate requires all levels of government to transition from an inquisitorial to an accusatorial justice system by June 2016. The new system will include open trials, leading to greater transparency and efficiency, and decreasing the reliance on confessions, which has been tied to human rights abuses. It will also aim to prevent and punish impunity and abuses more transparently and effectively.

Under the Merida Initiative, the U.S. Government is providing tens of millions of dollars in assistance to support the transition of Mexico's judicial system at the federal and state level. Moreover, as the U.S. and Mexican economic relationship continues to mature the protection of property rights, including intellectual property rights (IPR), is critical for investment, growth and prosperity. We are our pursuing these objectives through our initiatives under the High Level Economic Dialogue.

If confirmed, I will do all I can to promote U.S. cooperation and assistance to support the Government of Mexico's justice sector reform efforts and the rule of law.

Question. Mexico has recently been helpful in deterring undocumented migration from Central America, including unaccompanied minors. Will this effort by Mexico to interdict and repatriate undocumented migrants be sustainable over time?

Answer. Cooperation with Mexico on migration issues has been excellent. In June 2014 and in January 2015, President Peña Nieto expressed his commitment to President Obama to return children safely to their families in Central America, build Central American capacity to receive returned children, and address the underlying factors driving migration. We believe Mexico's increased enforcement,

including against human smuggling, as well as its efforts to share best practices on migration management with Central American governments have been significant factors in reducing the number of migrants apprehended by U.S. immigration officials at our southern border.

To help sustain Mexico's efforts, the United States is working with the Mexican Government to disrupt the organized criminal networks facilitating human smuggling, including through the provision of training, technical assistance, equipment, and coordination in support of Mexico's efforts to strengthen enforcement in its southern border region.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE JACOBSON'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. The TPP negotiations are in their final stages and many have high expectations that weaknesses in Mexico's labor laws will be addressed. Can the TPP really address the challenges to labor rights in Mexico without amendments to Mexican laws? Should these changes take place prior to the agreements' entry into force?

Answer. In order to meet the labor standards in TPP, each TPP country will need to have laws and practices consistent with the International Labor Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which includes freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor, the effective abolition of child labor, and the elimination of employment discrimination. TPP also includes requirements for countries to adopt and maintain laws and practices on minimum wages, hours of work, and occupational safety and health. On questions related to the negotiations and TPP's entry into force, I would refer you to the Office of the United States Trade Representative.

Question. Although the administration has indicated support for strengthening the labor rights provisions of the NAFTA, U.S. support for labor capacity-building programs in Mexico historically has been inadequate relative to the situation. For example, USAID has only one labor capacity-building program in Mexico, the Global Labor Program, which is scheduled to end in January 2016. Both USAID and the Department of State have so far been unwilling to use their trade capacity building funds to increase support for labor capacity programs with trade unions in Mexico.

- If confirmed, how will you ensure that the United States provides sufficient attention and funding for labor capacity-building programs in Mexico, so that Mexico can fulfill the labor rights commitments it has made in trade agreements with the United States?

Answer. The administration is working to identify needs and ensure that there will be appropriate labor capacity-building plans in place for TPP partners to support their efforts to improve protection of labor rights, particularly those related to the International Labor Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

As you note, some related work is already underway in Mexico. USAID/Mexico is supporting a pilot project to reform Mexico's labor arbitration courts through the Mexican Competitiveness Institute (IMCO). USAID also provides capacity-building funding to the Solidarity Center. The Solidarity Center programs in Mexico seek to strengthen the independence and democratic structure of labor unions in key sectors of the Mexican economy in strategic locations, with the overall goal of improving their ability to democratically represent workers, address issues of corruption and increase economic transparency and citizen participation. If confirmed, I will continue to support such programs.

Question. Over the past year, the United States has struggled in its response to the refugee crisis of unaccompanied children arriving on the Southwestern border. In 2015, the number of unaccompanied children arriving to the U.S. is down, but emerging evidence suggests this has less to do with the response by the U.S. and Central American governments, and more to do with Mexico's actions. While Mexico's participation in addressing this refugee crisis is vital, increasingly it appears that vulnerable children migrants detained in Mexico may not be receiving screening for international protections that they deserve.

- If confirmed as Ambassador, how would you work with the Mexican Government to ensure that the flow of migrants through the country is handled in a manner in which ensures the rights, protections, screening and appropriate care of all individuals?

Answer. The U.S. Government engages regularly with Mexican authorities on immigration issues, including border security, repatriation, enforcement, and migration of unaccompanied children. Recognizing the significant increase of Central American migrants, particularly unaccompanied children, transiting Mexico en route to the United States in 2014, the U.S. Government engaged with the Mexican Government to develop better ways to cooperate on this important issue.

I am aware of reports expressing concern over the inadequate protection of the human rights of migrants apprehended and repatriated by Mexican authorities. We discuss these issues with our Mexican counterparts on a regular basis. On February 25, 2015, the Department convened the third meeting of the U.S.-Mexico Repatriation Strategy and Policy Executive Coordination Team (RESPECT) to continue efforts to align U.S. and Mexican resources and to ensure the safe and humane treatment of migrants. If confirmed, I will continue to raise these issues and concerns at the highest levels of the Mexican Government, and work to identify ways the U.S. Government can best assist Mexican authorities.

Question. How can the State Department and U.S. Embassy Mexico City support advances in the Government of Mexico's search for the more than 20,000 people who have disappeared or gone missing over the past decade, including the case of the 43 disappeared students in Iguala?

Answer. The issue of the missing and disappeared is a significant human rights problem in Mexico, as we noted in our 2014 Human Rights Report. A database of names is an essential tool in addressing this challenge and, while Mexico's National Registry for Missing and Disappeared Persons exists, it is incomplete and imperfect. President Peña Nieto has pledged to support both a national missing persons database and a national genetic information database.

I led the U.S. delegation to the Bilateral Human Rights Dialogue (BHRD) last year, where my Mexican counterparts shared the challenges they faced in collecting, verifying, and managing the registry.

We have provided significant expertise that can be brought to bear here. Forensics and crime-scene investigation trainings, for example, share many of the fundamentals that are required to collect the evidence necessary to resolve cases.

Regarding Iguala, I have been following the tragic events involving the disappearance, and presumed killing, of up to 46 students in the state of Guerrero in September 2014. We have met with Mexican officials to express our concerns and offer assistance to resolve this case. My thoughts and sympathies remain with the families and friends affected by the loss of loved ones. This horrific crime requires a full, transparent investigation and the prosecution of all responsible.

Mexican authorities have undertaken such an investigation and detained nearly 100 suspects. The Mexican Government has sought the assistance of a group of independent experts under the auspices of the Inter American Commission on Human Rights. We strongly support the experts group, whose mandate includes making recommendations to the Mexican Government about reforms that will help prevent disappearances.

The problem of disappearances underscores the importance of our partnership under the Merida Initiative: supporting Mexican efforts to enhance the professional capacity of the Mexico's justice sector institutions, thus ensuring accountability and increasing public trust.

We value our collaborative law enforcement relationship with Mexico and, if confirmed, I will make our cooperation on advancing the rule of law in Mexico among my highest priorities.

Question. The Government of Mexico has informed media outlets that it did not receive a formal, completed extradition request for Joaquin Guzman until June 2015. Please describe why this request was not submitted to the Mexican Government until nearly 16 months after Guzman's arrest. What role did you play in the interagency process to advocate for submitting a request for Guzman's extradition? What role did you play in advocating that the Mexican Government respond affirmatively to the U.S. request for extradition?

Answer. While the United States does not usually comment on pending extradition requests before they become public judicial proceedings for law enforcement and security reasons, it is the practice of the United States to seek extradition whenever defendants subject to U.S. charges are apprehended in another country.

Pursuant to the U.S.-Mexico Extradition Treaty, in advance of submitting a full extradition request either country may seek from the other a provisional arrest warrant for a fugitive. The treaty further contemplates that, after the fugitive has been arrested, a full extradition package will be submitted. We can confirm that, at the request of the United States, Mexico issued such a provisional arrest warrant for

Joaquin "Chapo" Guzman Loera more than a decade ago and, that subsequent to the arrest of Guzman Loera, the United States submitted a full extradition request to Mexico. The Department of State is part of the interagency review process for all extradition requests.

The U.S. Government has been clear since Guzman Loera's initial arrest about its desire to hold him accountable for his crimes in the United States. Even had the Mexican Government immediately agreed to extradite Guzman to the United States following his February 2014 capture, in all likelihood, he still would have been in a Mexican prison on July 11. He would have undoubtedly fought the extradition request in the Mexican legal system, as is his right under Mexican law. And the Mexican justice system would still have been preparing its prosecution and trial, based on its stated intent to ensure he faced justice in Mexico before the United States. Mexico's former attorney general made very clear from the beginning of the Peña Nieto government that Mexico wanted to prosecute Guzman in Mexico for crimes committed against the Mexican people before considering any extradition request. That is Mexico's sovereign right and permitted under our bilateral extradition treaty.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE JACOBSON'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question #1. Assistant Secretary Jacobson, during your testimony to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in May of 2010, you spoke about the administration's vision for a "21st century border." You stated that the objective of this new border would be to intercept threats before they even reach the border.

- Would you be able to describe further how that vision has been achieved today?
- If confirmed, what will be your comprehensive antidrug strategy with Mexico?

Answer. We have made significant steps to modernize and strengthen our shared border through both the Merida Initiative and our 21st Century Border Management Initiative. Under the 21st Century Border Management Initiative, the United States continues to work to reduce border wait times by expanding infrastructure capacity, including through public-private partnerships, and by improving the efficiency of the inspection process. We saw the completion of the first phase of our expansion at the busiest land port of entry between our two countries in November 2014, the San Ysidro-El Chaparral border crossing between San Diego and Tijuana, which more than doubled the number of inspection booths and significantly reduced vehicle wait times from 3 hours to as little as 30 minutes. Likewise, in October 2014 we inaugurated an improved port of entry at Nogales, AZ, through which 40 percent of Mexican produce bound for U.S. supermarkets passes. We are finalizing a pilot program this year for cargo preinspection at three different sites on our border, which will allow U.S. and Mexican customs agents to work side by side to inspect and clear cargo simultaneously. This will notably increase cargo inspection efficiency at the border.

The United States has expended more than $1.4 billion in equipment, training, and capacity-building, including that dedicated to modernizing and securing our shared border since the Merida Initiative began in 2008. With support from Merida, Mexico has built a stronger legal framework, augmented specialized security forces, improved the detection of movement of narcotics, arms, and money, instilled a growing culture of lawfulness, and is more effectively using law enforcement information through the broader application of technology. To improve border security, the United States has provided the Government of Mexico with over $115 million in fixed and mobile nonintrusive inspection equipment (NIIE), maintenance, and related detection devices for use at Mexico's points of entry, border crossings, and internal checkpoints. With Merida-funded equipment, the Mexican Government has seized over $4 billion in narcotics and illegal currency. Building upon the Government of Mexico's own investment in NIIE and border security infrastructure, Merida assistance has significantly bolstered the ability of Mexican officials to increase border security and facilitate the flows of legitimate commerce and travel, while reducing the movement of illicit narcotics, currency, weapons, explosives, black market goods, and undocumented migrants.

During his visit to Mexico in May 2013, President Obama stood with President Peña Nieto and reaffirmed our commitment "to meet our responsibilities—to reduce the demand for illegal drugs, and combat the southbound flow of illegal guns and cash that help fuel violence." This is a fundamental component of our bilateral security cooperation: our two countries have a shared responsibility to work together to address this problem that affects both of our countries. The United States is actively

working to prevent the illicit flow of drug profits and weapons that strengthen the drug cartels in Mexico and fuel the violence. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts under the Merida Initiative and in close coordination with law enforcement agencies to combat criminal groups involved in the drug trade and the flow of illegal drugs through Mexico.

Question #2. The United States, Mexico and Canada are all involved in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations along with other Pacific region countries.

- To what extent might a failure to conclude a TPP impact North American trade relations and industrial competitiveness?

Answer. The TPP will be the economic centerpiece of a growing, dynamic Asia-Pacific region, which includes North America. This agreement has the potential to boost economic growth, development, and jobs in the United States, Mexico, and Canada and to enhance the competitiveness of the North American economy. Conversely, without the ratification of TPP, North America will not be as well positioned to compete effectively within the Asia Pacific and with the other major regions of the world.

We anticipate success in this endeavor as we are very close to completing the negotiations. And with the passage of TPA, Congress has given the administration marching orders to conclude a high-standard agreement. We are working hard to achieve an agreement that will not only support our economic and strategic interests, but also reflect our values. As President Obama has said, we must ensure that as the economic rules of the road are drawn up for this important region of the world, the United States is playing a leading role in shaping them.

Question #3. In December 2008, Mexico and the United States began the Merida Initiative to disrupt the capabilities of organized crime, improve the capacity of the Mexican judicial system to administer the rule of law, improve border security, and strengthen local communities across Mexico.

- What is the current status of implementation of Merida Initiative programs in Mexico?
- Following the implementation of Merida Initiative programs, has Mexico increased its security cooperation with the U.S., remained the same, or decreased?
- Has the U.S. successfully helped Mexico develop independent judiciary/courts systems that is free from political interference? (Why Not?)

Answer. The Merida Initiative has transformed our bilateral relationship with Mexico. We have achieved unprecedented levels of bilateral collaboration on a range of issues, including security, economic competitiveness, trade, energy, environment, climate, human rights, cultural and educational ties, and regional and global issues.

Since the Merida partnership was formalized in 2008, $2.3 billion has been appropriated for the Merida Initiative (FY08–14). More than $1.4 billion in equipment, training, and capacity-building has been delivered since the Merida Initiative began. Between 2008 and 2014 Mexico invested about $68.3 billion in security and public safety. That means that our assistance has leveraged approximately $28.5 dollars in Mexican investment for every $1 dollar of our own appropriations.

The Merida Initiative is a broad strategy to support the Mexican Government's efforts to strengthen rule of law, democratic institutions, and community efforts against crime and violence, while protecting human rights. The Merida Initiative enables greater cooperation between U.S. and Mexican law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and judges as they share best practices and expand bilateral cooperation in tracking criminals, drugs, arms, and money. The Merida Initiative has contributed greatly to strengthening our overall bilateral law enforcement cooperation.

Mexico's security challenges do not lend themselves to easy or short-term solutions. Building institutional capacity for the rule of law is crucial to long-term success. Our support for Mexico's ongoing judicial reform will help create a more effective, transparent, and independent justice system. Continuing our strong security cooperation under the Merida Initiative remains a major component of our bilateral relationship. If confirmed, I will continue our joint efforts to support more capable institutions—especially police, justice systems, and civil society organizations—as rule of law is essential to Mexico's economic growth.

Question #4. There have been media reports suggesting that the current Mexican administration does not prioritize information-sharing as highly as previous Mexican administrations, including a prohibition on direct intelligence-sharing between law enforcement groups. Under President Nieto, all information must go through a centralized office under Mexico's Secretary of the Interior.

- Does Mexico regularly accept U.S. security and intelligence assistance when offered?

- Has a slowdown in criminal intelligence sharing hindered law enforcement operations in both Mexico and the United States?
- Do you support a more robust role for the U.S. military in Mexico to assist the Government of Mexico with training, equipping, and targeting efforts in the fight against the cartels and transnational criminal organizations?
- What role can the U.S. military and law enforcement play in helping Mexico secure their southern border with Guatemala and Belize?

Answer. The United States and Mexico have an extremely close and cooperative security, law enforcement, and intelligence relationship, one that has expanded over the last 15 years and especially since the inception of the Merida Initiative. We have a range of assistance we can and have made available to the Government of Mexico, and Mexico works closely with us to define the assistance that best responds to the government's priorities and the situation on the ground.

While I would defer to our law enforcement agencies to comment on changes in the pace of criminal intelligence-sharing with the Mexican Government, I believe we have the mechanisms in place and the close institutional and personal relationships for strong law enforcement cooperation to more effectively address the transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) that threaten both our countries.

I believe we have the right balance with respect to the role of the U.S. military in assisting Mexico in confronting TCOs. The military-to-military relationship has strengthened in the last few years.

Our military and law enforcement agencies will continue to play a key role in support of Mexico's effort to implement its Southern Border Strategy and better secure its borders with Belize and Guatemala. We are already working with Mexican agencies to increase their capabilities along their southern border as well as to encourage greater cooperation and communication between Mexico and its southern neighbors.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work to ensure the security, law enforcement, and intelligence sectors of the United States work together effectively with their Mexican counterparts to advance our mutual security interests.

Question #5. Mexico's most notorious drug lord, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, broke out of a high-security prison on July 11 for the second time, escaping in a tunnel built right under his cell. Recent media reports suggest that the DEA had developed intelligence suggesting that Guzman and his associates were plotting his escape as early as 2014. Mexico's Secretary of the Interior, Osorio Chong, has denied that authorities in Mexico were ever informed of potential escapes while U.S. authorities contend that they alerted Mexican authorities 16 months ago.

- Was intelligence about a potential escape by Guzman ever conveyed to the Mexican Government?
- Why would Secretary of the Interior, Osorio Chong, claim his office had no warning from the U.S. when his office is the clearinghouse for law enforcement information-sharing?
- Did the prohibition of direct intelligence-sharing between law enforcement agencies in Mexico and the U.S. help lead to Guzman's escape?
- As Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere, were you aware of any intelligence or any other information suggesting Guzman was plotting his escape?
- Did you ever personally discuss the Guzman case with any Mexican official? If not, why not?

Answer. While I cannot comment on the sharing of specific law enforcement information in the context of an ongoing sensitive investigation, I can assure you I have stayed actively engaged on the Guzman case. I and others in the Department and in Embassy Mexico City have discussed the Guzman case with Mexican officials and underscored the strong interest of the United States in seeking his extradition. Mexico wanted to prosecute Guzman in Mexico for crimes committed against the Mexican people before taking up consideration of any extradition request, which is permitted under our bilateral extradition treaty.

We have a robust law enforcement information-sharing relationship with the Government of Mexico. We have engaged them for many months on Guzman's case. However, for specific questions related to law enforcement information, I must refer you to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the Department of Justice.

Question #6. Migrants from the Northern Triangle Countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have increasingly made their way to the United States through Mexico. Since mid-2014, Mexico has stepped up immigration enforcement along the major routes traversed by many Central American migrants.

- How effective have those actions been?
- To what extent have those efforts been in response to U.S. pressure?

- How is Mexico balancing the need to combat illegal transmigration through its territory with the need to protect migrants' rights and well-being?
- What steps has the United States taken to ensure that illegal migrants are treated humanely when being repatriated to their home countries by Mexico?
- If confirmed as Ambassador to Mexico, what message will you convey to the Government of Mexico and the people of Mexico to discourage illegal immigration to the United States?

Answer. Cooperation with Mexico on migration issues has been excellent. In June 2014, President Peña Nieto expressed his commitment to President Obama to return children safely to their families in Central America, build Central American capacity to receive returned children, and address the underlying factors driving migration. We believe Mexico's increased enforcement, including against human smuggling, as well as its efforts to share best practices on migration management with Central American governments have been significant factors in reducing the number of migrants apprehended by U.S. immigration officials at our southern border.

As I noted during the confirmation hearing, bilateral cooperation on migration issues has increased. As the U.S. Government continues to secure our border and the Mexican economy improves, the Mexican Government realizes that many migrants may choose to stay in Mexico instead of trying to enter the United States. Therefore, Mexico has an added incentive to continue working with the United States to ensure orderly, safe, and legal migration.

We have seen reports expressing concerns of inadequate protection of the rights of migrants apprehended and repatriated by Mexican authorities. We discuss these issues with our Mexican counterparts on a regular basis. For example, during the third meeting of the U.S.-Mexico Repatriation Strategy and Policy Executive Coordination Team on February 25, 2015, we discussed ways to align U.S. and Mexican resources and to ensure safe and humane treatment of migrants through the coordination of repatriation policies.

If confirmed, I will continue to press the importance of orderly, safe, and legal immigration and support the Department's public education efforts in the region to discourage illegal migration.

Question #7. In a previous hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee you provided testimony regarding U.S. sanctions toward individual human rights violators in Venezuela. During the question and answers portion of the hearing, you specifically stated that recognized opposition leaders from the MUD (Mesa Unidad Democratica) had requested that no sanctions be levied. In fact, you repeated the same answer when the question was raised on two separate occasions. However, after the hearing, the MUD put out a statement that was completely opposite of what you testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

- How do you explain this contradiction?

Answer. Twenty-seven political parties comprise Venezuela's opposition; each with different philosophies and strategies. At the time of the SFRC hearing in 2014, the government and some members of the political opposition were engaged in dialogue facilitated by the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) with the involvement of the Vatican. However, other important elements of the opposition, students, and other protesters were skeptical of that dialogue and remained outside it. We respect all these legitimate, yet distinct, views.

The opposition elements engaged in that dialogue asked that the U.S. Government not act in a way that would undermine it. As I testified, we believed that both the timing and any action on sanctions should be calibrated in such a way as not to undermine that dialogue—so long as it offered a realistic chance of progress. It was that view that informed our belief that timing was not right for sanctions at that time. Regrettably, the Venezuelan Government failed to make any concessions in the context of that dialogue, and it ended, prompting us to impose targeted sanctions.

On July 30, 2014 and February 2, 2015, we took steps to impose visa restrictions against 56 individuals believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, human rights abuses and public corruption pursuant to Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

On March 8, 2015, President Obama signed Executive Order 13692 targeting not only persons (i.e., individuals and entities) involved in or responsible for actions that limit or prohibit the exercise of freedom of expression or peaceful assembly and significant acts of violence that constitute a serious abuse or violation of human rights, including in response to antigovernment protests, but also those involved in public corruption and actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions within the Government of Venezuela. Seven individuals were placed on the Office of Foreign Assets Control's List of Specially Designated Individuals and

Blocked Persons (SDN List). Consequently, their property and interests in property subject to U.S. jurisdiction were blocked, and U.S. persons wherever located are generally prohibited from doing business with them. The E.O. also suspends the entry into the United States of any individual designated pursuant to the E.O.

Question #8. There have been recent media reports that former legislator Maria Corina Machado has been prohibited from running for office in Venezuela's upcoming December's congressional elections.

- What is the USG's position on this undemocratic measure taken by the Government of Venezuela designed to influence the outcome of the upcoming elections?

Answer. The United States is deeply concerned about the Venezuelan Government's continuing effort to prohibit opponents from participating in the political process. Prohibiting select opposition members from taking office is an abuse of power intended to silence and punish critics. Restricting opposition candidates weakens the electoral process and undermines the principle of democratic pluralism. This is why I publicly expressed my concern via Twitter upon learning of the action against Ms. Machado.

We join the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the European Union (EU), and the Canadian, Italian, Norwegian, and Spanish Governments in calling on the Venezuelan Government to cease efforts to silence the political opposition, further weaken democratic institutions, and for it to release political prisoners and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedoms of peaceful assembly and association.

We will continue to call on the Venezuelan Government to ensure free and fair elections by ceasing harassment of the opposition and allowing credible, independent international electoral observation. Free and fair elections, an essential element of a healthy democracy, require a society that encourages full citizen participation, opportunities for all individuals to become candidates, free operation of political parties and candidates, and flourishing independent media. All these conditions are consistent with the principles and values set forth in the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Question #9. The Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014 imposes targeted sanctions on persons responsible for violations of human rights of antigovernment protesters in Venezuela. In May of last year, you told this committee that the time was "not right" for sanctions on human rights violators in Venezuela. As you know, President Obama eventually signed this bill into law in December.

- Why has Miguel Rodriguez Torres, the Minister of Interior, Justice, and Peace not been sanctioned under this law?
- What about Hugo Carvajal, the head of the Directorate of military intelligence?
- What about Diosdado Cabello, President of the National Assembly of Venezuela, reportedly the most corrupt man in Venezuela?

Answer. The action taken in March was a significant list that holds key individuals accountable, including based on involvement in human rights abuses and undermining democratic processes or institutions, including through public corruption.

We will continue to monitor developments on the ground and stand prepared to take action against others as additional information becomes available and is assessed to meet the criteria for sanctions.

Question #10. Mrs. Jacobson, you were the lead U.S. negotiator for the recently announced agreement to reestablish diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba.

As such, do you fully standby the results of the deal announced by President Obama, which you negotiated, to reestablish diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba?

Do you believe the Obama administration's efforts to reestablish diplomatic relations will help preserve the Castro regime and Communist one party rule in Cuba or lead to democratic reforms?

Answer. Yes, I stand by our agreement with the Government of Cuba. Our new approach to Cuba will make it easier for the United States to advance our interests and result in greater prosperity for the Cuban people. For almost 55 years, we tried using isolation to bring about change in Cuba. However, as the President stated on December 17, that approach was not working. Instead of bringing about change, we ended up focusing the international community's attention on U.S. policy rather than on the negative effects of the Cuban Government's policies on the Cuban people.

Reopening the U.S. Embassy in Havana and reestablishing diplomatic relations are the first steps in a long process of normalization. By engaging the Cubans through U.S. Embassy Havana, we will improve our access to the Cuban Government and our ability to advance our interests on a variety of issues, which include human rights, law enforcement, extraditions, counternarcotics, property claims, and the environment. Our new approach also allows us greater contact with the Cuban people, who ultimately will have the power to choose their own future. In recognition of that reality, our diplomats will be able to travel more freely around island and engage with the Cuban people more effectively.

We understand that change will not come to Cuba overnight. There may well be setbacks on the path to normalization of U.S.-Cuba relations. However, by engaging the Cuban Government in an atmosphere of mutual respect, we hope to promote our interests more effectively and increase the prospects of the Cuban Government respecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its own people, thereby becoming prosperous and democratic.

Question #11. Please provide a copy of the agreement you negotiated with the Cuban Government to reestablish diplomatic relations outlining the key commitments made by each side.

Answer. From January 21 to July 1, I led a Department team in negotiating the conditions under which the proposed new embassies of the United States and Cuba in our respective countries would operate. That process culminated in the exchange of letters between President Obama and President Castro on July 1, 2015, in which they jointly agreed to reestablish diplomatic relations and reopen Embassies effective July 20. The only legally binding agreement concluded between the two countries in the course of these negotiations was an agreement to terminate the Interests Section Agreement of 1977, which was effected through an exchange of diplomatic notes on July 20.

Several members of my staff briefed Congress on the key outcomes of the negotiations. One example of these outcomes is that United States diplomats will be able to meet and exchange opinions with Cubans with a variety of voices and views, both within the government and outside. We will reciprocally loosen the travel restrictions on both missions. We have a good start on diplomatic shipments that will allow us to upgrade several physical aspects of the Embassy. Finally, we have agreed with the Cubans to review these conditions in the coming year to see what adjustments need to be made.

Question #12. According to Section 201 of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, it is the policy of the United States that diplomatic recognition should be considered "when the President determines that there exists a democratically elected government in Cuba."

- ♦ Did the President determine that "there exists a democratically elected government in Cuba?"

Answer. No, he did not. The President's new direction in policy toward Cuba maintains the long-standing objective of empowering the Cuban people and promoting a democratic, stable, and prosperous Cuba. The reestablishment of diplomatic relations is a key step in implementing this updated approach. Having the U.S. Embassy in Havana allows the United States to more effectively promote U.S. interests and values and increase engagement with the Cuban people.

Question #13. In a tweet from April 1 you said "engagement is the best way to bring freedom and opportunity to people of #Cuba and to promote America's national interests."

- ♦ We are all familiar with the numerous unilateral concessions the U.S. has given to the Castro regime. However, what freedoms have the Obama administration's policy of engagement secured for the Cuban people?

Answer. Through increased travel and communication between Cubans on the island and people in the United States, which is a key part of the administration's new approach, the Cuban people will be empowered through greater access to information and resources. People-to-people ties will be strengthened, and result in the building of bridges to bolster and broaden the normalization process.

This approach is already working. For example, we have seen an increase of about 35 percent in U.S. travel to Cuba this year, a deal by IDT Corporation, a New Jersey based telecommunications company, to handle direct long-distance phone traffic from Cuba, and the Cuban Government's release of a broadband strategy that acknowledged its low household penetration rate of less than 5 percent and set the ambitious goal of achieving more than 50 percent by 2020. Moreover, in June the Cuban Government announced plans to open 35 public wi-fi hotspots for half the

current price. We believe increased access to the Internet is fundamental to the free flow of information, and to the ability of the Cuban people to freely express themselves. We see this having enormous potential to connect the Cuban people with the rest of the world.

We believe our policy of empowering the Cuban people with greater access to information and resources will help foster prosperity for Cuban citizens. To this end, changes that went into effect on January 16 increase the amount of remittances permitted under general licenses and authorize expanded commercial sales from the United States of certain goods and services for use by private sector entrepreneurs and agricultural workers.

Question #14. Secretary Jacobson, in your testimony to this Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 3, you stated: "We are already seeing indications that our updated approach gives us a greater ability to engage other nations in the hemisphere and around the world in promoting respect for fundamental freedoms in Cuba."

Since the President's December 17 announcement, there has been a slew of foreign dignitaries, business leaders, and Members of this Congress traveling to Cuba. They have all followed the same script, focusing on meetings with regime officials and ignoring Cuba's courageous dissidents. For example, one would be hard-pressed to find any foreign dignitary, business leader, or Member of this Congress, who has met with Berta Soler, the head of The Ladies in White, while in Havana. And that is the most-world renowned democracy group in Cuba.

As Yoani Sanchez recently wrote, "a true shower of Presidents, Foreign Ministers and deputies has intensified over Cuba without daily life feeling any kind of relief from such illustrious presences."

Meanwhile, political arrests in Cuba continue to rise. Since December 17, there have already been over 2,500 documented arrests. We have seen an increase in violent tactics, like this week against democracy leader Antonio Rodiles, who literally had his nose shattered by secret police officials, requiring emergency surgery.

- Why are all of these foreign dignitaries and businessmen shunning Cuba's democracy activists during their trips to Havana? Is it because the Cuban regime has made it clear that visits with dissidents would result in having meeting with regime officials canceled? As such, has this not further empowered the regime?
- What are some specific, recent examples of nations in this hemisphere promoting fundamental freedoms in Cuba, as you testified to this committee would take place?

Answer. We regularly urge foreign governments and other international organizations to raise human rights issues with the Cuban Government and meet with a broad range of Cuban society including independent civil society, both inside and outside of Cuba. The U.S. mission in Havana has maintained long-standing contacts with diverse and respected Cuban dissidents. Several Members of Congress, including Representative Pelosi and Senator Flake, met with Cuban civil society representatives during previous visits to Havana. Moreover, the President has expressed his confidence in the American people as being the best ambassadors of our principles and values. That would include U.S. businesses.

The United States remains committed to supporting vibrant civil society and forward progress on human rights issues in Cuba. To that end, we continue to encourage other governments and international organizations to raise human rights concerns in their meetings with the Cuban Government. We believe our previous policy of isolation was counterproductive in that it made it more difficult for the United States to advance this goal. Under our new policy approach to Cuba, U.S. diplomats will have greater access to engage directly with the Cuban Government on a range of issues and in particular, on human rights.

We believe U.S. engagement with Cuba will also result in greater visibility and greater support internationally for Cuban civil society. For the first time, independent Cuban civil society groups attended the Summit of the Americas in Panama City this year. Cuban dissidents participated in President Obama's meeting with civil society at the summit, along with the Presidents of Uruguay and Costa Rica. Moreover, we have been able to bring together third country ambassadors on the island with dissidents for the first time. These opportunities give dissidents not permitted to travel, access to such diplomats for the first time. Cuban Government-organized groups tried to block and publicly clashed with independent Cuban groups, who demonstrated their maturity and professionalism with substantive participation in the summit process. We believe these public incidents served to place a spotlight for the rest of the region on the restrictive environment in which Cuban civil society operates and raise awareness of this issue for the benefit of many government rep-

resentatives and civil society groups from around the hemisphere. Finally, increasing the free flow of information to and from Cuba, a key component of the President's policy, will help amplify new voices from Cuba and increase information to activists on the island.

Question #15. During the President's December 17 announcement, he "welcomed" the Cuban regime's decision to provide more access to international institutions, specifically the International Committee of the Red Cross, which promotes universal values.

- Has the Cuban regime allowed the ICRC to visit prison conditions in Cuba, as they have repeatedly requested and been denied, but President Obama announced? Have you discussed this issue, which is one of the very few things the Cuban regime apparently promised President Obama for the litany of concessions given?
- How many Cubans have been jailed since December 17?

Answer. In the March session of the Human Rights Council, Cuban Foreign Minister Rodriguez extended an invitation to the president of the ICRC to visit Cuba. We are not aware of visits by the ICRC to monitor prison conditions, and ultimately, the scheduling and specific details of visits by international human rights organizations to Cuba are determined by the Cuban Government and those international actors, respectively. We have and continue to use the opportunities presented by our new approach to Cuba to urge the Cuban Government to schedule these and other visits by international human rights bodies in order to provide for greater transparency and allow for objective assessments of the state of Cuba's prisons. We will encourage other countries to urge the same.

During my January 22 visit to Cuba, I urged the Cuban Government to provide prison access to the U.N. and other international organizations. We will continue to press for greater access—and for the Cuban Government to live up to Raul Castro's statement that "Cuba reiterates its willingness to cooperate in multilateral bodies, such as the United Nations."

Independent civil society groups track the number of short-term arbitrary detentions of activists who are freely exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms. From January through June 2015, the independent group Comisión Cubana de Derechos Humanos y Reconciliación Nacional (Cuban Commission of Human Rights and National Reconciliation) documented 2,822 short-term detentions.

Question #16. Cuba is considered a hard target by the Intelligence Community and has an aggressive intelligence collection posture against the United States. The United States is considered the principal target from the Cuban intelligence apparatus. The U.S. employs hundreds of Cuban nationals at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana. This is clearly a significant counterintelligence threat.

- While I recognize that it is not possible to have every person working at the Interests Section a U.S. person, do you support efforts to have supervisory positions headed up by U.S. persons who have undergone a background investigation to ensure we are taking reasonable steps to counter the CI threat at our diplomatic facilities in Cuba?

Answer. No. Given the unique nature of working in Cuba, we have a dynamic program in place to ensure the safety and security of personnel and sensitive information.

Our operations in Havana and around the world dictate we use local staff for supervisory positions in some Embassy functions (motorpool, administrative, and consular, for example). Utilizing locally hired staff results in significant costs savings as compared to U.S. direct-hire employees. As is standard practice at our embassies throughout the world, an American employee with a security clearance in the direct chain of the employee must review all Cuban staff and sign off on their employee evaluations. As a result, each Cuban employee of the U.S. Embassy in Havana is supervised by a cleared American employee. Furthermore, Cuban employees at the Embassy do not have the authority to make hiring or dismissal decisions, nor can they implement disciplinary actions.

Question #17. According to the State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report, Cuba has been a Tier 3 country since they were first evaluated in 2003.

- Is the State Department planning on moving Cuba to Tier Watch List 2?
- What specific actions have the Cuban Government taken to justify its improvement in ranking?

Answer. The Department will be releasing this year's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report soon. It would be premature to comment on any particular outcome; whatever conclusions are reached with respect to individual countries will both be based

on a pragmatic analysis of the best information possible and reinforce our strong interest in human rights around the world.

The TIP Report covers 188 countries and territories in detail. Consistently over the past 14 years, it has provided detailed analyses and meaningful recommendations for advancing global efforts to fight trafficking. As with any nation, the United States seeks to cooperate with Cuba in eliminating trafficking in persons.

Question #18. During a special briefing on May 19, 2015, regarding the Ongoing Discussions with Cuba to Re-Establish Diplomatic Relations and Reopen Embassies, an anonymous senior State Department official stated the following via teleconference:

> SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: "I can certainly reiterate that the status of Guantanamo is not a part of these talks." As I had said months ago, it is not on the table. The question of why, or why not, I think is a question—the President has made clear he's not interested in having that conversation. But we've made clear that the issue of Guantanamo is not on the table at this point, and I don't—I can't say what the future may bring on this, but it's not on the table right now, and I don't know that there's a reason to justify having it or not having it. And you certainly heard the Cubans' view on this, but it's not under discussion at this point.

That official went on to say of U.S. democracy programs:

> SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: "On the question of democracy programs, I think the thing that you have to remember is the democracy programs, in their history since I think about 1996 when they began, have changed over time. And they will continue to change over time to reflect a reality, whether that reality is on the ground in Cuba or in the United States. When the democracy programs began, for example, Cubans could not travel nearly as freely as they now can. Ever since the change in policy by the Cuban Government in 2013, many more people can travel, which means people can do things and participate in things outside of Cuba as opposed to inside of it.
>
> "I think we always have to be cognizant of making sure that when we are supporting the Cuban people, we're doing it in a way that is the most effective. We've moved forward with requests for funding in the past couple of years, and we've done that most recently in FY16. But I think we have to be careful not to ever have thought that those programs were static and separate from changes in the environment in which they're working."

- Were you that anonymous official?
- Was that official expressing a change in U.S. policy on the strategic importance of Naval Station Guantanamo?
- How do you anticipate democracy programs in Cuba to "change over time?"

Answer. The Department does not normally provide the names of officials who are asked to do background briefings for the press. However, I can affirm to you that there has been no change in U.S. policy regarding the strategic importance of Naval Station Guantanamo. We have not discussed the status of Naval Station Guantanamo with the Cuban Government during these discussions. I reiterate Secretary Kerry's statement on July 20 that "at this time, there is no discussion and no intention on our part at this moment to alter the existing lease treaty or other arrangements with respect to the naval station."

U.S. assistance supports civil society initiatives that promote democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly freedom of expression. The promotion of democratic principles and human rights remains the core goal of U.S. assistance. Through regular interagency meetings, the Department and USAID work together to review programs, identifying the most successful programming areas to date and making note of new or as-yet unreached audiences, so that future programs among the agencies will be complementary and highly effective. Following Cuba's lifting of travel restrictions in early 2013, more civil society members have been able to participate in training opportunities outside of Cuba, increasing their professional networks. In addition, as the staff members at the U.S. Embassy in Havana are able to engage a wider range of Cuban society, new areas of focus for our programming may develop, consistent with applicable U.S. legislation.

Question #19. On January 18, 2015, Argentinian prosecutor Alberto Nisman was found dead of a gunshot wound in his apartment located in in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Nisman was the principal investigative prosecutor in the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) bombing investigation, killed 85 people and wounded more than 300. Nisman's investigation revealed the involvement of Iran and

Hezbollah in the attack and led to the issuance of Interpol "Red Notices" (detainment notices) for the identified conspirators.

♦ Have you seen any analysis of the Nisman death that would lead you to conclude that he was murdered?

Answer. There has been a great deal of analysis and speculation concerning the causes of and responsibility for Prosecutor Nisman's death; however, to date the investigation has been inconclusive. Since the death of Prosecutor Nisman, both the Department and our Embassy in Buenos Aires have pushed for a complete, transparent, and impartial investigation into Mr. Nisman's death. Through our Embassy in Buenos Aires, we have been in contact with Argentine law enforcement officials to offer U.S. assistance to the investigation.

Question #20. The Millennium Challenge Corporation's Compact-Eligibility Country Selection Criteria and Methodology includes a competitive selection process that judges each country's performance in three areas, ruling justly; investing in people and economic freedom.

♦ Do you believe that El Salvador's Government is worthy of MCC funds that are intended for countries that are "governing justly" and upholding the rule of law?
♦ Are you aware of any discussion among officers of your bureau or with MCC staff that the standards were being lowered to accommodate El Salvador's second MCC grant of $277 million?
♦ Can you describe such deliberations in detail?

Answer. To determine countries' eligibility to receive compacts MCC utilizes a scorecard that measures the extent to which a country rules justly, respects economic freedom, and invests in its people. MCC has determined that El Salvador meets these requirements. Additionally, El Salvador was a strong partner in implementing their first MCC compact.

MCC monitors its partner countries before and during compact implementation. MCC has shown that it will take action—up to and including suspension or termination—if an MCC partner is engaged in a pattern of actions inconsistent with the agency's principles and selection criteria. The Salvadoran Government committed to contribute $88.2 million on top of MCC's investment, constituting a combined total of $365.2 million.

When MCC's Board of Directors approved the compact in September 2013, MCC stated its expectation that the Salvadoran Government needed to make tangible and sustained progress on improving the investment climate and strengthening the rule of law. Progress in these areas will help ensure that MCC's investment achieves long-term and sustainable results.

Once the Salvadoran Government presented a solid plan to address these issues and made tangible and sustained progress on addressing them, MCC moved forward with signing the compact in September 2014.

Among other reforms and commitments obtained from the Salvadoran Government as a condition for compact signing, the Legislative Assembly passed reforms to the antimoney laundering regime prior to the signing and the Salvadoran Government committed to further reforms criminalizing bulk cash smuggling and regulating money remitters. Now that the compact is signed, the focus is on successful implementation of the projects, which include further reforms to improve the investment climate.

Question #21. On January 30, 2015, I wrote a letter to Secretary Kerry expressing concern about the Government of Uruguay's handling of six Guantanamo Bay detainees transferred to Uruguay in December 2014. In that letter, I requested "the written agreement between the U.S. Department of State and the Government of Uruguay" related to the transfer of these detainees. Following several briefings, the State Department informed my staff and Senator Corker's staff that there was no written agreement. On May 20, 2015, Chairman Corker formally requested "All diplomatic notes, cables, and other documents describing any commitments, understandings, or other agreements or arrangements between the United States Government and the Government of Uruguay related to the transfer and subsequent disposition of the Guantanamo Bay detainees transferred late last year."

♦ Please provide these documents.

Answer. The Department appreciates Congress' important oversight responsibilities on these transfers and is committed to providing information to enable your committee to perform that function. That said, the Department, across two administrations, has consistently informed Congress, and represented to U.S. courts, that disclosing these diplomatic assurances would have a chilling effect on foreign governments' willingness to cooperate on detainee transfers.

Accordingly, these sensitive diplomatic communications containing foreign government information are kept to a limited executive branch dissemination. Indeed, foreign governments have noted that disclosure outside of this limited dissemination could endanger future cooperation related to detainee transfers, which would harm cooperative efforts to mitigate any threat posed by transferred detainees.

The Department is happy to brief you or your staff further on these issues.

Question #22. If confirmed, what will be your approach regarding raising U.S. concerns related to corruption, religious freedom, and human rights in Mexico? How will you, as Ambassador, broach what are often sensitive issues with a close democratic partner?

Answer. We have a strong, positive relationship with Mexico that allows us to raise issues of concern in a respectful, productive manner. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work to maintain a constructive partnership such that we can forthrightly share viewpoints and work together to resolve areas of concern in a proactive and direct manner.

Cooperation on anticorruption and good governance are a core part of the bilateral agenda. President Peña Nieto signed Mexico's anticorruption bill into law in May. The legislation will strengthen oversight of public officials and designates a special prosecutor to tackle corruption issues. Mexico is also a founding member of the Open Government Partnership and its willingness to chair the initiative for the next year is a signal of President Peña Nieto's desire to improve governance in Mexico.

We are actively engaged with Mexico on human rights issues, and we have established a formal mechanism, the Bilateral Human Rights Dialogue that brings together officials from the Departments of State, Defense, Homeland Security, Justice, and other U.S. Government agencies to meet with Mexican counterparts, to review and discuss a wide range of human rights issues.

In addition to the formal Bilateral Dialogue, we regularly meet with government officials at all levels, as well as with civil society and human rights groups, to discuss both general issues and specific cases—including issues related to religious freedom. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen these efforts and ensure human rights concerns remain a central element of our bilateral relationship.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE JACOBSON'S RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Mrs. Jacobson, the Obama administration stated that its January 2015 changes to U.S. regulations regarding commerce and travel to Cuba were tailored to "support the Cuban people." Yet, in a recent newspaper article about the limited commerce resulting from this new policy because of the Cuban Government's insistence on funneling U.S. transactions through its monopolies, rather than allowing the Cuban people to benefit directly, you were quoted as stating that the new rules were "a work in progress. Cubans are getting used to it; our business people are getting used to it. We are going to tweak. We may not have written them right."

- What portion of the administration's new Cuba regulations was "not written right?"
- Do you agree that accommodating increased U.S. commerce through the Cuban Government's monopolies does not "support the Cuban people" and that such benefiting of the Cuban Government's oligarchs contravenes the previously stated purpose of the Obama administration's Cuba policy and legislative limitations on U.S. Policy toward Cuba as codified in law?

Answer. The regulatory amendments introduced January 16 by the Departments of Commerce and the Treasury, consistent with the President's December 17, 2014, announcement, were developed through a comprehensive interagency process in order to increase the flow of information and resources in support and for the benefit of the Cuban people. These changes, among other things, ease travel restrictions, facilitate certain exports, and increase the amount of remittances that may be sent to individual Cubans. This administration is strongly committed to ensuring that the spirit of the President's new direction on Cuba policy is implemented in practice, and that U.S. persons are able to engage with and support the Cuban people. The regulations were published 1 month after the President's announcement, and in the following months many individuals, NGOs, and businesses have begun to use these authorizations. There is no question that these measures have already had a substantial positive impact on the Cuban people. However, across sanctions programs, the U.S. Government makes every effort to ensure that authorizations have the intended impact—something that cannot be ensured until they are used.

To this end, the State Department supports amendments and changes to regulations to help ensure that our foreign policy goals continue to be fully met.

The January 16 regulatory amendments are consistent with U.S. law and with our foreign policy goals. Increased travel and interaction between the United States and Cuba, and limited commerce in certain areas (e.g., exports of agricultural commodities, medicines and medical devices, items for use by the Cuban private sector, consumer communications devices, and telecommunications equipment) serve to build people-to-people ties and increase the flow of information and resources to the Cuban people.

Question. Related to the case of notorious Mexican drug lord "El Chapo" Guzman:

- What was the first date on which you discussed the Guzman case with Mexican officials?
- What was the last date on which you discussed the Guzman case with Mexican officials?
- As Assistant Secretary, were you personally aware of any information suggesting that Guzman was plotting an escape?
  - If so, did you convey this information to Mexican officials?

Answer. Extradition of Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman has been the subject of discussions between the United States and Mexico for a number of years. Pursuant to the U.S./Mexico Extradition Treaty, in advance of submitting a full extradition request, either country may seek from the other a provisional arrest warrant for a fugitive; the treaty further contemplates that, after the fugitive has been arrested, a full extradition package will be submitted. We can confirm that, at the request of the United States, Mexico issued such a provisional arrest warrant more than a decade ago.

After the Mexican Government recaptured Guzman on February 22, 2014, I and others in the U.S. Government and in Embassy Mexico City discussed the Guzman case with Mexican officials and underscored the strong interest of the United States in seeking his extradition. We remained in close contact with the Mexican Government and subsequent to the arrest of Guzman last year, the United States submitted a full extradition request to Mexico.

U.S. Attorney General Lynch spoke with Mexican Attorney General Gomez on July 12—within 24 hours after Guzman's escape—to offer full support to the Mexican Government in its efforts to recapture him. The United States and Mexico are working closely together through law enforcement and diplomatic channels at all levels to coordinate efforts and resources to recapture Guzman.

Both Mexican and U.S. authorities were well aware of Guzman's history and previous escape. During Guzman's recent incarceration, the U.S. Government discussed with Mexican authorities information concerning his criminal associates' desire to break him out of prison; however, this information was general, nonspecific, and spoke to intent, not the actual planning, means, or timing of an escape attempt.

Question. Regarding your 2014 testimony on the human rights situation in Venezuela: Did the recognized leaders of Mesa Unidad Democratica ask you directly to ensure that the U.S. Government not act in a way that would undermine the ongoing dialogue?

- Which members of the political opposition whom were engaged in the dialogue did you speak with?
- Please explain how the answer to my question for the record is consistent with your clarification for the record last year indicating that you had not been in touch with members of the opposition involved in the dialogue?

Answer. Both my clarification for the record last year and my response to your question for the record are consistent with my testimony.

Over the last several years, in Washington and elsewhere, I have had the opportunity to speak with many members of the diverse Venezuelan political opposition, private sector, civil society, and government.

The political opposition is in an extremely difficult position in Venezuela, and not all members of the opposition agree on how to further their political objectives. I respect the varying opinions and perspectives among leaders of the MUD. When developing U.S. policy, we remain mindful of the on-the-ground situation and the possible consequences of our actions. There was no direct request that we refrain from sanctions, but we were at that time extremely aware of the context of the dialogue and its fragility.

Question. On Question 9 related to the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014, please provide a written response or a briefing in the appropriate setting explaining why these individuals have not been sanctioned.

- Miguel Rodriguez Torres, the Minister of Interior, Justice; and Peace Hugo Carvajal, the head of the Directorate of military intelligence Diosdado Cabello, President of the National Assembly of Venezuela.

Answer. Each determination on whether and when to impose targeted measures, including visa restrictions or asset blocking, takes into account U.S. law and whether the measures are likely to advance U.S. foreign policy interests in addition to the specific information we have on individuals. These interests include respect for the human rights of the Venezuelan people, democratic governance and pluralism, and regional security and stability.

On September 12, 2008, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated Hugo Armando Carvajal Barrios under the Kingpin Act. That action froze any assets Carvajal may have under U.S. jurisdiction and prohibited any U.S. persons from conducting financial or commercial transactions involving those assets.

The steps the Department took in July 2014 and February 2015 to restrict visa eligibility for individuals believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, human rights abuses and public corruption were carried out pursuant to Section 212 (a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Visa confidentiality laws restrict us from naming those individuals.

We continue to monitor developments on the ground and stand prepared to take action against others as additional information becomes available and is assessed in terms of U.S. law and foreign policy interests.

Question. On Question 11, please provide any documents that outline the agreement you negotiated, legally binding or otherwise, between the United States and Cuba regarding the number of personnel allowed at each Embassy and the conditions under which the Embassies will operate. If this is not provided in the exchange of notes or letters, please provide the relevant reporting cables.

Answer. We appreciate and welcome the strong interest that you and other Members of Congress have in ensuring that our U.S. Embassy in Cuba will be able to fully perform its duties and functions. We also appreciate that Congress has important oversight responsibilities in this regard and we are committed to providing as much information as possible to ensure that Congress can perform this function.

As you know, on July 7 senior officials from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and Bureau of Diplomatic Security provided a classified briefing to Foreign Relations Committee staff, including members of your staff, which covered all substantive aspects of the agreement, including the numbers of personnel at each Embassy and the conditions under which the Embassies will operate. We would be happy to continue briefing your staff to answer any additional questions you may have and to update you as the bilateral relationship progresses.

Question. On Question 12, are you arguing that the administration's Cuba policy complies with Section 201 of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act and if so, how? If not, has the administration concluded it is not bound by this law and if so, why?

Answer. The administration's Cuba policy is consistent with all applicable law. Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution grants the President the authority to "receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers." This grant of authority has long been understood to provide the President with the exclusive authority to establish diplomatic relations with foreign nations. Presidents throughout our history have used their constitutional authority to establish or reestablish diplomatic relations with foreign nations, and there are numerous recent examples of Presidents from both parties doing so.

Section 201 of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity ("LIBERTAD") Act of 1996 provides that it is the policy of the United States "[t]o consider the restoration of diplomatic recognition and support the reintegration of the Cuban Government into Inter-American organizations when the President determines that there exists a democratically elected government in Cuba." While the provision thus indicates that the United States should consider restoration of diplomatic recognition if the specified condition is met, it does not by its terms purport to prohibit the President from exercising his exclusive constitutional authority with respect to recognition in other circumstances. Consistent with long-standing constitutional practice and President Clinton's statement on signing the LIBERTAD Act, we construe this provision to be precatory to avoid interfering with the President's constitutional authority to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Question. On Question 13, what is the percentage increase in Internet access in Cuba since December 17, 2014?

Answer. Data are not available to estimate the increase in Internet access in Cuba since December 17 with sufficient accuracy. However, public pressure for Internet access has swelled in recent months, evidenced in part by a substantial increase in demand for Cubans' use of the Internet Center at Embassy Havana. The January 16 regulatory changes enable U.S. telecommunications firms to export the equipment and services needed to rapidly expand Internet connectivity.

The Cuban National Assembly posted updates regarding its July 14 session on official Twitter and Facebook accounts, suggesting the Cuban Government's acknowledgment of the need to adapt to greater international interconnectivity. In June, the Cuban Government announced the addition of 35 Wi-Fi hotspots and a reduction in Internet access rates from $4.50 to $2.00. While this rate is still too expensive for the average Cuban, we assess the Cuban Government finally realizes its Internet penetration rate of less than 5 percent is too low for the country to thrive in a global economy. For the moment, however, reliable, legal, and affordable Internet access remains out of reach for the average Cuban citizen.

Question. With regards to Question 16, please answer the following questions:

- How many non-U.S. persons currently work in U.S. diplomatic facilities in Cuba?
- How many are projected to work there next year? Are there plans to hire additional non-U.S. persons?
- How many non-U.S. persons currently hold supervisory positions in U.S. diplomatic facilities in Cuba?
- Do any of these individuals have access to sensitive areas within the U.S. Embassy compound such as access to the Ambassador, DCM or other senior leader's office space, access to the same floor as a sensitive compartmented information facility or the motor pool vehicles used by senior U.S. diplomats and visiting delegations?
- How does the State Department define "supervisory" in this instance?
- Please list the positions defined as supervisory that are currently held by non-U.S. persons.
- Have any of these individuals undergone a background check or polygraph test?
  - If so, who conducted the background checks or polygraph tests?
- What would it cost to replace each non-U.S. person supervisor currently working in a U.S. diplomatic facility in Cuba with a cleared U.S. person?

Answer. There are currently 294 non-U.S. persons working in U.S. diplomatic facilities in Cuba. We have several authorized positions that are currently vacant and hope to fill 10–15 of these in the next year.

We employ local staff in Havana in positions that entail some oversight of local staff, as we do at all embassies throughout the world. In Havana, approximately 40 Cubans have some oversight of other Cuban employees. No Cuban employees supervise American staff. Each Cuban employee has an American supervisor. Cuban employees do not have the authority to make hiring or dismissal decisions, nor can they implement disciplinary actions.

Access to our facilities in Havana is strictly controlled. As with other embassies around the world, there are certain areas within the Embassy that only cleared Americans can access.

The following positions have some oversight or administrative responsibility for less experienced Cuban staff and are currently held by non-U.S. persons:

- Senior HR Assistant
- Senior Storekeeper
- Shipment Supervisor
- Mechanic Supervisor
- Maintenance Supervisor (2)
- Computer Management Supervisor
- Procurement Team Leader
- Housing/Property Assistant
- Senior Guard Supervisor
- Guard Shift Supervisor (5)
- Senior Guard (5)
- Administrative Assistant
- Senior Visa Assistant
- Refugee Unit Supervisor
- IV/NIV Team Leader (6)
- IV Subject Matter Expert (2)
- Admissions Team Leader
- Document Checker Team Leader

- Principal Cashier
- PSU Team Leader
- Physician
- Pol/Econ Assistant
- Senior Media Assistant
- Financial Specialist

All Cuban employees are required to pass a background check investigation that is performed by a cleared American staff member of the Regional Security Office.

For FY 2017, the estimated startup costs for a new U.S. Direct Hire (USDH) position overseas is $222,500. The yearly costs for that position are estimated at $441,100. The average cost of a Cuban employee at the Embassy in Havana is $12,000. To replace a Cuban employee with a USDH would cost an additional $651,600 the first year and $429,100 in subsequent years.

Question. With regards to Question 17, given that the report has now been released:

- What was your role in the decision to move Cuba from Tier 3 to Tier 2 Watch List in the TIP report?
- Did you discuss the TIP ranking upgrade during your recently concluded negotiations with the Cuban Government?
- What specific actions did the Cuban Government take during 2014 to justify this upgrade?

Answer. The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP), which gathers data for and drafts the annual TIP report, does not fall under my oversight. However, the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs collaborates with J/TIP in developing the report narrative and ranking for WHA countries. Information used to generate the report comes from a wide variety of credible sources, including foreign government officials, NGO representatives, international organizations, journalists, academics, and survivors of trafficking. Also included is input from U.S. diplomats on the ground and State Department country desk officers.

State Department officials do not discuss TIP rankings with foreign governments prior to the annual report's public release. And we did not do so with the Cubans during the negotiations on reestablishing diplomatic relations or at any other time in our discussions with the Cubans. As a courtesy, we do disclose our final decisions to foreign governments shortly before publicly releasing the annual rankings. Tier rankings in the 2015 TIP report reflect a country's efforts to comply with the minimum standards to eliminate trafficking in persons set forth by Congress in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), including law enforcement efforts, victim assistance, and prevention efforts.

In 2014, the Cuban Government reported several law enforcement and victims assistance efforts to combat sex trafficking. For example, the government released official data on prosecutions and convictions of sex traffickers during the previous calendar year, showing additional law enforcement efforts that led to 13 prosecutions and convictions, versus 10 in 2012. This demonstrated clear progress over the prior year.

The government also provided assistance to sex trafficking victims identified in the 13 cases. In addition, employees of the Ministries of Tourism and Education received training to spot indicators of sex trafficking, particularly among children engaged in commercial sex.

Our robust engagement with the Cuban Government on combating trafficking in persons has included the exchange of delegations of experts in 2014 and 2015.

Question.

- Is it your assessment that the Government of Argentina has conducted a complete, transparent, and impartial investigation into the death of Alberto Nisman?
- Have the offers of U.S. assistance you mentioned been accepted by the Government of Argentina?
- What is your assessment of the accusations made as a result of Mr. Nisman's investigation into the AMIA bombing?

Question. The Argentine investigation into Alberto Nisman's death has not yet concluded. We are following the investigation closely, including the analyses of outside investigators hired by Mr. Nisman's former wife, Judge Sandra Arroyo Salgado. The United States has urged the Argentine Government to conduct an objective, transparent, thorough, and prompt inquiry into Mr. Nisman's death, and we await the outcomes of the ongoing inquiry. Argentine authorities have not accepted U.S. offers of investigative assistance, although we remain ready to provide aid—if and when requested.

It is for the Argentine people and judicial system to assess the results of Mr. Nisman's investigation and its relevance to the bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center. For more than two decades, the United States has supported Argentina's efforts to hold accountable the perpetrators of the heinous attack on the AMIA Jewish community center. I personally did some of my first work in the region researching the Argentine Jewish community during the military government, have known leaders of the community for decades, and care deeply about the outcome of this case. We have clearly and consistently urged the international community to support the investigation, consistent with the rule of law. The United States looks forward to, and will continue to work toward, the day when justice is done for the victims of this attack.

Question. With regards to Question 21, multiple Senators have been requesting this information for more than 6 months. Despite repeated briefings, the administration has yet to provide the requested information, even in summary form, including the specific commitments made by the Government of Uruguay.

♦ Please provide the requested information so that this committee can fulfill its oversight responsibilities.

Answer. The Department appreciates Congress' important oversight responsibilities on these transfers and is committed to providing information to enable your committee to perform that function. As you know, the Department, across two administrations, has consistently informed Congress and represented to U.S. courts that disclosing these diplomatic assurances would have a chilling effect on foreign governments' willingness to cooperate on detainee transfers.

Accordingly, these sensitive diplomatic communications containing foreign government information are kept to a limited executive branch dissemination. Indeed, foreign governments have noted that disclosure outside of this limited dissemination could endanger future cooperation related to detainee transfers, which would harm cooperative efforts to mitigate any threat posed by transferred detainees.

The Department is committed to continuing and deepening our dialogue with you on this important topic and the Office for Guantanamo Closure would be happy to brief you or your staff further on these issues.

Question. What portion of the administration's new Cuba regulations was "not written right?"

Answer. Following the President's December 17, 2014, announcement, the Treasury and Commerce Departments took steps within the scope of executive authority to implement certain aspects of the administration's new approach toward Cuba. The regulatory amendments published January 16 were developed through a comprehensive interagency process with the goal of further engaging and supporting the Cuban people. To that end, it is clear that these regulations have already made a substantial impact. For example, travel to Cuba increased over 35 percent during the first quarter of 2015, and U.S. entities have made use of the new license exception for exports. In addition, the debate over access to the internet in Cuba has shifted from criticism of U.S. restrictions to what steps the Cuban Government must take to increase connectivity and allow its people to communicate amongst themselves and with the outside world.

My comment was not intended to signal that the January regulatory amendments were somehow written incorrectly or in error, but rather that we continue to assess how the intent of the policy direction can be achieved in practice. As we do across sanctions programs, the U.S. Government will continue to make every effort to ensure that the Cuba regulations have the intended impact and meet our foreign policy goals, within the limits of executive authority. The State Department regularly supports amendments and changes to regulations to help ensure that our foreign policy goals continue to be fully met.

Question. What was the last date prior to his escape from prison on which you discussed the *Guzman* case with Mexican officials?

Answer. Upon his arrest last year, I and other U.S. Government officials discussed with Mexican officials numerous times the importance of extraditing Guzman to the United States. I repeatedly made clear that Guzman's eventual extradition to the United States was a top priority for the U.S. Government and for our bilateral law enforcement cooperation. Our Mexican counterparts made clear they wanted to prosecute Guzman in Mexico for crimes committed against the Mexican people before taking up consideration of any extradition request. That is Mexico's sovereign right and is permitted under our bilateral extradition treaty, at Mexico's discretion. The Mexicans believed they would be able to hold Guzman in prison; however, I and other U.S. Government officials continued to raise the U.S. interest

in extraditions, including in Guzman's case, in high-level meetings in the months prior to his escape.

Question. Which members of the political opposition engaged in the dialogue did you speak with prior to your testimony in May 2014?

Answer. I spoke with various members of the diverse Venezuelan political opposition, including representatives from the opposition coalition (Democratic Unity Roundtable—Mesa de la Unidad Democratica, MUD) and several individual political parties, including but not limited to Justice First (Primero Justicia), A New Era (Un Nuevo Tiempo), and Popular Will (Voluntad Popular).

Our Embassy in Caracas remains in close contact with the MUD and individual political parties, including but not limited to Democratic Action (Accion Democratica), Advanced Progressive (Avanzada Progresista), Christian Democratic (COPEI), Primero Justicia, Voluntad Popular, Vente Venezuela, and Un Nuevo Tiempo. The Embassy's reporting on these meetings provides key on-the-ground insights to inform my—and other policy makers'—understanding and decisionmaking.

We strive—here in Washington and in Caracas—to speak with a broad spectrum of the population including the opposition, private sector, civil society, and government.

Question. What was your role in the planning the August 14, 2015, flag-raising at the U.S. Embassy in Havana?

Who was responsible for determining the guest list of those invited to the flag raising ceremony?

Since the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba, the U.S. Embassy's Twitter account has covered a wide range of issues such as climate change, sports and even promoted Cuban Government officials (in the case of Eusebio Leal). Yet, there has not been a single tweet promoting human rights and democracy. Why?

During your tenure as Assistant Secretary of State, have you met with representatives of, or attended any events hosted by, Engage Cuba, the Trimpa Group, and Cuba Now? If so, please provide a list of the dates, individuals involved, and the subject matter of the meetings or events attended.

Answer. The Department of State worked closely with other U.S. Government agencies and the U.S. Embassy to plan the August 14 flag-raising at the U.S. Embassy in Havana.

In developing the guest list for the events in Havana on August 14, the Department of State sought to include as many individuals as possible from a broad array of sectors including the U.S. Congress, business leaders, civil society, and the general public. Guests also included Cuban Government officials.

The State Department and U.S. Embassy Havana employ a range of tools to engage the Government of Cuba on democracy and human rights. We have used social media in the past to decry human rights abuses such as the early July 2015 beating of Antonio Rodiles. Since reestablishing diplomatic relations, we are advocating for human rights directly with the Cuban Government. As our bilateral relationship evolves, we will continue to advocate on behalf of the Cuban people for fundamental freedoms, including the right to peaceful assembly, association, and freedom of expression. In his August 14 speech at the flag-raising in Havana, which was tweeted by the U.S. Embassy, Secretary Kerry delivered a strong message of support for democracy on the island.

In my capacity as Assistant Secretary of State, I meet regularly with a broad array of individuals and organizations to discuss U.S. policy toward the Western Hemisphere. During my tenure, I have attended events also attended by representatives from a wide and diverse range of organizations involved with Cuba, among them the Trimpa Group, Engage Cuba, and Cuba Now. At those events where I have engaged in conversation with these individuals, we have discussed U.S. policy toward Cuba.

Question. Media reports indicate that human rights experts at the State Department concluded that trafficking conditions had not improved in Cuba, and thus did not deserve to be upgraded from Tier 3 to Tier 2 Watch List.

Did you personally review any drafts of the Cuba section of the annual TIP report?

Did WHA propose any changes to the draft report produced by J/TIP?

If so, what changes were proposed?

Did any office or individual at the State Department oppose the upgrade of Cuba?

Please provide:

- All prior drafts of the Cuba portion of the TIP report.
- The specific changes proposed by WHA.

- Names of all State Department and White House officials who signed off on Cuba Section.
- Copy of the Cuban Government's national action plan.

Answer. The State Department has staff working on human trafficking issues in Washington and at U.S. embassies around the world. The State Department has a dedicated office, the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, which works year-round to gather information and produce the annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report.

Final decisions are reached only after rigorous analysis and discussion among officials in the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons; staff at the relevant regional bureaus and U.S. missions overseas; and senior State Department leadership—including myself. The final rankings are then approved by the Secretary of State.

The process is deliberative and fact-based. It is critical that Department officials are able to speak freely and frankly during the deliberative process, which ultimately contributes to the integrity of the report and the strength of tier-ranking decisions. Moreover, discussion of the internal deliberations that informed the Secretary's decision would undermine his authority as provided in the TVPA. We disclose our methodology in the report; however, we do not release earlier drafts of the final product or documents related to deliberations during the process.

The Cuban Government informed the Department in March of 2015 that they were developing a national action plan, which would include trafficking in persons, but we refer you to the Cuban Embassy in the United States for further information on this plan.

However, in November 2014, the Government of Cuba released a report detailing efforts to combat trafficking in persons, which is publicly available. (See http://www.cubaminrex.cu/es/informe-de-cuba-sobre-el-enfrentamiento-juridico-penal-la-trata-de-personas-y-otras-formas-de-abuso.)

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE JACOBSON'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR ISAKSON

Question. Ms. Jacobson, we have heard concerns from U.S. companies operating in Mexico that the tactics Mexico's tax authorities have employed are overly aggressive and seem to target U.S. global companies doing business in Mexico. Specifically, in the context of the OECD Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project Mexico has acted unilaterally at times which is contrary to its commitments as an OECD Member country. Recently, there was an article in the Mexican press that has been brought to my attention, where the Mexico SAT has made disparaging remarks about the OECD BEPS process and has said they will not wait for its conclusion to take unilateral action. This is obviously hurting U.S. companies and their ability to do business in Mexico and goes against Mexico's treaty commitments, trade agreements and their commitment as an OECD member.

- Will you continue the work of Ambassador Wayne to ensure that Mexico upholds its commitments to the OECD process and continue to ensure that U.S. businesses aren't unfairly or aggressively targeted?

Answer. We have heard the same concern from some U.S. companies in Mexico regarding this issue. As you note, Ambassador Wayne has raised this concern at the highest levels of the Mexican Government, and, if confirmed, I will do the same.

Like any nation, Mexico levies taxes on foreign companies operating in its territory. Such taxes should be levied transparently and according to clear rules and procedures. Moreover, Mexico's membership in the OECD is a reflection and recognition of the size and maturity of the Mexican economy. All OECD members share a commitment to respect OECD processes and practices.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE JACOBSON'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PAUL

Question. What does the Mexican Government need to do to improve the situation at the U.S.-Mexican border? And if confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, what specific steps would you take to help them in that regard?

Answer. Mexico is our second-largest export market and third-largest trading partner. More than $1.5 billion in daily trade with Mexico supports millions of jobs in states throughout both countries. President Obama and President Calderon launched the 21st Century Border Management Initiative in 2010 to promote eco-

nomic competitiveness and enhance security through the secure, efficient, rapid, and lawful movement of goods and people. As one result of that continued close cooperation, we saw the completion in November 2014 of the first phase of expansion at the busiest land port of entry between the United States and Mexico, the San Ysidro-El Chaparral border crossing between San Diego and Tijuana, which more than doubled the number of inspection booths and significantly reduced vehicle wait times from 3 hours to as little as 30 minutes. Likewise, in October 2014 we inaugurated an improved port of entry at Nogales, AZ, through which 40 percent of Mexican produce bound for U.S. supermarkets passes.

On the security front, President Pena Nieto's strategy to counter transnational crime and improve the situation on our shared border is to combine all elements of the Mexican Government to constrain, disrupt, and dismantle criminal groups. Law enforcement operations are one tool, but the strategy recognizes the need to counter criminal networks through disrupting their access to finance, their corrosive influence on governments and societies, and through building new partnerships. That approach is what you see in Mexico's national strategy as well as in the four pillars of our bilateral Merida Initiative: to disrupt organized criminal groups, institutionalize reforms to sustain the rule of law and support human rights, create a 21st century border structure, and build strong and resilient communities.

The United States and Mexico are dedicated to addressing shared security challenges and modernizing our shared border infrastructure. We work closely with our Mexican counterparts to communicate about threats along the border and to assess and respond to security issues as they develop. If confirmed, I pledge that the safety of U.S. Government personnel and U.S. citizens will remain my priority. We will continue our support through the Merida Initiative, which enables greater cooperation between U.S. and Mexican law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and judges as they share best practices and expand bilateral cooperation in tracking criminals, drugs, arms, and money as well as our efforts to support economic growth and the secure flow of people and goods through the 21st Century Border Initiative.

RESPONSES OF LAURA FARNWORTH DOGU, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DOGU'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. Nicaragua presents a conundrum. On the one hand, it is stable and relatively secure and the government pursues comparatively sound macroeconomic and investment policies. Nicaragua continues to seek partnership with the U.S. though the Central America Free Trade agreement. On the other hand, Nicaragua maintains friendly relations with governments that are hostile to the U.S. Most institutional power is concentrated in the hands of the governing Sandinista Party, dissent is muted, and violence is still part of the Sandinistas' political toolkit.

♦ What is your assessment and what will your priorities be as Ambassador?

Answer. I concur with this assessment, both in terms of Nicaragua's challenges and opportunities. A vibrant democracy includes participation from all sectors, and all sectors have a responsibility to contribute. As I mentioned at my hearing, in addition to supporting improvements to governance, rule of law, and human rights, we want to assist Nicaragua in efforts to integrate more fully into the Central American regional economy. Working with youth, universities, and the private sector to improve workforce development is a key component of this effort. If confirmed, I will ensure the Embassy works with partners in the private sector addressing issues such as labor rights, trafficking in persons, education, and the environment through corporate social responsibility efforts.

Continued engagement, in partnership with the people of Nicaragua, civil society, and the international community, is key to ensuring elections reflect the popular will. If confirmed, I will work to support the strengthening of democratic institutions and values in Nicaragua to reflect the region's collective commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. I also will work to support a Nicaragua that is more economically integrated with other Central American countries, and that collaborates effectively with us—and other stakeholders and donors—on a growing range of issues of interest to the people of the United States and Nicaragua. To do so, we will build on existing areas of cooperation and seek improved engagement and dialogue in those areas where we don't necessarily always agree.

The Strategy for U.S. Engagement in Central America serves as a common guide for ongoing shared efforts promoting prosperity, governance, and security with—and throughout—Central America. Key to Central America's success is regional eco-

nomic integration. Central America must integrate economically in order to compete globally. With this in mind, our engagement with Nicaragua under this strategy will advance governance, regional integration, prosperity, and security—and thus help us meet the needs and interests of the Nicaraguan people, as well as the many other citizens of Central America.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DOGO'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. According to the State Department's latest human rights report, the Nicaraguan executive branch is becoming increasingly authoritarian, exercising significant control over the legislative, judicial, and electoral branches. Furthermore, the police generally deny permission for demonstrations by opposition groups and the government uses judicial, financial, and administrative tactics to limit freedom of speech and the press.

- In a country where political power has become concentrated in a single and increasingly authoritarian party, what is your assessment of U.S-Nicaragua cooperation? If confirmed, what steps will you take to advance U.S interests as well as the efficacy of U.S democracy and governance programs?

Answer. The U.S.-Nicaragua relationship is complex. We work closely with the Nicaraguan Government, but there are areas where cooperation can be improved, including on issues relating to democratic governance and human rights. U.S. support for democracy and governance in Nicaragua is, and will remain if I am confirmed, a top priority for the United States. Continued engagement in partnership with the people of Nicaragua and the international community is key to ensuring independent voices are heard, elections are credible and reflect the popular will, irregularities are substantiated and reported on, and democratic governance is supported with a long-term perspective. If confirmed, I will encourage the development of democratic institutions and values, and will continue to support local governance efforts, with a focus on civic participation and transparency. I will also continue to support the role of civil society and independent media, and will expand these efforts as needed.

The Nicaraguan Government has cooperated with us in resolving a significant number of U.S. citizen property compensation claims. Additionally, we cooperate on trade issues, counternarcotics, search and rescue in cases involving U.S. citizens, disaster preparedness and response, the protection of cultural patrimony, consular matters, and the return of fugitive U.S. citizens. If confirmed, I will encourage mutually beneficial objectives such as Nicaragua's economic integration with Central America.

Question. Nicaragua will be holding Presidential elections in 2016. The process, as with all democratic elections, should be held to fair and transparent standards. Yet international organizations, such as the Carter Center, have found that recent elections in Nicaragua showed deeply troubling signs of fraud. There are also widespread concerns about the impartiality of the Nicaraguan Electoral Commission and the political agenda of the commission's president, Roberto Rivas.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to advocate for the presence of credible international observation? In your view, how can the United States utilize diplomacy to ensure that the 2016 elections are carried in a free, fair, and transparent manner?

Answer. Continued engagement with the people of Nicaragua, civil society, and the international community is key to ensuring elections reflect the popular will and to ensure that irregularities are substantiated and reported when they occur. The U.S. Government will work to ensure the 2016 elections are conducted in a free, fair, and transparent manner, in addition to continuous work on broader democratic governance issues. If confirmed, supporting a Nicaragua with transparent democratic institutions and values will be among my highest priorities.

Further, I would plan to continue our outreach to, and support of, civil society groups to improve their ability to articulate their views to policymakers, monitor and document the election-day process, and support citizens to advocate for identification cards which are required for voting. The United States also supports civil society, democratic youth leadership, and independent media, each of which is important to ensuring the 2016 elections are transparent and credible.

Question. Nicaragua is a recipient of Venezuela's petroleum subsidies through Petrocaribe. Venezuela's dire economic situation, however, indicates that it is only a matter of time before it begins to reduce the amount of subsidized oil it provides.

♦ In your view, how would a reduction of subsidies affect Nicaragua? And, what are the implications such reduction may have for the United States?

Answer. We have seen press reports indicating there has been a reduction in oil shipments under the Petrocaribe program. If Petrocaribe were to cease or to significantly decline, a number of countries in Central America, including Nicaragua, and the Caribbean could face financial challenges. Several countries have expressed a desire to transition their energy production from petroleum to other more sustainable sources. Of note, Nicaragua has already transitioned to obtaining more than half of its electric power from a variety of renewable energy sources. The Nicaraguan Government is also already preparing its public for smaller subsidized assistance programs or is finding other ways to finance the programs in the lead up to 2016 elections.

Current U.S. activities, including Connecting the Americas 2022 and efforts under the U.S. Strategy for Central America, emphasize fostering conditions for investment, including through regulatory reform, increasing access to affordable and cleaner energy generation and transmission, and promoting competitive, independent, and environmentally sustainable energy markets.

If I am confirmed, I will engage with Nicaragua to further these activities, promote its economic integration within Central America, and support the adoption of transparent and democratic institutions as a more stable and reliable path to economic growth and to reduce economic volatility.

RESPONSES OF PERRY L. HOLLOWAY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HOLLOWAY'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. For the past several days, Venezuelan President Maduro has chosen to focus his efforts on a long-standing border dispute with its neighbor Guyana—an action that has caused increased tensions between the two countries and negatively affects Guyana in a disproportionate way. President Maduro has issued a decree claiming Venezuelan control over the waters off the coast of the land being disputed, leaving Guyana with barely any offshore area and threatening the drilling agreement it has with ExxonMobil.

♦ What is your assessment of the dispute between Guyana and Venezuela? And, to your knowledge, are there any other U.S. interests that could be affected by Maduro's aggressive tactics?

Answer. Guyana's relationship with Venezuela is complicated by the ongoing disputes over territorial boundaries. It is imperative that any efforts to resolve this situation be through peaceful means consistent with international law, whether that be through the Caribbean Community, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Organization of American States, the United Nations, or another mechanism agreeable to both parties. We are examining Venezuela's recent claims. To assert maritime rights or jurisdiction, Venezuela's claims must be consistent with the international law of the sea, including respect for the rights and freedoms of other states. The uncertainty caused by this dispute has affected Guyana's ability to attract investment and otherwise develop its natural resources, and it is in the interest of all countries of the region that it be allowed to do so.

Question. The recent elections in Guyana resulted in a change of the ruling party—the People's Progressive Party (PPP)—for the first time in 23 years. In a country with severe ethnic and sectarian divisions, the new administration of David Granger, from the Partnership of National Unity (APNU), promises to address these issues and create spaces for better ethnic relations. Yet, this important milestone occurred as U.S. assistance in Guyana has largely dried up.

♦ How do you view current U.S. cooperation with the Guyanese Government? What specific opportunities do you see for engagement and cooperation with the new ruling party to ensure these democratic processes are strengthened and solidified? What do you think the U.S can do to promote better ethnic relations in Guyana?

Answer. The United States values its bilateral relationship with Guyana. President Granger has expressed a desire to deepen Guyana's relationship with the United States, and we are seeing renewed levels of engagement with both Embassy Georgetown and the Department by Government of Guyana departments and agencies. We will continue to engage with President Granger and the Government of

Guyana on the full range of issues that define our shared interests and that strengthen democratic institutions and processes: countering transnational organized crime; increasing Guyana's ability to compete within the broader global economy; providing economic, social, and political opportunities for all citizens; reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS; and supporting the nation's ability to adapt to climate change and manage its natural resources, including in the extractives sectors.

The United States has always worked to bridge the differences between Guyana's ethnic populations and political parties through public diplomacy programs and daily engagement by Embassy officials with key government and civil society groups. We continue to urge President Granger and all elected officials to focus their efforts on issues that unite the nation and to move away from the ethnic based politics of the past that resulted in unequal economic development and social exclusion for large parts of the population.

RESPONSES OF PETER F. MULREAN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF HAITI, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MULREAN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. After years of deadlock, Haiti's Government appears to be committed to organizing elections. Are they really? Is it true that, as of June 9, 2015, funding was still about 40 percent short of the estimated $66 million needed for the Haitian elections? What is the government of Haiti doing to fill that gap?

Answer. The Government of Haiti is moving forward with three rounds of elections, on August 9, October 25, and December 27 of this calendar year. The first vote will be for the first round of parliamentary elections; the second vote will include a second round of parliamentary elections, the first round of Presidential elections, and local government positions; the third vote will be the second round of Presidential elections. Due to political gridlock which delayed elections for almost 4 years, Haiti's independent Provisional Electoral Commission (CEP) only began work on the elections in January of this year. As a result, there are concerns that the relevant Haitian institutions will not be fully ready for the first round on August 9, due to delays in hiring and the training of staff. However, the CEP has met major deadlines for printing of the ballots and voter registration lists and its President, Pierre-Louis Opont, has said there will be no delay in holding the first round of voting for Parliament.

With regard to the shortage of electoral-related funding in the basket fund administered by the UNDP, a July 16, 2015, donor conference in New York at the United Nations resulted in an additional $14.2 million in elections funding pledged by the United States, Canada, Brazil, Norway, and Mexico. In addition, several other countries that did not pledge indicated they were considering additional donations. The U.S. pledge was for $9 million, which raises the total amount of funding the United States has dedicated to these elections to $27.8 million, of which $11.5 went to the basket fund and $4 million to UNOPS for logistical support, which MINUSTAH provided in the last election. The Government of Haiti has said it will cover any funding shortfalls for the election.

Question. Approximately half of all Haitians have access to basic health services at U.S.-supported health facilities. This is remarkable. But, is it sustainable? What will you do you engage the Government of Haiti to take on its own responsibilities to the Haitian people?

Answer. The sustainability of our programs in Haiti depends ultimately on the capacity of the Government of Haiti to maintain them, reflective in turn of the support of the Haitian people.

Our development efforts in Haiti are designed to foster economic growth, enhance government capacity, strengthen democracy, and improve security and respect for rule of law. Progress in these areas will, in turn, improve the Government of Haiti's ability to deliver quality services and meet the needs of the Haitian people. If confirmed, I will continue to advance the efforts of the United States to support the long-term goals of the people and Government of Haiti to build and realize a more prosperous and secure nation.

In the health sector, the U.S. Government is supporting the Ministry of Health to advance its ownership and oversight of the public health system on several fronts. Specifically, our programming is helping the Ministry of Health to improve data collection and usage, upgrade internal management systems, manage diverse funding sources, and improve its ability to attract, train, and retain professional

health workers. These capacity-building initiatives are laying the groundwork for long-term sustainability while continuing efforts to improve health outcomes. As we progress in these efforts with the Ministry of Health, both directly and in partnership with other donors, we will continue to work to ensure that access to health services is widely available.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MULREAN'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. Haiti is scheduled to hold its well-overdue legislative elections as early as next month, followed by local and Presidential elections later in the year. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to advance United States support for the Haitian electoral process? More importantly, how will you ensure collaboration and commitment with the Haitian authorities to prioritize the security of all Haitians both during the time leading up to the election and as they go to the polls?

Answer. If confirmed by the Senate, I will continue the strong support of the United States for the holding of credible and long-overdue elections; this would be one of my highest priorities. Political gridlock in Haiti has stalled needed reforms and elections are key to ensuring that solutions are identified and implemented. The engagement of the United States and our international partners has been instrumental in getting the elections scheduled and on track to take place this year. These efforts, which include close collaboration with President Michel Martelly, Prime Minister Evans Paul, the Provisional Electoral Commission (CEP) and major political parties, need to continue through the electoral period and beyond in order to help the Haitian people address the systemic problems that continue to challenge the effectiveness of that country's electoral process and institutions.

We have also been heavily engaged with MINUSTAH, the Haitian National Police (HNP), and the CEP as Haiti finalizes its electoral security plan. The recent reduction in the U.N.'s military footprint requires the HNP to increasingly take responsibility for nationwide security. The scale of the elections and the HNP's limited resources, including personnel and vehicle shortfalls, will challenge the force to maintain order if widespread disturbances occur. The HNP has sought and will require significant assistance to undertake the roles MINUSTAH performed in previous elections. To this end, the U.S. has committed over $30 million dollars in support of these elections, including some $2.8 million in vehicles, spare parts to repair inoperable vehicles, and communications equipment to improve the HNP's security and logistics posture.

Question. The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has supported Haiti with police and military personnel. However, these efforts are only temporary until the Haitian National Police is strengthened and capable of sustaining the security of the country. In your view, how is the Haitian Government working to improve the Haitian National Police capabilities. How is the United States supporting these efforts?

Answer. The United States has had an excellent working relationship with the Haitian National Police (HNP). The Haitian Government established a 5-year police development plan in 2012 aiming to grow the force to 15,000 officers by the end of 2016 and improve its professionalism; U.S. efforts are aligned to help the Haitian Government achieve these goals. Thanks to generous funding provided by the U.S. Congress for the HNP—over $200 million since the earthquake—we have assisted the HNP's growth by about 1,000 officers a year, to a current level of 12,200 officers. We recently funded improvements to the Police School that will enable basic training classes of 1,500 cadets a year to help the HNP toward its growth target. Our support for police training, as well as that of the Government of Canada and MINUSTAH, has made the HNP the most respected Haitian Government institution with a majority of Haitians trusting their police according to Department of State polling. Haiti's successful pilot community policing unit in Port-au-Prince, supported by a U.S.-funded partnership with the New York Police Department and by MINUSTAH, is growing and expanding to additional provinces. We provide embedded mentors in key HNP offices to improve strategic planning, budget, career development, and logistics capabilities, all aimed at improving the force's ability to sustain itself. Since the 2010 earthquake, we have improved police infrastructure by building six police stations and installing facilities for Haiti's counternarcotics police to enable their deployment around the country. The HNP's performance has improved, most notably in antikidnapping investigations and crowd control capacities. The HNP now rarely calls on MINUSTAH quick reaction support and has been largely effective in managing recent politically motivated protests. Early 2015 saw

a relative lull in protest activity, and although violence against MINUSTAH and HNP personnel has increased, Haiti remains secure overall.

Question. During the past month, more than 17,000 Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic have voluntarily chosen to return to Haiti. This number is expected to increase given the current policies in the Dominican Republic to regularize unauthorized migration in the country. There is concern that the large quantities of individuals returning to Haiti may overwhelm Haitian authorities, who may not have the capacity of the Haitian Government to adequately receive all returnees.

- Can you describe our current cooperation with the Government of Haiti to ensure an appropriate screening process? If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that Haitian returnees are afforded a fair process of reintegration to Haitian society?

Answer. The United States has been in close contact with the Government of Haiti to understand its contingency planning on how to process Haitian nationals being returned to Haiti or Dominicans of Haitian descent who arrive in Haiti. Embassy staff and implementing partners have also monitored the actual situation of arrivals from the Dominican Republic to better understand the situation and any humanitarian needs.

The United States is funding civil society organizations and international organizations, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM). IOM, in coordination with local civil society, is monitoring population movements at the border and referring people in need of protection, especially unaccompanied children.

We are encouraging the governments of both Haiti and the Dominican Republic to consult and collaborate with each other and with civil society groups and international organizations to develop processes that uphold the rule of law, provide procedural safeguards, and are consistent with each country's international obligations and commitments. Our Ambassador to Haiti has also led international engagement efforts to assist the Haitian Government in proactively managing increases in movements across the border. If confirmed by the Senate, I will continue robust engagement with the Haitian authorities on their efforts to manage this immediate issue and build capacity more generally in managing movement at their borders.

Question. Haitian workers continue to suffer restrictions on freedom of association, minimum wage violations, and other labor rights abuses, despite the promises of the HOPE II to bring attention to labor conditions. The United States last trade union program, funded by the Department of Labor, was shuttered in May.

- As Ambassador, how will you ensure that Haiti's workers and unions get the support and capacity-building they need to advocate for better labor rights enforcement and working conditions?

Answer. Since the implementation of the HOPE II legislation, producer compliance with the international core labor standards—which include freedom of association, the elimination of all forms of compulsory or forced labor, the abolition of child labor, and the elimination of discrimination—has improved, and there has been significant progress in relations between factoryowners and labor advocates. For example, during the last official identification cycle by the U.S. Government for noncompliance, only one producer out of 23 eligible producers was identified as noncompliant with one or more core labor standards, and that producer has reinstated all of the union members seeking reinstatement who were the subject of the noncompliance finding. In addition, through the Social Dialogue Table established in March 2014 to create a space for dialogue, textile workers and factoryowners were able to hold successful minimum wage negotiations and submit consolidated recommendations to Haiti's Superior Wage Council (CSS) for consideration. The CSS adopted a number of recommendations made by the Social Dialogue Table, becoming the first successful union-management minimum wage negotiation in the history of Haiti's textile industry.

The Government of Haiti has also actively engaged with both the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the U.S. Government in all aspects of the HOPE II implementation program and is building its capacity to monitor and inspect textile factories and mediate disputes. The ILO's Better Work Haiti program, funded by the U.S. Government, has continued to perform factory assessments, provide compliance advisory services, and issue the biannual reports required under the HOPE II legislation. While the reports show that there have been improvements in regards to the core labor standards and some aspects of working conditions, lasting solutions need to be developed in categories such as occupational safety and health. To meet this need, Better Work Haiti is placing a greater emphasis on in-depth advisory and

training services with the aim of promoting more sustainable solutions to the compliance problems that have persisted in the sector.

The U.S. Government's program to build the capacity of worker organizations closed in May 2015. If confirmed by the Senate, I will give labor issues priority attention and the Embassy, in partnership with other partners, most notably the ILO and the Government of Haiti's Office of the Ombudsperson, will continue to engage directly with worker organizations in Haiti to ensure ongoing support for unions in their efforts to represent the interests of apparel sector workers in Haiti.

Question. More than 17,000 Haitians have voluntarily chosen to return from the Dominican Republic. This number is expected to increase in the following months as the Dominican Republic moves forward with the implementation of its migration policies.

- In your view, what is the effect that the large quantity of returnees will have in the elections?

Answer. We are carefully monitoring these returns and are heavily engaged on migration concerns with the Governments of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, as well as international organizations and NGOs. To date the spontaneous returns have not resulted in a significant humanitarian crisis, although we stand ready to assist the Government of Haiti should numbers increase substantially. The Government of the Dominican Republic has indicated that there will be no large-scale deportations. So far we have not seen any significant effect on Haiti's election planning.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2015

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

Hon. Paul Wayne Jones, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Poland
Hon. Hans G. Klemm, of Michigan, to be Ambassador to Romania
Kathleen Ann Doherty, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus
James Desmond Melville, Jr., of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia
Samuel D. Heins, of Minnesota, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway
Thomas O. Melia, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:09 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Johnson presiding.

Present: Senators Johnson, Shaheen, and Menendez

Also present: Senators Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken.

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

Senator JOHNSON. Good afternoon. This hearing of the European subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is called to order.

Welcome, Senator Klobuchar and Senator Franken from Minnesota, to introduce our first nominee, Mr. Samuel D. Heins. If the good Senators would offer their introductions, we would appreciate it.

Senator Klobuchar.

STATEMENT OF HON. AMY KLOBUCHAR, U.S. SENATOR FROM MINNESOTA

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you very much for holding this hearing. I know your State, like ours, has a lot of Norwegians, so we appreciate it.

Senator JOHNSON. I am one of them.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Well, I could not have guessed, with your last name.

I am proud to be here today to introduce Sam Heins, the nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Norway.

Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to note that today marks exactly 4 years since the terrorist attacks that claimed 77 lives in Oslo and Utoya. A number of remembrance ceremonies are taking place across Norway, and the victims and their loved ones are in our thoughts and prayers.

I think it is a somber day, but it is also a very important day to show our solidarity with Norway and rededicate ourselves to the friendships between our countries. And getting an ambassador confirmed would be a major step forward.

As a Senator from the State, as I noted, that is home to 800,000 people of Norwegian heritage, really more than anywhere except Norway itself, I think it is only fitting that the nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Norway be from Minnesota.

As the Norwegian Ambassador to the United States Kare Aas noted, the ties between the Midwest and Norway are strong, and nowhere are they more deeply felt than in Minnesota.

Of course, there is much more to our nominee Sam Heins than the fact that he has Minnesota heritage. In addition to being an accomplished lawyer, Mr. Heins has demonstrated his devotion to, and leadership in, the cause of advancing human rights. In 1982, he founded, organized, and served as the first board chair for the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, which monitors and responds to human rights abuses throughout the world.

In 1985, he cofounded the Center for Victims of Torture, which provides services, research, and advocacy for victims of torture from across the world, where he continues to serve as a board member. It started as a humble rehabilitation center in St. Paul. Today, the center that our nominee founded is an internationally recognized organization that operates around the globe, providing desperately needed help to those who have been victimized by repression and violence.

This record of accomplishment is particularly appropriate for an Ambassador to Norway. Norway has long been an international leader on human rights issues. Just last month, for example, the United States and Norway issued a joint statement of support for international programs initiated by Freedom House and other like-minded groups to help civil society organizations around the world that have been threatened with violence as the result of their human rights advocacy.

Mr. Heins' extensive work on human rights and with NGOs that support human rights will be extremely helpful in sustaining and building on the strong United States-Norwegian partnership in this area. Norway is one of our strongest and most dependable international allies. We know of their important NATO involvement, especially on this committee you know that. And its military has participated in operations with the United States in the Balkans and in Afghanistan.

Norwegians work alongside Americans in standing up to Russian provocations in Ukraine, in countering ISIS and the spread of violent extremism.

As such, Norway deserves an ambassador who understands the country and is deeply committed to the relationship. We all know,

for a variety of reasons, as of today, it has been 663 days that Norway has not had an ambassador. The Foreign Minister was in to see me and he actually knew the exact number of days.

So I am very pleased, Mr. Chairman, that you and Chairman Corker were willing to hold this hearing so quickly after Mr. Heins has been nominated, so we can remedy the situation, which you did not cause. And I thank you so much for holding this hearing.

Senator JOHNSON. I appreciate you acknowledging that, and I also appreciate your persistence.

You have a tireless advocate there, Mr. Heins.

Senator Franken.

STATEMENT OF HON. AL FRANKEN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MINNESOTA

Senator FRANKEN. Thank you, Chairman Johnson, for holding this very important confirmation hearing. The chairman is not just a Norwegian-American. He actually grew up in Minnesota.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Yes, I know that. I heard that.

Senator FRANKEN. He does not like to admit it.

Senator JOHNSON. That could be used against me, so be careful. [Laughter.]

Senator FRANKEN. And he is a tremendous Vikings fan because of that.

Senator JOHNSON. That will be used against me. [Laughter.]

It is also not true.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. That record will reflect that is not true.

Senator FRANKEN. The record will reflect that is not true.

Senator JOHNSON. We do have some Super Bowls under our belt.

Senator FRANKEN. You do. We have some Super Bowls under our belt. We lost them all, but they are under our belt.

But, as you know, and as I think Senator Klobuchar mentioned, about 20 percent of Minnesotans trace their ancestry to Norway, and we have more Norwegian Americans living in Minnesota than in any other State and, as you just said, anywhere else but in Norway.

Norway and Minnesota enjoy a very productive bilateral relationship. Our universities collaborate on research projects. We collaborate in areas of renewable energy, health care, and other areas. And, of course, as you know, Mr. Chairman, our nations cooperate on very important security issues.

So it is very fitting that Sam Heins, a distinguished Minnesotan, has been nominated to serve as our next Ambassador to Norway. Mr. Heins is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, and he is a brilliant lawyer. He has been a great voice on behalf of women's rights, on human rights, refugees, just to name a few, and he has worked tirelessly to make sure that victims of torture receive the services that they need.

I am pleased that he was nominated to serve as Ambassador to Norway after this long vacancy, and I look forward to his speedy confirmation.

I thank you and Senator Corker.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Franken. Remind me not to invite you to another hearing. [Laughter.]

Senator FRANKEN. Okay. I will do that.

Senator JOHNSON. No, really, I thank both of the good Senators from Minnesota for coming in and offering those kind words of introduction.

And I would ask the other nominees now to be seated at the table, and we will continue on with the hearing.

It looks like we could have used just a slightly bigger table, but it looks like we squeezed you all in there.

Again, I want to welcome all of the nominees. I want to thank you for your previous service to the Nation and your willingness to serve as Ambassador of our Nation to the countries we are going to be handling nominations for: Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway, Ambassador to Poland, Ambassador to Romania, Ambassador to Cyprus, Ambassador to Estonia, and nominee for the Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia at USAID.

I am very happy to help move these nominations along. These are critical posts. It is extremely important that America is well-represented, and I assume, being patriots, you will do a good job of conveying, from my standpoint, American values to those countries, but at the same time recognize that your role is to make sure that we as elected officials of America understand the viewpoints of those countries to which you are going to be Ambassadors.

It is a critically important role, and, again, I am just very pleased that we are moving these nominations along in an expedited fashion so that our Nation will be well-represented in these countries.

With that, I will turn it over to our ranking member, Senator Shaheen.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEANNE SHAHEEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would just like to echo the chairman's comments about appreciation for your willingness to continue to serve this country and to serve in very important roles in Europe.

For a number of years, I think we viewed Europe as our most important ally, and we were well on the way to a Europe that was whole and free and at peace. Sadly, we are not in that position today.

So your willingness to serve at a time when there is continued financial upheaval in Europe, as well as the threat from Russia and from ISIS, is absolutely critical.

So thank you very much, and I look forward to hearing your testimony.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

We will just go from left to right. I will just introduce the nominees before you testify. Our first nominee is Ambassador Paul Wayne Jones, a nominee for the Ambassador to Poland. Ambassador Jones is a career member of the Foreign Service and currently serves as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, a position he has held since 2013.

Ambassador Jones.

STATEMENT OF PAUL WAYNE JONES, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND

Ambassador JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and committee members. It is a privilege to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Poland. I am honored by the trust and confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me.

With your permission, I would like to take this opportunity to briefly introduce some family members here today. My wife Catherine and I have been representing the United States together for the past 20 years of our marriage. Catherine, an award-winning author and mobile app developer, has lived in more countries than I have as the daughter of a retired U.S. Foreign Service officer and Ambassador Brandon Grove, whom I would also like to introduce.

We are so proud of our two children, Allie and Hale, who have been on the Foreign Service road with us since birth.

My brother-in-law, Paul Grove, is well-known for a distinguished career here in the Senate, as well as his wife, Martha, similarly at the National Archives, and their children Ella and Sam.

I regret that my father, a World War II veteran, did not live to see this day.

Mr. Chairman, I bring broad experience to this position, having served overseas on four continents, as well as in Washington over the past 28 years, including as Ambassador and three times as deputy chief of mission. I also bring intensive current experience from the past 2 years as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia, where I have been responsible for U.S. relations with Europe, particularly Russia and Ukraine, as principal deputy to Assistant Secretary Toria Nuland.

I am honored to be nominated to succeed Ambassador Steve Mull, a longtime friend who has served with distinction for the past 3 years, together with an extraordinary team of Americans and Poles at our Embassy in Warsaw and our consulate in Krakow.

Today, Poland has become one of our closest and most capable NATO allies, a relationship that at its core is founded on democratic values and a shared commitment to policies that provide peace and prosperity for our peoples.

Poland will host the 2016 NATO summit, an example of its growing transatlantic and regional security role. The alliance will review implementation of its readiness action plan, which includes strengthening the headquarters of Multinational Corps Northeast in Poland and standing up NATO's new spearhead force, which conducted its first live training exercise last month in Poland.

For its part, Poland is strengthening the alliance through its 10-year, $45 billion defense modernization program; its commitment now enshrined in law to invest at least 2 percent of its gross domestic product in annual defense spending; and its future hosting of a U.S. site for NATO ballistic missile defense.

Poland has shared our sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan, is contributing to NATO's mission in Afghanistan today, and is a member of the counter-ISIL coalition.

Mr. Chairman, as President Obama said in his June 2014 visit to Warsaw, the United States has an unwavering commitment to Poland's security through our shared Article 5 obligations. In the

wake of Russia's actions in Ukraine, we have demonstrated this commitment.

The United States maintains a persistent rotational military presence in Poland, complemented by significant U.S. and NATO air, land, and sea exercises in Poland and in the region. And as Secretary Carter announced last month, we will begin prepositioning military equipment and materiel in Central and Eastern Europe, a large portion of which will be in Poland.

Our relationship with Poland takes inspiration from the strong cultural ties between our peoples, fostered by a vibrant community of some 10 million Polish Americans. Since the fall of communism in 1989, Poland has set a standard of democratic and economic reform based on shared transatlantic values. A staunch supporter of Ukraine, Poland has provided Ukraine financial, decentralization, anticorruption, and security assistance. Poland is also one of the top contributors of monitors to the OSCE special monitoring mission in Ukraine.

The United States and Poland enjoy very strong economic ties. U.S. exports to Poland have grown 22 percent since 2009, supporting tens of thousands of American jobs. U.S. defense companies are full partners in Poland's defense modernization. And the recent selection of Raytheon's Patriot system will strengthen those ties and sustain jobs here at home.

The United States is a leading and growing source of investment in Poland across a wide range of sectors. While security is the foundation of our relationship, particularly today, if confirmed, I will seek to deepen our ties across the board, from education exchanges and entrepreneurship to trade, investment and innovation, energy security, science and technology, law enforcement, and counterterrorism.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and with Congress. I am happy to address your comments and questions.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Jones follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR PAUL WAYNE JONES

Mr. Chairman and committee members, it is a privilege to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Poland. I am honored by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me.

With your permission, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce some family members here today. My wife, Catherine, and I have represented the United States together for the past 20 years of our marriage. Catherine, an award-winning author and mobile app developer, has lived in more countries than I have, as the daughter of retired U.S. Foreign Service officer and Ambassador Brandon Grove, whom I'd also like to introduce. We're so proud of our two children, Allie and Hale, who have been on the Foreign Service road with us since birth. My brother-in-law, Paul Grove, is well known from a distinguished career here in the Senate, and his wife, Martha, similarly at the National Archives. I regret my father, a World War II veteran, did not live to see this day.

Mr. Chairman, I bring broad experience to this position, having served overseas on four continents as well as in Washington over the past 28 years, including as Ambassador and three times as deputy chief of mission. I also bring intensive current experience from the past 2 years as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia, where I have been responsible for U.S. relations with Europe, particularly Russia and Ukraine, as principal deputy to Assistant Secretary Toria Nuland.

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For its part, Poland is strengthening the alliance through its 10-year, $45 billion defense modernization plan; its commitment, now enshrined in law, to invest at least 2 percent of its gross domestic product in annual defense spending; and its future hosting of a U.S. site for NATO ballistic missile defense. Poland has shared our sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan, is contributing to NATO's mission in Afghanistan, and is a member of the Counter-ISIL coalition.

As President Obama said in his June 2014 visit to Warsaw, the United States has an "unwavering commitment to Poland's security" through our shared Article 5 obligations. In the wake of Russia's actions in Ukraine, we have demonstrated this commitment. The United States maintains a persistent, rotational military presence in Poland, complemented by significant U.S. and NATO air, land, and sea exercises in Poland and the region. And as Secretary Carter announced last month, we will begin prepositioning military equipment and materiel in Central and Eastern Europe, a large portion of which will be in Poland.

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While security is the foundation of our relationship, particularly today, if confirmed I will seek to deepen our ties across the board, from education, exchanges and entrepreneurship, to trade, investment, and innovation, energy security, science and technology, law enforcement, and counterterrorism.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and Congress. I am happy to address your comments and questions. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador Jones.

Our next nominee is Ambassador Hans Klemm, a nominee for Ambassador to Romania.

Ambassador Klemm is a career member of the Foreign Service and currently serves as senior adviser to the Under Secretary for Management at the Department of State, a position he has held since January 2015. He previously served in posts in Germany, Japan, and South Korea.

Ambassador Klemm.

STATEMENT OF HON. HANS G. KLEMM, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO ROMANIA

Ambassador KLEMM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Shaheen, and distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It is an honor for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Romania. I am humbled and grateful for the confidence that the President and Secretary Kerry have placed in me.

If confirmed, I pledge to promote our interests, protect American citizens, and encourage even stronger ties with our excellent ally and strategic partner, Romania.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to note with regret that my wife, Mari, is not here today due to professional obligations that kept her overseas. If confirmed, however, Mari will eagerly join me in support of our mission in Bucharest.

Romania is a staunch NATO ally and a significant contributor to international peace and security. For years, it has been among the top 10 countries providing troops in Afghanistan, first to the International Security Assistance Force and now to the Resolute Support mission. As a demonstration of its commitment to European defense, Romania is hosting a European-phased adaptive approach missile defense site.

Romania is also home to a forward operating site, which hosts hundreds of U.S. Marines and U.S. Army personnel and serves as an important regional logistics hub. And Romania has stood firmly aside the United States in responding to Russian aggression in the region.

If confirmed, I will work resolutely to further strengthen both Romania's role within NATO and our bilateral military partnership.

Romania also has a key role to play in ensuring the prosperity of southeastern Europe. With its long history of domestic oil and gas production, it is well-placed to help Europe diversify sources and transit routes for energy. To do so, however, Romania must support regional energy cooperation and diversification, and the efficiency of its domestic gas transmission network.

If confirmed, I will seek to deepen our engagement with Romania in the area of energy security.

The information technology sector is another that has tremendous potential in Romania, as suggested by the growing presence of American firms in that country. We urge Romania to make further reforms to boost its economic development and the prosperity of its people, including creating more opportunity for American exports and investment.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Romanian Government and both of our private sectors to promote bilateral trade and investment, including the negotiations toward a transatlantic trade and investment partnership.

Last but perhaps most importantly, as you know, Mr. Chairman, Romania has been engaged in an extended, serious effort to root out high-level corruption and improve adherence to the rule of law. As Vice President Biden said during a visit to Bucharest last year, corruption represents a clear and present danger to a country's national security.

To tackle corruption, a scourge that affects the lives of all its citizens, Romania has stood up powerful, independent law enforcement and judicial entities. Scores of local, regional, and national officials have been investigated, indicted, and convicted.

If confirmed, I pledge to redouble our support to Romania's anticorruption institutions and civil society to bolster the country's adherence to the rule of law.

Senators, Romania is a friend and strategic partner and a stalwart ally. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you on the many areas of U.S. interest in Romania. I will also look forward to welcoming you to Bucharest, where you will see firsthand the outstanding work our Embassy is doing on behalf of the American people. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Klemm follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR HANS G. KLEMM

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

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

I am humbled and grateful for the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to promote our interests, protect American citizens, and encourage even stronger ties with our excellent ally and strategic partner, Romania.

Mister Chairman, before beginning my remarks, I would like to note with regret that my wife, Mari, could not be here today due to professional obligations. If I am confirmed, Mari greatly looks forward to supporting our mission in Bucharest.

Romania is a staunch NATO ally and a significant contributor to international peace and security. For years, it has been among the top 10 countries providing troops in Afghanistan both to the International Security Assistance Force and now, Resolute Support Mission—saving U.S. taxpayers tens of millions of dollars by deploying and returning its own troops using Romania's own capabilities. I am proud to say that the United States helped Romania to develop these capabilities through an Excess Defense Articles grant of several C–130s. If confirmed, I will build on this cooperation to further increase Romanian defense capabilities and strengthen the alliance.

I also wanted to take a moment to publicly acknowledge Romania's commitment to European defense. Romania is hosting the U.S. site at Deveselu for NATO ballistic missile defense—the first new U.S. Navy facility in the European theater since Souda Bay in Crete. Romania is also home to our Forward Operating Site at Mihail Kogalniceanu, which hosts hundreds of U.S. Marines and U.S. Army personnel and serves as an important logistics hub for TRANSCOM. These examples of Romania's commitment are also the result of our excellent bilateral defense cooperation. Our military leaders at EUCOM, the European combatant command, and here in Washington, working together with the Department of State and across the interagency, have done a superb job in laying the foundation of this relationship. And if confirmed, I will rely on their expertise and advice to build on these successes.

Romania has stood with us in responding to Russian aggression in the region. Its leaders condemned Russian violations of Ukrainian sovereignty and have urged European Union solidarity on sanctions against Russia—including increasing them, if necessary, until Russia reverses course. Romania has provided humanitarian and development assistance to Ukraine and leads the NATO Cybersecurity Trust Fund for Ukraine. If confirmed, I hope to consult often with the Romanian Government on the best united course of action to resolve the conflict.

On the economic and energy fronts, Romania has a key role to play in ensuring the prosperity of southeastern Europe. With its long history of domestic oil and gas production and openness to exploration, Romania is well placed to help Europe diversify sources and transit routes for energy. Over time, we hope that Romania's role in the production and transit of energy for the region will grow. But in order to do so, Romania should advance priority projects that enhance regional energy cooperation, efficiency, and diversification—including upgrades to its domestic gas transmission network and improved interconnections with its neighbors. We applaud Romania's efforts to build a pipeline to Moldova, which will help that country benefit from an integrated European energy market. Our engagement with Romania in the energy sector has been robust and collaborative. To foster continued growth and attract continued investment, Romania must ensure that it has the appropriate regulatory and policy framework. If confirmed, I will continue our strong engagement on these issues.

Romania has supported the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement, which will create jobs and economic growth on both sides of the Atlantic. Romania has improved its investment climate, and its economy is one of few among European Union members in recent years to achieve close to 3 percent

growth. Romania enjoys several advantages, including a skilled, multilingual labor force and a strategic location bridging Europe with Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Middle East. The information technology sector has tremendous potential in Romania, as evidenced by the growing presence of American firms and the overwhelmingly positive response to the recent cyber-security trade mission led by Department of Commerce Deputy Secretary Bruce Andrews. Now, Romania still needs to undertake further reforms. The United States has encouraged Romania to continue to professionalize the management of state-owned enterprises, strengthen its regulatory framework, and increase transparency in official decisionmaking. These reforms are crucial to increase the well-being of the Romanian people and create more opportunity for Romanian and American companies. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Romanian Government and private sector to make more progress on these fronts.

Last but perhaps most important, Romania has been engaged in a years-long, serious effort to root out high-level corruption and improve adherence to the rule of law. As Vice President Biden said during a visit to Bucharest last year, corruption represents a clear and present danger to a country's national security, and outside forces exploit these weaknesses to exercise malign influence and undermine the independence of sovereign countries. That is exactly why we have been so engaged in helping Romania sustain empowered, independent entities to tackle an issue that affects the lives of all Romanians. We are also helping Romania to focus on asset forfeiture, transparency initiatives, and on supporting the next generation of reformers. Altogether, Romania has made significant achievements in fighting corruption. Scores of local, regional, and national officials have been investigated, indicted and convicted on corruption charges. We must remain engaged with our Romanian partners to help ensure continued progress and that Romania's anticorruption institutions have the freedom and independence to act, and to ensure the Romanian people will see no backsliding on the hard-won progress made so far. If confirmed, I will support Romania's anticorruption institutions and civil society to strengthen adherence to the rule of law.

We have many agencies represented at Embassy Bucharest. Besides the Department of State, there is the Department of Defense, FBI, U.S. Secret Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of Justice, Department of Commerce, and Department of Agriculture, in addition to others. If confirmed, ensuring the Embassy's efficient and effective operation and its good stewardship of taxpayers dollars will be among my top priorities.

Senators, Romania is a strategically important friend and stalwart ally that has made great strides in transforming itself, even as it helps us to keep a watchful eye on Russia's destabilizing actions in the region. If confirmed, I will work with you and your colleagues on the many areas of U.S. interest and look forward to welcoming you all to Bucharest, where you can see firsthand the outstanding work our Embassy is doing on behalf of the American people and in support of our strategic partnership. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ambassador Klemm.

Our next nominee is Mr. Samuel Heins, a nominee for the ambassadorship to the Kingdom of Norway. Mr. Heins was a partner at Heins Mills & Olson in Minneapolis, MN, from 1994 to 2013.

In 1983, he founded Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, where he continues to serve as a member.

Mr. Heins.

STATEMENT OF SAMUEL D. HEINS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY

Mr. HEINS. Thank you, Chairman Johnson, Senator Shaheen, and members of the committee, for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I would also like to thank Senator Klobuchar and Senator Franken for their generous remarks. I hope I can live up to the standards that they set as exemplary public servants.

I would also like to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their trust and confidence in me. I am extraordinarily grateful to the President for nominating me to be Ambassador to Norway,

and I am honored and humbled that the committee is considering my nomination.

I would like to introduce my wife and partner, both professionally and in life, Stacey Mills. I would not be here today without her love and support.

I am also joined by some wonderful members of our family, my stepson, Clark Newman, and my niece, Nicole Mills.

My mother, who is 97, is watching and is very proud that I have the honor to appear before you today.

If confirmed by the Senate, I intend to be a reliable, diligent, and energetic representative of the United States to Norway. I will undertake those duties recognizing the vital importance of our bilateral relationship and the utmost seriousness of the work of a U.S. Ambassador. As a key part of this responsibility, I will ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens and our Embassy community in Norway.

Norway holds a unique place in the world, and its relationship with the United States is of tremendous value and significance. Norway is one of the world's great democracies, and its leadership publicly declares that the United States is its closest ally.

If the Senate confirms my nomination, I will devote every effort to enhancing this remarkable relationship.

I know from my own experience that our friendship extends beyond the formal relations between sovereign nations. There are more than 800,000 proud Norwegian-Americans, as my Senators have remarked, in my home State of Minnesota alone. They share their culture, history, and pride in their heritage with the rest of us. And we Minnesotans are happy to think of ourselves as honorary Norwegians. We are proud of the admirable Norwegian culture that is an intrinsic and historic part of our State.

In facing the challenges that confront us as a nation, we know that Norway is a dependable and responsible partner. As a founding member of NATO, Norway is a long-standing and steadfast ally. Norwegian and American military personnel have served side by side in operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo, over the skies of Libya, and beyond. Norway has repeatedly demonstrated its military readiness and commitment to interoperability through regular joint exercises with U.S. and other allied forces.

Former Norwegian Prime Minister Jan Stoltenberg is the current NATO Secretary General, as you know, a testament to the respect of the alliance for Norway's dedication to transatlantic security.

Norway has been fully committed to the U.S.-EU approach to support Ukraine, imposing all rounds of sanctions against Russia despite the economic burden.

Norway has also repeatedly called for full implementation of the Minsk agreement and is supporting Ukraine's reform efforts. Norway is a strong partner in the coalition to counter ISIL, contributing military trainers for Iraqi forces, as well as millions of dollars in humanitarian support for both Iraq and Syria.

In addition, Norway is at the forefront of our efforts to combat violent extremism, hosting a 2-day summit in June to further the agenda of the White House summit on countering violent extremism held in February.

Norway and the United States are substantial investors in each other's business enterprises. Over 300 U.S. companies have a presence in Norway, and Norway is the fifth fastest-growing source of foreign direct investment in the United States. If confirmed, I intend to expand this relationship and work to create even more opportunities for U.S. businesses and American workers.

We share with Norway vital economic and environmental interests in the Arctic. We are fortunate that our staunch friend Norway works closely with us on the Arctic Council, which we now share, sharing our goals for responsible stewardship of the region and strengthening international cooperation.

Norway has established itself as a peacemaker and peacekeeper, as well as a generous activist in the alleviation of humanitarian crises and the promotion of human rights around the world. I know from my work over the last 30 years with human rights and humanitarian NGOs that in the international arena, Norway commands principled, moral high ground. It has earned its reputation as an honest broker. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Norway in pursuit of these important undertakings.

Throughout my career, I have been a business manager and advocate and negotiator. I will bring these skills to bear, if the Senate confirms me as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway. Norway's partnership and alliance with the United States requires ambassadorial representation in Oslo that it is hardworking, informed, and dedicated to advancing what can only be described as an extraordinary international friendship.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Heins follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SAMUEL D. HEINS

Thank you Chairman Johnson, Senator Shaheen, and members of the committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would also like to thank Senator Klobuchar and Senator Franken for their generous remarks. I hope I can live up to the standards they set as exemplary public servants.

I would also like to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their trust and confidence in me. I'm extraordinarily grateful to the President for nominating me to be Ambassador to Norway, and I'm honored and humbled that the committee is considering my nomination.

I'd like to introduce my wife and partner, both professionally and in life, Stacey Mills. I wouldn't be here today without her love and support. I'm also joined by some wonderful members of our family, my stepson, Clark Newman, and my nieces, Elizabeth Potter and Nicole Mills, and nephew, Noah Potter. My mother, who is 97, is watching and is very proud that I have the honor to appear before you today.

If confirmed by the Senate, I intend to be a reliable, diligent, and energetic representative of the United States to Norway. I will undertake those duties recognizing the vital importance of our bilateral relationship and the utmost seriousness of the work of a U.S. Ambassador. As a key part of this responsibility, I will ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens and our Embassy communities. Norway holds a unique place in the world, and its relationship with the United States is of tremendous value and significance. Norway is one of the world's great democracies, and its leadership publicly declares that the United States is its closest ally. If the Senate confirms my nomination, I will devote every effort to enhancing this remarkable relationship.

I know from my own experience that our friendship extends beyond the formal relations between sovereign nations. There are more than 800,000 proud Norwegian-Americans in my home State of Minnesota alone. They share their culture, history, and pride in their heritage with the rest of us. We Minnesotans are happy to think of ourselves as honorary Norwegians. We are proud of the admirable Norwegian culture that is an intrinsic and historic part of our State.

In facing the challenges that confront us as a nation, we know that Norway is a dependable and responsible partner. As a founding member of NATO, Norway is a long-standing and steadfast ally. Norwegian and American military personnel have served side by side in operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo, over the skies of Libya, and beyond. Norway has repeatedly demonstrated its military readiness and commitment to interoperability though regular joint exercises with U.S. and other allied forces. Former Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg is the current NATO Secretary General, a testament to the respect of the alliance for Norway's dedication to transatlantic security.

Norway has been fully committed to the joint U.S.-EU approach to support Ukraine, imposing all rounds of sanctions against Russia despite the economic burden. Norway has also repeatedly called for full implementation of the Minsk Agreement, and is supporting Ukraine's reform efforts.

Norway is a strong partner in the Coalition to Counter ISIL, contributing military trainers for Iraqi Forces, as well as millions of dollars in humanitarian support for both Iraq and Syria. In addition, Norway is at the forefront of our efforts to combat violent extremism, hosting a 2-day summit in June to further the agenda of the White House summit on Countering Violent Extremism held in February of this year.

Norway and the United States are substantial investors in each other's business enterprises. Over 300 U.S. companies have a presence in Norway, and Norway is the fifth fastest-growing source of foreign direct investment in the United States. If confirmed, I intend to expand this relationship and work to create even more opportunities for U.S. businesses and American workers.

We share with Norway vital economic and environmental interests in the Arctic. We are fortunate that our staunch friend Norway works closely with us on the Arctic Council, sharing our goals for responsible stewardship of the region and strengthening international cooperation.

Norway has established itself as a peacemaker and peacekeeper, as well as a generous activist in the alleviation of humanitarian crises and the promotion of human rights around the world. I know from my work over the last 30 years with human rights and humanitarian NGOs that in the international arena, Norway commands principled, moral high ground. It has earned its reputation as an honest broker. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Norway in pursuit of these important undertakings.

Throughout my career I have been a business manager, an advocate, and a negotiator. I will bring those skills to bear if the Senate confirms me as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway.

Norway's partnership and alliance with the United States requires ambassadorial representation in Oslo that is hardworking, informed and dedicated to advancing what can only be described as an extraordinary international friendship.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Heins.

Our next nominee is Mr. James Melville, a nominee for the Ambassador to Estonia. Mr. Melville is a career member of the Foreign Service and currently serves as the Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy in Berlin.

Previously, Mr. Melville has served as Executive Director of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and in positions in London, Moscow, Paris, and Brussels.

Mr. Melville.

STATEMENT OF JAMES DESMOND MELVILLE, JR., NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA

Mr. MELVILLE. Chairman Johnson, Senator Shaheen, thank you for holding this hearing today. It is a privilege to appear before you as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia. It is a tremendous honor to be asked to serve in this post, and I would like to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to protect American citizens and further U.S. interests in Estonia.

Mr. Chairman, with me is my wife, Joanna. We celebrated our 31st anniversary yesterday. I would have loved to have introduced you to our sons, Desmond and Daniel, but they were unable to make the trip down here today. I am very pleased, however, to introduce my rooting section from New Jersey, led by my mom, Georgina Melville; my sister-in-law, Ruth Bayus; my sister and brother-in-law, Eileen and Frank Karpicki; my nephew, Nicolas Karpicki; and my nieces, Kathleen and Francesca Karpicki.

Danny and Desmond were born in Berlin during our first assignment, and they grew up in the Foreign Service.

My late father immigrated to America when he was young, as did my mother's parents. They raised me and my six brothers and sisters to be very proud of our Irish heritage but to be even prouder to be Americans.

It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve our Nation for nearly 30 years, and I am deeply fortunate to have had Joanna and our sons by my side. We are all very excited about the prospect of an assignment to Estonia, a country we last visited in its first year of independence from Soviet occupation while assigned to the U.S. Consulate in St. Petersburg.

Estonia is a strong and reliable ally in NATO, a member of the E.U. and the Eurozone, and a provider of development assistance focused on good governance and democracy.

This year, we marked the 75th anniversary of the Welles Declaration, under which the United States would not recognize the incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union. This declaration provided critical support and encouragement for Estonia during their 50 years of occupation and remains a powerful symbol today. Our shared values continue to underline our robust cooperation bilaterally, regionally, and globally.

If confirmed, I hope to work to reinforce our partnership with Estonia during a new period of Russian aggression in the region and continue to strengthen the already deep and productive relationship we have enjoyed these many years.

A NATO ally since 2004, Estonia has shown unwavering support for our shared objectives around the world. Estonian troops served with us in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Estonia continues to contribute to NATO's Resolute Support mission. Estonia has met the NATO standard of committing 2 percent of its GDP to defense spending, serving as a model for other allies in making the investments necessary to ensure our common security. Estonian soldiers have proven themselves accomplished and knowledgeable partners in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world, nonetheless, our continued support remains crucial in helping Estonia respond to growing threats.

If confirmed, I look forward to working to implement the European Reassurance Initiative and continuing efforts to facilitate joint training and exercises, and increasing interoperability under Operation Atlantic Resolve.

The birthplace of Skype, Estonia has established itself as a world leader in information technology. If confirmed, I will continue to work to expand our opportunities for trade and commercial relations with this innovative partner. This includes working with my

Estonian colleagues in support of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

As an expert on cyber issues, Estonia hosts the NATO Cyber Centre of Excellence in Tallinn, which the United States joined in 2011, and has shared its expertise on e-governance with other nations, including Ukraine and other eastern partnership countries. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our strong cooperation on cyber issues. Outreach to and promoting resilience within all parts of society is an important component of an Ambassador's work. If confirmed, I will work closely with my team to continue outreach to the Estonian- and Russian-speaking public, including youth, as we welcome the strengths of a diverse and inclusive society.

Estonia has played an active role in advancing our shared security, economic, and social values. If confirmed, I look forward to representing my country in advancing a still deeper connection between the United States and Estonia.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have addressed you today and am at your disposal to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Melville follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES D. MELVILLE, JR.

Chairman Johnson, Senator Shaheen, members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing today. It is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia. It is a tremendous honor to be asked to serve in this post, and I would like to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to protect American citizens and further U.S. interests in Estonia.

Mr. Chairman, with me is my wife Joanna. We celebrated our 31st anniversary yesterday. I would have loved to introduce you to our sons, Desmond and Daniel, but they were unable to make the trip down here today. I am very pleased, however, to introduce my rooting section from New Jersey, led by my Mom, Georgina Melville, and including my sister-in-law, Ruth Bayus, my sister and brother-in-law, Eileen and Frank Karpicki, my nephew, Nicholas Karpicki, my nieces, Kathleen and Francesca Karpicki, my sister, Laura Hampton, and my niece, Colleen Hampton. Danny and Desmond were born in Berlin during our first assignment, and they grew up in the Foreign Service. My late father immigrated to America when he was young, as did my mother's parents. They raised me and my six brothers and sisters to be very proud of our Irish heritage, but to be even prouder to be Americans. It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve our Nation for nearly 30 years, and I am deeply fortunate to have had Joanna and our sons by my side. We are all very excited about the prospect of an assignment to Estonia; a country we last visited in its first year of independence from Soviet occupation while assigned to the U.S. consulate in St. Petersburg.

Estonia is a strong and reliable ally in NATO, a member of the EU and the Eurozone, and a provider of development assistance focused on good governance and democracy. This year we mark the 75th anniversary of the Welles Declaration under which the United States would not recognize the incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union.This declaration provided critical support and encouragement for Estonia during their 50 years of occupation and remains a powerful symbol today. Our shared values continue to underline our robust cooperation bilaterally, regionally, and globally.

If confirmed, I hope to work to reinforce our partnership with Estonia during a new period of Russian aggression in the region and continue to strengthen the already deep and productive relationship we have enjoyed these many years.

A NATO ally since 2004, Estonia has shown unwavering support for our shared objectives around the world. Estonian troops served with us in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Estonia continues to contribute to NATO's Resolute Support Mission (RSM). Estonia has met the NATO standard of committing two percent of its GDP to defense spending, serving as a model for other allies in making the investments necessary to ensure our common security.

Estonian soldiers have proven themselves accomplished and knowledgeable partners in Iraq and Afghanistan and around the world, nonetheless our continued support remains crucial in helping Estonia respond to growing threats. If confirmed, I look forward to working to implement the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) and continuing efforts to facilitate joint training and exercises and increasing interoperability under Operation Atlantic Resolve.

The birthplace of Skype, Estonia has established itself as a world leader on information technology. If confirmed, I will continue to work to expand opportunities for trade and commercial relations with this innovative partner. This includes working with my Estonian colleagues in support of TTIP.

As an expert on cyber issues, Estonia hosts the NATO Cyber Security Center of Excellence in Tallinn, which the United States joined in 2011, and has shared its expertise on e-governance with other nations, including Ukraine and other Eastern Partnership countries. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our strong cooperation on cyber issues.

Outreach to, and promoting resilience within, all parts of society is an important component of an ambassador's work. If confirmed, I will work closely with my team to continue outreach to the Estonian and Russian speaking public, including youth, as we welcome the strengths of a diverse and inclusive society.

Estonia has played an active role in advancing our shared security, economic, and social values. If confirmed, I look forward to representing my country in advancing a still deeper connection between the United States and Estonia.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have addressed you today, and am at your disposal to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Melville.

Our next nominee is Ms. Kathleen Doherty, a nominee for Ambassador to Cyprus. Ms. Doherty is a senior member of the Foreign Service and currently serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs.

Previously, Ms. Doherty has served at U.S. Embassies in London, Moscow, and Rome, working on economic affairs.

Ms. Doherty.

STATEMENT OF KATHLEEN ANN DOHERTY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Ms. DOHERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Shaheen. I am honored to appear before you today to be considered for the position of United States Ambassador to Cyprus. I am grateful to be nominated by President Obama, and I appreciate Secretary Kerry's confidence in me.

If confirmed, I pledge to work with all of you to advance in Cyprus the fundamental U.S. interests in a Europe whole, free, prosperous, and at peace.

I am pleased to be joined today by my partner, Mike Nelson; my sister, Erin; and many friends. I am thankful for the support of family and friends all these years.

Today is part of a journey that started when I traveled overseas at age 13 to visit Ireland, where my father was born and where I first became curious about the world beyond. As the daughter of an immigrant, I am proud to represent the United States and the hope of promise of this country.

This is a hopeful time for Cyprus, a country situated at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. With the resumption of settlement talks in May and the strong commitment of both the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot leaders, there is a real window of opportunity to forge a just and lasting peace.

If confirmed, I would do all that I could to support efforts by courageous and visionary leaders, ordinary people, and the United Na-

tions, to reach the promise of a bizonal, bicommunal federation. A reunified Cyprus would provide for a more prosperous future for all Cypriots.

Such an example would resonate well beyond the island. It would strengthen Greece-Turkey relations. A reunified Cyprus would also enhance regional security and boost NATO-EU cooperation.

Senators, I also believe it would serve as an inspiration for others who wish to define a new future after a painful past.

The Republic of Cyprus is a valued friend and an important strategic partner. The United States cooperates with Cyprus on a range of priorities, including counterterrorism, maritime security, and law enforcement. Cyprus' participation in the counter-ISIL coalition and its efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction demonstrate its commitment to international security.

U.S.-led investment in Cyprus, increasing nearly sevenfold over the last 2 years, is an example of our growing economic ties. Cyprus' economy is turning the corner earlier than projected after the country's acute fiscal crisis in 2012. Its economic reform programs will help ensure that this positive growth continues.

At the same time, progress on a settlement could have a positive impact on the entire island's economy. Study after study has shown a Cyprus settlement would create opportunities for greater trade and investment, bringing tangible benefits to all Cypriots.

The discovery of natural gas reserves in Cyprus' offshore waters has expanded possibilities for increasing regional energy security through diversification of resources, routes, and suppliers. We have emphasized our support of the Republic of Cyprus' right to develop hydrocarbon resources in its exclusive economic zone.

We believe that resources should be shared equitably between both communities within the context of an overall settlement. Hydrocarbons have the potential, if managed correctly, to serve as an incentive for a Cyprus settlement. If confirmed, I would seek to build upon this potential.

During his visit to Cyprus in May 2014, Vice President Biden emphasized that a reunified Cyprus would expand the possibilities for strengthening our partnership.

If confirmed, I will be accredited to one government, the Republic of Cyprus. That said, I will support both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities in their efforts to pursue reconciliation and reunification.

If confirmed, I believe my experience will prepare me well for the challenges and opportunities ahead. Throughout my 25-year career, I worked closely with Members of Congress, the U.S. military, and nearly all U.S. Government agencies and departments.

While serving in Washington and at posts overseas, I have strengthened United States-European relations, promoting trade, investment, economic opportunity, and innovation. I have been a strong advocate for the diversification of energy supplies and for the United States and the EU to work together to address energy challenges. I have championed efforts that enhance European security working through NATO and the EU And while serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary, I worked on the peace process in Northern Ireland, which gave hope to long-divided communities.

If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to strengthening the bonds between the United States and Cyprus, and working with Members of Congress, partners in the U.S. Government and elsewhere, and with the talented staff of the Embassy in Nicosia to further our goals and support the promise of a better future for all Cypriots.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Shaheen, thank you again for the opportunity to be here with you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Doherty follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KATHLEEN A. DOHERTY

Chairman Johnson, Senator Shaheen, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today to be considered for the position of the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus. I am grateful to be nominated by President Obama and appreciate Secretary Kerry's confidence in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work with all of you to advance in Cyprus the fundamental U.S. interest in a Europe whole, free, prosperous, and at peace.

I'm pleased to be joined today by my partner, Mike Nelson, and my brother Bob Doherty, who along with the other members of my family have supported me all these years. Today is part of a journey that started when I first traveled overseas at 13 to visit Ireland, where my father was born, and where I first became curious about the world beyond. As a first generation American on my father's side, I am proud to represent the United States and the hope and promise of this country.

This is a hopeful time for Cyprus, a country situated at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. With the resumption of settlement talks in May and the strong commitment of both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, there is a real window of opportunity to forge a just and lasting settlement. If confirmed, I would do all that I could to support efforts by courageous and visionary leaders, ordinary people, and the United Nations to reach the promise of a bizonal, bicommunal federation. A reunified Cyprus would provide for a more prosperous future for all Cypriots. Such an example would resonate well beyond the island, strengthening Greece-Turkey relations and links across the Eastern Mediterranean. It would serve as an inspiration for others who wish to define a new future after a painful past. A reunified Cyprus would also enhance regional security and boost NATO–EU cooperation.

The Republic of Cyprus is a valued friend and important strategic partner. If confirmed, I am committed to boosting our bilateral relationship to promote peace, security, and prosperity in the region and beyond. The United States cooperates closely with Cyprus on a range of priorities including counterterrorism, maritime security, and law enforcement. Cyprus' hosting of the Joint OPCW–U.N. Mission to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons, participation in the Counter-ISIL Coalition, as well as its regional efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction demonstrate its commitment to international security.

U.S.-led investment in Cyprus, increasing nearly sevenfold over the last 2 years, is a concrete example of our growing economic ties. Cyprus is supportive of our efforts to conclude the U.S.-EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). TTIP can help develop the island's growing professional services sector and provide new opportunities for entrepreneurship. Cyprus' economy is turning the corner, earlier than projected after the country's acute fiscal crisis in 2012. As the sacrifices required by fiscal consolidation and structural reforms are beginning to bear fruit, Cyprus' economic reform programs will help ensure that this positive growth continues. At the same time, progress on a settlement could have a positive impact on the entire island's economy. Study after study has shown a Cyprus settlement would create opportunities for greater trade and investment, bringing tangible benefits to all Cypriots. If confirmed, I would draw upon my years of experience creating opportunities in the areas of entrepreneurship, innovation, and commerce—particularly for women and young people—and push this vision forward.

The recent discovery of natural gas resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, including in Cyprus' offshore waters by U.S. company Noble Energy in 2011, has expanded possibilities for increasing regional energy security through diversification of resources, routes, and suppliers. We have emphasized our support of the Republic of Cyprus' right to develop hydrocarbon resources in its exclusive economic zone. We also believe the resources should be shared equitably between both communities within the context of an overall settlement. Hydrocarbons have the potential, if managed correctly, to be a catalyst for increased cooperation as well as enhanced

regional stability, security, and prosperity. Energy potential should serve as an incentive to a Cyprus settlement. If confirmed, I would seek to build upon this potential.

During his historic visit to Cyprus in May 2014, Vice President Biden emphasized that a reunified Cyprus would expand the possibilities for strengthening our partnership. If confirmed, I will be accredited to one government, the Republic of Cyprus. That said, I will support both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in their efforts to pursue reconciliation and reunification.

If confirmed, I believe my experience will prepare me well for the challenges and opportunities ahead. Throughout my 25-year career, I have worked closely with Members of Congress, the U.S. military, and nearly all U.S. Government agencies and Departments, and know how we can work together to support the goal of a whole and prosperous Cyprus.While serving in Washington as Deputy Assistant Secretary in our Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs and at posts overseas, I have strengthened U.S.-European relations, promoting trade, investment, economic opportunity and innovation. I have been a strong advocate for the diversification of energy supplies, and for the U.S. and European Union to work together to address global and regional energy challenges. I have championed efforts that enhanced European security, working through NATO and the EU, and while serving as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, I supported the peace process in Northern Ireland, which gave hope to long divided communities.

If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to strengthening the bonds between the United States and Cyprus, and working with Members of Congress, partners in the U.S. Government and elsewhere, and with the talented staff of the Embassy in Nicosia to further our goals in Cyprus and support the promise of a better future for all Cypriots.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to be here with you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ms. Doherty.

Our final nominee is Mr. Thomas Melia.

Am I pronouncing that correctly, "Melia"?

Mr. MELIA. We pronounce it "Melia." But you may have it——

Senator JOHNSON. I am happy to go with your pronunciation. I will probably still get it wrong, but it is close.

A nominee for Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia at USAID, Mr. Melia is currently executive director of Democracy International and previously served from 2010 to 2015 as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor at the Department of State.

Mr. Melia.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS MELIA, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. MELIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Shaheen, Senator Murphy. It is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

I am grateful for the trust and confidence placed in me by President Obama, Acting Administrator Lenhardt, and Secretary Kerry at this critical time in the region.

I am pleased to be joined today by my best friend, my spouse, Amy Conroy; our son, Tomás; and my brother, Tim, who is standing in for the wider Melia clan, my mother, Margaret; my sister, Kay; my brothers, Terry and Pat, who may be watching on the video link today.

It happens that Amy grew up in a USAID family as her father, Dennis, pursued a career in the agency and its predecessor agen-

cies from the early 1950s to the 1980s, working to advance U.S. interests in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Since then, Amy has built a distinguished career promoting women's participation in American politics and in leading some of the best-known and most important nonprofit advocacy organizations in the United States.

My son, Tomás, meanwhile, as he prepares to enter the seventh grade, is learning the importance of public service, too, and investing great energy in developing critical national security skills in lacrosse, basketball, and soccer.

For more than 30 years, I have worked to promote democratic governance and fundamental freedoms throughout the world, mainly while working for nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations, and now at Democracy International, an exciting new entrant in the community of democracy support organizations.

I believe the United States can, and should always be, a reliable friend of democracy and its advocates worldwide, not only because a more democratic world would enhance America's prosperity and security, but because democracy is the only political framework that can ensure that universal human rights are respected and that the voices of the poor and marginalized are heard by their leaders.

As Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor most of these last 5 years, I oversaw the Bureau's work in three regions, including Europe and Eurasia.

I know this region and its people well. I was the U.S. chair of several bilateral working groups and led delegations to address human rights, civil society, rule of law issues in countries across the region—including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Russia, Turkey, and, of course, Ukraine, where I led official U.S. missions more than six times in 3 years.

Ukraine is a central focus of USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, as it is across the administration. The agency plays an important role supporting the Government of Ukraine's accelerated reform efforts, and I want to acknowledge the many members of this committee, in particular, who have led Congress in providing vital support to the people of Ukraine.

In various capacities inside and outside government over the years throughout my career, I have seen firsthand the effectiveness of development assistance as an important aspect of our foreign policy, particularly in the former Communist countries of Europe and Eurasia. Yet, even with this success, the region's transformation is incomplete, and we find ourselves today at a tipping point.

The threat of political and economic backsliding remains. The resurgence of extreme nationalism across the continent reminds us of the fragility of the post-war social compact we once thought had been secured by creation of the European Union. Trafficking in persons continues to be a serious human rights challenge in the region. Conspicuous, high-level corruption undermines public confidence in the utility of democratic institutions and open markets.

It turns out there is more to be done to secure the transition from totalitarian to the Europe we have all envisioned—whole, free, and at peace.

Having begun my professional career working for more than 5 formative years for Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, I understand and appreciate the important role that Congress plays—and in my view should play—in the development and execution of U.S. foreign policy. The Congress is the democratic fulcrum that ensures our international policies properly project American values and remain focused on core national interests. If confirmed to the position the President has nominated me for, I would welcome the opportunity to work closely with this committee as together we chart the way forward to advance USAID's mission: to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies—while advancing our own security and prosperity.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on a regular basis. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today. I welcome any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Melia follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THOMAS O. MELIA

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shaheen, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Assistant Administrator for Europe and Eurasia (E&E) at the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID). I am grateful for the trust and confidence placed in me by President Obama, Acting Administrator Lenhardt, and Secretary Kerry at this critical time for the region.

I want first to recognize the outstanding work being done by Susan Fritz, who has been leading the Bureau as acting Assistant Administrator since January. Ms. Fritz has served our country with great distinction throughout a 25-year career at USAID and is a true expert on the development challenges we confront in the region. I also want to acknowledge with appreciation Paige Alexander, the previous Assistant Administrator for E&E, and to thank her for advice and guidance during this process. I worked closely with Ms. Alexander in my previous position at the Department of State and know how effective her leadership was in the region and in the U.S. Government's interagency deliberations.

I also want to thank my family, friends, and professional colleagues whose support and encouragement have allowed me to pursue this opportunity. I am especially pleased to be joined today by my best friend, my spouse, Amy Conroy, and our son Tomás. It happens that Amy grew up in a USAID family, as her father pursued a career in the Agency and its predecessors from the early 1950s to the 1980s, working to advance U.S. interests in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Her sisters were born in Ethiopia and Iran, when the Conroy family was posted to those countries. Since then, Amy has built a distinguished career promoting women's participation in American politics and in leading some of the best-known and most important nonprofit advocacy organizations in the U.S. For more than 30 years, she has been making significant contributions to strengthen American democracy. Tomás, meanwhile, as he prepares to enter the seventh grade, is learning the importance of public service at the community, national and international levels.

For more than 30 years, I have worked to promote democratic governance and fundamental freedoms throughout the world, mainly while working for nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations, including the National Democratic Institute and the bipartisan Freedom House. Since leaving government service earlier this year, I am proud to be working at Democracy International, an exciting new entrant in the community of democracy support organizations. As a university teacher and occasional writer of articles and books, I have also had the opportunity to discuss with scholars and practitioners how the United States might better help those men and women in other countries who share our values to build their own democratic societies and institutions. While each country's path will be decided by its own citizens—we as outsiders will only ever be supporting actors in other nations' national dramas—I believe that the United States can and should always be a reliable friend of democracy and its advocates worldwide. This is why it is so important that the U.S. Government's recently released second Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) highlights, as one of the Nation's four top strategic priorities, "promoting open, resilient and democratic societies." For this is the only sure path to enduring development outcomes for the poorest and least resilient societies. It is

the only political framework that can ensure that universal human rights are respected, and that the voices of the poor and the marginalized are heard by their leaders.

From 2010 to earlier this year, I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL). In that role, I oversaw the Bureau's work in three regions, including Europe and Eurasia. I know this region and its people well. I have worked with political leaders, including government officials and opposition leaders, human rights activists and community leaders. I have coordinated our efforts with our closest allies. I was the U.S. chair of several bilateral working groups, and led delegations to address human rights, civil society, or rule of law issues in countries in this region—including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Russia, Turkey—and of course Ukraine, where I led official U.S. missions more than six times in 3 years.

Senator Cardin may recall that I led or participated in many U.S delegations to meetings of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) during those 5 years, including each year's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw, where I led our interaction with civil society and human rights activists from across the OSCE region. I was honored to serve and work closely with both Secretaries of State Hillary Clinton and John Kerry in the annual ministerial meetings of the OSCE. Moreover, during these past 5 years, I was also fortunate to work with impressive colleagues from across the U.S. Government, including at the Department of Justice and Department of Defense, as well as the National Security Council staff, and most frequently with USAID counterparts, so I know the interagency apparatus and procedures well.

Having begun my professional career working for more than 5 years for Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, I understand and appreciate the important role the Congress plays—and in my view should play—in the development and execution of U.S. foreign policy. The Congress is the democratic fulcrum that ensures our international policies are leveraged to properly project American values and remain focused on core national interests. If confirmed in this role, I would welcome the opportunity to work closely with this committee as together we chart the way forward to advance USAID's mission: to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies—while advancing our own security and prosperity.

USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia was created a quarter century ago, pursuant to specific legislative mandates enacted after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, with the goals of promoting Euro-Atlantic integration and fostering a Europe whole, free, and at peace. I have seen firsthand the effectiveness of development assistance as an important aspect of our foreign policy, particularly in the formerly Communist countries of Europe and Eurasia. For well over two decades, the United States and USAID have played a key role in the region, supporting successful transitions from assistance to partnership in 10 formerly Communist countries that have joined the European Union. Today, we count several of these countries as some of the United States strongest and most able allies. The region serves as a model for the principles of sustainable development, for creating the conditions where international assistance is no longer needed.

However, even with this success, the region's transformation is incomplete, and we find ourselves today at a tipping point. In a growing number of countries that had appeared to have successfully transformed, the threat of political and economic backsliding still remains. Multiple political crises and the recent resurgence of extreme nationalism in multiple countries across the European Continent remind us of the fragility of the post-war social compact we once thought had been secured by creation of the European Union. Trafficking in persons continues to be a serious human rights challenge in the region. Conspicuous high-level corruption undermines public confidence in the viability and utility of democratic institutions and open markets. It turns out there is more to be done to secure the transition from totalitarian rule to the Europe we all have envisioned—whole, free, and at peace.

Development assistance remains a strategic imperative in a region facing rising internal and external pressures. Structural instability and democratic and economic stagnation are all exacerbated by Russia's aggressive actions, reminding us that the United States still has an important role to play.

Ukraine is a central focus of USAID's E&E Bureau, as it is across the Obama administration. The agency continues to play an important role supporting the Government of Ukraine's accelerated reform efforts across key sectors, providing macroeconomic assistance, helping strengthen civil society, supporting energy security, and providing humanitarian relief to conflict-affected communities in the east. While progress is being made, Ukraine must continue to aggressively pursue not only enactment of new laws, but also actually implementing real reforms. In order to be successful, Ukraine will need continued support and technical assistance from

the international community, and I want to acknowledge the many members of this committee in particular who have led the Congress in providing vital support to the people of Ukraine.

I want to emphasize, however, that Russian pressure is not limited to Ukraine. At a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations hearing on February 24, 2015, Secretary Kerry, in response to a question regarding Russian influence in the region, stated, "Whether it's Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, other places—they are all in the firing line." If confirmed, I will be a strong advocate for strong continued USAID engagement in the Balkans, as well as in Georgia and Moldova, where increased Russian pressure has the potential to destabilize those countries and threaten important progress toward implementation of the historic Association Agreements and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area agreements with the European Union. It is important that the United States continues to support the sovereign right of these countries to choose their own futures and help them meet the conditions of these agreements. I also want to say—to the peoples of Belarus, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, and Russia—that we support their aspirations to live in prosperous, democratic countries, at peace internally and with their neighbors, and more fully integrated into Europe and the modern world.

This is a pivotal moment for the wider European region, facing its most significant challenges—economic, social, political and military—in decades. The United States and USAID have an important role to play in the region and must continue to demonstrate leadership and commitment to Europe's success. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and all of our partners to achieve our objectives in the region.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome any questions you might have.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Melia.

Let me start with the nominees for ambassadorships to the different countries with the same question. We will just go from left to right. Tell me what is the number one or top two or three opportunities in terms of economic cooperation between our two countries.

Ambassador JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I briefly outlined in my statement, we have a strong economic-commercial relationship between the United States and Poland, but I believe there is opportunity for significant growth.

Poland's economy has been consistently growing over the last years, even during the financial crisis. And it is strong across the board, a comprehensive growth. Poland's significant domestic market, its location next to significant markets, present a lot of opportunities for U.S. exporters and U.S. investors.

Secretary Pritzker led a delegation of the President's export council last fall to Poland and identified several different areas where there is great promise to expand our exports and our investments in both directions. Those include areas such as defense, as I mentioned, the defense industry, IT, aerospace, areas such as green cities, green technology, energy cooperation.

So I will, if confirmed, work very closely with the American business community, the Polish business community, to try to expand those opportunities.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ambassador.

Ambassador Klemm.

Ambassador KLEMM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, an excellent question.

You are familiar with Romania, as a result of your visit there last year. The country has great potential. It is one of the fastest growing in the European Union. It has relatively low debt, and it is fiscally sound and has an educated population. As a result, there

is already a substantial presence of U.S. investment in the country, particularly in the sectors of energy, IT, and manufacturing.

All that said, I think there is still great potential for American firms to increase their presence in Romania and, importantly, increase exports to the country to support job growth here at home.

That growth in U.S. presence and, actually, economic development in of itself in Romania is hindered I think by two major factors. One is corruption. Romania still faces a serious problem with corruption. Within the European Union, it is ranked among the very bottom of countries facing corruption and, of course, the contribution that makes to its business and investment environment. And the other one is infrastructure.

In both cases, Romania is committed to improving its environment. It is drawing on European Union resources to help build out its infrastructure, particularly in roads and rail and energy. And then corruption, as I mentioned in my remarks, and as you saw firsthand, Senator, it has put into place some very powerful and courageous institutions in law enforcement and the judiciary to try to deal with corruption and over time has established really both a courageous and remarkable record in terms of pursuing corruption at the local, regional, as well as national level. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Murphy and I, when we were in Romania, met an incredibly courageous young woman, Laura Kovesi. And as Ambassador, we, certainly, hope that you make sure that she remains supported by the Romanian Government.

Mr. Heins.

Mr. HEINS. Thank you, Senator.

There are identified a number of really great opportunities for American companies in Norway. They include oil and gas, in particular technologies for cleaner extraction, more efficient extraction, of oil and gas, and technologies that would permit the extraction of oil and gas in evermore remote and difficult to work in areas.

LNG transport, carbon capture and technology, other green technologies, including wind and solar and hydro; there are opportunities in the marine industry for joint partnerships with Norway; and in health care, with regard to medical devices, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals—these all present real opportunities, I believe, for U.S. industry to export to Norway.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Melville.

Mr. MELVILLE. Thank you, Senator.

Estonia is a very successful economy and very welcoming to American businesses. There are approximately 100 American companies who already have a presence in Estonia, which has a well-deserved reputation as an innovative, creative place for startups. And the best example, of course, I already mentioned. That is Skype.

But Estonia has a very responsible approach to managing their economy, as well. They have a balanced budget. They are very open to investors from the United States. We only have about 2.2 percent of their economy in exports now, and there is lots of room for advocacy and growth there, which, if confirmed, I look forward to taking advantage of.

Senator JOHNSON. I would mention the way they balanced their budget was to dramatically reduce spending.

Ms. Doherty.

Ms. DOHERTY. Thank you, Senator.

As I mentioned in my testimony, U.S. investment has already increased sevenfold in the past 2 years in Cyprus, primarily in the professional services sector and tourism, but, most importantly, in the energy sector. Cyprus is in the process of identifying the depth of its natural gas reserves, but the potential is quite high. U.S. company Noble has already invested a significant amount of money in exploration.

But, obviously, the most important thing that could happen for Cyprus and U.S. business opportunity is reunification of the island, which would offer great opportunity for U.S. trade and investment and also Cypriot investment in the United States.

I spent most of my career actually doing economic and commercial advocacy and diplomacy, and I spent a lot of years promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, especially among young people and women. So I look forward to doing that, if I were to be confirmed.

Senator JOHNSON. Can you also tell me a little bit about what you know about the banking crisis there in 2012 and 2013, kind of the cause and effect, and the aftermath?

Ms. DOHERTY. Yes, Senator.

As you do know, Cyprus went through a very serious economic and fiscal crisis in 2012. Cyprus has undertaken several economic reforms. Despite very high unemployment and other constraints, it actually expects to have modest growth this year. So we are reasonably optimistic that Cyprus is moving forward in terms of economic opportunity, and its reform program is quite serious and ambitious.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Melia, within Europe and Eurasia, can you talk about the top priorities for U.S. assistance through USAID?

Mr. MELIA. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

The mix of assistance programs in this region differs somewhat from other parts of the world for some obvious reasons. In the Europe and Eurasia region, USAID's programs revolve around support for democratic transformation, through democracy and governance programs; support for economic growth, helping promote institutional and structural reform to make these countries more attractive to international investment; to reform their legal structures, to be more law-abiding and fair and transparent; and providing, in some cases, startup investments for small- and medium-sized businesses to model the kind of investments that the private sector can use to jump start business development.

So economic growth is a big part of it. Energy security is the other piece, energy security, economic growth and democratic transformation.

Senator JOHNSON. Can you just mention the country names where the top priorities are, where most of the aid is flowing?

Mr. MELIA. Well, the biggest focus these days, of course, is Ukraine. The investment in Ukraine went from about $50 million, 2 years ago, to $150 million in the current year. That reflects the heightened priority that we are all placing on bolstering Ukraine

at this difficult moment and the action by this committee and the Congress to enable us to do that.

So Ukraine is the biggest focus and that program is built around these three priority sectors—democratic transformation, economic growth, energy security, which is paramount in Ukraine. And there is a modest health program as well in Ukraine, which has a large incidence of drug-resistant tuberculosis.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Since I think almost everyone has mentioned energy security, let me just urge you, as you are looking at the potential for energy resources throughout Eastern Europe and in the countries that we hope you will be representing the United States in, that you also look at energy efficiency. It is an area where we have tremendous potential to export. It is the cheapest and fastest way to develop energy. And it is a place where I think, particularly in some of the countries that you are representing, that there has not been much focus. Ukraine is one of those, which has been mentioned several times. So I would just urge you to think about that.

Mr. Melia, you talked about support for Ukraine. Georgia and Moldova are also countries where USAID still has a robust effort. But in most of the countries in Europe, USAID funding has declined precipitously.

So is that a reflection of a lack of need for those economic development programs?

Mr. MELIA. Well, thank you, Senator. And coming from the great State of New Hampshire, I am sure you are very familiar with energy-efficiency programs. That is very much a part of the energy programs in Ukraine and in the region. So I want to acknowledge that it is an important part.

No, the declines over the last few years in assistance levels for the region do not reflect necessarily a diminishing of the need. It has reflected the challenge we all face in trying to make limited and sometimes dwindling amounts of money available to deal with a growing number of crises in the world.

In the FY16 budget request, the administration has proposed increasing funding levels in almost, I believe, in every country that we have an aid program in these days.

I would be a strong advocate for enlarging those budgets, at the same time ensuring that the money is well-targeted and well-spent.

We have not talked about the Balkans, Serbia and its neighbors——

Senator SHAHEEN. I was about to raise that. So I am glad that you did.

Mr. MELIA. They are also in the line of fire from Russia. The Russian propaganda and meddling in local politics and the pugnacious energy politics are being applied against Serbia and its neighbors, as well as against those countries that adjoin Russia.

So I will be an advocate for more robust programs in the key countries across the region.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I appreciate you saying that. As you point out, economic assistance, development assistance, is one

of the best ways that we can encourage democratic values in many of the countries that we are working in.

Let me just ask you, if you could, to zero in a little bit more on the Balkans. I was just in Bosnia, and one of the things we heard there is the economic challenges that they are facing. And given the other governance challenges, are there other ways in which we can support Bosnia that would be helpful as they are trying to address their governance challenges as well?

Mr. MELIA. Bosnia and its neighbors are still in the process of creating new states. Institutions and habits of democratic governance are still very much in their nascent stages. So I would hope that we would be able to continue to provide the kind of technical advice and information exchanges that help them do that.

At the same time, we can deploy American know-how in other fields that are important to them—energy security, how to manage grids, how to develop energy efficient approaches to industry and housing. There is a lot of information that we can bring to help people make better decisions. It does not always require a lot of money, but it requires some money to be present and to be able to deploy the know-how that Americans have developed over the years.

So I think there is more to be done in the Balkans. I just visited Kosovo, Serbia, and Macedonia earlier this year on one of my last trips at the State Department. And they generally want more American presence. They are finding their way through coalition-building and democratic politics, media, and transparency. There are a lot of things that are very much in progress there that I think we should not walk away from at this point. When Europe writ large is at a tipping point, we need to consolidate the gains that we helped them achieve before we move on to the next crisis.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I could not agree more, and I look forward to working with you to address those challenges.

Ms. Doherty, you talked about the potential in Cyprus to come to an agreement that might reunite the country and address what has been a frozen conflict for a very long time. We have heard that before. So what are the reasons that we should be hopeful that this time might be different?

Ms. DOHERTY. Thank you, Senator. That is an extremely important question, and I would like to express why we think the situation is different.

Primarily, the commitment of the two leaders, the Greek Cypriot President and the Turkish Cypriot leader, are fundamentally committed to the process of reunification. They actually know each other from their childhood. They have worked together before. And they have been pursuing these talks since May. They have been meeting regularly and the negotiators meet almost every single day.

We want to be supportive of the process as much as possible, and if confirmed, I will do what I can to be supportive to both communities as they try to undertake a very difficult path to reconciliation and reunification.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Jones, one of the other places I recently visited was Poland. I was there in June for the global security conference in Wroclaw.

What I heard from the Poles was a great deal of concern about Russia and its renewed threat to particularly Eastern Europe.

What more can we do to support Poland in its efforts to be a bulwark against further incursions by Putin into Eastern Europe?

Ambassador JONES. Thank you, Senator, for obviously a very important question and one that can be addressed in many ways.

Briefly, Poland obviously has become a significant contributor to security in the alliance and in Central and Eastern Europe through its military but also through its society, its democracy and the activism of its civil society in the region, and through its economy that is helping other countries nearby grow.

I think we want to address the full spectrum, the hybrid spectrum of possibilities of interference with our partners and our allies. And I think we have done an excellent job within the NATO alliance and bilaterally at deterring and bolstering the security of Poland and our allies. I think there is more we can do in the areas of cybersecurity, in the areas of countering disinformation, in the areas of energy security, as you mentioned, all of which are vulnerabilities to allies and partners in the region.

Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much. My time has expired.

Again, thank you all for your willingness to serve.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me congratulate all of the nominees on their nominations and extend I think the thanks of all of us for your families' willingness to join, because it is a collective effort, at the end of the day, so we appreciate their willingness to sacrifice on behalf of the Nation as well.

Mr. Melville, anyone who was born in Jersey City and has family from Berlin has got to be an extraordinary public servant. So congratulations on your particular nomination.

As you know, the President Ilves, whom I visited with last year, lived and studied in New Jersey. And he can actually turn a New Jersey accent pretty quickly, so you will have a lot to talk about with them.

Mr. MELVILLE. If confirmed, Senator, I very much look looking forward to working with President Ilves, another Jersey boy.

Senator MENENDEZ. Yes, and it is amazing how he can turn it on. He tells me he does not do it very often, and it does not necessarily help him there are lot. But anyhow, you will have a lot to talk to him about.

I think what is happening in Estonia, the challenges, the concerns they have in Poland, which I was also at last year, obviously with the Russian invasion, countries that all have legitimate reasons to be concerned about Russia's resurgence and its actions, concerns in the case of Estonia about Russian-speaking populations and what that means to stability in the country, particularly with all the propaganda that Russia spends an enormous amount of money in those countries, and how we counteract that. So I look forward to working with both of you in your respective nominations.

Let me turn to Ms. Doherty. You are going to a country that as you and I discussed, I have a lot of interest in, Cyprus. I have been

following the Cyprus question for the better part of my congressional career.

I think for the first time in decades, Cyprus has a historic opportunity to forge a lasting agreement between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. And the efforts of President Anastasiades and the Turkish Cypriot leader Akinci have put all of the difficult issues on the table, which I think is very important.

However, one of the concerns that I have even in a moment in which I think there is an opportunity is that, at the end of the day, any potential agreement has to be Cypriot-led and Cypriot-agreed to. When we try to impose upon the Cypriots our will or the will of the international community, that is a challenge. We saw that in the Annan plan, which was rejected by the people of Cyprus.

So I hope we have learned from that lesson and try to be a facilitator, but not try to impose our will on the Cypriots, because that will not have a lasting effect.

I think there are some things that are important to recognize, and so as you visited with me and I shared with you some of my concerns, I come to this with the view that, even though we have expectations at this moment, at the core of this problem is an invasion of Turkey and an occupation of Northern Cyprus. And I would like to hear your views on that, as a starting point.

Ms. DOHERTY. Thank you, Senator. And thank you for your interest in Cyprus all these years. You have a lot of expertise on the issue and on the country, and I very much appreciate that as well.

As you mentioned, this needs to be a Cypriot-led process, and it is a Cypriot-led process. The commitment of both the Turkish Cypriot leader and the Greek Cypriot President, they seem very determined to doing and taking the very tough questions at hand.

I think the issues of the past are very painful. They need to be recognized. They need to be considered. They need to be acknowledged.

But I think at this moment, as we said, we have a historic moment that we need to look at the future and really concentrate on what can be done to actually move this process through its process of reconciliation and reunification. And if I were to be confirmed, I would do a lot of listening to both sides. I would be engaged as much as possible, as they asked me to be, and try to be supportive of the U.N.-facilitated process as well, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate our desire to look forward, but sometimes unless we reconcile ourselves with the past, it is difficult to move forward.

America had slavery as an original sin, and it was not until we came face to face with that reality that it was not truly possible for us to liberate ourselves and to move forward in a way that really had all American society progress.

So what I would hate to hear is you as the United States Ambassador not acknowledge or say what your predecessor has said about the reality is that we have the most militarized place in the world in Northern Cyprus with thousands of Turkish troops who invaded and occupied a sovereign country, a country that is part of the European Union.

So while you want to focus on the future, can I have an assurance that I will not be hearing from you that there was never an invasion of Cyprus?

Ms. DOHERTY. Senator, the years of intercommunal violence were terrible and many lives were lost. I think we need to really think about those and recognize it.

I worked in the peace process in Northern Ireland, and I also understand how violence can divide communities.

I think we need to focus on the future, Senator, and I think the issue——

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate that, but you are not giving me an answer to my question.

Ms. DOHERTY. The issue of foreign troops is one of the core elements of the peace process and settlement process. The two Cypriot leaders need to find a resolution that is satisfactory to both——

Senator MENENDEZ. So if Turkey, who says in a recent visit by the President of Turkey to the occupied section of Cyprus, who says that this is time for the agreement to come about—sounds good—but then at the end insists that Turkish groups continue to be in Northern Cyprus even if there is an agreement between Turkish and Greek Cypriots that the European Union is enough of a safeguard.

Would we say that we still want to look forward then? Or would we acknowledge that agreement between the two parties is what should prevail, and that Turkey would have to seek to withdraw its troops?

Ms. DOHERTY. I think, Senator, we need to focus on what the Turkish President has said. He said this is an opportunity not to be missed. He said that even just this morning in Cyprus.

So I think we need to work very closely with Ankara, as well as Athens, as well as the two communities on both sides of the island, in ensuring that we have a resolution that is satisfactory to all parties.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, may I have two additional minutes?

Well, okay, I know what the State Department tells you to say. That is not satisfactory to me. And I think it does not take a lot to acknowledge that if Greek and Turkish Cypriots come to an agreement, which says we want the Turkish troops out of here and we are willing to accept the European Union as our security guarantee, that we should be able to say that the two parties who are the people who are most involved in terms of their lives and future, that we should be able to honor that. And if we cannot say that, that is a problem.

So I hope that the State Department will allow you in some response in writing to give me a better response than what we got.

Let me ask you this, the committee on missing persons in Cyprus has been unable to access so-called Turkish military zones where the remains of Greek and Turkish Cypriots missing persons are likely buried. They have been very slow in allowing the process of exhumations to move forward. What is your take on this issue, considering the fact that the United States has contributed over $500,000 to the committee for the exhumation and identification of the remains of 500 Turkish Cypriots and 1,500 Greek Cypriots?

Ms. DOHERTY. We have called repeatedly for expeditious access to all burial sites, as have the two Cypriot leaders. While the access has been slow, Senator, the Turkish Government has provided information on two new military sites, as you have seen in the U.N. security report that was just released, which is a step forward, a positive trend forward.

That said, we continue to raise this issue with Ankara, and we will continue to press for a greater and more expeditious access to all burial sites.

Senator MENENDEZ. So if you are confirmed as Ambassador, you will make that one of your priorities?

Ms. DOHERTY. I will, indeed, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. Finally, for the purposes of not extending the time here, I will submit some questions for the record for you and a few others.

Cyprus is the only European country where the United States still maintains an arms embargo. It is on a short list with countries that it does not deserve to be, like North Korea and Iran—despite being a strategic partner of the United States, despite being part of the coalition fighting ISIL, despite being one of the only stable democracies in the region, a member of the European Union, and someone that is working with us on just about every element that we want to.

Now, an amendment that I authored was passed on the national defense authorization bill, which passed here in the Senate. Do you have a view as to lifting the outdated arms embargo on this European Union country?

Ms. DOHERTY. Thank you, Senator.

Cyprus is an important partner. We are prohibited under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1987. There is a statutory requirement that prohibits defense sales and transfers. So we are obligated to follow that statutory requirement.

That said, we do have some waiver authority. And we have on a case-by-case basis, provided equipment to Cyprus under our waiver authority. And we would consider all possibilities should the Cypriot Government present us with a list of requests. We will consider those within our own authorities.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I will submit, Mr. Chairman. I do not want to delay——

Senator JOHNSON. You can ask more questions.

Senator MENENDEZ. That is an invitation I will not resist. I am sure Ms. Doherty would appreciate——

Ms. DOHERTY. I am from New York, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. I understand, yes. Which is a great suburb of New Jersey. [Laughter.]

So we like New Yorkers.

Look, just a different topic, on Cyprus, obviously, but a different topic.

In the future for both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots is the exclusive economic zone, which abuts alongside Israel, in terms of the zone. Cyprus and Israelis have been working jointly toward being able to explore the fulfillment of that exclusive economic zone, which can not only be a tremendous opportunity for Cyprus and, if there is reunification, a tremendous opportunity for Turkish and

Greek Cypriots, but also an opportunity to help Europe with its energy needs and keep moving away from Russia's dominance in that respect.

But Turkey came in there and started claiming responsibility—not responsibilities, but started claiming that it has rights, even though it is nowhere near this exclusive economic zone, sent in the Barbaros exploration ship into Cypriot waters, followed it with warships.

Do we believe that the Cypriot Government has the right to explore the exclusive economic zone in accordance with international law that we would want to have observed in our own interests?

Ms. DOHERTY. Yes, Senator. We believe the Republic of Cyprus has the right to develop its exclusive economic zone.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. And we would hope that that would be without the interference of other countries? Is that a fair statement?

Ms. DOHERTY. The incident mentioned, that you described, sir, we did raise our concerns and we feel very strongly that the Republic of Cyprus does have its right to develop its own. So if I were to be confirmed, I would also speak out for anything that raises tension and serves as an impediment to the reconciliation process.

Senator MENENDEZ. One final question, then to Mr. Melville and Ambassador Jones. What do you think, in your respective roles with Poland and Estonia—and you may have answered this before. I tried to listen while I was in my office in a meeting, keeping the TV on. So I do not know if I missed it.

But as it relates to this issue of Russia and its bombardment in Eastern Europe and the efforts on both trying through its media and other forums to affect communities particular more in Estonia but also with the challenge that the former President of Poland described to me when I was visiting with him, what is the U.S. role in responding to that?

Mr. MELVILLE. Thank you, Senator, for that important question.

Yes, the Russian-speaking population of Estonia is about a quarter, more or less 300,000, concentrated in the northeast part of the country. Fortunately, recent polling indicates a strong identity on the part of these Russian-speaking Estonians with Estonia. They like the fact that they are members of a stalwart ally, a strong democracy with progressive, liberal economic opportunities. But it is true there is a cultural pull of Russia.

We have been looking for opportunities to reach out to that community to counter the Russian propaganda with fact-based, truthful reporting.

So, for example, through the international visitors program, we have invited journalists to be trained in the United States, and through various other programs, in investigative techniques and honest reporting. We are looking for opportunities to encourage English-language training in this community as well. And the Embassy, as a matter of fact, spends a lot of time and resources on public outreach to that community.

As a Russian speaker myself, if confirmed, Senator, I would look to spend a lot of time there. And I think there is a lot of strength through diversity that I think the United States provides a wonderful model of. And that would be an important part of the public

outreach that I would engage in, were I to be confirmed as Ambassador.

Ambassador JONES. Thank you, Senator.

Poland is a terrific partner in this effort to counter Russian disinformation and propaganda. Some of the things that the United States is doing in cooperation with Poland and a number of other interested partners include helping to network and build capacity among Russian-speaking independent journalists in the Russian-speaking areas, such as in Estonia and other countries nearby Russia, also helping with building capacity in content and building capacity of broadcast capability.

I think there are a couple of different threats coming our way in the area of disinformation. One is to this Russian-speaking community. Another is, frankly, to Europe and even in our country where the effort is more about trying to confuse debates and undermine solidarity within the alliance and within the European Union.

I think what we are working together with several countries on is to try to make clear, sort of unmask this propaganda machine, and make clear to our publics, our elites, our legislatures, and our government partners how this is done and how coordinated it is emanating from Moscow.

And if confirmed, I will, certainly, take up that issue very energetically with the Government of Poland.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your courtesy. I appreciate it.

Senator JOHNSON. No, I appreciate it, because that is actually a line of questioning I was going to continue on, quite honestly.

So I am hearing that we are pushing back. Do either of you two gentlemen think that we are pushing back even close to enough?

Ambassador Jones.

Ambassador JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think Russia has invested a significant amount of money over a period of many years in creating what appears to be very slick and Western-looking media capabilities that are existing in many, many countries, including our own, and I think we are starting our pushback.

I think we are off to an important start, collaborating with other governments. But we will not be matching the annual budget that Russia frankly puts into this effort. So we have to do it smarter. We have to rely on, in my view, as I say, networking and building capacity among journalists. And I think over time, we have the potential to turn this into a strategic vulnerability for Russia.

Senator JOHNSON. I am concerned when I hear you say we are not going to match the budget. Russia is about a $2 trillion a year economy. Western Europe combined with the U.S. is over $30 trillion. We have started but we are not even close to pushing back. It is completely inadequate.

And this is extremely important. They are getting away with what they are doing in Ukraine because of their incredibly effective propaganda.

When I was over there with Senator McCain, we sat down with Foreign Minister Sikorski. I know he has some ideas. I would really encourage you to work with the Foreign Minister and, certainly,

the Polish people. We have to push back. I think it is just absolutely vital.

As long as I am on Poland here, we held a hearing in my other committee, the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, on the visa waiver program. I think an awful lot of people had a perspective that this actually represented a security threat to America. I think the testimony was pretty clear that if properly handled, if properly structured, if a country is fully cooperating and put in place the requirements of a visa waiver program, that it actually improves our security.

Can you speak to that, because I know Poland as well as other European countries that are no longer on these visa waiver systems would like to become part of it? Can you just kind of speak to your perspective in terms Poland?

Ambassador JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I could not agree more with the approach you just outlined.

The Obama administration is committed to the expansion of the visa waiver program through legislation that would allow greater flexibility, so that countries such as Poland can be considered to join the visa waiver program.

Poland has a growing and strong economy. So we strongly believe that it would benefit our business as well as our people-to-people ties. As you indicated, there are a number of requirements that Poland has already instituted. Poland is a very close cooperator on counterterrorism and law enforcement. So those requirements are virtually all met.

So as I say, we would welcome additional flexibility that would allow us to consider Poland.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay, good. Obviously, I hope they succeed, because it actually does improve our own security, particularly in light of what is happening now with terrorism around the world and folks going into Europe.

The first congressional delegation trip I took 2 months into my term here was to visit Georgia, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. It was very obvious then talking to representatives of all five of those nations that Russia had a very overt, were not trying to hide it at all, effort to destabilize those democracies.

Again, propaganda is going to be extremely important. What other measures can we take? I will start with you, Ambassador Klemm.

Ambassador KLEMM. Thank you, Senator.

In the case of Romania, you do not have the presence of a population with strong Russian ties. In fact, the relationship between Russia and Romania, historically, has often been fraught. So the inclination of the population in Romania to be attracted to Russian propaganda starts at a very low level.

The affection, according to opinion polls, among Romanians for the United States, for example, is very, very high, and for Russia actually remarkably low.

That said, Romanians are very concerned about Russia and Russian aggression and the impact that has had on regional security. They share a very long border with Ukraine. And right over the horizon across the Black Sea, is Russia itself.

So the steps that they have taken are working with us and with the NATO alliance to ensure that the alliance and the bilateral security posture is strong and able to resist Russian aggression.

Senator JOHNSON. Talk about the other ways that Russia tries to destabilize. Obviously, they utilize their oil and gas resources. Corruption within these systems is endemic and a legacy of the Soviet system.

Just describe a little bit about that in terms of what the pushback would be and the other ways that Russia tries to destabilize other than just propaganda.

Ambassador KLEMM. Yes, sir. You have raised two important areas.

One is in energy. Here, too, Romania is fortunate that it is somewhat isolated from those pressures in that it is still a net exporter of energy. It is very, very slight. Their oil and gas reserves are declining. But at least today, they have not been vulnerable to Russian pressure on energy. That said, all of their neighbors are. All of their neighbors are very much reliant on Gazprom sources, particularly natural gas.

What we have been encouraging Romania to do is to invest in its energy infrastructure, which is antiquated, so that it can be part of a European-wide solution to improve diversification of energy resources.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Melville, you can feel free to answer those two questions, but I also want you to speak to the difference in perspective that I hear as I meet with representatives from Eastern Europe versus representatives of Western Europe, in terms of the imperative of pushing back or basically how we should push back on Russian aggression. Can you speak to that issue?

Mr. MELVILLE. Yes, Senator.

Estonia, as you know, has been one of our most stalwart allies in terms of responding to the recent Russian aggression. Within the European Union, they have advocated the imposition of sanctions, despite the fact of having that border with Russia and close trade ties. It would have economic consequences, but Russia's conduct is so objectionable that they are willing to take the leadership role in standing up to that aggression.

So the Estonian Government has been very clear that until Russia implements all of the provisions of the Minsk agreement and withdraws from their illegal annexation of Crimea, the sanctions should stay in place.

So the policy of the Estonian Government and the United States Government in response to Russian aggression is indistinguishable.

Senator JOHNSON. Although, do the Eastern European countries not want us to have a far more robust response? I mean, they would like to see us provide lethal defensive weaponry, for example. I think the Eastern European countries would like to see that. Western European countries would not or are certainly more cautious about it.

Is that an accurate statement?

Mr. MELVILLE. I would point to Estonia's role as a NATO ally. They provide security to the alliance. They have stepped up markedly their contributions toward host nation support for the presence that has been increased since the Wales summit last year.

We have a persistent and continuing presence of American troops now in Estonia. The Estonians are spending 40 million over the next 5 years to beef up the host nation support that they are providing for the infrastructure to support those troops. They are taking great measures to improve their border security. And, of course, their borders are also NATO borders. That is another contribution to our collective security.

And as the President said when he was in Tallinn last September, the defense of Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius is the same as the defense of Berlin, Paris, and London.

So I think Estonia's role in the alliance and leadership in standing up to Russia and the increased aggression has been admirable.

Senator JOHNSON. Ambassador Jones, can you speak to that basic comment about the different perspectives, Eastern Europe versus Western Europe? And do you really believe that Poland is satisfied with America's response to this? Do you think they prefer seeing a little bit more robust response to the situation in Ukraine, for example?

Ambassador JONES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think that since the summit in Wales, the last NATO summit, the response from NATO and from the United States has grown much more visible and much more tangible to countries such as Poland.

Senator JOHNSON. Describe that a little bit for us.

Ambassador JONES. As Secretary Carter just announced last month, we will be prepositioning an armored brigade worth of equipment and materiel in several countries of Central and Eastern Europe for use in exercises, for use in training. We will also be, using the European reassurance initiative funding, upgrading the infrastructure in Poland, particularly at two bases, an aviation base and an army base. So we will be able to more effectively train together on this continuous, persistent basis with U.S. forces and forces from—every member of the alliance that contributes to this effort.

I think as we have seen, we have had an aviation detachment in Poland for some years now. We increased the numbers within days of aircraft to that detachment, within days of Russia's land grab in Crimea.

So I think the people of these countries are seeing that response. Now I will not say that there are not differences about how we should take it forward. As I indicated in response to Senator Shaheen's question, I think that that conversation has to be a wide-ranging one that includes all of the hybrid war threats and not only military equipment.

Senator JOHNSON. Is it your sense that the Government of Poland is satisfied with our response? Is there going to be mounting pressure to do more?

Ambassador JONES. I think the government is satisfied with our response to date. But obviously the threat is evolving, and our response to it continues to grow. So as that goes on, I look forward, if confirmed, to participate in that conversation.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Melia, you mentioned human trafficking. Can you just make a few comments on that?

Mr. MELIA. Thanks for the question, Mr. Chairman.

It remains one of the scourges of the region, human trafficking and forced labor, sex trafficking. It is a widespread problem. Some of the governments are beginning to pay more attention to it and take our exhortations more seriously.

USAID has several programs in five countries in the region, specifically working either with government agencies to increase the ability of the justice sector to address this as a criminal matter and prosecute offenders, and also with civil society to increase social service provisions to victims of trafficking.

Senator JOHNSON. Can you talk about where the real problem regions are?

Mr. MELIA. I confess I do not have the numbers at the tip of my tongue. Ukraine is the biggest country with the largest population. It is centrally located. It is a big problem there. There are other countries that are both sources and transit points for trafficking. A number of these countries have large portions of their laborers working in Russia, where they are often subject to atrocious working conditions.

So there are a number of countries that have different aspects of this problem. The programs that the U.S. Government has been supporting address both the government efforts in those cases where we have willing partners but also then supporting social service and advocacy organizations in a number of the countries to press their governments to be more active on this.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay, thank you.

Again, I just want to wrap up and thank all of the nominees for your willingness to serve this Nation.

As Senator Menendez mentioned, I also want to thank your families. This is a full commitment on the part of yourself and your families. Thank you very much.

I, certainly, wish you the best in what I am sure will be your appointments to the posts.

So with that, the record will remain open for questions until noon on Monday, July 27.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:41 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF JAMES DESMOND MELVILLE, JR., NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MELVILLE'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. The OIG gave our Embassy in Tallinn a "D" grade last month, citing serious concerns about maintenance and security issues, finding that it does not meet—and cannot be retrofitted to meet—even the most basic security standards. Despite this, the Embassy was taken off the "Top 80" OBO Capital Security Construction Program.

- Please explain why that is the case. If confirmed, how will you make securing our Embassy in Tallinn a priority of the U.S. Government?

Answer. If confirmed, keeping personnel safe and secure will be one of my highest priorities. Based on its security risk rating relative to other posts, Tallinn did not score high enough on the Department's September 2013 Risk Matrix to be placed on the Department's Top 80 List. Hence it is not scheduled for a New Embassy Compound (NEC) on the current Capital Security Construction Program (CSCP) schedule. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security is currently conducting its annual

update to its Risk Matrix, which will be the basis for a revised Top 80 List and CSCP schedule. The Department does, however, have projects underway and plans to improve Embassy Tallinn's physical and security infrastructure.

Understanding that the Department has a prioritization process, OBO continues to improve the security and physical infrastructure of Embassy Tallinn to the extent possible. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues in the Department of State to keep U.S. personnel serving in Tallinn safe and secure.

RESPONSES OF KATHLEEN ANN DOHERTY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DOHERTY'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. Is the Cyprus problem, at its core, one of invasion and occupation?

Answer. The Cyprus problem is rooted in a complicated history, which has resulted in the presence of U.N. peacekeeping forces; the division of the island, and the presence of Turkish troops in the north. Outstanding issues related to these events, including properties and the presence of foreign troops, must be addressed in the context of the settlement process. We remain focused on supporting efforts to achieve a just and lasting settlement. The U.S. Government has consistently sought to use language to describe these events that would enable us to play an effective role in support of that process. Like you, we believe that Cyprus is poised for tremendous economic growth and opportunity, and we look forward to working together to unlock the island's great potential.

Question. Do you support lifting the arms embargo on Cyprus?

Answer. I believe we should have normal trade and security relations with all of our European Union partners. The United States is actively supporting efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement, which would obviate the rationale and statutory requirements for special procedures for arms exports to Cyprus. Until then, we will continue to license, on a case-by-case basis, exports to Cyprus of defense articles in accordance with the existing statutory framework.

Question. What will the U.S. position be if Turkey isn't willing to honor an agreement between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to have Turkish troops leave? Will the United States pressure Turkey to honor that agreement?

Answer. The United States would support a settlement that is agreed to by both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. We believe Cypriot leadership of the settlement process is critical to its success. Thus, we would actively urge Turkey, and all stakeholders, to respect and support a solution welcomed by both sides, including one in which the sides agreed to address the withdrawal of troops from the island.

RESPONSES OF THOMAS O. MELIA, NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE MELIA'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. Europe and Eurasia Bureau.—With the rise of a belligerent Russia, the E&E Bureau has taken on new prominence, yet the E&E Bureau offices at USAID are offsite. This sends a bad message. If you are confirmed, will you commit to working to move this now much more important bureau to offices within the USAID headquarters building?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with agency officials to ensure that the E&E bureau's space needs are adequately addressed consistent with the challenges of finding appropriate space for all the agency's personnel.

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE MELIA'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Please describe your top three priorities for your role, if confirmed.

Answer. As I mentioned in my testimony, the Europe and Eurasia region faces heightened political, economic, and energy challenges at present. If confirmed, I will bring the Europe & Eurasia (E&E) Bureau's considerable expertise to bear as the

United States elevates its support for Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia to counter Russian aggression and continue to advance a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

I will continue to prioritize the E&E Bureau's work across the region on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance, Economic Growth, and Energy Security. All three of these areas are mutually reinforcing and are critical to the short- and longer-term development of countries across the region, helping to make them more stable and resilient to external pressure.

If confirmed, I will also continue to advance USAID's new model of development by leveraging partnerships with the private sector, universities, and civil society; promoting science, technology, and innovation; and focusing on sustainable results through rigorous monitoring and evaluation of our work. In addition, if confirmed, I will seek closer partnership with like-minded partners, including support for countries in the region seeking further Euro-Atlantic integration.

Question. If confirmed, what could Congress do to help USAID Europe and Eurasia better meet your goals and mission?

Answer. Congress has long played a critical role in helping to advance the U.S. objective of a Europe whole, free, and at peace—and particularly during the crisis of the past 2 years as Russia's aggressive behavior has obliged us to reinvigorate our efforts to assist the countries transitioning from communism.

As I stated in my testimony, having worked for more than 5 years for Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, I understand and appreciate the important role that Congress plays in the development and execution of U.S. foreign policy. The Congress is the democratic fulcrum that ensures our international policies are leveraged to properly project American values and remain focused on core national interests. Congress has long played a critical role in helping to advance the U.S. objective of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. If confirmed, it will be a priority for me to work closely with members this committee and with others in Congress to address the challenges we face in Europe and Eurasia.

Question. The Foreign Relations Committee is working to draft legislation to help tackle corruption in Ukraine and assist in their economic recovery. What recommendations would you have for this legislation, pertaining to USAID efforts?

Answer. As I noted in my testimony, I am grateful for the strong bipartisan support that the Congress has shown Ukraine and for the consistently strong position regarding the need for the Ukrainian Government to take concrete measures to address corruption. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the committee and others in Congress to identify additional tools and resources to support the Government of Ukraine's efforts to address endemic corruption.

It is important to recognize the whole-of-government approach required to tackle corruption. USAID, along with colleagues across the U.S. Government, is working closely with the Ukrainian Government, the Verkhovna Rada and Ukrainian civil society to address the long-standing challenge of combating corruption in Ukraine. The impact of corruption on Ukraine's economy over the past two decades has been far reaching and has left Ukraine with a weakened economy, preventing sustainable growth and prosperity for the Ukrainian people.

USAID's efforts are closely linked to State Department and Justice Department efforts to support the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) and National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) to ensure the Government of Ukraine prosecutes corruption, as a real deterrent to corrupt practices. USAID also continues to support civil society actors as they hold the Government of Ukraine accountable and advocate for reforms.

It is also worth noting that the new Ukrainian Government has taken steps to put in place a strategy and laws to fight corruption, including setting up a new independent National Anti-Corruption Bureau, ensuring that politicians and government officials disclose their assets and recently standing up new patrol police in Kiev. To support this effort, since the Maidan, the U.S. Government has provided $38 million in assistance including: technical assistance; support to establish new agencies; and support for civil society and media engagement on passage, enactment, and implementation of anticorruption measures and key reforms.

Question. What progress has Ukraine made under President Poroshenko on fighting corruption? How is USAID helping with this effort?

Answer. Corruption is a central challenge for Ukraine, and it must be addressed in order for Ukraine's reforms and progress to be sustainable. Eliminating opportunities for corruption is an overarching and cross-cutting focus of all of USAID's programming in Ukraine from agriculture, to energy, to health. For example, USAID works with Ukraine's judiciary to promote greater transparency and accountability of judicial institutions and reduce opportunities for corruption. USAID supports the

development and implementation of merit-based judicial selection and standardized judicial discipline procedures and monitoring by civil society organizations of judicial selection and discipline processes. USAID also works with Ukraine's Parliament to advance an anticorruption framework and legislation, and to increase understanding of the national budget process for both parliamentarians and the public.

USAID's support to civil society fosters citizen activism and participation in policymaking, and helps civil society organizations monitor the government, which directly ties into anticorruption efforts by enhancing government accountability. I understand that USAID has promoted reforms through a broad coalition of civic activists and experts, who have played a significant role in driving many of the government's major anticorruption achievements to date. These achievements include the creation of a national anticorruption strategy, reform of the public procurement system, the creation of a National Anti-Corruption Bureau and National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption, strengthened antimoney laundering regulations, official asset disclosure laws, and partial judicial reform, including reform of the Prosecutor General's office. USAID also works to improve the quality of local media and investigative journalism to promote government accountability and enhance the transparency of public activities.

The Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), the Council of Europe's corruption watchdog, said Ukraine had fulfilled 20 of 25 recommendations the group made, marking considerable progress over the past year. However, full implementation of these anticorruption reforms will be critical to Ukraine's long-term success.

Question. What conditionality would you recommend to ensure that Ukraine's anticorruption efforts are successful?

Answer. It is my understanding that the United States and international partners are working closely with the Ukrainian Government and civil society to incentivize Ukraine's efforts to address corruption. A key element is conditionality on U.S. and international financing (macroeconomic support) to Ukraine. Major structural reforms required for IMF, U.S., and other international support include: governance reforms, including anticorruption and judicial measures, deregulation and tax administration reforms, and reforms of state-owned enterprises to improve corporate governance and reduce fiscal risks. Broader energy sector reforms, including Naftogaz's restructuring, are intended to increase energy efficiency and foster energy independence. The loan guarantees signed by the United States and Ukraine also included conditionality focused on two new Ukrainian anticorruption agencies, the establishment of the National Agency on Prevention of Corruption (NAPC) and ensuring that the Ukraine's National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NAB) has the necessary startup resources to begin investigations and operations to combat corruption. To fulfill loan guarantee conditionally Ukraine also passed a new State Procurement Law to strengthen governance and checks and balances, including by reducing exemptions from competitive processes.

Question. How long do you think that the United States and EU will need to commit to ensure Ukraine develops the proper rule of law and sufficient economic growth?

Answer. The United States is strongly committed to support Ukraine's short, medium, and long term reform efforts in the area of rule of law. The United States partners with the European Union and other international donors to work collaboratively in support of these reforms. Over the past year, the Government of Ukraine (GOU) has achieved some progress in this area—such as instituting merit-based tests for judges. However, there is still significant work to be done to reform the judiciary and establish a credible rule of law in Ukraine. Both the U.S., EU, and international community understand that reforming the rule of law in Ukraine is a long-term process given the deteriorating effects of more than 20 years of entrenched corruption in the rule of law sector and of longer term legacies from the Soviet era that continue to distort the justice system in Ukraine.

USAID is well-positioned to support the GOU in developing the rule of law in Ukraine, and has provided key technical support in informing the GOU about the lustration efforts and models that were developed in Eastern Europe after the fall of communism in the early 1990s. For example, USAID rule of law efforts established objective reappointment criteria that are being used to vet judges. The Agency also works with civil society organizations and media professionals to engage various audiences outside of the judiciary and justice sector to build demand for the rule of law in Ukrainian society.

The United States is similarly engaged, taking short, medium, and longer term steps to strengthen Ukraine's economy. Ukraine has suffered from decades of economic mismanagement and corruption and its economy has been severely impacted

by the eurozone crisis. More recently, Russian aggression, including the use of energy, trade, and finance as weapons, has led to further economic contraction. Given these challenges, USAID, as part of the broader U.S. Government effort, is committed to working with the GOU, and partners like the EU, to take steps to strengthen the Ukrainian economy today and into the future.

Question. What safeguards are in place to ensure that U.S. foreign assistance to Ukraine is not diverted into the pockets of corrupt officials? Do you believe more could be done on this front?

Answer. My understanding is that the majority of U.S. assistance to Ukraine is given in the form of technical, or advisory, assistance rather than direct assistance to the Government of Ukraine. I have been assured that when assistance is, in fact, provided to the GOU, it is accompanied by rigorous oversight measures on the part of the USAID mission, including funding for independent civil society watchdogs to ensure greater accountability and transparency. If confirmed as Assistant Administrator, I will place a premium on safeguarding all taxpayer investments in the region through robust oversight, including strong fiduciary controls, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

Question. What USAID programs can be used to help in President Poroshenko's "de-oligarchization" effort?

Answer. Improvements to economic governance are the key to curbing the influence of oligarchs in the economy. This includes removing barriers to business startups; increasing transparency and uniform enforcement of laws and regulations that govern the business sector; and adopting and enforcing strong antimonopoly, competition policy, and antitrust legislation. Changes to the legal and regulatory regime are important but the creation and strengthening of the institutions that implement and enforce the rules is a more difficult task that requires changing the attitudes and behavior of underpaid and poorly trained civil servants at all levels.

I understand that USAID has received a request from the Government of Ukraine (GOU) to provide technical assistance in privatizing state-owned companies, and is exploring ways to support this request. USAID personnel have deep expertise in this area and could provide technical assistance working with the GOU to ensure that tender documents reflect accurate valuation and that competitions are free and fair. Other municipal entities in Ukraine have requested USAID assistance in "de-oligarchizing" unfair concession agreements so that contracts provide value to citizens, rather than funnel money uniquely to oligarchs.

Question. What effect, if any, have U.S. Sanctions against Russia had on Ukraine? What could be done to mitigate negative effects?

Answer. As I understand the situation, an important part of the U.S. assistance program is aimed at helping Ukraine reorient its trade and become less reliant on the Russian market and therefore less vulnerable to Russia's abrupt and punitive cutoffs of trade with Ukraine, a tactic Russia has frequently used to pressure Ukraine before and since the imposition of international sanctions against Russia for its aggression against its neighbor. This includes not only the considerable work with European nations to provide reverse flow of natural gas to assist Ukraine during the winter seasons, but also assistance to help Ukrainian firms meet Western product standards and improve their productivity and competitiveness; building business linkages and relationship in new markets; helping the government develop and implement a sound export promotion strategy; improving trade policy, including better capacity to utilize understanding of WTO rules and procedures; and enhancing trade facilitation to reduce the time and cost of getting goods across borders.

Question. What efforts, specifically, is USAID taking spark or support FDI by the private sector both from the EU and other developed nations? What industries or economic sectors do you see as the best potentialities for these efforts?

Answer. The most important step that any country in this region can take to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) is to make meaningful and visible improvements in the business enabling environment. Potential investors need to know that the host country government truly welcomes investors and protects their rights. A significant focus of the U.S. assistance program in the Europe and Eurasia region is aimed at improving economic governance. While there are significant differences between countries, the most promising sectors in the region include agriculture and agro-processing, energy, information technology, light manufacturing, and tourism.

For example, in Ukraine, the sectors with the greatest potential for FDI are agriculture production and processing, energy, information technology, health, and transportation infrastructure roads, highways, rail, ports, and commodity storage. With a focus on small- and medium-sized enterprises in the agricultural sector, I

understand that USAID supports partnerships in developing Ukraine's agriculture sector to spur economic growth that increases competitiveness, productivity, employment, and incomes. USAID's goal is to work with private sector partners to promote agricultural development by leveraging the expertise of commercial partnerships to benefit small- and medium-sized enterprises in productive and profitable ways.

Question. How is/does USAID (intend to) work with the EU, the IMF, and DOS to insure that USAID funds are not allotted in a duplicative manner? To what extent does USAID work in conjunction with the EU, the IMF, and DOS to prevent duplication of efforts and funds?

Answer. USAID participates in broad donor coordination, including the EU, IMF, multilateral organizations, and bilateral donors in the field across Europe and Eurasia. This is done regularly on a sector-by-sector basis to ensure complementarity and effective use of resources. For example, with respect to coordination with the Department of State and the broader interagency, coordination on assistance and funds in Ukraine is done in Washington through the State Department's Assistance Coordinator for Europe and Eurasia (State/EUR/ACE) and in Kiev through the U.S. Embassy's special coordinator for assistance, retired ambassador Clifford Bond. USAID's guidance for developing Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) and project design documents includes mandatory sections on donor cooperation to promote collaboration and guard against duplication.

Question. The Department of State's 2014 Trafficking in Persons report cites Ukraine and other E&E countries in the Tier 2 and Watch List categories, meaning they have made commitments to pursue significant efforts to reduce trafficking. What USAID programs are helping to combat human trafficking and verify these efforts? In your opinion, what more could be done by USAID to address this problem?

USAID has committed to playing a vital role in international efforts to counter all forms of human trafficking. Through the adoption of its code of conduct in compliance with Executive Order 13627, USAID has pledged to incorporate a standard trafficking in persons clause into all of its acquisition and assistance instruments.

My understanding is that missions are expected to support the implementation of the Countering Trafficking in Persons (C–TIP) Code of Conduct and to identify opportunities to strengthen anti-TIP efforts in their respective missions. Especially in Tier 2 Watch List and Tier 3 countries, missions are encouraged to develop anti-TIP strategies across all technical areas and integrate anti-TIP components into ongoing programming. To support these efforts, the Europe and Eurasia Bureau has developed a Toolkit for Integrating C–TIP into Cross-Sectoral Programming in Europe and Eurasia.

At the regional level, USAID has projects in five countries: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, and Ukraine:

In Azerbaijan, USAID provides assistance victims of human trafficking and forced labor, through the provision of technical and financial assistance to NGO-run shelters for female, male, and child victims of human trafficking and forced labor.

In Belarus, USAID works to strengthen government agencies and civil society organizations to counter TIP. The project has two objectives: (1) containing TIP through prevention and protection activities; (2) and capacity-building for domestic stakeholders. The project is also supporting civil society organizations to strengthen their role in countertrafficking efforts.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, USAID supports the Ministry of Security and the Department for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings to carry out their strategy and action plan. The goal of the assistance is to strengthen the capacities of C–TIP institutions and organizations to adopt and implement more effective policies, laws, and regulations to provide better protection and assistance to the TIP victims. USAID's support will help Bosnia and Herzegovina implement 18 out of 33 strategic goals of the strategy.

In Moldova, USAID addresses trafficking issues by working to strengthen and improve the capacity of justice sector institutions to respond to the needs of victims in a more transparent and accountable manner. USAID support has improved the knowledge of judges and prosecutors to investigate and classify trafficking as well as assisted the National Institute of Justice to develop a C–TIP curriculum for in-service training of judges and prosecutors.

In Ukraine, USAID and the Department of State work to strengthen the Government of Ukraine's capacity to undertake countertrafficking work, including prosecution and prevention and reintegration assistance to victims of trafficking under the institutionalized framework of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Additionally, U.S. Government programs work to build local capacity and support for tar-

geted prevention programs and strengthen the capacities of law enforcement to investigate and prosecute trafficking crimes.

Question. What current USAID missions in Ukraine have been affected by Russian aggression in the past year? Have these instances affected project design for future missions? If so, how would you address these interruptions?

Answer. Following the Maidan, USAID has strategically refocused several programs in Ukraine to respond to the rapidly changing environment in Ukraine which has been impacted by increased Russian aggression, the conflict in Ukraine's east, and the severely weakened Ukrainian economy.

For example, I understand that the USAID economic growth programming for the financial sector was affected by conditions on the ground and as the GOU reprioritized its most pressing needs. USAID has strategically considered the priorities for the current and anticipated environment and needs of the GOU, not only for the financial sector, but across sectors to ensure that assistance programs are impactful and well targeted. My understanding is that USAID has been addressing such interruptions by assessing how other programs may be able to extend assistance, considering headquarters (Washington, DC)-managed regional mechanisms, and using other tools to fill gaps and address short-term assistance needs.

Question. What role is USAID playing in providing humanitarian assistance to those areas of eastern Ukraine affected by the war? What are the biggest problems? Is more funding needed?

Answer. The presence of more than 1 million registered internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine is a major potential source of instability. Tensions emanate from competition over resources and economic opportunity, social integration of IDPs, and diminishing morale and confidence in the Ukrainian state. The lawless environment, unstable security situation, and bureaucratic restrictions have severely disrupted freedom of movement into and out of the nongovernment controlled areas (NCGAs) of Eastern Ukraine, affecting civilians' access to critical services, income, and basic goods. The elderly, persons with disabilities, families with children, and people in institutional care, many of whom are unable to flee, are extremely vulnerable. Hospitals and clinics are only partially operational due to lack of medicines, medical supplies, and personnel, as well as damage and destruction.

Although some international organizations and NGOs are currently able to operate in NGCAs, their status is precarious, in part due to the security situation and new registration requirements by separatist authorities' increasing interference by separatist authorities. The needs of the displaced population outside of the conflict zone have outstripped the response capacity of the local government and civil society and volunteer groups. IDP reception centers and local governments are overwhelmed, underresourced and underprepared for possible high levels of new arrivals. Burdensome administrative processes, challenges in replacing lost documentation, the poor state of the economy, and competition over limited resources continues to restrict the ability of IDPs to get jobs, housing, and access government IDP benefits. Further, there is a near total lack of direct service provision for survivors of gender-based violence.

To respond to these challenges, the U.S. Government has provided $61.5 million in humanitarian assistance in FY 2014 and FY 2015, including $27.4 million from USAID.

USAID has provided food, shelter, water supplies, cash resources for local procurement of food, psychosocial support, and livelihood assistance to the most vulnerable conflict-affected populations, including children, the elderly, and female-headed households.

Before the humanitarian response was fully operational, USAID helped catalyze assistance to communities responding to the displacement crisis and has since committed $10.2 million to help communities and government at the local and national level to mitigate deepened social tensions in conflict-affected communities in the east, and to increase access to information and inform public debate on the crisis. The Agency is also committing $3 million to support help Ukraine's health sector efforts in addressing psychosocial trauma and support physical rehabilitation for people with disabilities.

If confirmed, I will work with my team, and with the Congress, to assess the needs on the ground and mobilize the requisite resources.

Question. What role do you foresee USAID playing in helping Ukraine hold free and fair elections later this year? Under what conditions would USAID be able to help separatists?

Answer. I understand that USAID intends to provide assistance in training election commissions and educating voters and other stakeholders on an entirely new

system for local elections. The Agency's programming will also support robust election oversight, including comprehensive monitoring by Ukrainian civil society. In the lead up to the elections, USAID has assisted and supported civil society engagement in improving election legislation and is supporting efforts to reform political and campaign finance. USAID programs encourage political parties and candidates to be more responsive to citizens and to engage more constructively with civic organizations and local officials between elections. I understand that USAID is providing approximately $3.1 million in assistance related to the upcoming local elections. Any local elections in the nongovernment controlled areas in the east would have to be conducted according to Ukrainian law and OSCE/ODIHR standards.

Question. How is USAID working to help Ukraine achieve an independent and effective judicial system?

Answer. USAID has been working with the Government of Ukraine (GOU) to develop an independent and efficient judicial system, by supporting judicial self-governance in Ukraine to help insulate the judiciary from political influence. This includes budget independence, disciplining of judges, judicial education, as well as the development of court administration functions. I understand that USAID has supported amendments to the Law on the Judiciary and the Status of Judges and the Law on the High Council of Justice. Additionally, USAID supports efforts to strengthen the institutional capacity of the High Qualifications Commission by supporting clear standards for transferring judges; automating the judicial qualifications exam; training judicial inspectors and establishing standards for adjudicating judicial misconduct; and developing an integrated system for managing judicial selection and discipline procedures. All of these efforts are aimed at helping Ukraine develop an independent and effective judicial system.

In 2015, several notable achievements have occurred in the sector, many of which were directly supported by USAID assistance: the Verkhovna Rada passed the Law on Fair Trial, signed into law in March 2015; the GOU passed the Justice Sector Reform Strategy in May 2015; the High Council of Justice is now operational again as of June 2015, after being blocked for over a year, and is proceeding to consider a backlog of cases regarding approval of transfer, reprimand, and dismissal of judges; and the judiciary amendments to the constitution have been drafted and the Venice Commission issued a preliminary opinion on July 24 positively assessing the judicial amendments to the constitution with some key recommendations to further improve these amendments. The success of these current interventions will be both the foundations for genuine rule of law reform, and serve as indicators for progress, such as judiciary amendments to the constitution, and the GOU's ability to reform core judicial functions and roles, including lustration of judges and limiting judicial immunity.

Question. Given that Ukraine's current natural gas exchange with Gazprom, as well as imports from Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia, is a temporary solution at best, what is USAID doing to address the short-term "reverse-flow" supply shortage of natural gas?

Answer. USAID support to Ukraine is part of a broad U.S. interagency and multidonor effort that balances near term priorities with longer term development needs, focusing on areas of greatest impact. The Department of Energy and the State Department Energy and Natural Resources Bureau are focused on improved natural gas production and alternative supply arrangements.

USAID continues to focus on near term activities to lessen external energy market pressure on Ukraine, specifically through the stabilization of Ukraine's power sector in light of external pressure on fuel supply; and providing legal regulatory support to move Ukraine into European Union energy markets and offering protections associated with inclusion in a larger market.

My understanding is that medium- to long-term activities focus on setting the groundwork for Ukraine to upgrade its energy sector to modern standards, specifically through improving the investment environment necessary for energy supply diversification and energy efficiency; and improving energy sector governance to help curb corrupt practices and wasteful mismanagement.

Question. In the latest USAID-Department of State (DOS) joint strategic plan, USAID and DOS list Strategic Goal 3 as promoting a transition to "low-emission, climate resilient" energy projects. Considering the dire economic situation in Ukraine, Kosovo, Bosnia, and Herzegovina and others, as well as the precarious energy situation in light of Russian energy dependence and aggression, do you see this as a viable economic goal for these counties? What research is USAID doing to compare the immediate cost-benefit and investment necessary for pursuing "green" tech-

nologies over other more cost-effective sources of power that could help jumpstart these economies?

Answer. USAID seeks to support the mutually reinforcing goals of enhanced energy security, EU integration, and accelerated transition to a sustainable, clean energy economy throughout the region, following five key tenets:

1. Diversification of energy imports and domestic supplies is essential to reduce vulnerability to potential disruptions.
2. Integrated regional electricity and gas networks and markets are needed to enhance security, foster energy development, and tap economies of scale.
3. Rational energy pricing and harmonized, transparent energy regulatory frameworks are required to attract private investment to modernize energy infrastructure and develop new supplies.
4. Improved energy efficiency and renewable energy development can contribute to enhancing energy security as well as increased competitiveness, sustainable economic growth and GHG emissions reduction.
5. Addressing the energy needs of low income and vulnerable populations is a necessary component of an overall energy reform program.

USAID works toward these objectives through support of the Energy Community Treaty, which seeks to harmonize energy and environmental practices and regulations of the Contracting Parties of the Balkans and Eastern Europe countries with those of the European Union. Accomplishing this goal would modernize energy governance in the E&E region and link E&E countries to the EU internal energy market, enhancing energy security and encouraging investment, regardless of the chosen electric generation technology.

Question. Kosovo has suffered from shortcomings in the rule of law, including corruption and organized crime. What role is USAID playing to help Kosovo in this area? What results have been achieved?

Answer. USAID has been supporting Kosovo's justice sector since Kosovo gained its de facto independence from the former Yugoslav Republic. USAID helped establish the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) and worked to support the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council, Kosovo Judicial Institute, Ministry of Justice and other justice sector institutions. The Agency played a key role in the process of judicial reappointments and vetting of judges in Kosovo. Through its efforts with the KJC, USAID has helped the Kosovar judiciary develop objective and transparent performance criteria to allow judges to do their work more effectively and efficiently. The Agency has also been working to reduce the backlog of cases in Kosovo, introduce more effective case management techniques, and professionalize the cadre of court administrators and managers. By introducing more transparent and streamlined court and case management techniques, USAID has helped to reduce opportunities for corruption in the judiciary in Kosovo. For example, I understand that through one USAID program the KJC drafted and approved its first strategic plan since 2007, providing the courts a roadmap to improve the work and independence of the judiciary and implemented a backlog reduction strategy, including a case tracking database to register all current and pending court cases. Over 20,000 cases have been reviewed and over 5,000 cases have been closed. In addition, 18 courts have been refurbished in compliance with international standards, significantly increasing court staff efficiency, public accessibility, and accommodation for persons with disabilities.

Question. How do USAID programs help the nation of Georgia reduce its economic and energy dependence on Russia?

Answer. My understanding is that USAID's programs in Georgia are oriented around the goal of strengthening and sustaining a democratic, free-market, Western-oriented transformation in that country. Specific components of the Economic Growth program seek to improve the business enabling environment for trade and investment and strengthen ties with the West. This includes support for harmonization of Georgia's laws and regulations with its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with the European Union, promotion of East-West trade via the New Silk Road linking the Black Sea to Central and East Asia, and development of policies and regulations in the energy sector to promote energy security and regional trade of electricity.

Contributions by USAID and other donors have helped Georgia to reduce its dependency on Russia in the areas of fossil fuels, oil and gas, through the establishment of the Southern Corridor for oil and gas. Over the last decade USAID/Georgia installed gas pipelines from Azerbaijan; built electricity infrastructure; leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars in private financing for hydropower generation; and built the capacity of the Ministry of Energy, the energy regulator, the Transmission System Operators and other stakeholders to assess, model, plan, and implement all

the steps necessary to set up an open electricity market. Current assistance is devoted to increasing energy efficiency.

In the gas sector, by laying pipeline to transport gas from Azerbaijan through Georgia, the country has already decreased its reliance on Russian exports. In 2013 Georgia imported 27 percent less gas from Russian and 1,052 percent more gas from Azerbaijan than it had in 2010 when USAID assistance began.

In the electricity sector, USAID is helping transition the country into an open-market system in which Georgia is able to trade freely with Turkey. By opening the Georgian market to Turkey, Georgia will be able to access the wider European market for exports of its native hydrogeneration resources, and in so doing, will invite increased foreign, likely European, investments in hydrogeneration within its borders—and decrease dependency on Russian trade. Increased hydrogeneration capacity within Georgia and a direct connection to European markets will significantly decrease, if not eliminate, the country's remaining reliance on Russian electricity markets.

Question. Is Georgia making progress in creating an independent judiciary? How is USAID helping Georgia develop a depoliticized judicial system?

Answer. I believe that Georgia is making progress to create a more independent judiciary, but challenges remain to further strengthen its judiciary. USAID has played a leadership role in supporting Georgia's efforts to develop an independent judicial system for more than a decade. Specifically, USAID efforts have strengthened the High Council of Justice (HCOJ), the High School of Justice (HSOJ), as well as the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the Legal Aid Service (LAS), and the National Center for the Development of the Quality in Education (NCDQE). Institutional independence of the judiciary insulates judges from political influence and coercion. I understand that USAID has engaged with a number of prominent NGOs, such as the Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF) and its affiliate the Caucasus Resource Research Center (CRRC), as well as the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA), and Transparency International (TI) to provide external oversight of the judiciary and make the system more transparent to the public and reduce opportunities for abuse and corruption. Most recently, the composition of the High Council of Justice was changed to bring in members of civil society, which reduces political control of the Chair of the Supreme Court.

Question. What lessons can USAID learn from programs in Georgia in the wake of Russian aggression that it could apply to Ukraine?

Answer. My understanding is that USAID's efforts in Georgia have informed how USAID addresses similar challenges in Ukraine. In response to a crisis like we saw in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine today, timely, coordinated assistance, based on an assessment of needs can have powerful and lasting impacts. For example, USG contributions to economic stabilization in Georgia, combined with those of other partners, likely prevented a much deeper and more drawn out economic decline, in the face of both conflict and global recession. Years later, beneficiaries are aware and appreciative of U.S. emergency humanitarian and long-term development assistance.

One of the greatest challenges facing Ukraine is the legacy of corruption. Georgia has demonstrated that the best way to fight corruption is to get out in front of the problem and put in place systems for transparency and proactive disclosure of information. USAID has been instrumental in helping to put many of these systems into place. This includes strengthening the professionalism of the State Audit Office so that it can exercise its independence, working with the Ministry of Justice to enhance freedom of information requirements, expanding the use of open government data through Georgia's open data portal, helping the Competition and State Procurement Agency stand up a Dispute Resolution Board, and setting the stage for a new civil service legal framework based on open competition and consistent standards. Many of these activities were coupled with grants to civil society to monitor compliance and hold government accountable to its promises.

Question. What is your opinion of USAID Forward and other reform efforts? If so, how do you see these reforms being implemented in Eastern European and Eurasian nations specifically?

Answer. I understand that USAID has implemented a series of reforms over the last several years, known collectively as USAID Forward. By all accounts, these reforms have strengthened the Agency's focus on results, partnership, and innovation over the past 5 years. USAID now has in place a rigorous and transparent process for designing strategies and projects while evaluating their achievement of results in a more focused and selective manner. Its partnership agenda has grown substantially. USAID's direct partnering with local actors and local systems, which has al-

most doubled since 2010, reflects the Agency's commitment to creating processes whereby countries own, resource, and sustain their development. It has also increased its emphasis on innovative approaches through the use of science, technology and open innovation.

Regarding implementation of USAID Forward in Europe and Eurasia, I understand that efforts are furthering collaboration among external partners, leveraging additional resources, and increasing innovation through two Science, Technology, Innovation and Partnership (STIP) leader Missions. Public-private partnerships in the region are highly leveraged and direct support to local organizations has increased tremendously.

Additionally, USAID's development projects are designed with monitoring mechanisms at the forefront, allowing for objective evidence-based evaluations of development projects and for ensuring a responsible use of resources. Evaluations are used in the region to not only track progress and results, but to provide evidence that will inform management decisions for improvements that are needed, and to inform follow on or future programming.

Question. Specifically, what is your plan for implementing "local solutions" to promote country ownership while also ensuring reasonable accountability measures? Do you believe these two goals are compatible for Ukraine in its current state?

Answer. I understand that USAID is committed to enabling countries to lead, resource, and sustain their own development. This is a commitment I share and, if confirmed, will prioritize in Europe and Eurasia. I agree that country ownership should be at the core of how USAID does business. At the same time, USAID should and does exercise robust oversight and maintain appropriate fiduciary controls to safeguard taxpayer dollars and ensure prudent investments with an increased emphasis on solid project design with clear purpose and measures of progress and evidence-based monitoring and evaluation.

With regard to Ukraine specifically, my understanding is that USAID integrates anticorruption activities into every project design in Ukraine. For example, anticorruption measures are included in programs to support the judiciary, education, health/pharmaceutical procurement, e-governance, permitting, financial disclosure, and energy, agriculture, and economic development.

After many years of false starts, under the current government in Kiev, the world is beginning to see progress on implementation of anticorruption reforms in Ukraine. More than a dozen key pieces of legislation have been passed, including laws to establish the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) and the National Anti-Corruption Prevention Agency (NAPC). The Ukrainian government is in the process of standing up these two agencies, which are critical to fighting corruption.

USAID has bolstered monitoring and independent evaluations in the region by organizing monitoring workshops for implementing partner staff, and contracting for independent evaluations of its programs to ensure intended impact, including three such evaluations in Ukraine last year. If confirmed, I will build on these efforts to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of Agency programming, including in Ukraine.

Question. Historically, some have cited tensions between USAID and the Department of State, stating that USAID efforts are often supplanted by the diplomatic imperatives of DOS. Do you feel this is the case? If so, other than publishing the joint strategic plan every 5 years, how else do you plan to work with DOS to ensure that USAID missions are not sidelined?

Answer. All agencies report to the President of the United States and seek to implement his articulated policies. While each agency has its distinct role to play, I believe that the inevitable tensions that emerge in large organizations can be effectively mitigated and minimized through personal diplomacy and a tone of collaboration and complementarity that is set by senior officials. During my time at the Department of State, from 2010 to 2015, I actively reached out to USAID and to other agencies—including the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, and of course, the National Security Council staff—to ensure that funded programs and diplomatic initiatives were mutually understood and reinforced. This included joint missions to a number of countries in the E&E region, including with the previous Assistant Administrator, Paige Alexander, and other counterparts across the U.S. Government. These visits were, in my opinion, valuable in enhancing collaboration and finding an appropriate balance between diplomatic imperatives and development goals. If confirmed, I hope to continue this practice with colleagues at the Department of State and other U.S. agencies.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2015

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

Lucy Tamlyn, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Benin

Jeffrey J. Hawkins, Jr., of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador to the Central African Republic

David R. Gilmour, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Togolese Republic

Daniel H. Rubinstein, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Tunisia

Carolyn Patricia Alsup, of Florida, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador to the Republic of the Gambia

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:04 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jeff Flake presiding.

Present: Senators Flake, Gardner, Murphy, and Markey.

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

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

Thank you all for being here. It is nice to see the nominees and family members, as well. That is always the best part.

Today, we have ambassadorial nominees for Benin, Togo, Central African Republic, Tunisia, and The Gambia. These are all important and challenging posts, to put it mildly. I look forward to hearing from today's nominees about how diplomatic engagement can help build positive economic and political trends in Benin and Togo, and how to address ongoing challenges that we have in Tunisia, which is often said to be, as we spoke about yesterday, the most successful democratic transition of those who were involved in the Arab Spring.

If confirmed, the Ambassador-designate will mark the return of the U.S. Ambassador to Bangui, following a 2-year gap. That is significant. I look forward to hearing how U.S. interests, including stability, can be advanced in the complex environment, certainly, in Central Africa.

Finally, the committee is eager to hear about the best way to go forward in The Gambia as well.

I look forward to all of you sharing your expertise.

Senator Markey is voting and will come back here shortly, but we will go ahead and get started. I am glad to have Senator Gardner here. I know he has to leave shortly, but I appreciate his interest.

The first nominee is Lucy Tamlyn. Ms. Tamlyn is a career Foreign Service officer with the Foreign Service and currently is serving as director in the Office of Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan. Ms. Tamlyn has served in a wide range of overseas positions, including Deputy Chief of Mission in Lisbon, economic consular at the U.S. mission in the OECD in Paris, Provincial Reconstruction team leader in Iraq. And Ms. Tamlyn also served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Chad.

So glad to have you here.

Our second nominee is David Gilmour. Mr. Gilmour is a career Foreign Service officer and currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs. Previously, Mr. Gilmour led the Africa Bureau's Public Diplomacy Office. Mr. Gilmour's numerous overseas assignments include Deputy Chief of Mission in Panama City, Panama, and in Malawi as well.

Jeffrey Hawkins is our third nominee today. He is a career member of the Foreign Service also, most recently consul general in Lagos, Nigeria. Prior to that assignment, he was director of the South and Central Asian Affairs Office in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. He served in a number of overseas assignments, as you all have, including Deputy Chief of Mission in Angola, Brunei, and political economic chief at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Daniel Rubinstein is a career Foreign Service officer as well. He most recently served as Special Envoy for Syria, a place without any problems at all, so thank you for your service there. That is the position that he has held since 2014. Previously, he served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Mr. Rubinstein's overseas leadership positions include serving as consul general in Jerusalem, chief of the Civilian Observer Unit in the Sinai in Egypt, and Deputy Chief of Mission in Amman, Jordan. He also served as director of the Office of Israel and Palestinian Affairs.

Finally, we have Carolyn Patricia Alsup, a career member of the Foreign Service. Ms. Alsup also served recently as Deputy Chief of Mission in Ghana. Previously, she led the Office of Central African Affairs and Deputy Chief of Mission in The Gambia. So this will be a return trip for you, if confirmed. Ms. Alsup also held a number of positions in economic affairs at the State Department, including serving as executive assistant of the Economic Bureau and special assistant in the Office of Under Secretary of Economics, Business and Agricultural Affairs.

Thank you all for being here, and I appreciate your service and meeting with you before. I am just amazed at the sacrifices that you made and that your families have made as well.

I appreciate having family members here. I hope that you will introduce them as you begin your remarks.

And we will recognize Lucy Tamlyn first.

STATEMENT OF LUCY TAMLYN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF BENIN

Ms. TAMLYN. Thank you. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a great honor for me to appear before you today. I am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Benin.

My husband, Jorge Serpa, is here today, representing many far-flung family members, especially our children, Ben and Filipa. Unexpected evacuations and long separations have not dampened their enthusiasm or the pride they take in being part of the Foreign Service family. I know that I could not have come this far without their support.

I joined the Foreign Service in 1982 and have served in positions of increasing responsibility across three continents, including three assignments with the Bureau of African Affairs.

Working alongside of, and learning from, extraordinary colleagues and leaders in the State Department, I have gained the experience and the understanding, which, if confirmed, will enable me to faithfully represent and advance U.S. interests in Benin.

Mr. Chairman, Benin is a strong partner of the United States. The people of Benin are justly proud of their democratic traditions and record of peaceful transfers of power. President Thomas Boni Yayi, serving his second and final 5-year term, was invited by President Obama in 2011 to the White House as one of four African Presidents representing Africa's democratic progress, which, as President Obama stated at the time, is vital to a stable and prosperous Africa, and also critical to the stability and prosperity of the world.

With 50 percent of the Beninese population under 18 years of age, Benin is a vibrant and dynamic nation rich in culture, history, and potential. We partner with the Government of Benin to provide a helping hand to support the inclusive economic growth, which is the centerpiece of the country's own poverty reduction strategy, and which will enable the people of Benin to achieve a better future for themselves and their families.

Our largest assistance program targets malaria, a disease which is particularly deadly for the young and which takes an enormous economic toll on the economy.

Benin is on track to receive a second Millennium Challenge Compact, a reflection of its ability to sustain high rankings in the MCC's political, economic, and social indicators, and to muster the political will to address shortcomings when those rankings slip.

U.S. investment in Benin through the Millennium Challenge Account will help address energy shortfalls, which are a serious impediment to economic growth.

Benin is a strong regional partner on other fronts. It has stood with its neighbors to confront the horrors of Boko Haram and is a member of the Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force, to which it has pledged a battalion.

The government partners with the United States and other international donors to combat drug trafficking, piracy, and maritime crime.

Our shared human rights values are reflected in the stands that Benin takes in international fora and its multiple contributions to peacekeeping operations worldwide, including in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

But challenges remain internally and externally for Benin. Robust economic growth is essential to meet the needs of the people. But despite considerable efforts on the part of President Yayi's government, extreme poverty and corruption remain serious obstacles to achieving development goals.

The country is vulnerable to economic shocks, particularly emanating from larger economies in the region. Transnational organized crime can flourish where borders are porous and thinly surveilled, and where corruption corrodes the rule of law.

And finally, extremist violence threatens Benin's near neighbors, where perpetrators of such violence find recruits in disenfranchised and vulnerable communities.

My priorities, if confirmed, will be to identify those areas where U.S. partnership can assist the government and people of Benin continue as a beacon of democracy, stability, peace, and tolerance in the region. I will seek to further strengthen the ties of friendship and understanding with the people of Benin. And I will look for ways to advance U.S. interests for the benefit of the American people through a partnership with Benin, which bolsters the fight against transnational organized crime and enables us to stand together for shared values internationally.

Benin has welcomed more than 2,000 Peace Corps Volunteers over the years, and in the truest spirit of partnership, these Volunteers have given much and received much from the host communities in which they worked.

Kate Puzey was one such Volunteer whose life was tragically cut short, but whose memory very much endures. If confirmed, one of my highest priorities will be to continue to work with the Government of Benin for justice for Kate Puzey and our family.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, for the opportunity to address you today. I am very happy to take any questions that you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Tamlyn follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LUCY TAMLYN

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a great honor for me to appear before you today. I am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Benin.

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I joined the Foreign Service in 1982 and have served in positions of increasing responsibility across three continents, including three assignments with the Bureau of African Affairs. Working alongside of, and learning from, extraordinary colleagues and leaders in the State Department, I have gained the experience and the understanding which, if confirmed, will enable me to faithfully represent and advance U.S. interests in Benin.

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Benin is a strong regional partner on other fronts. It has stood with its neighbors to confront the horrors of Boko Haram and is a member of the Lake Chad Basin Multinational Joint Task Force, to which it has pledged a battalion. The government partners with the United States and other international donors to combat piracy, drug trafficking, and other maritime crime. Our shared values are reflected in the stands that Benin takes in international fora and in its multiple contributions to peacekeeping operations worldwide, including in Cote d'Ivoire, Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

But challenges remain internally and externally for Benin. Robust economic growth is needed to meet the needs of the people, but despite considerable efforts on the part of President Yayi's government, extreme poverty and corruption remain serious obstacles to development. The country is vulnerable to external shocks, particularly emanating from larger economies in the region. Transnational Organized Crime can flourish where borders are porous and thinly surveilled and where corruption corrodes the rule of law. And finally, extremist violence threatens Benin's near neighbors, as perpetrators of such violence find recruits in disenfranchised and vulnerable communities.

My priorities, if confirmed, will be to identify those areas where U.S. partnership can assist the government and people of Benin continue as a beacon of democracy, stability, peace and tolerance in the region. I will seek to further strengthen the ties of friendship and understanding with the people of Benin. And I will look for ways to advance U.S. interests for the benefit of the American people through a partnership with Benin which bolsters the fight against transnational organized crime and enables us to stand together for shared values internationally.

Benin has welcomed more than 2,000 Peace Corps Volunteers over the years and—in the truest spirit of partnership—these Volunteers have given much, and received much, from the host communities in which they worked. Kate Puzey was one such volunteer whose life was tragically cut short—but whose memory very much endures. If confirmed, one of my highest priorities will be to continue to work with the Government of Benin for justice for Kate Puzey and her family.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for the opportunity to address you today. I am very happy to take any questions which you may have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Gilmour.

STATEMENT OF DAVID R. GILMOUR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE TOGOLESE REPUBLIC

Mr. GILMOUR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have submitted a longer versions of my statement for the record.

Mr. Chairman, I am honored to appear before you today, and I am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to Togo. I am also grateful for the support of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

I am joined today by my wife, Judith Martin, who has spent a lifetime in the Foreign Service, first with her father, S. Douglas Martin, a career State Department officer, and her mother, Pauline, and later as my cherished partner as we traveled the world and raised our family in eight overseas posts and in Washington during my 29 years in the Foreign Service.

Also, here is our son, Tristan. Our other two children, Miles and Schyler, are watching online from Texas.

I would also like to acknowledge my father, John Gilmour, who could not be here today. He worked for 34 years in local government, proudly serving the citizens of the small town in Michigan where I grew up. Everything I know about integrity, treating people with respect, and dedication to public service, I learned from my dad.

Mr. Chairman, I believe my service in four African posts and in senior positions in Washington, as well as postings elsewhere in the world, including as Deputy Chief of Mission in Panama, have prepared me for this assignment. If confirmed, I will draw upon these experiences to advance U.S. interests in Togo and the West African region.

The United States and Togo enjoy a strong relationship and broad mutual interests. Togo lies at the heart of West Africa, a region that is important to the security of the United States, and to which the United States has long-standing economic and cultural ties.

Mr. Chairman, our policy priorities in Togo are to safeguard the welfare of American citizens, promote democracy and good governance, improve maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, promote human rights, combat transnational crime, advance commercial opportunities for U.S. business, and improve the quality of health care and education.

Togo is recovering from 15 years of political and economic isolation that began in the early 1990s due to political instability. The country's long cycle of decline ended in 2007, following largely free and fair legislative elections.

The political situation has stabilized over the past few years, and successive elections were recognized by the international community as free and fair, despite some shortfalls.

Most recently, Presidential elections in April of this year were judged credible by international observers, and the United States congratulated the people of Togo for exercising their democratic rights.

The country is presently at peace. Should I be confirmed, I will work to maintain a peaceful, transparent, and fair political climate, thereby consolidating and expanding on the democratic gains of the past several years.

Togo has been a willing partner in advancing security in West Africa and beyond. If confirmed, I look forward to helping enhance Togo's ability to police and regulate the Gulf of Guinea and to expand their capacity to train and deploy peacekeepers, as they have successfully done in Mali, Darfur, Cote d'Ivoire, and many other conflicts.

If confirmed, I will strongly support Togo's efforts to address the challenges or corruption, wildlife trafficking, smuggling, and traf-

ficking in persons, which also threaten the national interests of the United States.

The Government of Togo recognizes that improving the investment climate is key to sustained economic growth and eliminating poverty. If confirmed, I will support reforms that promote investment and provide opportunities for American companies. I will work to strengthen Togo's developing role as a regional trade and transportation hub, and encourage Togolese entrepreneurs to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by AGOA.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to address you. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you in representing the interests of the American people in Togo. I am happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gilmour follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID R. GILMOUR

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today, and grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to Togo. I am also grateful for the support of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

I am joined today by my wife, Judith Martin, who has spent a lifetime in the Foreign Service, first with her father, S. Douglas Martin, a career State Department officer, and later as my cherished partner as we traveled the world together and raised our family in eight overseas posts and in Washington during the 29 years of my Foreign Service career. Also here is our son, Tristan. Our other two children, Miles and Schyler, will be watching online from Texas. I would also like to acknowledge my father, John Gilmour, who could not be here today. He worked 34 years in local government, serving the citizens of the small town where I grew up in Michigan. Everything I know about respect, integrity, and dedication to public service, I learned from my dad.

Mr. Chairman, I believe my service in four African posts and in senior positions in the Bureau of African Affairs in Washington, as well as postings elsewhere in the world, including as Deputy Chief of Mission in Panama, have prepared me for this assignment. If confirmed, I will draw upon these experiences to advance U.S. interests in Togo and the West African region.

The United States and Togo enjoy a strong relationship and broad mutual interests. With a population of nearly 7 million inhabitants, Togo lies at the heart of West Africa, a region that is important to the security of the United States, and to which the United States has long-standing cultural ties. If confirmed, I will do my utmost to broaden and strengthen our mutual pursuit of this shared agenda.

Mr. Chairman, our policy priorities in Togo are to safeguard the welfare of American citizens, promote a representative democracy and good governance, improve maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, promote human rights, improve the capacity to combat transnational crime, advance commercial opportunities for U.S. businesses, and improve the quality of health care and education. To achieve these goals, the United States has a range of programs supporting public health, security sector reform, international peacekeeping and economic development. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with our international partners to help Togo promote empowerment and prosperity for all Togolese, regardless of their ethnic, religious, regional or political affiliations.

The United States established diplomatic relations with Togo in 1960 following its independence from a French-administered trusteeship. Togo is recovering from 15 years of political and economic isolation that began in the early 1990s due to political instability. Togo's long cycle of decline ended in 2007, following largely free and fair legislative elections. The political situation has stabilized over the past few years, and Presidential and legislative elections, held in 2010 and 2013, respectively, were recognized by the international community as free and fair, despite some shortfalls. Most recently, April's Presidential elections were judged credible by international observers, and the United States congratulated the people of Togo for exercising their democratic rights before, during, and after the vote. The country is presently at peace. Should I be confirmed, one of Embassy Lomé's top priorities will be to support and maintain a peaceful, transparent, and fair political climate, thereby consolidating and expanding on the democratic gains of the past several years.

A stable, peaceful, and prosperous Togo serves American interests and expands Togo's ability to contribute to regional stability. The United States maintains a good relationship with the Togolese military, which has been a willing partner in key areas such as maritime security and international peacekeeping. If confirmed, I look forward to maintaining our strong partnership with Togolese security officials to effectively police and regulate Togolese waters in the Gulf of Guinea. Additionally, if confirmed I hope to strengthen Togo's capacity to engage in peacekeeping missions through the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program, which has been active in Togo since 2009, and has assisted with the training and deployment of Togolese peacekeeping forces to Mali, Darfur, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Burundi, Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic. Also, beginning in 2013, the Government of Togo has stepped up its effort to curb wildlife trafficking, making several seizures and arrests. The United States is providing technical expertise and material support to help the Togolese law enforcement community overcome this rising challenge. If confirmed, I look forward to maintaining our strong partnership with the Togolese on this issue.

Poverty continues to breed corruption and crime, smuggling, and trafficking in persons. If confirmed, I will support Togo's efforts to address these challenges, which also threaten the national interests of the United States. The Government of Togo recognizes that an improving but still challenging investment climate and a developing but still weak private sector are key impediments to Togo's prospects for sustained economic growth, and eliminating poverty. If confirmed, I will take advantage of available initiatives to promote a healthy economy, including identification of public-private partnerships that include American companies and that enjoy United States Government guarantees. The Embassy will look to use regional programs offered through the U.S. Agency for International Development to strengthen Togo's developing role as a regional trade hub, as well as to help ensure that the country makes the most of Lomé's deep-water port, which is a significant contributor to the Togolese economy. If confirmed, I will encourage the Togolese Government and Togolese entrepreneurs to take full advantages of the opportunities and preferences provided by AGOA.

Development assistance to Togo provided through the U.S. Agency for International Development focuses primarily on improving Togo's national public health capacity; USAID's West African Regional Health Office runs multiple health programs in Togo, including HIV/AIDS prevention. Through the Department of Defense's HIV/AIDS Prevention Program monitored by Embassy Lomé, 50 newborns were born free of HIV to HIV-positive mothers last year. This year that program has been expanded to include 150 mothers. If confirmed, I will look to employ such existing initiatives, including the multilateral partnership of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), to assist the Togolese Ministry of Health in improving basic public health programs and treating and eradicating disease. The Embassy in Lomé will also continue to support a robust Peace Corps presence in country with a programmatic focus on health, especially on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, for this opportunity to address you. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you in representing the interests of the American people in Togo. I am happy to answer any questions you have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Hawkins.

STATEMENT OF JEFFREY J. HAWKINS, JR., NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Mr. HAWKINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next Ambassador of the United States to the Central African Republic. I thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for entrusting me with this important responsibility.

If confirmed, I will work with Congress to advance the interests of the United States in the Central African Republic.

Joining me here today is my wife, Annie. I am deeply grateful to Annie and to our small children, Max and Alex, for allowing me

this opportunity to serve my country, despite the hardships and sacrifices that it will require of them.

Mr. Chairman, the Central African Republic, a Texas-sized nation in the heart of Africa, is blessed with an abundance of natural resources and a resilient and entrepreneurial people. Sadly, however, cycles of conflict have roiled that nation for decades.

Beginning in late 2012, the Central African Republic saw its latest and certainly its worst such cycle. Conflict left thousands dead and hundreds of thousands displaced. Armed factions, including foreign groups like the heinous Lord's Resistance Army, controlled large swathes of its territory. The picture, frankly, was bleak.

Mr. Chairman, a transitional government, with strong support from the international community and the United States Government, is taking the first, difficult steps toward peace. If confirmed, my primary objective will be to support this process.

We have a strong interest in CAR's success. A successful transition will help forestall a return to anarchy and atrocities on victim populations. A successful transition also will assist in preventing extremist and trafficking groups from using the country's ungoverned spaces for their own nefarious purposes.

Finally, it will also aid in reducing regional instability.

The people of the Central African Republic are clearly ready for a new beginning. Earlier this year, they gathered together in grassroots consultations to speak about their hopes for their nation's future. Armed groups agreed to halt the use of child soldiers and committed to stopping violent conflict.

The country's political transition will culminate later this year with a constitutional referendum and elections.

The international community provides key support to this process. In particular, the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA, has operated in the country since September 2014. Nearly 10,000 U.N. peacekeepers and some 900 French troops provide the security backbone for this deployment.

The United States has made a real commitment to the positive change we are beginning to see in the Central African Republic. Over the past 2 years, we have contributed some $800 million to assist at-risk populations, underwrite the U.N. effort, reform the justice sector, aid the electoral process, and encourage peace-building and reconciliation.

In September of last year, with support of the Congress, we reopened our Embassy after nearly 2 years of closure.

Mr. Chairman, we may not have a better opportunity to break the cycles of conflict in CAR. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will ensure that U.S. resources are used appropriately. I believe my deep experience in Africa, years working in post-conflict environments like Afghanistan, and strong Foreign Service leadership credentials will be useful in promoting U.S. Government interests there.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today, and welcome any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hawkins follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JEFFREY J. HAWKINS, JR.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next Ambassador of the United States to the Central African Republic. I thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for entrusting me with this important responsibility. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to advance the interests of the United States in the Central African Republic.

Joining me here today are my wife, Annie, and our children, Max, 5, and Alex, 3. Regrettably, security conditions do not permit families to join our diplomats working in Bangui. I am deeply grateful to Annie and the boys for allowing me this opportunity to serve my country, despite the hardships and sacrifices that it will require of them.

Mr. Chairman, the Central African Republic, a Texas-sized nation in the heart of Africa, is blessed with an abundance of natural resources and a resilient and entrepreneurial population.

Sadly, however, cycles of conflict and political instability have roiled that nation for more than 30 years. Beginning in late 2012, the Central African Republic saw its latest, and worst, such cycle. Regional and ethnic conflict left thousands dead and hundreds of thousands displaced. Armed factions, including foreign groups like the heinous Lord's Resistance Army, controlled large swathes of its territory. The picture, frankly, was bleak.

Mr. Chairman, there is now reason for hope in the Central African Republic. A transitional government—with strong support from the international community and the United States Government—is taking the first, difficult steps toward peace.

If confirmed, my primary objective will be to support this process. Should this process succeed, a newly peaceful and democratic Central African Republic will face many serious challenges. We have a strong interest in CAR's success. A successful transition will help forestall a return to anarchy and atrocities on victim populations. The transition also will assist in preventing extremist and criminal trafficking groups from using the country's ungoverned spaces for their own nefarious purposes and in reducing regional instability. A successful transition will put the people of CAR in a position to rebuild their lives and build a better nation themselves.

The people of the Central African Republic are clearly ready for a new beginning. Earlier this year, Central Africans gathered together, in grassroots consultations known as the Bangui Forum, to speak about their hopes for their nation's future. At the forum, armed groups agreed to halt the use of child soldiers and committed to stopping violent conflict. Voter registration began in June and continues to expand throughout the country. The country's political transition will culminate later this year with a constitutional referendum and elections.

The international community provides key support to this process. In particular, the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic—MINUSCA—has operated in the country since September 2014, to reinforce the transition and protect civilian populations. Nearly 10,000 U.N. peacekeepers and approximately 900 French troops provide a security backbone for this deployment.

The United States has made a real commitment to the positive change in the Central African Republic. Over the past 2 years, we have contributed over $800 million to assist at-risk populations, underwrite the U.N. effort, reform the justice sector, aid the electoral process, and encourage peace-building and reconciliation. In September of last year, with support of the Congress, we reopened our Embassy after nearly 2 years; the Embassy is a vital platform for oversight of our operations and I want to recognize here the extraordinary efforts of our team on the ground in Bangui.

Mr. Chairman, we may not have a better opportunity to break the cycles of conflict in CAR. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will ensure that U.S. resources are used appropriately so that they will contribute effectively to sustainable change in the Central African Republic. I believe my deep experience in Africa, years working in post-conflict environments like Afghanistan, and strong Foreign Service leadership credentials will be useful in promoting U.S. Government interests there.

In closing, I would like to express particular thanks to the outstanding team currently serving at Embassy Bangui for their courage and fortitude in leading our engagement in the Central African Republic.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today, and welcome any questions you may have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Rubinstein.

STATEMENT OF DANIEL H. RUBINSTEIN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Republic of Tunisia.

I would also like to thank Secretary Kerry for placing his trust in me to manage the relationship with this important partner, and recently designated Major Non-NATO Ally.

Before I begin, I would also like to take a moment to recognize and thank my family, my wife, Julie, and our children, Jonah and Simon. They have provided unconditional love and constant support throughout my career.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the honor of serving as a Foreign Service officer for the last 26 years, much of it in the Middle East, including 1 year in Tunisia. My previous assignments have provided me with an extensive background in economic and counterterrorism issues that are critical to our partnership with Tunisia.

While my time in Tunisia was before the 2011 revolution, I maintain an abiding respect and admiration for the country, its culture, and its people. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia, I pledge to work with my colleagues in the executive and legislative branches of our government to advance our national interests and deepen this partnership.

During President Caid Essebsi's visit to Washington in May, President Obama affirmed the enduring partnership between the United States and Tunisia based on both mutual interests and shared values. Tunisia's democratic progress is an important counterpoint to those who assert that Islam and the Arab world are somehow incompatible with democracy.

Chairman Flake, let me assure you that during these challenging times, I am deeply cognizant that the number one priority of an Ambassador is the safety of Americans abroad. If confirmed, I assure you that I will carefully monitor the security environment as I seek to advance our diplomatic objectives, with no higher responsibility than ensuring the security of all U.S. citizens in Tunisia and all personnel under my charge.

In addition to keeping this commitment in mind, I will also continue to be mindful that this is a critical time in our engagement with Tunisia.

Since the 2011 revolution, Tunisia has taken remarkable and inspiring steps to build an accountable and representative democracy. But despite historic legislative and Presidential elections in 2014, the democratic transition and the country's security remain fragile.

In recent months, Tunisia has endured two horrific terrorist attacks that threaten the progress so many Tunisians have fought for since Mohamed Bouazizi set himself alight in Sidi Bouzid and thus sparked the Arab Spring.

Those vile attacks on innocent tourists and Tunisian citizens underline the enormous security challenges facing Tunisia. The reasons for radicalization are many but what is clear is that high levels of youth unemployment, feelings of marginalization, and instability in Libya are exploited by those who wish to undercut Tunisia's progress in the name of radicalism and barbaric violence.

If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues across the U.S. Government to direct resources to increasing the capacity of Tunisian Security Forces to address and degrade the threats posed by groups like AQIM, Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia, and ISIL, which has claimed responsibility for the Bardo Museum and Sousse attacks.

Tunisia's security services have made commendable progress in dealing with dangerous extremists, but more needs to be done. In the wake of the attacks, the Tunisians have asked for continued support for their military and internal security forces to include increased information-sharing, equipment, and training to effectively identify threats and subvert efforts of violent extremist groups.

If confirmed, I will continue these endeavors, and I will also support reform to Tunisia's judicial, prison, and police forces to help make them more professional institutions that are more responsive and accountable to their public.

And while security support is critical, Mr. Chairman, the United States must also help strengthen Tunisia's economy in order to address some of the root causes contributing to the rise of extremist violence. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Government of Tunisia in support of its economic reform agenda. I will also support the government and private sector's efforts to increase access to economic opportunities for all, to include marginalized and economically disadvantaged populations.

I firmly believe that we cannot forget what makes Tunisia special: Its democracy. Islamists, secularists, and many in between are working together daily to negotiate and seek consensus. Tunisia is the only Arab country ranked as "free" by Freedom House. The consolidation of democratic governance will take time and patience as Tunisia builds its institutions and works to ensure the freedoms guaranteed to Tunisian citizens by their constitution.

Tunisia's people expect transparency in government institutions, and for government officials, security forces, and their private sector leaders to behave in ways that are not corrupt and that benefit the public. If confirmed, I will ensure the United States continues to promote reforms that will address issues of transparency and accountability, and prioritizes the rights of the Tunisian people.

If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I will also pay close attention to the management of the Embassy and its hardworking and dedicated personnel. As our partnership with and assistance to Tunisia grows, I can assure you I will work to ensure we have adequate staff and resources to properly manage the many facets of the relationship.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, for the opportunity to testify before you. I can assure you today that, if confirmed, it will be my honor to further U.S. interests and strengthen our relationship with Tunisia, and I look forward to the opportunity to welcome you in Tunisia, if confirmed, and work with you and your staffs to achieve those goals.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rubinstein follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DANIEL H. RUBINSTEIN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Republic of Tunisia. I would also like to thank Secretary Kerry for plac-

ing his trust in me to manage the relationship with this important partner, and recently designated Major Non-NATO Ally. Before I begin, I'd also like to take a moment to recognize and thank my family—my wife, Julie, and our children, Jonah and Simon. They have provided unconditional love and constant support throughout my career.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the honor of serving as a Foreign Service officer for the last 26 years, much of it in the Middle East, including a year in Tunisia. My previous assignments have provided me with an extensive background in economic and counterterrorism issues that are critical to our partnership with Tunisia. While my time in Tunisia was before the 2011 revolution, I maintain an abiding respect and admiration for the country, its culture, and its people. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia, I pledge to work with my colleagues in the executive and legislative branches of our government to advance our national interests and deepen this partnership.

During President Caid Essebsi's visit in May, President Obama affirmed the enduring partnership between the United States and Tunisia based on both mutual interests and shared values. Tunisia's democratic progress is an important counterpoint to those who assert that Islam and the Arab world are somehow incompatible with democracy.

Chairman Flake, let me assure you that during these challenging times, I am deeply cognizant that the number one priority of an ambassador is the safety of Americans abroad. If confirmed, I assure you that I will carefully monitor the security environment as I seek to advance our diplomatic objectives, with no higher responsibility than ensuring the security of all U.S. citizens in Tunisia and all personnel under my charge.

In addition to keeping this commitment in mind, I will also continue to be mindful that this is a critical time in our engagement with Tunisia. Since the 2011 revolution, Tunisia has taken remarkable and inspiring steps to build an accountable and representative democracy. But despite historic legislative and Presidential elections in 2014, the democratic transition and the country's security remain fragile.

In recent months, Tunisia has endured two horrific terrorist attacks that threaten the progress so many Tunisians have fought for since Mohamed Bouazizi set himself alight in Sidi Bouzid and sparked the Arab Spring. Those vile attacks on innocent tourists and Tunisian citizens underline the enormous security challenges facing Tunisia. The reasons for radicalization are many but what is clear is that high levels of youth unemployment, feelings of marginalization, and instability in Libya are exploited by those who wish to undercut Tunisia's progress in the name of radicalism and barbaric violence.

If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues across the U.S. Government to direct resources to increasing the capacity of Tunisian Security Forces to address and degrade the threats posed by groups like AQIM, Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia, and ISIL, which has claimed responsibility for the Bardo Museum and Sousse attacks. Tunisia's security services have made commendable progress in dealing with dangerous extremists, but more needs to be done. In the wake of the attacks, the Tunisians have asked for continued support for their military and internal security forces to include increased information-sharing, equipment, and training to effectively identify threats and subvert efforts of violent extremist groups. If confirmed, I will continue these endeavors and I will also support reform to Tunisia's judicial, prison, and police forces to help make them more professional institutions that are more responsive and accountable to their public. And while security support is critical, the United States must also help strengthen Tunisia's economy in order to address some of the root causes contributing to the rise of extremist violence.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Government of Tunisia in support of its economic reform agenda. I will also support the government and private sector's efforts to increase access to economic opportunities for all, to include marginalized and economically disadvantaged populations. I will promote these efforts through expanded technical support for the government's reform efforts, through greater coordination with international partners to leverage their resources and expertise, and via continued support for workforce development and entrepreneurship initiatives. I will prioritize the strengthening of Tunisia's economic institutions and increasing public sector transparency and accountability.

I firmly believe that we cannot forget what makes Tunisia special: its democracy. Islamists, secularists, and many in between are working together daily to negotiate and seek consensus. Tunisia is the only Arab country ranked as "free" by Freedom House. The consolidation of democratic governance will take time and patience as Tunisia builds its institutions and works to ensure the freedoms guaranteed to Tunisian citizens by their constitution. Tunisia's people expect transparency in government institutions, and for government officials, security forces, and private sector

leaders to behave in ways that are not corrupt and benefit the public. If confirmed, I will ensure that the United States continues to promote reforms that will address issues of transparency and accountability and prioritizes the rights of the Tunisian people.

If confirmed, I will also pay close attention to the management of the Embassy and its hard working and dedicated personnel. As our partnership with, and assistance to Tunisia grows, I can assure you I will work to ensure we have adequate staff and resources to properly manage the many facets of the relationship.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, and members of the committee, for the opportunity to testify before you. I can assure you today that, if confirmed, it will be my honor to further U.S. interests and strengthen our relationship with Tunisia, and I look forward to the opportunity to welcome you in Tunisia and work with you and your staffs to achieve those goals.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Alsup.

STATEMENT OF CAROLYN PATRICIA ALSUP, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

Ms. ALSUP. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today. I wish to express my gratitude to the President and Secretary of State for the trust and confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of The Gambia.

If confirmed, I would embrace the opportunity to apply my 23 years of experience as a Foreign Service officer to advance U.S. priorities in The Gambia. I believe my previous experience as Deputy Chief of Mission in The Gambia from 2005 to 2007, and my most recent experience as Deputy Chief of Mission at our Embassy in Ghana, would be particularly helpful in continuing to advocate for U.S. objectives in The Gambia.

Throughout my Foreign Service career, I have relied on my ability to build and maintain a strong, collaborative team with high morale and a clear sense of purpose to advance U.S. interests and objectives, whether it was promoting increased literacy, facilitating U.S. investment, encouraging entrepreneurship, advancing human rights, or supporting democratic institutions and free and fair elections.

I believe I am well-prepared to assume the duties and responsibilities of U.S. Ambassador to The Gambia and to deal with the many opportunities and challenges associated with that position.

The United States and The Gambia share a long history dating back to the mid-1800s. The Gambia has a rich cultural heritage, perhaps made most famous in the United States by Alex Haley's novel, "Roots," which still today brings many African-Americans to the country on a journey to discover their heritage.

The United States is committed to helping the Gambian people improve their lives by promoting democratic principles, human rights, and economic development. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to engage the Government of The Gambia on these core areas to accomplish our shared goal of greater prosperity for The Gambia and for the Gambian people.

The Gambia is a troop-contributing country for U.N. peacekeeping missions, including a substantial presence in Darfur, a very important contribution to international peace and security. But peace and security must start at home.

The Gambia, as a predominately moderate Muslim country where people of different faiths have long lived together with little tension, could play an important role in promoting tolerance and countering violent extremism. However, The Gambia will not be able to play that role to the fullest without making changes at home.

We remain deeply concerned about the downward trajectory of The Gambia's human rights record. Gambians are being arbitrarily arrested and detained for longer than the constitutionally mandated 72-hour period, and discriminatory legislation and verbal and physical abuse have been targeted against the LGBTI community.

Furthermore, we still do not know the whereabouts of two missing dual Gambian-American citizens who were last seen in The Gambia over 2 years ago.

Human rights is a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy; respecting and upholding human rights is also a cornerstone of maintaining a just and peace society, and mitigating the lure of violent extremism.

In my career, I have found that when we as diplomats are open to dialogue, to listen and speak frankly, that we can make great strides in narrowing our differences on even the most contentious issues. If confirmed, I will seek regular dialogue with Gambian officials, political parties, civil society, journalists, youth, and women to emphasize the importance of respect for and protection of all human rights.

Lastly, although the U.S. Embassy footprint in The Gambia is small, we are able to expand our reach through the 92 Peace Corps Volunteers working in the education, environment, and health sectors. Peace Corps has been active in The Gambia since 1967 and has been warmly welcomed by the government and people of The Gambia. If confirmed, I would make my top concern the safety and security of the nearly 2,000 U.S. citizens in The Gambia, about half of whom are minors.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear today. I would be pleased to respond to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Alsup follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CAROLYN P. ALSUP

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today. I wish to express my gratitude to the President and Secretary of State for the trust and confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of The Gambia.

If confirmed, I would embrace the opportunity to apply my 23 years of experience as a Foreign Service officer to advance U.S. priorities in The Gambia. I believe my previous experience as Deputy Chief of Mission in The Gambia from 2005 to 2007 and my most recent experience as Deputy Chief of Mission at our Embassy in Ghana would be particularly helpful in continuing to advocate for U.S. objectives in The Gambia. Throughout my Foreign Service career I have relied upon my ability to build and maintain a strong, collaborative team with high morale and a clear sense of purpose to advance U.S. interests and objectives—whether it was promoting increased literacy, facilitating U.S. investment, encouraging entrepreneurship, advancing human rights, or supporting democratic institutions and free and fair elections. I believe I am well-prepared to assume the duties and responsibilities of U.S. Ambassador to The Gambia and to deal with the many opportunities and challenges associated with that position.

The United States and The Gambia share a long history dating back to the mid-1800s. The Gambia has a rich cultural heritage perhaps made most famous in the

United States by Alex Haley's novel, "Roots," which, still today, brings many African-Americans to the country on a journey to discover their heritage.

The United States is committed to helping the Gambian people improve their lives by promoting democratic principles, human rights, and economic development. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to engage the Government of The Gambia on these core areas to accomplish our shared goal of a greater prosperity for The Gambia and for the Gambian people.

The Gambia is a troop contributing country for U.N. peacekeeping missions, including a substantial presence in Darfur, a very important contribution to international peace and security. But peace and security must start at home. The Gambia—as a predominately moderate, Muslim country where people of different faiths have long lived together with little tension—could play an important role in promoting tolerance and countering violent extremism.

However, The Gambia will not be able to play that role to the fullest without making changes at home. We remain deeply concerned about the downward trajectory of The Gambia's human rights record. Gambians are being arbitrarily arrested and detained for longer than the constitutionally mandated 72-hour period, and discriminatory legislation and verbal and physical abuse have been targeted against the LGBTI community. Furthermore, we still do not know the whereabouts of two missing Gambian-American citizens who were last seen in The Gambia over 2 years ago. Human rights is a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy; respecting and upholding human rights is also a cornerstone of maintaining a just and peace society and mitigating the lure of violent extremism. In my career, I have found that when we as diplomats are open to dialogue—to listen and speak frankly—that we can make great strides in narrowing our differences on even the most contentious of issues. If confirmed, I will seek regular dialogue with Gambian officials, political parties, civil society, journalists, youth and women to emphasize the importance of respect for, and protection of, all human rights.

Lastly, although the U.S. Embassy footprint in The Gambia is small, we are able to expand our reach through the 92 Peace Corps Volunteers working in the education, environment, and health sectors. Peace Corps has been active in The Gambia since 1967 and has been warmly welcomed by the government and people of The Gambia. If confirmed, I would make my top concern the safety and security of the nearly 2,000 U.S. citizens in The Gambia, about half of whom are minors.

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to appear today. I would be pleased to respond to your questions.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you all for your testimony.

We have been joined by Chris Murphy, a Senator from Connecticut. Thank you for being here.

Let me just start with a couple questions.

Ms. Tamlyn, how can Benin take better advantage of AGOA and improve their economic performance? Is that a reasonable prospect?

Ms. TAMLYN. Thank you, Senator. That is an excellent question.

Their exports under AGOA are very small, at least those that are covered by AGOA. Of course, some of their primary exports are not covered, such as cotton.

But I think one of the ways we can work with them to improve that record is, in fact, through the Millennium Challenge Compact, which is going to work on improving the supply of electricity. For many small businesses or agro industry, the inability to maintain a steady production line because of gaps in electricity coverage is a real impediment to economic growth and to getting those products out to market.

So I think that is a very important contribution that we are making. We do hope that we will be able to see an increase in economic production generally and hope that that translates as well into products that can be exported to the United States, products that are valued added that U.S. consumers seek and that help benefit to the economy of Benin.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Gilmour, to what extent does the Togolese military play in domestic politics?

Mr. GILMOUR. Thank you, Senator.

The military has played less and less of a role in politics, fortunately, in recent years because there has been a process of reform since 2007. There have been successful free and fair elections. And part of our strategy has been to work with the Togolese military to increase their professionalism to be able to deploy peacekeeping missions.

They have about 1,000 peacekeepers on deployment right now. That is both military and foreign police units that have deployed. I think that is the largest contingent in Mali right now.

So that has helped a great deal. And then our other key area in working with them has been in the maritime area. They have been a very strong partner in terms of building their capacity to patrol the waters off the coast of Togo. Togo has become a kind of safe harbor for the region. On any given day, there are over 100 ships lying off of Lome, waiting to go into the other nearby ports and into Lome itself, because the Togolese military has done such a good job of patrolling their waters.

Much of that is thanks to assistance from the United States. We have donated patrol boats and done quite a bit of training. If confirmed, I would certainly look forward to working to intensify that cooperation.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Hawkins, elections have been postponed now twice in CAR. What is the likelihood that they will go as scheduled? And if so, does that allow for adequate preparation?

Mr. HAWKINS. An excellent question and one that will be determinate in the future of this country.

The electoral process is underway. Elections are scheduled in October. There will be a constitutional referendum followed by Presidential elections subsequently. In November, there will be legislative elections. That is the plan.

The first part of that now is voter registration, and we have had some fairly promising news. Registration in Bangui is up. Almost 300,000 people have been registered there. The Embassy estimates that approximately 350,000 eligible voters live in Bangui, so that part of the process is doing well.

They are moving out into the provinces now to register voters.

Funding remains an issue, and there is still a gap of about $15 million to pay for the elections. Getting election preparations out into those provinces, particularly in areas where government control is weak, is going to be an issue.

Another issue is the voting of refugees. That is a key element in this because those refugee populations must be brought in and included, or you will not have elections that will reflect the will of the entirety of the people.

So there are a lot of issues at stake, but we are there. We are supportive. We have done work. The U.S. Government has done work on the constitutional drafting process, on the electoral code. We are just putting in $2 million into electoral education. So we are hopeful that things will go ahead as planned.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Rubinstein, what types of U.S. engagement have been effective in Tunisia? It is one of the best examples of transition after the Arab Spring. What have we done that has worked?

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for the question.

My sense is that there has been some very effective diplomatic engagement in the first instance, particularly to keep all of the leading elements of Tunisia's body politic, whether they were secularist, Islamist, or others, working together during some of these very fragile moments of the transition. That involved, I think, some very good engagement out in the field at the most senior levels.

Of course, we provided resources to ensure that both the legislative and the Presidential elections occurred peacefully and in ways that were credible, free, and fair. So I think that engagement was very, very effective.

I think on the security side, there has been as well some very effective engagement. The Tunisian and U.S. militaries have a long history of working together. That engagement has deepened not only through Joint Military Commissioned annual meetings but also through now a far more robust set of activities, primarily training and equipping the Tunisians on various capabilities, particularly in the CT area. So that is going to continue.

I think on the economic side as well there has been some very effective engagement. We are providing some technical advice as they tackle some of the key critical economic reforms that need to be really driven home during this period. That includes getting a new investment code, banking reform, tax and customs reforms, as well as a public-private partnership law. We have had some really good engagement with technical advisers to get them where they need to be on those fronts.

Senator FLAKE. That sounds like a full range.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Yes, sir.

Senator FLAKE. Ms. Alsup, when we spoke in my office, we talked about realistic expectations about the situation in The Gambia. One of the issues is trafficking. How can we help in that regard? What impact can we have on government there?

Ms. ALSUP. I am glad you asked that question, Senator. We are, in fact, bringing the head of The Gambia's coordinating committee on anti-trafficking here to the United States for a seminar that is coming up in August on combating trafficking in persons. Through the J/TIP office at the State Department we also provided some training through UNODC, the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

With regard to prisoners who were released, I believe 200 a while ago, what do you think prompted that action?

Ms. ALSUP. Well, I think that the action was purportedly a gesture in honor of the Eid celebration. However, I believe that it was done primarily to show the world that The Gambia is trying to move toward a greater respect for human rights. At least, that is my hope that is what it means.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

We have been joined by Senator Markey. If we seem blurry-eyed, we both arrived yesterday at 3:30 a.m., having just traveled to Africa. I am glad to have taken the trip and to be back.

If you want to make any statement or launch into questions?

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The chairman and I did have a great time in Africa, Ethiopia and Kenya, for several days.

We thank you each for being willing to serve our country in the roles that you are nominated for. It is a very important continent, and it is just exploding economically. But underneath it, there are many historical tensions, problems that continue to exist.

Mr. Rubinstein, I was in Tunisia 3 years ago. They were just drafting the new constitution, with a lot of hope for the country. It is where the peaceful revolution really began, and it turned into something that is unrecognizable in other countries. But in Tunisia, I think there is still a commitment to trying to fulfill the original ideal.

Can you talk a little bit about that and what, from your perspective, is the greatest threat to Tunisia being a model that ultimately can be emulated?

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Thank you very much, Senator.

I share your optimism regarding Tunisia. What I would say though is, as opposed to a model for the rest of the Middle East, perhaps it is better to think of it as an example. The reason I mention that is because the very high number of differences between all of these countries in the Middle East, whether going through Arab Spring experiences or not.

But certainly, it serves as an example where there was political compromise practiced by people of very, very different perspectives, if we think about Nahda on the Islamist side all the way through to Nida Tounes on the other side, strongly secular. The fact that those political movements and others have continued through very, very challenging times to work through their differences, reach consensus, and also pass off power, as we saw Nahda do in 2014 to the transitional government, concede defeat in the last elections, these are hopeful signs that there is significant buy-in on the part of really all parts of the Tunisian political spectrum to continue on that path of democratic transition.

Frankly, I think what threatens it most are these horrific terrorist attacks. That is why the Tunisian security forces do need to be bolstered. They do need our help. With the generosity of the Congress, I suspect that we will be able to bring them greater security capacity, particularly in the area of border security.

Senator MARKEY. I agree with you. I visited Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt in the spring of 2012. They were all drafting their new constitutions. They each had a Muslim Brotherhood in each country. It was pretty clear that each Muslim Brotherhood was different from the other. It is not monolithic. Each one, to a certain extent, has to reflect the history of its own country and be accommodating to it, including the 1959 constitution that gave equal rights to women in Tunisia. It just cannot be overturned overnight in a country.

That is why Tunisia, in my mind, is something that is really hopeful, but we have to keep our eye on it as well.

If I could go to Togo for a second, there was just an election. There was a resounding victory. It has been rejected by the opposition. There are accusations of fraud.

You just heard the President, Mr. Gilmour, talk about that in Ethiopia before the African Union. Can you talk a little bit about Togo, this election, and how you view our ability to work for that government to make sure that it has the kind of credibility that the President was talking about?

Mr. GILMOUR. Thank you, Senator.

There has been a process of political reform going on in Togo since 2006, with what they call the global political agreement that was negotiated between the opposition and the government. Since that time, they have had free and fair elections in several instances, including in April of this year. There were questions about the fairness of the election and the administration beforehand.

Our Ambassador, Ambassador Whitehead, who is there was very much part of the discussions of bringing in the other international observers, including the International Organisation of La Francophonie, to help lend credibility to the administration of the elections.

So everyone who was there who observed had a consensus that the elections were, indeed, free and fair.

One opposition leader, as you mentioned, has rejected the results, but fortunately since the election, things have been peaceful, so people have not come out in the street to protest. I think we still can make progress, certainly, on the issue of term limits, which the President talked about in his speech in Ethiopia.

In fact, term limits have been on the agenda in Togo for several years. There were negotiations as recently as last year between the government and opposition about the modalities of how they might work that out. In fact, in the legislature last year, there was legislation introduced but did not pass. So the government and opposition were not able to come to agreement on kind of the implementation and how term limits could work.

I am told that term limits are still on the agenda and that the president is willing to talk about this and that the opposition is, of course, very much engaged in the question. So I would look forward to, if confirmed, continue to facilitate that dialogue, as Ambassador Whitehead has done.

Senator MARKEY. If I could go to Gambia for a second and talk a little bit about that tension that exists between the United States and the Gambian Government over democracy and its operation in Gambia.

Can you talk a little bit about that, Ms. Alsup, so we can get your perspective?

Ms. ALSUP. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

Yes, there is a very real tension between the United States and The Gambia regarding democracy and human rights. If confirmed, that would be one of my priorities, to establish a dialogue. I believe it is important that we engage. I do not think that changes can be made overnight, but I think it is important that we continue to emphasize the importance of democratic principles, the importance of respect for human rights, particularly with regard to arrests. There have been many arbitrary arrests.

We were pleased with the release of the prisoners recently. Many of them were the family members of people who had been involved in the December 30 coup attempt, so we were very pleased that they had been released.

However, it is something that would be ongoing. We have had a good relationship now with the Foreign Minister, someone whom I had met with frequently when I was in The Gambia before. But I think we need to have that kind of dialogue that we have with her at all levels of the government. That would be my top priority, to establish that dialogue.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you so much. I thank all of you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being with us here today.

Mr. Hawkins, I just wanted to talk about what you have learned so far in your preparation for this post, as to the effect of the U.S. spending and U.S. aid in CAR. I was trying to figure out what the number is. It looks to me around $70 million or so, heavily in humanitarian aid and really small amounts of money being spent on this election. I think we have less than $1 million in electoral support.

What is your sense of what we have been able to leverage with the amount of money that we are spending there, and what you have heard from folks in terms of recommendations about where we might need to spend more in order to get a bigger bang for our buck?

Mr. HAWKINS. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate that question.

I think you have to break our assistance down a bit. The overall number in the last 2 years is quite large. It is about $828 million. A lot of that is for assistance for refugees and internally displaced people. They estimate that about 2.7 million people in CAR need some sort of assistance. That is over half the population of the country. So this year alone, we will be providing about $101 million in that area.

Another big ticket item is our support to MINUSCA, to the U.N. peacekeeping operation, our assessed contributions. I think for the last little bit over a year, that has run at about $452 million.

So those are big and very impactful and very important contributions that we have made.

In some other areas, the numbers are smaller but still important. One area that we are looking at very closely is the justice sector. The INL Bureau in the State Department has about $25 million to help reestablish the justice system in that country, in a place that has had such dreadful occurrences and people's rights abused in such awful way, providing people an outlet, a justice outlet, is hugely important. That has been impactful. The court has started working in Bangui, at least. In the first session, they went through a number of cases.

We are also providing assistance for victims of sexual abuse, which in that conflict context is very important.

Some of the contributions in other areas are smaller. The electoral area is certainly one that requires attention of the inter-

national community. The shortfall there is pretty significant, as I mentioned earlier. It is about $15 million. That is an immediate need, because those elections are taking place in a few months, if they hold to the schedule. So that is, certainly, something that we will need to look at more closely.

We are not alone on this, of course. There is an international coalition of willing partners who have contributed in various ways. The International Contact Group for CAR just met on the 27th, and we were represented there, and a number of countries in the AU and others were looking at those issues.

But there is a lot to do. I am very proud of the U.S. contributions so far. If confirmed, I look forward to overseeing those programs, ensuring that they are operated appropriately, and making the best case possible that we have the resources we need to move this forward.

Senator MURPHY. Having spent $800 million there, it would be a shame if we relatively nickel and dimed them such that they could not run an appropriately funded election.

Mr. Rubinstein, I was with a big delegation in Tunisia earlier in the year, and I wanted to ask you a couple questions in that context.

On a bipartisan basis, we were there and made a commitment to do everything that Tunisia needed in order to continue on its democratic path. Then as a member of the Appropriations Committee, we just voted for a foreign aid budget that did not fund the President's request for Tunisia, something that, from what I understand, the Tunisians have noticed. There seems to be a separation between our rhetoric and what we are able to deliver.

There is some vague language in the appropriations bill that we are going to try to find the money somewhere else, but is this going to be an issue for you? Can we fulfill the commitments that we have made, formally or informally, if we do not ultimately fund the number that the President has requested?

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Thank you very much, Senator, for that question.

My sense is that the increases that are in the administration's request for fiscal year 2016 are very well grounded and they reflect some very serious needs not only in the security area where it is plainly obvious that Tunisia is facing some extremely serious threats with these two major attacks, but also in the economic reform and the democracy, governance, and rights areas.

Frankly, if those two areas do not keep up in some way with the security side of the relationship, that could get out of whack. I think that is a problem.

So I do sense that we have made those rhetorical commitments. Tunisia is counting on our support as well as that of other countries. Thankfully, we do have other countries that are in the mix. Of course, Tunisia getting support from the IMF and the World Bank and others. But I think they are primarily looking to the United States to meet these needs at this time and to ensure that they stay on the path, particularly, I would add, on the side of giving them the fiscal space so that they can make these very difficult economic reforms, particularly reforming state-owned banks, investment, tax, customs. These are going to entail some real choices,

and probably some winners and losers. It will be important for us to provide that fiscal space for them.

Senator MURPHY. I wanted to ask you one more question, drawing on your long experience in the region. I tend to think the way that we think of the region is far too black and white. There are not really friends and enemies. There are degrees of friends and degrees of enemies or adversaries, whatever you want to call them.

We had a meeting with a cross-section of opposition leadership while we were there that included Nahda, that included Rachid Ghannouchi.

Actually, some members of our delegation chose not to take part in that meeting because they did not want to be associated with a member of an Islamist party.

So just talk to me about how the United States deals with, specifically, a group like Nahda, but the general phenomenon of Islamist parties who cannot be completely excluded from political coalitions but often have values that are completely antithetical to those that we wish were the core of these emerging democracies? So maybe speak to it specifically with respect with Nahda, but I am sure you may have thoughts in a broader sense from your experience in the region.

Mr. RUBINSTEIN. Senator, I think you properly identified the key factor, and that is: Is the Islamist movement both an important part of the national political fabric and social fabric of the country? And secondly, are they playing by the rules? Those are two indicators that at least I have looked to and, if confirmed, I would look to in Tunisia to see if they are continuing to do what they have done so far, which is to participate fully and constructively in political life there, to engage in compromise, to be supportive of the reforms the country needs.

In fact, they have been very supportive. They have formed key coalitions to get things done with Nida Tunis and other parties. That is something I think should be, frankly, strengthened.

As far as other movements in other parts of the region, I think you made an excellent point. They do need to be looked at in terms of their commitments to representative democracy and whether they want to be a good actor, a constructive actor, and know how to turn over power to others when appropriate, when citizens have voted. On those indices or indicators, Nahda has done very well. Certainly, I think it has been entirely appropriate that we engage with them, as we do with other Tunisian political parties and movements.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Markey had a followup.

Senator MARKEY. I just had a couple questions for you, Mr. Hawkins.

The Central African Republic has historically not really had religious tensions, but they seem to have broken out. Can you talk a little bit about how out of character it is in the history of the country? And what is going on right now in terms of those new ethnic and religious tensions being activated?

Mr. HAWKINS. Thank you very much, Senator.

The origins of the current cycle of conflict in CAR are complicated. There are many different elements to that. There are regional and economic, ethnic tensions that all play into this.

Unfortunately, as we went from late 2012, 2013, some of these tensions took on, as you noted, sir, an increasingly sectarian flavor. I think that is a cause of real concern. That has been one area of emphasis for us on the policy side and on the assistance side, focusing again on reconciliation and bringing people together after this incredibly divisive period in their history.

We are spending this year and last about $15 million on reconciliation programs.

Given my experience in Nigeria, where we did a lot of interfaith work, working with evangelical Christians and Muslim clerics, bringing those people together is so important to creating a national identity, an inclusive national identity. If confirmed, that will be one of my priorities as Ambassador to the re.

Senator MARKEY. Can you talk a little bit about the role of conflict diamonds in the Central African Republic right now?

Mr. HAWKINS. Hugely important. One of the major industries of the country, and again, this is a country that has been blessed with very rich resources and yet is at the bottom of every indicator for economic growth.

Diamonds play a key part now in fueling conflict because many of the bad actors in CAR are sitting on diamond resources. And diamonds will play an absolutely crucial role in getting this country out of this conflict, because that will be one of the main sources of revenue.

I was quite surprised, in studying for preparation for taking on this assignment, if confirmed, that something like 100,000 people in a country of 5 million depend on the diamond industry in the CAR. So it has a huge effect.

The focus internationally has been on the Kimberley Process. That coalition of producing and purchasing countries has suspended CAR since 2013. The Kimberley Process is looking very closely at ways that those parts of the diamond industry that are now increasingly under the international control or under state control can be brought into the system and that maybe diamonds can be used to fund good things, to fund the government, to fund support for the people, as opposed to funding conflict.

Senator MARKEY. Good luck to all of you on your missions.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Markey.

I want to thank all of you for being here. I appreciated meeting you all in my office. I wish you all the best. Certainly, our country relies on your professionalism and your expertise and your willingness to serve.

And also to your families, I want to express appreciation for the sacrifices that they all make in their own way.

I think one of these is an unaccompanied post. To Annie and Max and Alex, that is a particular sacrifice, in that regard.

But for all of you, I know that there are a lot of sacrifices that are made, and we just want you to know that this committee and the Senate, the Congress, appreciates that.

So thank you for your service. Thank you for what you are doing. We look forward to moving this process along with your nominations.

I should say that the record will stay open for a couple days, until Friday. So if anything needs to be submitted until then, it will be included in the record.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you very much. This meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:03 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF LUCY TAMLYN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF BENIN, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TAMLYN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR ISAKSON

Question. As we discussed during your office call, one of my highest priorities in office is ensuring that justice is done for Kate Puzey, who was murdered in Benin while serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer. There has been progress in the prosecution of this case, including assistance by our own FBI.

- Will you commit to continuing the same level of engagement on this issue as your predecessor, Ambassador Michael Raynor?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing Ambassador Raynor's high level of engagement to achieve justice for Kate Puzey. This tragedy took the life of an extraordinary young woman who was dedicated to improving the well-being of Beninese children—especially girls—and to promoting increased understanding between the United States and Benin through her service in the Peace Corps.

Your ongoing engagement on this issue and numerous trips to Benin, including for the 5th anniversary of Kate's murder in March 2014, have helped keep the Puzey investigation at the forefront of bilateral relations. President Yayi has been consistent in his commitment to seeing that justice is served. The Beninese Government and law enforcement cooperation with U.S. authorities and U.S. law enforcement remains high. The U.S. interagency law enforcement team is working closely with Beninese counterparts to develop and pursue new leads and to lay the foundation for successful prosecution.

If confirmed, I will work to continue this strong cooperation between the U.S interagency team and the Government of Benin. I also pledge to work with you to ensure this issue remains a top priority in U.S.-Benin relations.

RESPONSES OF DAVID R. GILMOUR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE TOGOLESE REPUBLIC, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE GILMOUR'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. According to the most recent Country Reports on Human Rights, "corruption and inefficiency were endemic in the police force, and impunity was a problem."

- What resources are available through State Department to combat police corruption, and what can you do as Ambassador to help Togo establish a roadmap to reforming police?

Answer. Police modernization and training programs are available through the Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) to help combat police corruption. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Togo, I will continue to advocate for efforts to modernize Togo's stance toward corruption and the prosecution of corruption.

I will also continue to promote programs to combat corruption through the Embassy in Lome and the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL). The United States, through the Embassy in Lome and through other INL and Department of Justice programs, has facilitated several anticorruption workshops and other training opportunities for Togolese law enforcement and judicial per-

sonnel. Embassy Lome also enjoys a very productive working relationship with the Ministry of Security and Civil Protection and engages with the government regularly on efforts to reinforce the capacity of Togo's national police. This summer the Government of Togo announced the creation of a high authority unit tasked with preventing and fighting against corruption, including corruption among government officials. If confirmed, I will also pursue additional INL programs aimed at increasing police professionalism and capacity. Additionally, with assistance from donors such as the European Union, I will work collaboratively with our international partners to implement a justice modernization project to improve transparency and efficiency as a roadmap to reforming police in Togo.

Question. The 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report indicates that Togo is making considerable efforts to comply with the minimum standards for eliminating trafficking, but has not demonstrated efforts to address trafficking of adults.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to encourage the Government of Togo to increase prosecution of traffickers, and enact draft laws outlawing forced labor and trafficking for sexual exploitation?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue our call on the Government of Togo to step up its current efforts to convict and punish traffickers. I will also stress to the Government of Togo the importance of enacting the draft law prohibiting forced labor and forced prostitution of adults. To help the Togolese public better understand the complexities involved in human trafficking in Togo and influence their government to enact the draft legislation, I will increase Embassy Lome's public diplomacy on the issue and engage with grassroots organizations and the public in antitrafficking efforts.

RESPONSES OF JEFFREY J. HAWKINS, JR., NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HAWKINS'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. What is the status of the position held most recently by Ambassador Stuart Symington and what is the plan as it relates to U.S. engagement on the issue of facilitating a regional effort toward political reconciliation?

Answer. Ambassador Stuart Symington becomes Deputy Assistant Security for African Affairs for the Central African Region and Security Affairs on August 3, but will continue to serve as the Special Representative for the Central African Republic (CAR). Special Representative Symington will continue to support our policy objectives in the Central African Republic by engaging and facilitating regional and international efforts toward the ongoing political reconciliation processes in CAR.

Question. What role will the J Under Secretariat, and specifically the Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization (CSO) have in maintaining close and continuing cooperation toward a negotiated settlement and stabilization of the country?

Answer. CSO is providing targeted, diplomatic, and analytic support in Washington and the Central African region, to Embassy Bangui, the Africa Bureau, and other key international actors to help advance critical transition processes in the Central African Republic (CAR). These processes include local and national-level dialogues, constitutional reform, reconciliation, and elections preparations, as part of our effort to help ensure that these initiatives continue to be a priority beyond the May 2015 Bangui Forum. CSO is focusing on analyzing atrocities and political violence risks associated with the transition process, and, depending on funding and the situation in country, providing direct on-the-ground support to programs, such as those associated with reconciliation and early warning/response, furthering the objectives which came out of the Bangui Forum.

CSO initially deployed an employee to Bangui in May 2015 for 3 weeks to support the Embassy in analyzing atrocities and political violence risks during the transition process; providing an update on these processes as they relate to medium and longer term goals of the U.S. Government, CAR Government, and international community; developing recommendations on how to guide next steps; and providing enhanced diplomatic engagement. The CSO employee returned to Bangui in July for another 3 weeks in order to followup on these initiatives and identify potential points of intervention for CSO in the areas of reconciliation and early-warning/response. CSO's current effort in CAR is supported by CSO's previous work in CAR, which includes an in-country interagency conflict assessment and planning exercise

in 2011; DC-based mass atrocities prevention planning in 2013; and DC-based national and local level dialogue consultations and research in 2014.

Since 2011, CSO has also been involved in the counter-Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) mission, which includes CAR, through a field representative, based in Kampala, Uganda, that supports the LRA-affected countries.

Question. In the same vein as above, what role will the Department of Defense play in helping to facilitate a more stable and politically viable CAR in this challenging region and what priority will they have?

Answer. The Department of Defense (DOD) will continue to support U.S. security assistance efforts, led by the State Department, in the Central African Republic (CAR). To date, DOD has supported the troop contributing countries to the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA) by providing airlift, equipment, and the construction of U.N. base camps in-country, and will continue to provide support to the peacekeepers on a bilateral basis and to the U.N. where possible.

Question. How will the nominee be further empowered as Ambassador and the post and his country team be resourced to address the significant deficiencies at post and those in the political environment identified during his confirmation hearing?

Answer. We remain committed to expanding and normalizing operations following the resumption of the activities of Embassy Bangui in September 2014, despite operating in a challenging environment in the Central African Republic (CAR).

This summer, we will increase the number of Embassy staff in order to expand our political, economic, development, and public diplomacy engagement in CAR. We intend to maintain and, when conditions permit, increase the number of temporary personnel, allowing the United States to address specific programmatic and operational priorities that broaden our overall engagement and ensure appropriate stewardship of U.S. resources.

In addition, Embassy support staff will continue their efforts to improve management and information technology platforms, thus enabling staff to keep up with the increased workload.

We are working to lease housing in addition to using existing U.S. Government-owned residences on and off the Embassy chancery compound, thereby lessening the burdens placed upon the Embassy's aging infrastructure and improving the overall quality of life for Embassy personnel.

If confirmed, I will continue to make strides in normalizing our Embassy's operations, thus permitting us to continue the important work of helping the Central Africans find the peace, justice, and prosperity they richly deserve.

Question. What is the U.S. Government position on the holding of an election in October 2015 in CAR?

Answer. The United States, in line with the position of the international community, supports the efforts of the CAR authorities to hold the first round of Presidential and legislative elections in October 2015 or as soon as possible.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HAWKINS'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. As the Central African Republic looks toward national elections, many people in the country are continuing to face a humanitarian crisis. There are approximately 400,000 people displaced internally and another 420,000 Central Africans living as refugees in neighboring countries. The U.N. estimates that 2.7 million people throughout the Central African Republic, over half the country's population, are in need of humanitarian assistance. And while parts of the country have indeed stabilized, there are areas of CAR that remain violent and volatile.

- In your estimation, what are the greatest challenges to a coordinated international response to assisting displaced populations? What can be done to ensure United Nations and international organizations are meeting the continuing needs of these populations?

Answer. The greatest challenges to a coordinated international response to assist displaced populations in the Central African Republic (CAR) are insecurity, lack of basic state services, and funding.

Ongoing insecurity and recent clashes in some areas of CAR continue to create new displacement and additional humanitarian needs while preventing people from returning to their homes and livelihoods. Targeted attacks against humanitarian agencies hinder access and provision of services to affected populations.

Humanitarian agencies also face the daunting task of substituting for the state system in the provision of basic services, such as primary health care, education, and clean water. This stretches their limited resources as they try to meet the needs of all Central Africans, including the displaced, in areas where there is little state presence.

Also, the U.N. strategic response plan to support some 2.7 million people in need of humanitarian aid in CAR remains only 32 percent funded. Consequently, humanitarian agencies must make difficult choices about their operations and the populations slated for assistance.

The United States will continue our critical support and build upon the roughly $251 million in humanitarian aid we have provided in FY14 and FY15 to date in order to ensure the United Nations and international organizations are meeting the needs of the CAR's people. Further, we will work closely with other donors and liaise directly with U.N. humanitarian agencies to ensure that support reaches those most in need, including internally displaced persons and refugees, and is not duplicative.

Question. The Bangui Forum was widely praised by the international community for its inclusiveness. The forum brought together members of the transitional government, armed groups, and civil society to discuss the way forward on elections, disarmament of rebel groups, and the creation of justice and reconciliation mechanisms.

♦ (a) What is the status of implementation of recommendations from the Bangui Forum, such as disarmament of Seleka and anti-Balaka fighters, a constitutional revision process, and mechanisms for reconciliation? What, in your view, are the key challenges to implementation?

Answer. (a) Following the conclusion of the May 2015 Bangui Forum, the transitional government established a followup committee to begin the process of implementing the Forum's recommendations. The naming of the committee members, however, has been subject to debate and revisions as some groups, including the primarily Muslim, ethnic Peulhs have complained they were not adequately represented on the committee. Consequently, there has been little progress in the implementation of the Forum's recommendations.

The U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA) has developed a $10 million predisarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and repatriation (DDRR) program that intends to jump-start the process of disarming former armed combatants. The program faces challenges as rebel leaders have proven reluctant to comply with the May 10 DDRR agreement because they are unsure of what long-term DDRR and security sector reform will look like. Donor support for DDRR remains insufficient. On a positive note, in May the international community successfully encouraged a group of ex-Seleka soldiers to vacate a camp in downtown Bangui, which allowed the removal of approximately 3 tons of explosives that had been in danger of spontaneous explosion.

Discussions at the Bangui Forum helped inform an early July workshop of Central African Republic (CAR) experts and international observers on the constitution. The draft constitution will now move to the Transitional National Council, the interim Parliament, for consideration, after which the draft will be presented to voters at an October 4 referendum.

The transitional CAR Government is considering several mechanisms for reconciliation including transitional justice measures, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and a Commission on Good Governance.

The key implementation challenges of the Bangui Forum recommendations are the lack of financial resources and human capacity capable of organizing, leading, and carrying out programs that could convert recommendations to reality.

♦ (b) How is the administration planning to support the implementation of these recommendations?

Answer. (b) In support of the Bangui Forum's recommendations, we are working with the United States Institute of Peace to develop a grant that will assist and work with the Bangui Forum followup committee. In addition, Embassy Bangui is closely monitoring the constitutional drafting process and, through the American Bar Association, is supporting the efforts of CAR's civil society to advocate for an inclusive and representative draft.

♦ (c) The inclusion of civil society and community leaders is absolutely essential to the success of these efforts. If confirmed, what would you do to encourage the continued consultation of civil society in the constitutional revision process?

Answer. (c) I witnessed, as Consul General in Lagos, Nigeria, during the recent Presidential elections, the importance of having civil society and community leaders engaged in political processes. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work closely with all facets of CAR's civil society, through public diplomacy campaigns, training workshops, and informal dialogue, to ensure they are well informed and engaged in the political transition, including the constitutional revision process. I will further work with the CAR transitional authorities, including members of the transitional Parliament who lead the constitutional drafting process, to encourage a robust dialogue with the people of CAR about the democratic foundations upon which their country should be built.

Question. How much in total funding has the United States provided to help reestablish rule of law in the Central African Republic in fiscal years 2014 and 2015, and what do we hope to achieve through the activities that we have funded? What has been accomplished to date? What plans are in place to assess progress in helping reestablish the criminal justice system? What assistance has been provided to the police, gendarmerie, and prosecutors? How do we plan to measure its effectiveness?

Answer. In fiscal year (FY) 2014, the United States Government provided $15.6 million to help reestablish rule of law and criminal justice in the Central African Republic (CAR). In FY 2015, we intend to spend $10.2 million for these activities in the CAR.

With this funding, we hope to assist the CAR Transitional Government reestablish law enforcement and criminal justice processes, thereby strengthening the rule of law in the country.

With our assistance, the CAR Court of Appeals held its first criminal court session in more than 5 years. The court heard 78 cases, a figure that was 25 percent higher than anticipated. We have opened and staffed three legal aid centers in major towns for victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). With additional U.S. support, the American Bar Association-Rule of Law Initiative (ABA–ROLI) is working on several cases of SGBV victims and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is working with the Ministry of Justice to deploy mobile courts to the provinces, and to develop rehabilitation plans for courts in provincial cities.

In support of reestablishing the police and gendarme, we, in collaboration with UNDP, expect to hold a groundbreaking ceremony for the rehabilitation of several police and gendarmerie facilities in several weeks. We are also working with the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission to CAR (MINUSCA) to deliver critical equipment for the police, gendarmerie, and newly reconstituted civilian prison service.

The capacity and level of operations of criminal justice institutions in CAR are extremely low, and some institutions, such as courts, barely function, which provides a clear baseline for measuring progress. As a result, basic output-related measurements such as the holding of a criminal court session, number of cases heard, opening of legal aid centers, number of SGBV cases being accepted, and rehabilitation and reopening of prisons and police and gendarmerie stations will continue to provide immediate, meaningful indicators on the progress in reestablishing criminal justice and rule of law.

With our partners, we have established clearly defined output and outcome-related measurements to assess and monitor progress. With ABA–ROLI, we have a monitoring and evaluation plan that has defined indicators, ranging from the number of bar association attorneys trained to the percentage increase in paralegals' knowledge of basic legal principles. With UNDP, we are expanding our monitoring and evaluation to better gather and analyze criminal and court data, conduct surveys, and track other information.

Finally, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) sits on the steering committee that directs UNDP's work in CAR and is working to send additional staff to Bangui for on-site monitoring and oversight.

RESPONSES OF DANIEL H. RUBINSTEIN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE RUBINSTEIN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. What is the Chief of Mission's role in engaging the Tunisian American Enterprise Fund? How will you work with the Tunisian American Enterprise Fund

to ensure that it is reaching its maximum investment potential? What are the challenges to the Tunisian American Enterprise Fund's success?

Answer. The Tunisian-American Enterprise Fund (TAEF), seeded with $60 million in Economic Support Funds, has made an initial investment of $2.7 million in a Tunisian microcredit firm and hopes to invest approximately $7 million over the next several months in Tunisian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). I expect TAEF to fully invest its funds and create growth in SMEs, venture capital opportunities, and in microfinance.

The TAEF has had challenges navigating a difficult and complicated Tunisian financial regulatory system, but after creating innovative investment platforms, it is poised to make important investments in the Tunisian economy in the coming year. Hopefully, the Enterprise Fund activities will also bolster the Tunisian Government's reforms that directly bear on the Fund's activities, such as small business establishment and expansion.

If confirmed, I will continue to closely monitor the Fund's progress, engage with its board of directors to advocate for additional progress, and ensure that the Fund is effectively working to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth and employment in Tunisia.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2015

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

Ann Calvaresi Barr, of Maryland, to be Inspector General, United States Agency for International Development

David Malcolm Robinson, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Conflict and Stabilization Operations) and Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization

Edwin Richard Nolan, Jr., of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Suriname

John L. Estrada, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Scott Allen, of Maryland, to be United States Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:33 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. David Perdue, presiding.

Present: Senators Perdue and Kaine.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID PERDUE, U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA

Senator PERDUE. The Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

The hearing today is to consider nominations for five individuals to a wide range of posts. I look forward to discussing the wide ranges of challenges and opportunities that our nominees expect to face, if confirmed.

I want to thank each of you for your dedication to public service, for your families, for the support you have. We welcome your families and friends who are present here today. I have met a few of them.

Today, I would like to introduce our nominees. We will do that first, and then we will proceed to questions after a statement from the ranking member.

First, we have Ms. Ann Calvaresi Barr of Maryland to be Inspector General, United States Agency for International Development.

Welcome, Ms. Barr.

Mr. David Malcolm Robinson of Connecticut, to be Assistant Secretary of State, Conflict and Stabilization Operations, and coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization.

Mr. Edward Richard Nolan, Jr., of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Suriname.

John L. Estrada of Florida to be Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Scott Allen to be Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Several of you have spent many years dedicated in service to our country already. For that, we are sincerely thankful. I look forward to hearing your testimony today, but I would like to add a personal note.

I have made a couple trips outside of the United States. I have met many of your compatriots in the State Department. I can tell the people of America that the best of the best represent us abroad. I want to thank each of you and the people you represent for what you do.

With that, I will turn it over to the ranking member, Senator Kaine.

Senator Kaine.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. That was a gracious comment, and I am going to continue in that way.

I think we have a bipartisan appreciation on this committee that the work that you do is very important, and that you do it under very difficult circumstances, and often did you do it without the understanding and, sadly, even the appreciation that we ought to extend to you.

I think one of the lessons that America learned from the Vietnam era is whatever our political feelings about any particular military conflict, we should express our thanks and appreciation to those who serve in uniform. I think we have gotten better at that, and I thank God for that. But we have a whole lot of people who serve not in military uniform but still representing the United States, whether they be State Department or USAID or DEA agents who work overseas. We have a lot of folks who are kind of small-a ambassadors working overseas who represent the United States every day, often in dangerous places, and often sent to places that they did not choose, and often sent without their families, if the places are particularly dangerous.

I have also, as member of this committee and the Armed Services Committee, in my travels have had a chance to interact with a lot of the folks that you are already working with and that you will be working with. You have fantastic colleagues. Those of you who are going to be Ambassadors have that care on your shoulder of protecting the safety of the public servants who work for you.

I congratulate you for being nominated but also just tell you that my sense is the same as Senator Perdue's, that the people you will be working with are really top notch, and we owe you and them a great deal of thanks.

Quickly, about the nominees, Ms. Barr, your experience at GAO and as Deputy Inspector General of the U.S. DOT will be very, very valuable, if you are confirmed in this position as the Inspector General of USAID. It is an important agency. We care deeply about the mission. The role of the IG is very important to the USAID being successful.

Ambassador Robinson, as a Career Member of Foreign Service, your current tenure as the Principal Deputy High Representative of the International Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other roles will undoubtedly benefit you in the position you have been nominated for as Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations.

Mr. Allen, your 20 years of work in the financial sector will be a great match as you go to take on the task of an institution whose mission has probably gotten a little bit more complicated than it has been, the U.S. Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. We have been following the situation in Europe closely. I know you will have interesting insights for us on that.

Mr. Nolan, you are also a career Foreign Service member. You currently serve as Minister of Political Affairs of the U.S. Embassy Ottawa and you previously served in The Hague. Thirty-four years of combined service will serve you well as the U.S. Ambassador in Suriname.

And then, Mr. Estrada, I cannot resist, as a father of a Marine, to give you a shout-out for your strong service, 34 years of service in the Marines and really the achievement of what has to be the top job in the Marine Corps, even over Commandant, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, the highest-ranking enlisted Marine. What a wonderful track record. I know you will bring that to your position of the Ambassador of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Everywhere I travel, I always stick my head in Post One at every Embassy to thank the Marine security guards who are trained at Quantico in Virginia. I know you have interacted with them, and they will be new family in this new role.

So I appreciate your service. I applaud you for your nomination.

And, Mr. Chair, I look forward to the questions.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

Now we will open it up to questions, and I would like to give each of you—I am sorry, we will do testimony first. I jumped ahead. I am anxious to get to these questions.

Senator KAINE. He is tough. He wants to get to the cross-examination, so you guys better hunker down over there. [Laughter.]

Senator PERDUE. What I was going to do, though, actually, was give you the privilege of introducing your family and guests, each of you, and I will ask you to do that as you give your statement.

Up first is our nominee to become the Inspector General of USAID, Ms. Calvaresi Barr. She is currently the Deputy Inspector General at the Department of Transportation.

Ms. Calvaresi Barr.

STATEMENT OF ANN CALVARESI BARR, NOMINATED TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Thank you, Chairman Perdue and Ranking Member Kaine. It is a great honor to be here today as the President's nominee for Inspector General of the United States Agency for International Development. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on important oversight and accountability matters related to U.S. foreign assistance.

Before I begin, I would like to recognize my husband, David, who is in Iraq on a State Department detail; my daughter, Julianna, who completed her second year at Dickinson College and will soon begin a year of study in Italy; my mother, Julia; my late father, Anthony; my siblings, Kathleen, Dominic, and Anthony; my mother-in-law, nieces, nephews, and other members of my sizeable Italian family.

Together, they have instilled in me strong ethical and moral values, and taught me that hard work, dedication, and humility are the foundation to building resilient relationships and mutual respect. As you can see, I am surrounded by much love and support.

I have served in the government accountability community for more than 3 decades. My civil service career includes 25 years at the Government Accountability Office and 6 years at the DOT's Office of Inspector General. GAO served as a critical training ground for me, and I had the privilege to work for many role models, including three outstanding Comptrollers General.

During my time at GAO, I worked in multiple offices, including 5 years in GAO's former European Office, leading audits of large-scale, cross-cutting programs that resulted in improved operations and significant cost-savings across government.

Particularly gratifying and fulfilling was work I performed while stationed overseas, work that concerned national security interests, international development efforts, and the state of human rights conditions in countries throughout Africa and the Middle East.

My GAO experience prepared me well for working alongside DOT's Inspector General Calvin Scovel, whose exceptional leadership I respect very, very much, and I learned from, and is recognized across the OIG community.

I must tell you, he surprised me today, and he is here with me. I could not be happier about that.

Thank you, Cal.

Within my first weeks as Assistant Inspector General for Audit and Evaluation, I led the development of a comprehensive strategy for mitigating risks in DOT's oversight of $48 billion in transportation projects funded under the Recovery Act. Our strategy enabled us to quickly identify and inform the department of vulnerabilities that required immediate attention or a sustained focus before funds were further obligated or expended.

I also collaborated with senior managers to institute new policies and streamline procedures that enhanced product quality and accountability for issuing timely and relevant audit reports.

After my first year at DOT, the inspector general selected me as his deputy. In this role, I identified opportunities for greater synergies among OIG's audit, investigation, and operational sup-

port activities, as well as programs to further develop and motivate staff. I also personally sponsored many initiatives aimed at broadening perspectives and encouraging greater coordination and partnering.

Our returns on investment and employee survey scores demonstrate the success we have had in cultivating a skilled and high-performing workforce and in achieving results. Over the past 5 years, we averaged a return of $26 for every dollar appropriated and seen remarkable improvements in our Employee Viewpoint Survey scores.

Of particular note, we ranked first in effective leadership, support for diversity, and innovation across the OIG community.

If confirmed, I would approach this new responsibility with a clear understanding that foreign assistance is an integral part of U.S. engagement with an increasingly interdependent world, and that the success of AID's mission depends in large part on effective partnerships with the State, Defense, and other Federal entities, industry, foreign governments, international donors, and the academic and scientific communities.

The independent work of USAID OIG is critical to ensuring transparency and accountability at USAID, as well as at the four other entities I would have oversight responsibility for.

I would continue to model the highest standards of leadership. Effective leaders marshal rather than direct. And I welcome the opportunity to marshal the dedicated professionals at AID OIG.

I would work to ensure they have the tools needed to combat fraud, waste, and abuse. Despite the many challenges these professionals face, they remain resolved to carry out their important audit and investigative mission around the globe. Nothing short of a work environment characterized by integrity is acceptable to support their dedication.

AID reflects the good will of the American people, and while working in areas affected by poverty, conflict, and instability, I saw firsthand how effective foreign assistance programs can help transform lives and unlock human potential.

I remain passionate about that cause and, to that end, to helping ensure that every dollar spent furthers foreign assistance goals.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to address your areas of concerns; ensure transparency; and provide complete, timely, and accurate information on the progress of key foreign assistance priorities.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Calvaresi Barr follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANN CALVARESI BARR

Chairman Perdue, Ranking Member Kaine, and members of the committee, it is a great honor to sit before you today as the President's nominee for Inspector General of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). I very much appreciate your consideration of my nomination, and if confirmed by the full Senate, I look forward to working with you on important oversight and accountability matters related to U.S. foreign assistance.

I would first like to recognize my family, who are always there for me: my husband, David, who is currently in Iraq on a State Department detail; and my daughter, Julianna, who completed her second year in International Studies at Dickinson College and is beginning a year of study in Italy. I would also like to recognize my

mother, Julia, and late father, Anthony; and my siblings, Kathleen, Dominic, and Anthony. Also with me, in person or in spirit, are my mother-in-law, Aldonna; nieces, nephews, and other members of my sizeable Italian family. Together, they have instilled in me strong ethical and moral values and taught me that hard work, dedication, and humility are the foundation to building resilient relationships and mutual respect. I would also like to recognize my mentors, colleagues, and friends for their inspiration, encouragement, and support—some of whom are also here today. As you can see, I am surrounded by much love and personally blessed as a result.

It has been a privilege to serve in the government accountability community for more than three decades. My civil service career—which began in local government in my hometown of Reading, PA—includes 25 years at the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and 6 years at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Office of Inspector General (OIG). As the premier Government agency that wrote the standards for auditing and accounting, GAO served as a critical training ground for me from the time I started as a graduate co-op to my entry into the Senior Executive Service. During my tenure, I had the privilege to work with three outstanding Comptrollers General, as well as many other leaders who served as role models to me.

While at GAO, I led a number of complex and high-profile audits in multiple offices—including 5 years in GAO's former European Office in Frankfurt, Germany. These audits included assessments of large-scale, cross-cutting programs, and resulted in improved operations and significant cost savings across Government. Many of these audits focused on acquisition and procurement practices, financial and grant management, and export controls. I also worked closely with the Comptroller General to identify and develop key national indicators used by state, local, and foreign governments for gauging economic, social, cultural, and environmental health. This effort resulted in the development of a comprehensive system for assessing and improving the United States position in the world in these areas.

Particularly gratifying and fulfilling was work I performed while stationed overseas, where I took part in improving and overseeing plans for implementing programs that provide aid. This work concerned international development efforts and the state of human rights conditions in Somalia, Turkey, Israel, and the former Yugoslavia and Zaire. I also worked on audits related to national security concerns, such as the drawdown of forces from Europe, the evacuation of noncombatants, and the deployment of female forces to the Persian Gulf.

My GAO experience prepared me well for the next chapter of my Federal career—working alongside DOT's Inspector General, Calvin Scovel III, whose vision and exceptional leadership I learned from and are highly regarded throughout the OIG community. Within my first weeks as Principal Assistant Inspector General for Audit and Evaluation, I led the development of a comprehensive strategy for identifying and mitigating risks in DOT's oversight of $48 billion in transportation projects funded under the new American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Our risk mitigation strategy enabled us to quickly identify and inform the Department of vulnerabilities that required immediate action or a sustained focus before funds were further obligated or expended. We subsequently adopted this approach for our surface transportation reauthorization and Hurricane Sandy relief audits.

During this time, I developed a vision for the Office of Audits and, in collaboration with senior managers, devised a strategic plan for the office with achievable goals, objectives, and performance measures. Ultimately, our aim was to enhance product quality and stress accountability for issuing timely and relevant reports. To get there, I worked with senior managers to streamline processes and institute new programs, policies, tools, and procedures.

After my first year at DOT, the inspector general selected me as his deputy, expanding the scope of my responsibilities to include providing leadership and direction for OIG's investigation and operational support activities. From this position, I was able to fully appreciate each office's distinct focus and outlook, as well as the need for greater synergies to fully develop and leverage our resources. Continual dedication to developing and motivating staff was critical to achieving these goals. I personally sponsored Communities of Practice, a forum where staff share knowledge to broaden perspectives and encourage greater coordination and partnering. I also established and participate in an OIG-wide mentoring program, monthly leadership brown bags for managers and line staff, an Adjunct Faculty Training Program, a Job Shadow Program, and an external Speakers Series.

Our returns on investment and positive employee survey scores demonstrate the success we have had in cultivating a skilled workforce and high-performing teams, building coalitions, branding the organization, and in achieving results. Over the past 5 years, our return on investment has averaged $26 for every dollar spent on

our office, with a high in fiscal year 2013 of $41 for every appropriated dollar. During this time, we made over $8.5 billion in financial recommendations through our audits, and realized more than $1.8 billion in fines, restitutions, and recoveries from our investigations. We have also seen remarkable improvements in our Employee Viewpoint Survey scores. I am proud to report that last year, DOT's OIG ranked in the top 15 percent among the Government's 314 subcomponents. Among the Department's subcomponents and across the OIG community, we ranked first in effective leadership, support for diversity, and innovation. Moreover, we ranked in the top 10 among all 314 subcomponents in those three categories as well as work-life balance.

If confirmed as USAID's inspector general, I would approach this new responsibility with a clear understanding that foreign assistance is an integral part of U.S. engagement with an increasingly interdependent world, and that the success of USAID's mission depends in large part on effective partnerships and coordination with the State Department, Department of Defense, and other Federal entities, as well as with industry, foreign governments, other international donors, and the academic and scientific communities. The independent work of USAID OIG is critical to ensuring transparency, integrity, and accountability at USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, U.S. African Development Foundation, Inter-American Foundation, and Overseas Private Investment Corporation. It is equally important that OIG systems and processes thoroughly reflect oversight community standards and best practices.

If I have the honor and privilege of serving as USAID's next inspector general, I would continue to model the highest standards of leadership and integrity. My experience has taught me that the most effective leaders, past and present, share at least one common trait—they marshal rather than direct. I welcome the opportunity to marshal the workforce of committed professionals at USAID OIG. With shared vision, clear expectations, strategic planning, and stewardship of resources, I would work to ensure they have the tools needed to fully engage in identifying and responding to major management challenges and to combat program fraud, waste, and abuse. Despite the many challenges these professionals face, they remain resolved to carry out their important mission—that is, to promote efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity in foreign assistance programs and operations around the world. Nothing short of a highly motivating, positive, trusting, and productive work environment is acceptable to support their dedication.

Aid reflects the good will of the American people, and during my time working throughout Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, I saw firsthand how effectively implemented foreign assistance programs can help transform lives and unlock human potential. I remain passionate about the cause and, to that end, to helping ensure that every dollar spent furthers foreign assistance goals.

If confirmed as Inspector General, I look forward to continuing my Government service at USAID and to working with Congress to address your concerns; ensure transparency; and provide complete, timely, and accurate information on the progress of key foreign assistance priorities.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Robinson currently serves as Principal Deputy High Representative at Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations, and coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization.

It sounds like four jobs to me, Mr. Ambassador.

Ambassador Robinson.

STATEMENT OF DAVID MALCOLM ROBINSON, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (CONFLICT AND STABILIZATION OPERATIONS) AND COORDINATOR FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND STABILIZATION

Ambassador ROBINSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Kaine. It is an honor to be here today.

I first want to thank the President, the Secretary of State, and Under Secretary Sewall for the confidence they have placed in me.

I look forward, if confirmed, to working with you and other members of this committee to advance the difficult but essential work of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations.

But before I say anything else, I want to recognize and thank my wife, Donna, who is here today. She has been the rock of stability and grace in an otherwise hectic Foreign Service life.

So thank you, Donna.

Senators, I have spent much of my 30 years as a Foreign Service officer, nearly half of those as a member of the Senior Foreign Service, in conflict zones or in other unstable environments, from Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Central America, to regions of Africa and Asia that have been scarred by war. I know intimately the civilian costs of violent conflict, and I have worked extensively with other actors in the international arena to try to address those costs.

Unfortunately, the cost in ruined lives and political instability continues to grow. The number of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide is now nearly 60 million, more than at any other time since World War II, and no corner of the globe is immune, even in areas in which the roots of representative civilian governance are beginning to take root. Some 30 countries in Africa will have elections in the next 2½ years. Those expressions of democratic practice must be protected against efforts to undermine or delegitimize them through violent conflict.

Repeating cycles of conflict sap our diplomatic, military, and development resources. There is no simple solution, including, as the President and the Secretary of State recently noted, a purely military response.

Instead, we have to use all the tools at our disposal, including civilian, to anticipate, prevent, or limit conflict, whenever and wherever we can. A focus on prevention is not only cost effective, it also gives us a chance to find lasting political and social responses to these challenges, because there is a chance to break the cycles of violence.

Three and a half years ago, CSO was created to give the Secretary, the Department of State, and, most importantly, our diplomatic missions overseas the information and tools they need to more effectively address the threat of violent conflict. There have been notable successes. For example, CSO is supporting interagency efforts to stem the tide of al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa and Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. It has helped prevent violence around elections in Kenya, Nigeria, and Bangladesh. And it has strengthened civilian security in some of the most dangerous parts of Central America.

At the same time, I know well that CSO's mission and methodology have not always been clear and consistent. I read last year's hard-hitting inspector general report, and I take it seriously, as does the current leadership of CSO. Most of the recommendations already have been closed, and the few remaining are well on their way to successful conclusion. These changes reflect a maturing culture within the Bureau, and I welcome the chance to make them lasting and to better integrate the Bureau within the broader work of the Department.

CSO has a talented and dedicated staff. What it needs now is seasoned leadership. If confirmed, I will work to make sure the

Secretary and our diplomatic missions have reliable tools based on solid analysis and lessons learned to anticipate, prevent, and respond to conflict, especially the worst forms of conflict directed at civilians: mass atrocities and violent extremism.

I will work to ensure the accountability and effectiveness of our efforts through robust monitoring and evaluation and a sound management controls program. And I will strengthen our partnerships within the Department, the interagency community, and among our allies.

Finally, if confirmed, I assure you I will lead a Bureau that measurably strengthens American diplomacy in this critical arena.

I welcome your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Robinson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR DAVID M. ROBINSON

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor to be here today as the nominee for Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations. I am grateful for the confidence President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Under Secretary Sewall have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and other members of the committee to advance the difficult work of preventing and responding to violent conflict.

I have spent much of my 30 years as a Foreign Service officer, almost half as a member of the Senior Foreign Service, in conflict zones and unstable environments, from Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Central America, to other regions of Asia and Africa scarred by war and persecution. I know intimately the civilian costs of violent conflict, atrocity, and extremism, and I have worked extensively with other actors in the international community to overcome them.

Unfortunately, the cost in ruined lives and political instability continues to grow. The number of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide is now nearly 60 million, more than at any time since World War II, and no corner of the world is immune. Even where representative civilian governance is taking root—some 30 African countries will have elections over the next 2½ years—those exercises in democracy must be protected against threats to violently undermine or delegitimize them.

Conflict carries other costs, as well, sapping our diplomatic, military and development resources. There is no simple solution, including, as the President and the Secretary of State recently noted, a purely military response. Instead, we have to use all the tools at our disposal, including civilian ones, to anticipate and prevent conflict, wherever and whenever we can. A focus on prevention is not only more cost effective; it also gives us the space to find effective, lasting political and social responses to these challenges.

Three and a half years ago, CSO was created to enhance the State Department's ability to prevent and respond to conflict, giving the Secretary of State, regional Assistant Secretaries and our Ambassadors the information and tools they need to more effectively understand and respond to the threat of violent conflict. There have been notable successes. CSO's talented and dedicated staff, for example, is supporting interagency efforts to stem the tide of al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa and Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin. They have helped prevent violence around elections in Kenya, Nigeria, and Bangladesh. And they have strengthened civilian security in some of the most dangerous parts of Central America.

At the same time, I know well that CSO's mission and methodology have not always been clear and consistent. I read last year's hard-hitting inspector general report. Most of the recommendations have already been closed, and the few remaining are well on their way to successful conclusion. These changes reflect a maturing culture within the Bureau. I welcome the chance to make them enduring and to better integrate the Bureau within the work of the Department.

What CSO needs now is seasoned leadership. If confirmed, my priorities will be:

- To ensure the Secretary and our embassies have reliable tools based on solid analysis and lessons learned to anticipate, prevent, and respond to conflict, especially the most severe forms of conflict affecting civilians, such as atrocities and violent extremism.
- To assure accountability and effectiveness of our efforts through robust monitoring and evaluation and sound management controls.

♦ To serve as an active resource for and active partner with the Department and with our interagency and international counterparts in tackling these challenges.

Finally, if confirmed, I assure you I will lead a Bureau that strengthens American diplomacy where it is needed most, where conflict and extremism undermine United States interests and values.

Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Ambassador.

Next we have Mr. Nolan, who is nominated to serve as Ambassador to Suriname. Mr. Nolan currently serves as Minister Counselor for Political Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa.

Mr. Nolan.

STATEMENT OF EDWIN RICHARD NOLAN, JR., NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

Mr. NOLAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Kaine. I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you today.

I am honored to be President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Suriname. I thank the President for the confidence he has placed in me by putting me forward to the Senate for consideration, and I thank Secretary Kerry for his trust and support.

I have had the honor to serve our country for 35 years as a Foreign Service officer. Every day of those 35 years, I have had the love and support of my wife, Tricia, who I would like to introduce to the committee, along with my children, Ryan and Katie, of whom I am immensely proud. I would not be here today without my wonderful family.

During those 35 years, I have had the opportunity to contribute to some historic successes in U.S. foreign policy. Among them were the first conventional arms control agreements with the Soviet Union in the 1980s, the successful integration of the Warsaw Pact members into NATO in the 1990s, and the indispensable U.S. efforts to bring lasting peace to Northern Ireland through the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

I have also had the opportunity to lead large, multiagency missions, as Deputy Chief of Mission in both Cyprus and the Netherlands, and then later as Chargé d'Affaires at Mission Netherlands from 2011 to 2013. I also gained experience on many Caribbean regional issues in that time as a result of the Netherlands' continued engagement with its Caribbean territories and its historic relationship with Suriname.

If confirmed, I believe my leadership and policy experience will serve our mission and our team in Suriname well. If confirmed, I will proudly represent the United States in Suriname, a country whose people are among the most ethnically and religiously diverse in the world. Its citizens of African, Asian, European, and indigenous descent, practicing Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and indigenous religions, live peacefully and productively together.

As someone who has worked to build understanding between diverse religious and ethnic communities, from Protestants and Catholics in Ireland to Turkish and Greek Cypriots in Cyprus, I look forward to engaging with Suriname's communities to learn

how they might be able to share their experiences with others in the region and around the world.

If confirmed, I will also work with the Surinamese Government to promote the adoption of policies to increase U.S. trade and investment. Increased trade has the potential to drive progress and growth in Suriname, and it is in the interests of both of our economies.

We will work with Suriname to find solutions that tap into, as well as conserve, the country's extensive natural resources. The people of Suriname also are heirs to a vast rainforest and other natural areas that are contributing great economic and environmental benefits to Suriname and to the world.

The Obama administration's efforts to combat the dangers posed by pollution and the risks of climate change are tied to the conservation and health of such ecosystems. If confirmed, I will work hard with the Surinamese to help protect these critical natural resources and environment, a goal that I firmly believe is in the interests of both the United States and the people of Suriname.

It is also in our interest to strengthen the rule of law in Suriname. In parliamentary elections this past May, President Desire Bouterse's party won a slim majority, and he has been reelected to a second 5-year term. International observers found this election to be generally free and fair.

We remain concerned, however, about some aspects of democratic governance, corruption, and judicial independence. If I am granted the opportunity to serve, I will continue the efforts of my predecessor to press the Government of Suriname for an independent judiciary capable of protecting and advancing democracy and the rule of law.

Citizen security is another key goal of this administration in the region. The people of Suriname are benefiting from U.S.-sponsored programs, such as the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, through providing technical training to law enforcement officers, combating money-laundering and financial crimes, and preparing at-risk youth for successful and crime-free lives. If confirmed, I will seek to gain an increased commitment from the Government of Suriname to this partnership.

Of course, my first priority would be protecting the safety and welfare of Americans in Suriname, both private citizens and the Embassy community. To ensure the safety and security of our staff in Suriname, we are building a new Embassy compound in Paramaribo and plan to move in next summer. I will work with the Government of Suriname, along with local police and other security services, to reinforce cooperation that will keep Americans secure.

If confirmed, I look forward to representing the United States in Suriname, working with you and your colleagues in Congress on behalf of the administration, while also engaging Suriname in a regular and respectful dialogue on broad international issues to exchange views and, where possible, identify means of mutual interest and agreement.

Mr. Chairman, I stand ready to answer any questions you might have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nolan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF EDWIN RICHARD NOLAN, JR.

Mister Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Suriname. I thank the President for the confidence he has placed in me by putting me forward to the Senate for consideration, and I thank Secretary Kerry for his trust and support.

I have had the honor to serve our country for 35 years as a Foreign Service officer. Every day of those 35 years I have had the love and support of my wife, Tricia, who I'd like to introduce to the committee along with my children, Ryan and Katie, of whom I am immensely proud. I would not be where I am today without my wonderful family.

During those 35 years I have had the opportunity to contribute to some historic successes in U.S. foreign policy. Among them: the first conventional arms control agreements with the then-Soviet Union in the 1980s; the successful integration of the former Warsaw Pact members into NATO in the 1990s; and indispensable U.S. efforts to bring lasting peace to Northern Ireland through the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. I have also had the opportunity to lead large, multiagency missions, as Deputy Chief of Mission in both Cyprus and the Netherlands, and then later, as Chargé d'Affaires at Mission Netherlands from 2011 to 2013. I also gained experience on many Caribbean regional issues in that time as a result of the Netherlands' continued engagement with its Caribbean territories and its historic relationship with Suriname. If confirmed, I believe my leadership and policy experience will serve our mission and our team in Suriname well.

If confirmed, I will proudly represent the United States in Suriname—a country whose people are among the most ethnically and religiously diverse in the world. Its citizens of African, Asian, European and indigenous descent, practicing Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and indigenous religions, live peacefully and productively together. As someone who has worked to build understanding between diverse religious and ethnic communities, from Protestants and Catholics in Ireland to Turkish and Greek Cypriots in Cyprus, I look forward to engaging with Suriname's communities and learning how Suriname might be able to share its experiences with others in the region and around the world.

If confirmed, I will also work with the Surinamese Government to promote the adoption of policies to increase American trade and investment between our two countries. Increased trade has the potential to drive progress and growth in Suriname, and it is in both of our interests to increase economic ties.

We will work with Suriname to find solutions that tap into, as well as conserve, the country's extensive natural resources. The people of Suriname also are heirs to a vast rain forest and other natural areas that are contributing great economic and environmental benefits to Suriname and to the world. The Obama administration's efforts to combat the dangers posed by pollution and the risks of climate change are tied to the conservation and health of such ecosystems. If confirmed, I will work hard with the Surinamese to help protect these critical natural resources and environment—a goal that I firmly believe is in the interest of both the United States and of the people of Suriname.

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Of course, my first priority would be protecting the safety and welfare of Americans in Suriname—both private citizens and the Embassy community. To ensure the safety and security of our staff working in Suriname, we are building a New Embassy Compound in Paramaribo and plan to move in next summer. I will work with the Government of Suriname, along with local police and other security services, to reinforce cooperation that will keep Americans secure.

If confirmed, I look forward to representing the United States in Suriname, working with you and your colleagues in Congress on behalf of the administration, while also engaging Suriname in a regular and respectful dialogue on broad international issues to exchange views and, where possible, identify areas of mutual interest and agreement.

Mr. Chairman, I stand ready to answer any questions you might have. Thank you.

Senator PERDUE. Mr. Nolan, thank you.

Next, we have Mr. John Estrada. Mr. Estrada is nominated for Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago. He currently serves as senior manager and senior program project manager at Lockheed Martin.

Mr. Estrada.

STATEMENT OF JOHN L. ESTRADA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Mr. ESTRADA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Kaine. Good afternoon. It is an honor to appear before you today.

I want to express my gratitude to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have placed in me through their renomination of me to represent my country as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. I am particularly thrilled at the prospect of representing the United States, if confirmed, in the country of my birth.

I was born in Trinidad and Tobago, and at the age of 14, I immigrated to the United States to forge a new life. I brought with me a respect for diversity and an inherent sense of the equal value of all people. I served with honor in the U.S. Marine Corps, attaining the corps' highest enlisted rank as the 15th Sergeant Major in the history of the Marine Corps.

After retiring from the Marine Corps, I continued serving my country as a Presidential appointed commission member of the American Battle Monuments Commission and as a committee member on the Defense Advisory Committee for Women in the Services.

In the private sector, I led Lockheed Martin Training Solutions, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary company specializing in flight training and logistics solutions.

I firmly believe that one of the greatest aspirations of all free people is to live their lives to the fullest without limitations based on their ethnicity, class, race, gender, or sexual orientation. If confirmed as Ambassador, with that ideal as my guide, I would seek to strengthen the ties between the citizens and elected representatives of our two great nations.

Trinidad and Tobago is an important Caribbean partner of the United States. The relationships between our countries rest on a strong foundation. We share a common language and a firm commitment to democratic principles, the rule of law, and a free market system.

The United States mission to Trinidad and Tobago has three strategic objectives.

On security, the mission first works to protect American citizens in Trinidad and Tobago. Related to the security of Americans, the Embassy works with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to improve the capacity of Trinidadian law enforcement and justice sector institutions to reduce violent crime and illicit trafficking, safeguard human rights, and create safer communities.

Second, the mission promotes increased commerce and transparent investment climates to enhance our mutual prosperity.

Third, on social inclusion, the mission conducts extensive outreach and encourages regional leadership by Trinidad and Tobago to protect vulnerable populations, including at-risk youth.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading our efforts in these crucial areas.

The United States and Caribbean partners have developed the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, an ongoing, multifaceted citizen security initiative for the Caribbean, of which Trinidad and Tobago is a key player. In creating the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, the United States and Caribbean partners are attempting to combat the drug trade and other transnational crimes that threaten regional security with the goal of substantially reducing illicit trafficking, increasing public safety, strengthening the rule of law, and addressing the underlying social and economic root causes of crime.

I will do my utmost, if confirmed, to increase cooperation and encourage Trinidad and Tobago to take more of a leadership role in security in the Caribbean, where it has much to offer its neighbors.

As a resource-rich country, Trinidad and Tobago is full of opportunity for energy companies. The United States works cooperatively with Trinidad and Tobago, both bilaterally and through the Caribbean Energy Security Initiative, to develop new avenues for regional energy security and conservation.

I am excited Trinidad and Tobago is playing a growing role in regional integration and promoting business relationships in the hemisphere. If confirmed, I would advocate on behalf of U.S. companies and commercial interests to ensure a level playing field and support their engagements with Trinidad and Tobago.

Education is the foundation for economic growth. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to explore ways in which we can provide at-risk youth and other vulnerable populations with tools that can help them succeed.

I firmly believe that my 34 years of Active Duty service in the United States Marine Corps and my experience in the private sector, coupled with my personal history, have prepared me to represent the Government and people of the United States to the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago.

If confirmed, it would be my great honor to work closely with this committee and others in Congress to advance our shared objectives in the Caribbean.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before this distinguished committee. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Estrada follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY JOHN LEARIE ESTRADA

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this committee, good afternoon. It is an honor to appear before you today. I want to express my gratitude to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have placed in me through their renomination of me to represent my country as the next Ambassador to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

I am particularly thrilled at the prospect of representing the United States, if confirmed, in the country of my birth. I was born in Trinidad and Tobago and, at age 14, I immigrated to the United States to forge a new life. I brought with me a

respect for diversity and an inherent sense of the equal value of all people. I served with honor in the U.S. Marine Corps—attaining the corps' highest enlisted rank as the 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. After retiring from the Marine Corps, I continued serving my country as a Presidential-appointed Commission member of the American Battle Monuments Commission and as a committee member on the Defense Advisory Committee for Women in the Services. In the private sector, I led Lockheed Martin Training Solutions, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary company specializing in flight training and logistics solutions.

I firmly believe that one of the greatest aspirations of all free people is to live their lives to the fullest without limitations based on their ethnicity, class, race, gender, or sexual orientation. If confirmed as Ambassador, with that ideal as my guide, I would seek to strengthen the ties between the citizens and elected representatives of our two great nations.

Trinidad and Tobago is an important Caribbean partner of the United States. The relationship between our countries rests on a strong foundation. We share a common language and a firm commitment to democratic principles, the rule of law, and a free market system.

The U.S. mission to Trinidad and Tobago has three strategic objectives: On security, the mission first works to protect American citizens in Trinidad and Tobago. Related to the security of Americans, the Embassy works with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to improve the capacity of Trinidadian law enforcement and justice sector institutions to reduce violent crime and illicit trafficking, safeguard human rights, and create safer communities. Second, the mission promotes increased commerce and a transparent investment climate to enhance our mutual prosperity. Third, on social inclusion, the mission conducts extensive outreach and encourages regional leadership by Trinidad and Tobago to protect vulnerable populations, including at-risk youth. If confirmed, I look forward to leading our efforts in these crucial areas.

The United States and Caribbean partners have developed the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), an ongoing, multifaceted citizen security initiative for the Caribbean, of which Trinidad and Tobago is a key player. In creating CBSI, the United States and Caribbean partners, we are attempting to combat the drug trade and other transnational crimes that threaten regional security with the goal of substantially reducing illicit trafficking, increasing public safety, strengthening the rule of law, and addressing the underlying, social and economic root causes of crime. I will do my utmost, if confirmed, to increase cooperation and encourage Trinidad and Tobago to take more of a leadership role in security in the Caribbean, where it has much to offer its neighbors.

As a resource-rich country, Trinidad and Tobago is full of opportunity for energy companies. The United States works cooperatively with Trinidad and Tobago, both bilaterally and through the Caribbean Energy Security Initiative, to develop new avenues for regional energy security and conservation. I am excited Trinidad and Tobago is playing a growing role in regional integration and promoting business relationships in the hemisphere. If confirmed, I would advocate on behalf of U.S. companies and commercial interests to assure a level playing field and support their engagement with Trinidad and Tobago.

Education is the foundation for economic growth. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to explore ways in which we can provide at-risk youth and other vulnerable populations with tools that can help them succeed.

I firmly believe that my service in the Marine Corps and my experience in the private sector, coupled with my personal history, have prepared me to represent the government and people of the United States to the government and people of Trinidad and Tobago.

If confirmed, it would be my great honor to work closely with this committee and others in Congress to advance our shared objectives in the Caribbean.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before this distinguished committee. I look forward to answering your questions

Senator PERDUE. Mr. Estrada, thank you very much.

Finally, we have Mr. Allen, who is currently a private investor and philanthropist. He is nominated to serve as the U.S. executive director for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Mr. Allen.

STATEMENT OF SCOTT ALLEN, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Chairman Perdue and Ranking Member Kaine. I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am honored that President Obama has nominated me to serve as the U.S. executive director for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce my family members that are here today.

Bette Allen, my mother, who is 91 years old, who is becoming a regular at confirmation hearings, as she attended the hearing for my brother, Craig Allen, who was confirmed by this committee to serve as Ambassador to Brunei in July 2014.

My wife, Kanako, who has devoted her career to working on economic development issues, first at the United Nations and currently at the World Bank. She is my rock.

Finally, our two daughters, Lisa, who has just returned from a couple of years in Kyoto, Japan; and Sara, who works in finance in New York.

I come from a very close family with a history of government service. My sister, Sara Bowden, and her husband, Dennis Bowden, are also here today. During the Reagan administration, Sara worked at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. Dennis spent nearly 30 years at the CIA.

And prior to his confirmation to serve as the Ambassador to Brunei, my brother, Craig Allen, spent a long career working at the Department of Commerce.

Over the course of a 22-year career in investment banking, I became a specialist in emerging markets and credit. In the early 1980s, I was part of a small team of bankers focused on the sovereign rescheduling of commercial bank debt. My primary country of focus was the Philippines, but I also worked on distressed sovereigns in Latin America as well as Eastern Europe, specifically Yugoslavia.

Through this work, I came to appreciate the tradeoffs between balancing lenders' need to protect loan assets with the sovereign nations' desires to reduce pressure from debt service payments so that economic growth could improve their citizens' livelihoods and increase repayment probabilities.

Thirty years later, the players have changed, but many of the same dynamics continue to play out in Europe.

I arrived in London in 1992 to lead Chemical Bank's emerging markets business. Just a couple of years earlier, during President George H.W. Bush's administration, the EBRD had been established, with the United States contributing 10 percent of the capital, the largest single country stake.

The founding vision of the EBRD remains sound: fostering the economic vitality of the private sector through debt and equity capital to help countries effectively transition to market-oriented, pluralistic, and democratic societies. At the time, the context was a post-Soviet era. EBRD's client countries were Eastern European countries that had just thrown off the yoke of communism.

The EBRD today has new challenges. The EBRD has taken its founding vision into select countries in Northern Africa, Turkey, and Jordan with the same conviction that the development of an economically vibrant private sector will foster a political transition to democracy in these new client countries. At the same time, it is working to complete the transition of several more advanced Eastern European countries by aiming to reduce investments in these countries while recognizing that there is still a role for the EBRD, given the effects of European economic turmoil and the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Over the medium term, however, these countries will need to follow the path of the Czech Republic, which has graduated from EBRD investments.

EBRD's role in Ukraine deserves special mention. At the time of the unlawful annexation of Crimea, Ukraine was the second-largest recipient of outstanding loans among EBRD countries of operation. Today, virtually all commercial and private sources of fresh capital are reluctant to invest in Ukraine, as lenders and investors judge the risk as too extreme, absent broader signals of support for Ukraine.

The EBRD, true to its mission, continues to provide that signal and to make new lending available to private sector entities and the government. For calendar year 2015, the EBRD expects to make an additional $1.25 billion in new cash disbursements. If confirmed, I will seek to encourage the EBRD to continue to provide new financing to Ukraine entities on a prudent basis.

My long involvement in emerging markets and portfolio management provides me with a deep understanding of credit and event risk. I also ran sales teams from London that covered institutional investors in Eastern Europe, Russia, Turkey, and the Middle East, many of the same countries where the EBRD is most active.

If confirmed, I would like to focus on how the EBRD can most effectively support our allies in the region while balancing the financial risks that entails. My background and experience provides me with the skill set to ask the right questions and to understand the answers.

Thank you again for considering my nomination, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Allen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY SCOTT AMES ALLEN

Chairman Perdue, Ranking Member Kaine, and distinguished members of the committee, I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored that President Obama has nominated me to serve as the U.S. Executive Director for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce my family members that are here today. Bette Allen, my mother, who is 91 years old. She is becoming a regular at confirmation hearings, as she attended the hearing for my brother, Craig Allen, who was confirmed by this committee to serve as Ambassador to Brunei in July 2014. My wife, Kanako, who has devoted her career to working on economic development issues, first at the United Nations and currently at the World Bank. She is my rock. Finally, our two daughters: Lisa, who has just returned from a couple of years in Kyoto, Japan; and Sara, who works in finance in New York.

I come from a very close family with a history of government service. My sister, Sara Bowden, and her husband, Dennis Bowden, are also here today. During the Reagan administration, Sara worked at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. Dennis spent nearly 30 years at the CIA. And, prior to his confirma-

tion to serve as the Ambassador to Brunei, my brother, Craig Allen, spent a long career working at the Department of Commerce.

Over the course of a 22-year career in investment banking, I became a specialist in emerging markets and credit. In the early 1980s, I was part of a small team of bankers focused on the sovereign rescheduling of commercial bank debt. My primary country of focus was the Philippines, but I also worked on distressed sovereigns in Latin America as well as Eastern Europe, specifically Yugoslavia. Through this work, I came to appreciate the tradeoffs between balancing lenders' need to protect loan assets with the sovereign nations' desires to reduce pressure from debt service payments so that economic growth could improve their citizens' livelihoods and increase repayment probabilities. Thirty years later, the players have changed, but many of the same dynamics continue to play out in Europe.

I arrived in London in 1992 to lead Chemical Bank's emerging markets business. Just a couple of years earlier, during President George H.W. Bush's administration, the EBRD had been established, with the United States contributing 10 percent of the capital, the largest single country stake. The founding vision of the EBRD remains sound: fostering the economic vitality of the private sector through debt and equity capital to help countries effectively transition to market-oriented, pluralistic, and democratic societies. At the time, the context was a post-Soviet era and EBRD's client countries were Eastern European countries that had just thrown off the yoke of communism.

The EBRD today has new challenges. The EBRD has taken its founding vision into select countries in Northern Africa, Turkey, and Jordan with the same conviction that the development of an economically vibrant private sector will foster a political transition to democracy in these new client countries. At the same time, it is working to complete the transition of several more advanced Eastern European countries by aiming to reduce investments in these countries while recognizing that there is still a role for the EBRD, given the effects of European economic turmoil and Russian aggression in Ukraine. Over the medium term, however, these countries will need to follow the path of the Czech Republic, which has graduated from EBRD investments.

EBRD's role in Ukraine deserves special mention. At the time of the unlawful annexation of Crimea, Ukraine was the second-largest recipient of outstanding loans among EBRD countries of operation. Today, virtually all commercial and private sources of fresh capital are reluctant to invest in Ukraine, as lenders and investors judge the risk as too extreme, absent broader signals of support for Ukraine. The EBRD, true to its mission, continues to provide that signal and to make new lending available to private sector entities and the government. For calendar year 2015, the EBRD expects to make an additional $1.25 billion in new cash disbursements. If confirmed, I will seek to encourage the EBRD to continue to provide new financing to Ukraine entities on a prudent basis.

My long involvement in emerging markets and portfolio management provides me with a deep understanding of credit and event risk. I also ran sales teams from London that covered institutional investors in Eastern Europe, Russia, Turkey, and the Middle East, many of the same countries where the EBRD is most active. If confirmed, I would like to focus on how the EBRD can most effectively support our allies in the region while balancing the financial risks that entails. My background and experience provides me with the skill set to ask the right questions and to understand the answers.

Thank you again for considering my nomination, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you all very much. Now we will move to questions, and we will do it in reverse order.

But I am going to ask one question of each of you, just to get it started, and it is the same question, but it will be for your different posts.

A lot of times when we have these questions, we talk about the historical record and what you have done to get here. I accept the fact that all of you have stellar careers. It is obvious from reading your backgrounds. So I would like to know, for the record, how you see your next post, what those responsibilities would entail. So specifically, I would like to see what you think your priorities might be, as you look at this new responsibility, and what the challenges that you anticipate might be as well.

So, Mr. Allen, you are warmed up, so we will start with you and then we will go in reverse order. Thank you.

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you for the question.

If confirmed, I would like to think that my long experience in managing risk and understanding risk would help the EBRD manage its portfolio.

Clearly, working in emerging markets and sovereigns is full of credit risk and event risk that need to be understood and prudent measures taken to mitigate the risk wherever possible.

In the case of Ukraine, there was a huge event risk. It is noteworthy that EBRD has managed its risk prudently and is continuing to lend to Ukraine, thereby aligning our interests in Ukraine with EBRD.

So the management of risk is an area that I would like to focus on while at the EBRD, if confirmed.

Thank you.

Senator PERDUE. Mr. Estrada.

Mr. ESTRADA. If confirmed, I have three priorities, as I see it. First and foremost is the protection of U.S. citizens traveling, visiting, and working in the country of Trinidad and Tobago. My second priority would be continuing efforts to strengthen the capacity of Trinidadian law enforcement and also improving the justice sector system, so they could deal with the crime and drug issues that they currently face. My third priority would be to focus on improving the climate in Trinidad and Tobago and throughout the Caribbean region for a fair and open, transparent trade market system.

Senator PERDUE. What challenges do you think you will have in trying to achieve those three objectives?

Mr. ESTRADA. For the first challenge, protection of U.S. citizens, Trinidad and Tobago is struggling. They are challenged by high crime. We need to ensure that we educate Americans visiting the country. For those that are living in the country, we need to continue to educate them on safe areas, where not to go, and where to go for assistance. We need to continue to reach out to them. That would be my first challenge. We should be communicating with every American in the country. That would be my biggest challenge.

As far as strengthening the capacity of Trinidad law enforcement and justice sector systems, the country continues to struggle because of the illegal narcotics trade. They continue to struggle with corruption in some areas. And they need to strengthen their borders. They have very open sea lanes, so the challenge would be to get them to move a little bit more quickly on addressing those areas of concern.

Senator PERDUE. Great. Thank you.

Mr. Nolan.

Mr. NOLAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Like Mr. Estrada, my number one goal would be the safety and security of both official and nonofficial Americans in Suriname. The challenge we face there is continuing to professionalize the police and military institutions in the government; education and democratic control of the military; and a full range of law enforcement programs that would improve the police and military's performance. The problem in Suriname is not terrorism at the moment,

even though that can change anywhere at any time. It is crime. So that makes it very important to work with the police.

I think that leads into the second goal I would have, which are the issues under citizen security, democratic governance, and the rule of law. If we can work with the Surinamese to strengthen institutions there, it is not only a benefit in and of itself, but it will help us deal with some of our other concerns there, such as the transshipment of drugs and the trafficking in persons.

These are some of the issues that we want to get at with the Surinamese, and I hope to do so, if confirmed.

My third area would be to facilitate economic growth and development in Suriname. We have some significant U.S. investment in Suriname, including a very recent billion-dollar investment by a U.S. mining company in gold-mining. We want to move the Surinamese to a more sustainable, environmentally sensitive development pattern.

Their rain forest is one of the world's ecological treasures. If we can make sure they develop both for the benefit of the Surinamese people, for U.S. investors, but also to preserve that environment, to the extent possible, it will be very important.

Thank you.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

Ambassador.

Ambassador ROBINSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, CSO is a young bureau that faces a complex and global challenge, and since its inception it has undergone a period of dynamic learning as it adjusts to that challenge and as it seeks to ensure its place in the interagency community. What I can say is that it has an extraordinarily dedicated and talented staff.

So, my goal, my priority, is to provide the kind of disciplined leadership that seizes that staff, directs its attention, its talents, and its dedication to getting its job done and knitting that skill into the main fabric of the State Department, so that it delivers what it is designed to deliver in a way that is not only recognized as useful for the State Department and for the interagency community but is essential as it faces the challenge of violent conflict.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

Ms. Calvaresi Barr.

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I look really forward to assuming this role, if confirmed. I believe my 32 years in the accountability community positions me well.

While I am not at the agency currently, I think I know how to get this job done, so a couple things that I would want to begin with. It is about learning the agency. And it sounds very simplistic, but it is a rule that I always followed. I would want to get a sense of the work, the processes, and the people, what is working well, what is not working well. That means I need to be in the listening mode. That means that I need to engage with our staff. I have to look at what sets our priorities. And the most important thing is to make sure that we have processes in place that yield work that is quality, that is reflective of the standards, and that is transparent to Congress and to the American public.

I would certainly want to reach out to members of this committee to understand what your interests are, legislative interests, prior-

ities for the upcoming year, so that I can understand how our work can best meet those needs.

In addition, I would want to coordinate with the AID administrator to understand what that individual believes are some of the greatest challenges and vulnerabilities.

At the end of the day, and I think a couple of my panel members here mentioned it too, people are your greatest asset in an organization. And if you invest in them and you invest in their development, and you are a good leader that marshals and does not direct, it is amazing what you can get done. And the mission can be very, very well-served.

So that would be how I would approach it.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

We will move on to the ranking member, Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks to all of you.

Ms. Barr, I wanted to ask you a question. I recognize you are not at AID now, so this is more how you would approach this. In the October 14 OIG audit of USAID and USAID's compliance with FISMA, the Financial Information Security Management Act, the audit had a conclusion that USAID does not comply with FISMA. Although the agency has developed and documented the majority of the information security policies and procedures required under the act, USAID has not established an effective risk management program to ensure that policies and procedures are assessed and working as intended.

Consequently, the audit found a number of information system weaknesses that, if exploited, could adversely affect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of USAID's data and information systems, and ultimately could have a negative impact on the agency's ability to protect the security of its information and information systems.

This is the kind of warning that I am sure is not unique to USAID, and we are dealing here with the challenge of the OPM data breach.

How would you in the position kind of approach that kind of recommendation, in terms of trying to get USAID to comply more with the FISMA requirements, as described?

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Thank you for the question, Ranking Member Kaine.

FISMA is a very, very important program and policy that we need to be very, very closely attuned to. I would say, in IT systems, the security posture of any IT system has to be absolutely secure. So conducting work audits that reveal where there are weaknesses or vulnerabilities in those IT systems, it is important to point out what those vulnerabilities are from an agency-wide perspective. In the case of AID, maybe even try to drill down as we did in the case of DOT, not just provide sort of the scorecard on the state of security posture across the agency but a scorecard by, in the case of DOT, administrations.

So what I would like to do is take a look at that report. I would like to see what the recommendations are. I would like to see the status of those recommendations, the extent to which they are followed up. We will continue with our required work in the FISMA

area, and we would make sure that that system, as well as any other systems, have to be about protecting the integrity of data. And FISMA speaks to the heart of the integrity of data.

So you would have my full commitment to keep a close eye on that.

Senator KAINE. Here is a question that is really more about philosophically the role of an IG, as I am kind of new on the committee still at 2½ years. I am really learning the job. There was a controversy within USAID about a previous acting director and a suggestion that this acting director, between 2011 and 2013, was removing from public audit reports recommendations or challenging comments and putting them in private letters to management instead. Some in the agency basically said that that was motivated to try to make him or others look better than they were.

From an IG perspective, I mean, I am assuming that sometimes you come up with recommendations and some you might share confidentially or in a prefatory way or a preliminary way to try get people to make improvements, and then some you make public so that the world will know. How as an IG do you handle that as you are analyzing the performance of this agency that you are independently charged with overseeing?

Ms. CALVARESI BARR. Certainly, I am aware of the concerns that you mentioned. I am aware of them but I do not know the key facts surrounding them, so I do not want to speculate actually on any of the particulars.

But to your larger question as to what is the appropriate role of the IG and concern for those matters, it goes back to my role of ensuring that we have absolutely airtight processes that ensure that our work is evidence-based, that it is of quality, that it is free from any type of outside influence. The process has to include a good vetting, verification of the data, quality control checks of the data in-house before it is publicly released.

So I want to take a really good look at the process that was used there that perhaps prompted maybe some weaknesses, and the process that prompted some of these questions, to make sure that we go ahead and fix any of that.

At the end of the day, the most important thing is transparency of our work products. There should be no hidden findings anywhere. There should not be reports that are banished to management letters that never see the light of day. So you have my commitment that all of our work will be posted publicly upon final publication of the work.

Senator KAINE. Thank you very much, Ms. Barr.

Now to you, Mr. Robinson, two questions. I would like to ask you about Honduras, and I would like to ask you about Syria and the CSO work that is being done.

I know there is work being done in Honduras because of the serious violence problem there. Honduras has been a good U.S. ally, but this is a very, very challenging area. In the Northern Triangle, you have the highest murder rates in the world, three of the five highest murder rates in the world in those countries. The President has proposed a significant investment in a plan in Central America to help them deal with the security situations.

What is the CSO currently doing or what might it do, if Congress sees fit to appropriate significant funds to this initiative, to help Honduras and the other countries in the Northern Triangle deal with the violence issues? I ask because I lived there 35 years ago and have a particular and personal interest in it.

Ambassador ROBINSON. Thank you, Senator.

Under the President's proposal, CSO would, in the first instance, design and then manage the monitoring and evaluation function to make sure that the proposal—that the programs—that are implemented in Honduras or in Central America—are, in fact, working as intended. As part of the monitoring and evaluation program, CSO has a commitment to developing the lessons learned that it then transfers to future planning and programs. So, it is a feedback loop that we would continue to refine the program in an intergovernmental fashion to get the best use out of it.

On the particulars of Honduras itself, CSO launched a program in conjunction with USAID to do two things, first to address the tremendous violence that made Honduras, at that time, from 2012 to 2014 when the program was running, the murder capital of the world and also to prepare to limit the damaging impact that violence would have on elections in Honduras.

So, working with local NGOs, local civil society organizations, and with our USAID partners, CSO launched a program in Honduras to bring together civil society officials and police to create early warning systems, to create fast response systems, allowing community leaders to intervene where violence would be or was beginning to become even more problematic.

In addition, working in the justice sector, it put pressure, through these civil society groups and through these NGOs, on the government and on particularly the attorneys general to perform their jobs. The result was astounding. The number of convictions increased enormously, where CSO had been working with the attorneys general.

CSO has turned that program over, as it was intended to do, has transitioned it to the local implementers, to local partners in the field, and it continues to run today. So, the program is still effective. It is still functioning, and it will expand.

CSO continues to support that. The Embassy supports it as well. And INL also supports that program.

So, it is a good example of the interagency aspect of CSO's work.

On elections violence, CSO identified the hotspots that were likely to erupt. It created, again with local implementers, the civil society groups that could respond to the kind of political dialogue that was provoking electoral violence. It mapped out the major actors—both pro and con—and gave those, of course, to the Embassy, to the Ambassador. The Ambassador made phone calls to those actors, and, in fact, the elections did occur without the eruptions of violence that were anticipated in those areas.

Following the elections, which is also a critical period to monitor violence, of course, the Ambassador actually visited those areas and talked to those people. The result was an extraordinarily strengthened regime of civil society action to take responsibility for the street violence that otherwise may have impeded the elections, and that, again, continues today.

At the end of the day, one of the benefits of the CSO action was to turn over to the Embassy, to turn over to our diplomatic mission, a new network of actors that can directly address the kind of violence that has disrupted Honduras.

Senator KAINE. It is a very important issue, not just because I live there. I am not asking just for that reason. Obviously, with the huge upturn in the unaccompanied minors coming to the southern border of the United States heavily from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, driven by violence issues, smart investments and smart CSO participation in antiviolence strategies will have a direct benefit to the U.S. system as well. We are close partners.

Let me ask you about Syria. I recently did a codel to Syria, and I met with individuals connected with the START team under the leadership of Mark Ward. I know that a lot of work of the CSO as a new bureau initially was done dealing with the Syrian refugee crisis. But I understand that that work has now been moved primarily from the CSO division within State over to the NEA division within State.

Could you just describe why that is? I know there have been efforts to define what the CSO mission is within State, but I am curious about the reason for that transfer.

Ambassador ROBINSON. Yes, Senator.

Most CSO programs are designed to transition to a more sustainable platform. The purpose of CSO is to be agile, is to go in and to seek innovative, if that is what is required, or creative responses to problems, to fill in gaps that cannot be filled in, but not to substitute for capacity that can be found in country.

CSO is not designed to remain in a place to be the operator for extended periods of time.

As I mentioned in the Honduras example, CSO successfully transitioned its programs to local implementers. Obviously, Syria is a different story. The local implementers are not quite available to us at this point.

Consequently, CSO did transition its programs to the NEA Bureau. That transition is now complete. That said, CSO remains engaged, in particularly staffing General Allen's office and the counter-ISIL work and on the Liberated Areas Working Group, and we have a broad cadre of personnel in CSO with great experience in that part of the world. So, we remain deeply engaged in the planning efforts, but not in the actual implementation efforts, at this point.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Chair, can I continue with questions for the other witnesses?

Senator PERDUE. Absolutely.

Senator KAINE. I have gone over my time.

Senator PERDUE. No, you are in good shape.

Senator KAINE. These are important positions.

I actually would like to ask you, Mr. Nolan and Mr. Estrada, kind of the same question for Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. You both mentioned public safety and security issues. We still continue to see major drug activity, drug transit from South America, often through Central America, through Honduras, as we were just describing, to the United States.

General Kelly has testified often before the Armed Services Committee, where I serve, and has just basically said, in the SOUTHCOM domain, the resources for interdiction are just not what he would hope. He says I watch 75 percent of drugs coming into the United States just go right by me, and he was talking in an antisequester message, but, certainly, he is also talking about cooperation between the U.S. military in the SOUTHCOM space and other U.S. partners, State and others, as well as the militaries of the nations that we are dealing with.

Talk a little bit about, in Suriname, and then in Trinidad and Tobago, the current status of mil-to-mil relationships, what you might do in your ambassadorial posts to help basically with this interdiction effort.

Mr. Estrada, you talked about sea lanes needing to be better controlled to help this issue in Trinidad and Tobago. The United States can play a role in that.

Talk a little bit about our military cooperation with each of your nations.

Mr. Nolan first.

Mr. NOLAN. Thank you, Senator. It is, certainly, an important question.

Suriname is not a drug-producing country, but it is a major transshipment country. No drug transshipments are good. They tend not to come to the U.S. from Suriname. They are largely going to Africa and to Europe. But that does not mean we do not need to take action against them.

A large problem that we have with Suriname is, even with the best of cooperation from the military, if we had that, it is just a very large and very unpopulated and difficult space to know what is moving through the country.

So what we have tried to do with our programs, through SOUTHCOM, a partnership program with South Dakota National Guard and the Surinamese military, and with INL programming, is train the trainers on how to improve their ability to deal with controlling that space. We have tried to provide some additional capacity, because a lot of the drug flow does move along rivers once it gets into the country.

To be honest, in the preelection period we had in Suriname in May, we were not getting tremendous cooperation from the government. A lot of the programs had stepped back a little bit even though training programs are still continuing.

With the new government, we do have the same President, but I always take it as an opportunity to engage with the new government. We have some new ministers and we want to try again to engage them more fully. We think there are a lot of good people in the Surinamese military who really want to cooperate. I will try, if I am confirmed, to get more central buy-in so they get the resources and support they need to take advantage of the programs that we can offer both through INL funding and SOUTHCOM.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Nolan.

Mr. Estrada, the SOUTHCOM question.

Mr. ESTRADA. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

The United States has instituted a comprehensive interagency, anticrime, and counternarcotics strategy aimed at assisting Trini-

dad and Tobago law enforcement agencies to detect and interdict narcotics and to develop the skills to manage the evidence needed to prosecute those crimes. Agencies that are playing a part in this effort are the Drug Enforcement Agency, which works to help disrupt the flow of narcotics to the United States. This has, in fact, resulted in seizures of large quantities of cocaine and marijuana.

There is still a lot of work to be done, working with all the different agencies. You mentioned SOUTHCOM. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago, I will focus on those areas and work with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. They realize they have a challenge in this area, and I will do everything I can to help them address that issue.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Estrada.

Finally, Mr. Allen, a lot of the work that has been done by the EBRD initially has been with firms in Russia, so I was kind of going to ask, as you come into this post, how has the Russian dynamic with Ukraine and other European nations, how is that likely to change our trajectory of the EBRD work?

And I was basically going to ask the same question about how the arc of EBRD work will change as a result of the challenges we have been seeing in Greece. You mentioned that have developed your appreciation through earlier work about this balance of trying to protect lenders interest, but also protect the interest of the government that wants to be able to grow and not just spend all their resources repaying debt.

My layman's read of a lot of the recent Greek deal is that we are lending them more money so that they can pay off bad debts, but without necessarily being able to use that money to be able to grow the economy.

So you do not have to editorialize on that, but I am just kind of curious how the EBRD mission might address the Russia challenge and how it would address the current challenges posed by the Greek situation.

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you very much for both questions, Senator.

Let us start with Greece. Everyone wants to help Greece. The EBRD, the United States, the eurozone wants to help Greece.

EBRD is fortunate that it was not lending to Greece, so it has zero exposure. The Greek Government requested EBRD to start evaluating projects earlier this year. Clearly, there is a lot of uncertainty, a lot of event risk, a lot of economic turmoil in Greece.

Going forward, some of that uncertainty needs to be alleviated before, in my opinion, the EBRD should start lending any money in Greece. In any event, my understanding is that any financing in Greece will be short term and very targeted toward the private sector, not with the government.

In the case of Russia, a bit of history, if I may, please. The EBRD was set up in 1990. At that time, the Soviet Union was disintegrating. So the EBRD and the United States and administration at the time looked at the EBRD as a way to start developing the private sector. There were trade missions under Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush trying to do the same thing, by engaging with the private sector to increase the dynamics in the economy and through those dynamics to help prompt a political transition.

Again, from a historic perspective, when President Medvedev took over, there was a lot of optimism that this could happen. I mean, President Medvedev talked about establishing technology hubs. The EBRD, in fact, started to increase its lending around that same time. The United States was very much wanting to engage with Russia, and to see the development of the private sector, which hopefully would lead to more of a pluralistic democracy.

The second coming of Vladimir Putin threw that optimism into a tailspin. The EBRD was caught with a lot of Russian loans. There is no doubt about that. Pre-Crimea Russian exposure of EBRD versus Russian exposure now, they have worked very hard to reduce that risk. So it has been reduced by 25 percent to 30 percent. That is a step in the right direction.

Senator KAINE. Would that be from like about 30 percent down to low 20s?

Mr. ALLEN. No, the Russian share of the EBRD portfolio was around 21 percent. Now it is around a little less than 14 percent.

So the mitigation of Russian risk is happening. A lot of it is the rolloff of trade finance, but clearly there is no new business being done in Russia. The G7 has basically told the EBRD not to start any new business whatsoever post-Crimea.

EBRD is still engaged with, obviously, its Russian counterparts in order to be able to ensure the timely repayment of loans. But it is not making any new payments, and it is mitigating and trying to reduce the overall risk.

Senator KAINE. One followup and I am done.

How about in Ukraine?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, Ukraine, it was the second-largest borrower from EBRD. U.S. interests are right along with the EBRD's interests. It is a strategic priority for the EBRD and for the United States to continue to finance new business in Ukraine. The EBRD took some losses, but the commitment I think is seen in the fact that it is raising $1.25 billion in new transactions in Ukraine for 2015.

At this point in time, it is pretty safe to say that that the EBRD is probably the only, if not one of a couple, of lenders willing to put fresh capital in Ukraine. The event risks are enormous. The economy is under a lot of stress.

And if confirmed, I would encourage the EBRD to continue this course of providing new financing to the private sector, as well as in the oil and gas sector with the government, and to continue to support Ukraine, which is aligned with our interests.

Senator KAINE. Very informative answers, all of you. Thank you very much.

Senator PERDUE. That is fascinating.

I do want to follow up on one thing, Mr. Allen. With regard to the Russian exposure to the EBRD, how does that burn off? What is the duration of most of that risk?

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you very much for the question, Senator.

I have not been at the EBRD, so I do not know in detail. I suspect that some of it is trade financed, because they work very well with banks. So some of it will be trade financed. I do not know what the duration of their portfolio is and whether or not loans that came due were paid. That may have been some of the reduc-

tion in overall exposures. Whether or not there has been any disposal or sale of loan or equity stakes, I cannot comment on because I do not know.

But it is an interesting question. Clearly, the reduction in risk is good, and it needs to be accelerated whenever possible.

Senator PERDUE. If you are confirmed, I will seek you out. I would like to learn more about that. Senator Kaine and I have talked about that.

Mr. ALLEN. I look forward to that, sir.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you all very much for your testimony and your thoughtful responses. It is encouraging to see talent like you being willing to step up and do what you are about to do and what you have already done, most of you.

That will be the end of our questioning today. The record will remain open, however, until close of business Thursday for members who wish to submit questions to the record.

With that, this hearing is adjourned. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 3:39 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF EDWIN RICHARD NOLAN, JR., NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE NOLAN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. In May, the National Democratic Party obtained 26 of the 51 seats giving them an absolute majority. President Desire Bouterse was reelected, however some remain concerned about democratic governance and corruption in the political system.

In your testimony you stated that you "will continue the efforts of your predecessor to press the Government of Suriname for an independent judiciary capable of protecting and advancing democracy and the rule of law in Suriname."

- Can you provide more details about the efforts of your predecessor to improve the juridical system and what effects they have had? How would you continue to pursue such efforts?
- If confirmed, please detail what specific policies will you promote to increase American trade and investment in Suriname?

Answer. Ambassador Anania and Embassy Paramaribo have implemented training programs for prosecutors and judges, and additional training in complex financial crimes cases is planned for the coming months. They have advocated with senior government officials the need to establish an independent budget for the judiciary, which is currently funded via the Ministry of Justice and Police.

If confirmed, I will seek to build upon of these programs and look for additional opportunities. In addition, I will urge the Government of Suriname to respect the separation of powers and to allow the judicial system to work without political interference.

Embassy Paramaribo engages regularly with the business community, often connecting importers with U.S. producers. They provide U.S. business with investment and commercial information across sectors—including mining equipment and supplies as well as construction material and equipment. If confirmed, I will actively highlight commercial opportunities that U.S. companies can take advantage to expand their exports. I will also explore opportunities for partnerships with the Suriname Chamber of Commerce and an Embassy presence at Suriname's largest trade fair.

Question. In the 2015 Trafficking in Person report, Suriname was placed in Tier 2 Watch List.

- How do you intend to work with the Government of Suriname to encourage them to improve their efforts to combat trafficking in persons?

Answer. Suriname is a source, transit, and destination country for women and children subjected to sex trafficking and men, women, and children subjected to forced labor. Workers in mining, agriculture, and fishing are highly vulnerable to forced labor, and women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking in remote and illegal gold mining camps in Suriname's interior. Chinese migrants are also vulnerable to trafficking in the service and construction sectors.

Senior government officials have made limited antitrafficking efforts. Working-level officials—primarily police and prosecutors—continue to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases and refer victims to assistance but without sufficient resources or adequate victim assistance structures in place.

We continue to encourage the Government of Suriname to improve victim identification and to provide adequate resources for victims—including through establishment of long-term shelters for victims. We also encouraged government officials to vigorously investigate and prosecute trafficking crimes, to convict more traffickers, to provide additional resources for the police antitrafficking unit, and to improve interagency coordination on human trafficking issues.

If confirmed, I will continue to pursue combating human trafficking as a priority. Suriname is not eligible to remain on the Tier 2 Watch List next year, so failure to make meaningful progress will result in an automatic downgrade to Tier 3. I will make clear to senior officials that their failure to make significant efforts to combat trafficking would have broad policy implications and consequences, including potential restrictions on foreign assistance.

RESPONSES OF JOHN L. ESTRADA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE ESTRADA'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Mr. Estrada as you are aware, there is a conflict between Venezuela and Guyana stemming over oil exploration. If confirmed, what would be your position to better address the existing dispute between two of your neighboring countries.

Answer. Any effort to resolve this situation should be through peaceful means, consistent with international law and the applicable obligations of both parties. If bilateral dialogue is not sufficient, there are a number of third-party options available to both governments in the search for a peaceful, mutually satisfactory resolution. If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to support the resolution of this and any territorial disputes through peaceful means of dialogue.

Question. Mr. Estrada, in your opening remarks, you stated that Trinidad and Tobago is a key player in the multifaceted citizen security initiative for the Caribbean (CBSI) and part of the initiative is "attempting to combat the drug trade and other transnational crimes that threaten regional security . . ." If confirmed, what specific measures would you take to combat drug trade and transnational crimes and preserve democratic stability in the region?

Answer. The United States works closely with Trinidad and Tobago through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). If confirmed, I would continue to expand cooperation to combat transnational crimes, such as illicit drug trafficking.

Under CBSI, the U.S. Department of State supports a broad range of engagement with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the region to combat illicit trafficking and strengthen law enforcement capabilities. Specifically, we are working with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to build the capacity of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Academy (TTPA). The TTPA will serve as a center to provide specialized training to both the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and regional law enforcement agencies. In order to augment this capacity, we are increasing specialized in-service training for police and improving capacity to develop evidence-based cases. Furthermore, we are providing K–9 training support to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and Trinidad and Tobago Prison Service to combat drug trafficking and transnational crime.

Technical assistance for the Trinidad and Tobago Financial Investigations Unit and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service's Financial Investigations Branch provides regulators and investigators in these units with the tools they need to succeed in combating transnational crime. In addition, U.S. support for the Trinidad and Tobago Forensics Science Unit is working to increase host nation capacity to prosecute criminal cases with forensics evidence. Trinidad, along with other CBSI coun-

tries, participates in regular maritime security exercises and workshops to enhance regional coordination and operations against drug traffickers.

Question. In the 2015 Trafficking in Persons report, Trinidad and Tobago was placed on the Tier 2 Watch List. How do you intend to work with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to encourage them to improve their efforts to combat trafficking in persons?

Answer. This past year, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's antitrafficking unit sustained efforts to identify trafficking victims and refer them to care. The government investigated trafficking offenses—including potentially complicit law enforcement and immigration officials—but initiated only one prosecution against a suspected trafficker under its 2011 antitrafficking law, a significant decrease compared to the 12 prosecutions during the previous reporting period. The government has yet to convict any individuals under its antitrafficking law and did not develop a national plan of action as mandated under that law. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to improve this rate of conviction and develop a national action plan to protect trafficking victims and prosecute the traffickers.

NOMINATION

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2015

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

Susan Coppedge, of Georgia, to be Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, with the rank of Ambassador at Large

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Corker, Gardner, Perdue, Isakson, Cardin, Menendez, and Murphy.

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

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

Today we have before us Susan Coppedge to head the TIP Office for State. And I am thrilled that she is here.

I just came from a meeting this morning. I was over at a church here on the Hill. There were people here from all over the country to push the legislation that we unanimously passed out of the Foreign Relations Committee under your leadership as chairman, the End Modern Slavery Initiative Act. And it was pretty overwhelming. I know I try to stay out of pulpits. [Laughter.]

This was the only place from which I could speak today that had a microphone. But it was pretty overwhelming to see the numbers of people up here who care so deeply about this issue from all over the country.

And you know, the issue of trafficking in persons and slavery is something that is not a Democrat issue. It is not a Republican issue. It is not an independent issue. It is just a moral issue, and it does not take major decision memos that sit on Presidents' desks. It just takes all of us vigilantly fighting to make sure that we deal with this most abhorrent thing, and that is trafficking in persons but also the whole issue of slavery in general.

So I just want to say to our committee I am so thrilled with today's hearing. I am so appreciative and proud of our committee for what we have begun to do, and I think we have some momentum around this issue.

But Susan Coppedge's nomination could not come at a better time. I do not think there is anybody that was a part of the briefing last week that does not believe there is at least some degree of integrity that we need to challenge relative to the 2015 TIP Report. I am sorry. Something is amiss there.

I want to thank Senator Cardin and Senator Menendez and Senator Perdue and others who were there.

I am sorry. I do not think we have had an advocate at the State—I know we have not had an advocate. We have not had anybody in the position since November 2014. So to have somebody of this caliber who is absolutely first rate, who has lived a life around this issue and has been so committed just makes this a great day for our country. And I hope, after her testimony today, we will move quickly to have her confirmed. I am thrilled that she is here. And I think with her and her breeding some integrity but also some advocacy, that has been missing in this program will do a lot not just to restore, if you will, our preeminence in the world around this issue. I am sorry. I think we have lost a degree of that. That has nothing to do with our nominee.

I actually believe we are on the verge of doing something relative to slavery that is going to show real U.S. leadership. And so for that reason, I am very pleased that Susan has agreed to be nominated and to go through the process of this hearing and hopefully to assume this role, which is so important to people around the world that live in poverty and basically—let us face it—they have no access to the criminal justice system because they just do not have the ability, unlike people like us that are U.S. Senators and people in the audience that have status in the world. So many people in poverty just do not and therefore are trafficked, are abused, and live lives of complete misery. And our Nation can do something about it, and with Susan's leadership in the TIP Office to me is one of the essential building blocks to make that happen.

So I am sorry my comments were so long. I will turn it over to our esteemed ranking member and thank him for his lifelong commitment to human rights.

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

Senator CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, I concur in everything you said.

Ms. Coppedge, thank you very much for your willingness to step forward at this very important time. This is an extremely important position. It will take a great deal of your energy and time. And we thank you for your willingness to serve our country.

I also want to thank your family because this is not easy on family. We know that. And we thank them for their willingness to share you with our country in carrying out one of our most important functions.

Senator Corker is absolutely right. Modern day slavery is something that has to end. The number of people who are victims of trafficking is staggering. It is in the tens of millions. The profit to illegal entities from trafficking is in the hundreds of billions of dollars. So we are talking about a huge area of profit for criminal ac-

tivities and an incredible human rights violation. It is modern day slavery. And we need to continue to be in the forefront.

I first got engaged in this under the Helsinki Commission where we made this a U.S. priority in the OSCE. And we were successful in establishing a trafficking commitment within the OSCE. There is now a representative on trafficking in the parliamentary assembly. That person is Chris Smith, our colleague from the House of Representatives, who has been one of the great leaders on trafficking legislation. It was, I guess, about 15 years ago that we passed the trafficking in persons statute here, which set up the TIP Report, which is the gold standard for judging all countries' commitments to universal standards to end trafficking.

I have visited victim assistance centers around the world and seen firsthand those who have been victimized by traffickers. I have seen the consequences of it to families. I have seen the labor abuses that have taken place through trafficking. And it has to be our top priority.

So the position that we are looking at today, Ambassador at Large and Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, the person who will head our TIP Office, has a critical mission to play because the United States is the global leader on this issue and the world watches what we do and how we respond. And our key person on this issue is the person we confirm for the position of Ambassador at Large and Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. It is critically important that that person be effective in dealing with the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs and our regional secretaries, particularly as they review progress being made in each around the world so that when the decision is made by the Secretary of State on the TIP Report, it is the Ambassador at Large who has been effective in ensuring objectivity when it comes to countries' rankings on the TIP Report.

So I very much look forward, Ms. Coppedge, to your testimony but also to quick confirmation. You have Senator Isakson at your side. You could not have a person who we are more impressed with his opinions on other people, than Senator Isakson. So we look forward to your testimony and, more importantly, we hope that we can move this quickly and get a confirmed position as head of the office.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

We will now turn to our witness, and as Senator Cardin mentioned, Johnny Isakson, our great friend and esteemed colleague, is going to introduce her, which makes it almost a unanimous assent on the floor when he does so. Senator Isakson, I know you are on the committee, but you know the drill. If you in fact have another meeting you need to go to, there is certainly no reason for you to stay during her testimony if there is something else you need to attend to. But we thank you very much for being the kind of person you are. We are glad someone from your State, which—let us face it—embodies all those values that you do here, is willing to ascend to this job. We certainly look forward to your introduction, and thank you so much for your service.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHNNY ISAKSON,
U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA

Senator ISAKSON. Well, thank you, Chairman Corker and Ranking Member Cardin and all the members of the committee with whom I have been honored to serve for a number of years.

I appreciate the privilege of doing it. This is a twofer for me. About a year ago, I had the privilege of introducing Sally Yates to the Judiciary Committee, upon her confirmation as Deputy United States Attorney. Today in front of this committee, I am getting to introduce Susan Coppedge who studied under Sally Yates to be the Ambassador at Large for Trafficking in Persons, and I am honored and privileged to be able to do so.

There are lots of things I could say about this lady, but the best thing is she has been there and she has done that. In the Northern District of Georgia in the last 15 years, she has prosecuted 21 high profile human trafficking cases. A couple of them I would like to mention.

The Cortez-Mesa case, which resulted in the conviction of 10 pimps and profiteers from the trafficking of young girls, six of them juveniles. Not only did she obtain long sentences, but she got restitution for those that were injured and trafficked, which was a great credit to her ability.

And then the *U.S.* v. *Pipkin* case, where she put away for 40 and 35 years, respectively, two of the most notorious criminals in terms of human trafficking that were coming out of Mexico into the United States of America.

The Northern District of Georgia is probably the gatepost and the center post for transited people from Latin America and Central America and Mexico, up the eastern seaboard to New York City and New England in terms of drugs, organized crime, human trafficking, and illicit activity. She has been the lead prosecutor and has prosecuted a number of high profile cases, all of which resulted not only in convictions but in recognition from the U.S. Attorney for her outstanding service.

She graduated from Stanford University with a juris doctorate, and got a magna cum laude, which I cannot even pronounce or spell, much less ever obtain, from Duke University in her undergraduate degree. And she is a very articulate, educated individual.

But I have to tell you an irony. The day that Secretary Kerry interviewed her for this job was the day that Duke won the national championship in basketball. She says that is a good omen for today and hopefully it will be a good omen for her.

It is a privilege and a pleasure for me to introduce to the committee one of Georgia's outstanding attorneys, one who studyed under one of Georgia's outstanding leaders in Sally Yates, and one of which I am very proud to introduce to this committee and one who understands the sensitivity of the chairman and the ranking member on the manipulation of numbers in terms of the TIP and is going to be committed to seeing to it we have unvetted, unvarnished information and we do the right thing when it comes to those rankings every single time.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee, an outstanding Georgian, Susan Coppedge.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you so much. As usual, an outstanding job.

Our witness is Susan Coppedge, who has been nominated to serve as Director of the Office of Monitor and Combat Trafficking, with the rank of Ambassador at Large. And we look forward to your testimony. Thank you for being here.

STATEMENT OF SUSAN COPPEDGE, NOMINATED TO BE THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING

Ms. COPPEDGE. Mr. Chairman and Senator Cardin, thank you so much for the hearing today to consider the nomination for Ambassador at Large to monitor and combat trafficking in persons.

Senator Isakson, thank you so much for that generous introduction.

I am honored by the opportunity to appear before you, as I am honored and humbled by the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me to serve our Nation in continuing the global flight against human trafficking.

I want to thank the individuals from the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons: Kari Johnstone and Carl Fox. They truly have their hearts in this fight and they stand ready to help me settle into the State Department.

I also want to thank my husband, Lorenzo Amato, who is here today. Without his support and love for me and our children, I could not do this job.

My father is here. My sister, my cousin, my brother-in-law, many of my friends from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta are here. Colleagues and friends and fellow classmates from Duke and from Stanford are also here.

Over my career, I have worked on cases that have assisted more than 90 individuals in leaving their victimization, and in many cases, those individuals participated in the process of bringing their exploiters to justice. I have worked with and trained Federal, State, and local law enforcement. I have partnered with NGOs, nongovernmental organizations, faith groups, and concerned citizens in Georgia who provide services to victims.

Finally, I have educated jurors and judges that modern slavery often does not involve locks on the doors or victims who are willing to come forward. Human trafficking involves more subtle forms of exploitation and coercion.

Our goal, everyone in this room who cares about this fight, is to ensure the dignity of all individuals. Human trafficking in all its forms, whether forced labor or sex trafficking, is modern slavery, and it is one of the greatest human rights causes of our time. We must assume our responsibility to stop this heinous crime and to address the conditions such as violent conflict, poverty, and discrimination that contribute to making individuals vulnerable.

With the leadership of President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Under Secretary Sewall, as well as the members of this committee who I know are dedicated to this fight, I know we can raise the priority of human trafficking and strengthen the U.S. leadership on this important issue.

If confirmed, I commit to using this position passionately to advocate for the rights of individuals to be free from forced labor or sex trafficking, for victims to have access to comprehensive services, for survivors to be empowered to have a voice in policy, and for an end to the trafficking in human beings.

If confirmed, I will seek to engage every segment of the U.S. Government to integrate antitrafficking policies into our Nation's foreign policy goals.

If confirmed, I pledge to do my utmost to uphold the integrity of the annual Trafficking in Persons Report and its tier rankings, including by ensuring that facts from the field are accurately presented in the report. The report is respected around the world and used in countless countries to increase prosecutions, enhance protections, and increase prevention of the crime.

If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with the many nongovernmental organizations and stakeholders doing critical work in this arena and partner with those in the business community who seek strong policies that ensure humane labor practices.

I would like to close with the story of Carolina, a survivor I had the chance to know while I prosecuted her trafficker. Carolina was 16 when Juan Cortes Meza romanced her in Mexico, promising her a better life here in the United States. Instead, Cortes Meza smuggled Carolina across the border and gave her the most shocking news of her life. He expected her to sleep with 20 to 30 men a night in his high-volume, low-cost prostitution business. At first, he told her it would only last until her smuggling debt could be paid. Then he told her it was the only way she could make money. Then when his deception and coercion were insufficient, he beat her to force her to continue.

I had the privilege of being with Carolina as she bravely spoke to the Federal judge who heard her case, sharing her pain and describing how she cried every night. Only the walls could hear my cries is what Carolina told him. That day at trial, Atlanta heard Carolina, and today sharing the story with you, the United States hears Carolina. The indelible memory of her and of survivors like her fuels my commitment to antitrafficking work. There are many people in this room and listening today who are as passionate as I am. Each of us plays a part in this connected fight in helping survivors worldwide and in supporting governments, nongovernmental organizations, and citizens to end modern slavery. I so look forward to working with the members of this committee and others in our shared fight.

Thank you again for your consideration, and I look forward to answering any questions that you have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Coppedge follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SUSAN COPPEDGE

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, thank you for this hearing to consider my nomination as Ambassador at Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. I am honored by this opportunity to appear before you, as I am honored and humbled by the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me to serve our Nation in continuing the fight against human trafficking in the world.

I want to thank Kari Johnstone, Carl Fox, and the team at the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. Kari has been Acting Director since Ambassador Luis CdeBaca, my former DOJ colleague, departed the office, and she has done a

wonderful job. The entire TIP Office has their hearts in the fight against human trafficking and stands ready to help me settle into the State Department.

I want to acknowledge my husband, Lorenzo Amato, who has been so wonderfully supportive of me and whose love for me and our children enables me to undertake the awesome responsibility of the position for which I have been nominated. My father Warren Coppedge is also here; unfortunately my mother and brother could not be here and we thought it best if my daughter, Lilliana who is seven, and my son Sebastian, who is three, stayed home today. I could spend days telling you of the love, support and guidance my parents have given me and the innumerable ways that they have made me the person I am. I certainly inherited the gift of gab from both of them and also an understanding of how important it is to serve. This lesson is summarized by a bumper sticker my father has on his car: "whatever you do to the least of these, you also do to me."

My parents instilled faith and a call to service in all of their children including my sister, Elizabeth Coppedge Henley, who is a Methodist minister and who is here today with her family, as are friends and colleagues from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta, as well as friends and fellow classmates from both my undergraduate alma mater, Duke University, and my law school, Stanford University. There is also a large group back in Atlanta and my hometown of Dalton, GA, saying prayers for me and the work I hope to undertake, with the support and confirmation of the United States Senate.

I want to thank Senator Isakson for being here to introduce me to the committee today and to Senator Max Cleland who could not be here but has been a vocal supporter of mine. I hope the bipartisan support will continue through this Senate confirmation process and, hopefully, as we work together in the future.

As a federal prosecutor in the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia, I have been dedicated to the fight against human trafficking for 14 years. In 2002, I tried my first human trafficking case, serving as second chair to my wonderful colleague, Janis Gordon. This first case is an example of how a community can drive action on behalf of government officials. It started in 2000 with a juvenile court judge who wrote an editorial in the Atlanta Journal Constitution decrying the "alarming increase" of the commercial sexual exploitation of girls based on her experience with 14, 15, and 16 year olds coming into her court on prostitution charges. These children's bonds to get them out of jail were paid repeatedly by the same group of men, and those men did not face any criminal repercussions themselves. The judge's editorial ignited a group of citizens to take up this issue and galvanized then-U.S. Attorney Richard Deane and other dedicated law enforcement officials with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Atlanta Police Department. Thirteen human traffickers were indicted under federal charges; 11 pled guilty and 2 went to trial and were convicted by a jury. That was my first time meeting victims of modern slavery: teenagers who at 16 had been punished in juvenile court with a fine for prostitution and then released to the very traffickers who exploited them. I am so proud to have been a part of that first federal case in Atlanta and an advocate for justice for those young girls. This case earned the two most culpable traffickers prison sentences of 30 and 40 years and set me on the path to be here in front of you today.

Since then I have indicted 49 traffickers in cases involving both American and foreign-born children and young women, victims of both sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Over my career, I have worked on cases that have assisted more than 90 people in leaving their victimization and, in many cases, those individuals participated in the process of bringing their exploiters to justice. I have worked with federal, state, and local law enforcement in the fight against human trafficking. This meant, in the early days, conducting training for law enforcement as to what human trafficking was and the warning signs they might see. It also meant partnering with nongovernmental organizations, faith groups, and concerned citizens in Georgia who provided services to victims of trafficking by helping them find safe housing, finish school or obtain their GEDs, and apply for visas provided by the U.S. Government to foreign-born victims of trafficking. Finally, it has meant educating jurors and judges that modern slavery often does not involve locks on the doors or victims who come forward, but more subtle forms of exploitation and coercion that cause victims to be deprived of their freedom, their ability to say "no, I don't want to do this work."

Even though I may sound a bit regional to those Senators not from Tennessee or Georgia, I have been engaged on the frontlines in the very antitrafficking efforts the State Department encourages foreign governments to pursue. Based on my extensive experience combating trafficking here in the United States, I have trained foreign law enforcement in Argentina, New Zealand, and Thailand. I have also worked with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to develop a database for track-

ing human trafficking prosecutions. The message I always seek to deliver, whether to foreign governments or to the Rotary Club, is that human trafficking cases are some of the most important cases that governments can undertake; these cases restore the individuals to the freedom and liberty to which all are entitled.

The U.S. goal, which I know this committee is so dedicated to supporting, is to ensure the internationally recognized right of individual freedom and the dignity of all persons. Human trafficking in all its forms—whether forced labor or sex trafficking—is modern slavery, and it is one of the greatest human rights causes of our time. We must undertake our responsibility as modern day abolitionists with energy and commitment to stop this heinous crime and to address the conditions such as conflict, poverty, and discrimination that contribute to making individuals vulnerable to enslavement.

With President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Under Secretary Sewall, we have leaders in the executive branch deeply committed to this agenda. We also have strong leadership on this committee from Senator Corker and Senators Menendez, Cardin, Rubio, and others who have kept the fight against human trafficking a priority for the Senate. I am well aware that the strong leadership of an Ambassador at Large is more important now than ever, and we should continue our efforts to combat human trafficking and lift up those who have suffered in its grip. Not only is it simply the right thing to do, it will also enable the United States to continue to lead on this important issue.

Thus—

If confirmed, I commit to using this position passionately to advocate for the rights of individuals to be free from forced labor or sex trafficking, for victims of human trafficking to have access to comprehensive services, for survivors to be empowered to have a voice in policy, and for an end to the trafficking of human beings.

If confirmed, I will seek to engage every segment of the State Department and the rest of the U.S. Government to integrate antitrafficking policies into our Nation's foreign policy goals: promoting open, resilient, and democratic societies, advancing inclusive economic growth, and preventing and mitigating conflict and violent extremism. Fighting human trafficking should be an integral part of all our engagements with other governments to further our nation's values of freedom and liberty.

If confirmed, I pledge to do my utmost to uphold the integrity of the annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report and its tier rankings, including by ensuring the facts from the field are accurately presented in the report.

The annual TIP Report is respected around the world and used in countless countries to try to increase prosecutions of the exploiters, enhance protections for the survivors, and encourage prevention of this crime. Thanks to the hearing held by this committee in August, foreign governments will know that the United States Senate and U.S. citizens are deeply concerned about human trafficking. This will only help to encourage countries to make real progress in fighting human trafficking, as I hope to do.

If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with the many nongovernmental organizations and stakeholders already in this arena who successfully raise awareness, support prosecutions, and offer services to survivors.

If confirmed, I will partner with those in the business community who are deeply concerned with the treatment of workers in their supply chains and who seek strong legal regimes and policies that ensure humane labor practices and facilitate fair markets.

Lastly, if confirmed, I will do everything within my abilities to maintain a close working relationship with Congress and with those federal agencies engaged in the fight against human trafficking.

I would like to close with the story of Carolina. Carolina is a survivor I had the chance to know while I prosecuted her trafficker. She was 16 when Juan Cortes Meza romanced her in Mexico. He promised her that a better life awaited her in the United States, a life where he would marry her and they could make a living cleaning houses or selling clothes. Instead, Cortes Meza smuggled Carolina across the border and then gave her the most shocking news of her life—that he expected her to sleep with 20–30 men a night. He forced her into his high-volume, low-cost prostitution business. At first, Cortes Meza said it would only last until she paid back the smuggling debt. Then he told her it was the only way she could earn money in a country where law enforcement would not help her and she would end up in jail. Then, when his deception and coercion were not sufficient, he beat her to force her to continue.

I had the privilege of being with Carolina as she bravely spoke to the federal judge who heard her case. I listened as she shared her pain and described how she cried every night. "Only the walls heard my cries," she said. That day at trial, At-

lanta heard Carolina. Today, I share her story in the U.S. Senate and the United States hears Carolina. Every victim's pain is our Nation's pain as well. The indelible memory of Carolina's cries—and of survivors like her—fuels my commitment to antitrafficking work. A commitment to human dignity is a commitment to a just world. There are many people in this room and listening today who are as passionate as I am. Each of us plays a part in this connected fight in helping survivors worldwide, and in supporting governments, nongovernmental organizations, and citizens to end modern slavery. I look forward to working with the members of this committee and others in our shared fight.

Thank you again for your consideration and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much for your testimony and again for your commitment to this issue. I think you are aware we had a meeting last week off the Senate floor. We talked a little bit about some of our concerns with the current TIP Office. And I realize there is no one there in your position and there has not been anyone there since November 2014. But the TIP Report tier rankings are reviewed and differences adjudicated at the Under Secretary level, as we understand it, and ultimately by the Secretary of State. What is your understanding of the TIP Office Director in that process?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Well, my understanding is that the TIP Office Director, the position that I am being considered for, is the person who first marshals with the office staff all of the facts from the field, who spends the year engaging our missions, the State Department's bureaus, citizens, and nongovernmental organizations, all report in facts to that office. Then the Ambassador, the Director of the office, advocates for the role that the TIP Office believes and the rankings the TIP Office believes those facts dictate.

The CHAIRMAN. And you will commit to assuring that the integrity of that process is there. I will just put it that way.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Yes, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. What are some of the kind of things that you think can sometimes come into play to keep those TIP rankings from being what they should be?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Well, I have not been part of the process yet. So I am kind of watching from the sidelines. I do not want to be a Monday morning quarterback and critique the team on Sunday. But I can certainly can commit to you that I will do my best to ensure the integrity of the report and to let people higher up at the Department know that that report needs to be based on facts to uphold its integrity.

The CHAIRMAN. It is our understanding that over time there has been a good deal of attrition in the office, I guess possibly due to lack of focus and lack of leadership. Obviously, you will change that hugely when you assume that role. Can you tell us a little bit about what your commitment is internally in the office in assuming this position?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Senator, as part of the nomination process, I have met with the individuals who work in that office, and I am very impressed by their dedication to the fight against human trafficking. They work hard and they care deeply about the issue. And I hope to be a good leader to them and a good champion for their report, and I look forward to working with the individuals who are there.

The CHAIRMAN. One of the things we all do—I had dinner with Senator Perdue last week, and we were talking about the fact that just the experience of being in other countries over a period of time ends up creating a body of knowledge that is second to none. I mean, it is amazing I think what all of us have learned by going to other parts of the world, understanding culture, seeing what is happening there.

It is my understanding that the TIP Office has had a limited travel budget and because of constraints, many of their officers are not out doing those things. Obviously, that affects things in a big way. I just wonder what your take on that is and what your commitment to people getting out and seeing on the ground firsthand what is happening.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Well, I do think it is very important to get into countries, particularly ones that are in a position to make a difference if they have a visit from U.S. officials. And I am committed to going to countries and doing that. And I do believe that meeting people face-to-face and building those relationships, working not just with governments but with citizens and nongovernmental organizations in the country, who frequently supply information to the TIP Office, meeting those individuals so that they know they have an avenue of communication to reporting facts in the field as well is very important.

And I think I am well situated, having been on the front lines in prosecuting these cases myself, to talk to people about the hurdles and the obstacles and suggest ways that we have overcome them here in the United States. And I look forward to doing that in the field.

The CHAIRMAN. And what is your understanding of how the action plans for each country is developed?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Senator, my understanding is with the recommendations that are in the TIP Report that everyone can read, that those recommendations form the basis of the action plans for the countries. And the United States is certainly encouraging other countries to meet those goals and those suggestions in the TIP Report to increase their rankings.

The CHAIRMAN. Will you commit to working closely with us on the committee and making us aware, if at any time you feel other forces are at work which are keeping your voice from being heard and the primary reason that you are assuming this job is being mitigated because of other forces? Will you work with us in that regard and ensure that that is not the case?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Senator Corker, I look forward to working with this committee because there are so many members on it who are passionate and dedicated to the fight against trafficking. I look forward to open communications with this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, listen, before I turn to Senator Cardin, I just want to say again to have someone who, like most of us here know individuals, have met individuals, have defended individuals, have caused justice to come about for individuals, assuming this role certainly is something that is good for our country and great for those who, again, do not have today access to justice. And I hope you will take the same commitment—I think you will—relative to what you did in the case you described earlier. I hope you

will maintain that and carry that with you to the State Department as you assume this position. And I want to thank you for your willingness. I want to thank your family for their willingness. I understand they may actually move to Washington if you assume this role. We thank them in particular for that.

And with that, I will turn to Ranking Member Cardin.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Thank you, Senator Corker.

Senator CARDIN. Did Senator Isakson know he might be losing some Georgians? [Laughter.]

Senator ISAKSON. We know how to deal with that. [Laughter.]

Senator CARDIN. Well, let me again welcome you.

I just really want to underscore the point that Chairman Corker made. As I understand the process on the rankings, the work that you do in your office working with missions around the world and working with NGOs and gathering the facts from every country—the initial work is done and accumulated by your office. That then works its way to determinations as to whether there is any disagreement as to the ranking for the coming year on the TIP Report. My understanding is that normally for about 80 or more percent of the countries there is no disagreement, and those rankings just routinely are accepted by the Secretary and included in the annual TIP Report.

But there are a number of countries where there are some disagreements, and the disagreements usually occur between your office and the regional Secretaries working through the various missions. That then is elevated to the Under Secretaries, and the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights is advocating on behalf of your position, and the regional secretaries will usually advocate on behalf of the mission.

Your role is to take a look at the human rights issue of trafficking. The regional Secretaries may have other areas of concern and relationships with countries that they must take into consideration. Trafficking is just one of the agenda items.

So the point I just really wanted to underscore, as that process moves forward, it is critically important that the Director have input into the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights so that the principal objective used in determining the rankings is progress made in trafficking. And that is where we need a strong advocate and an effective advocate.

In order to achieve that, you need to build support for the trafficking agenda. And I could not help but think as you were talking about Carolina that that is exactly what you need to do. You got to put a face on this. When I talk about tens of millions of victims, people say, okay, what else is new? But when you talk about an individual who has gone through the tragedy of being trafficked, that helps people to understand why this is important.

So I guess I would urge you to look at creative ways where you can build stronger support so that your recommendations will have stronger weight with the Under Secretaries as they make their recommendation to the Deputy Secretary and the Secretary of State. And you need to find, I hope, creative ways, working with the NGO community, to be able to personalize this. It affects all of our communities. And we can do something about it. And it starts with an

objective evaluation of every countries' efforts and what they can do to improve their efforts.

So I guess my point is that—I know you are committed to this, but I want you to understand you are going to reach some barriers in getting the results that you want because we have complicated relations with countries around the world, and there are not just human rights issues, there are other issues.

We have a meeting with the Chinese head of state coming on Friday, and I would hope that human rights would be top on the agenda. But somehow I got a feeling that cybersecurity and maritime security and all those other issues are going to be talked about at greater length than some of the human rights issues that I would like to see elevated in that discussion. It is your responsibility in this position to be able to elevate the trafficking issues as these debates takes place well before the decisions on the rankings.

Just get your reaction as to how you will try to carry that out.

Ms. COPPEDGE. That was a great pep talk for me going into the job on things I need to consider and work diligently at. I know that relationships are not built just at the time the TIP Report comes out and that I want to build those relationships throughout the year at the State Department. And I want to integrate human trafficking along with those other issues that you mentioned because there are multiple parts to U.S. diplomacy, and human trafficking needs to be an integral part and one of those parts that is considered.

Senator CARDIN. And as Senator Corker said, look, you have a lot of friends on this issue. You have friends in the United States Senate. You have friends in the NGO community. Just utilize the strength we have. I am proud that this issue has gained a great deal of strength through advocacy groups around America and around the world. And you need to be the leader to focus us on where we can be the most effective in helping you. If we know where problems exist in the political structure to make progress, then we can help you in doing that. On the other hand, if you feel, well, that is not your role, we may miss an opportunity. Your independent, objective information to us becomes critically important.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Thank you, Senator.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin. I think what he is saying—I will say it in a little different way. Look, we are going through a period of time where this issue is—I am sorry—not a focus. In Syria, we have not done what we said we would do, and people are dead and people are leaving. In Malaysia, I do not exactly know what has happened, but I do not think the TIP Office was heard at all. I do not think the issue of trafficking in persons has even been on the radar screen in modern times. I am sorry. It is a blight on our country. And you are entering at a time when all of us want to see that change. I think that is what he just said. [Laughter.]

But with that, Senator Isakson.

Senator ISAKSON. Well, let me follow up on that, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and tell you in preparing to introduce Susan, I was reading some of her history in terms of cases, and the Cortes Meza case and the face she put on that case, which you

bragged about—one thing I did not say in the introduction, which I should have—and she probably would not volunteer on her own. But in her 15 years at the Northern District of Georgia, she has spent a lot of time advocating on behalf of people who are victims of trafficking. In fact, the Rotary Club of Roswell, which is the second-largest Rotary Club in Georgia, where David McCleary has heard her speech at that Rotary Club about 5 or 6 years ago I think—they adopted human trafficking as their number one issue. That Rotary Club has raised money, has traveled across the country, has worked to try and raise the awareness of that. And I think that is what you both are saying. It is out of sight and it is out of mind.

And, Susan, you have a tremendous responsibility. We are politicians and we make a lot of speeches and we can talk about these things, but sometimes they heard, sometimes they are not. But if you can tell those stories of those 21 cases you prosecuted in the Northern District of Georgia, like Pipkin and like Cortes Meza, and tell the stories about really what happens to these people, it would do a world of good to help us raise that visibility as well.

Secondly, in reading background material, you have taught, as I understand it, in New Zealand, Australia, and other countries with regard to human trafficking. Have you worked with their judiciaries or their legislatures or their prosecutors? Tell us about that.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Yes, Senator. I have worked training law enforcement both locally in Georgia, federally in the United States, and internationally in New Zealand, Thailand, and Argentina. And I was sent there probably with State Department money to talk to law enforcement about the difficulties of investigating and prosecuting these cases. Law enforcement everywhere is overwhelmed with people coming forward to them to report crimes, where human trafficking victims do not always come forward. So there is a lot more work on law enforcement's part to uncover the crime. And then the victims are often afraid of law enforcement or ashamed of what has been happening to them. And so they are fearful of coming forward and working with law enforcement.

So when I was in those countries, I was talking to law enforcement about how you move through some of the obstacles in prosecuting those cases. I was also stressing a victim-centered approach in the investigations and prosecutions. We never had a case where a victim was not willing to cooperate in the Atlanta U.S. Attorney's Office, but if a victim did not want to pursue a case, it is the victim's rights that should prevail in that instance.

Senator ISAKSON. You know, sanctuary cities have gotten a lot of publicity in the United States over the incident that took place in San Francisco. But am I correct or incorrect? There are some sanctuary countries for human traffickers that exist today on the face of the earth.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Senator, I am not aware of that. I know there are some countries that do not comply with the minimum standards, and they are reported in the Trafficking in Persons Report.

Senator ISAKSON. And that is the kind of information we want to make sure we have the very best information possible in the TIP Report so we do not mask what might be somebody actually harboring human trafficking elements.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Yes, Senator.
Senator ISAKSON. We are proud of you.
Ms. COPPEDGE. Thank you.
Senator ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Isakson.
Senator Menendez.
Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Coppedge, congratulations on your nomination. And I must underscore that if Senator Isakson comes and vouches for you, it has an enormous weight, at least with this Senator, and I think that is true for many others. I do not think he has just done that because you come from Georgia. So that is very meaningful.

You and I had a good conversation. I just want to follow up on a couple of the things that we talked about.

First of all, while I know you were not there, I hope you have an understanding of why many members of this committee have a concern about the 2015 TIP Report as it relates to Malaysia, from my perspective as it relates to Cuba and other countries where the narrative of why a country was upgraded from a Tier 3 worst standard to a Tier 2 just does not fit the upgrade. So without commenting on whether it is right or wrong, you have an understanding as to why members have a concern about the 2015 TIP Report. Is that fair to say?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Yes, it is, Senator. I have been following all of your hearings on this matter and reading the articles as well.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. Hopefully it is not in the reruns at night on C–SPAN where you are—you know.

Let me ask you. Knowing that, knowing what the concerns are as it relates to the upgrade, how do you plan to appropriately but nonetheless push back?

I am looking for someone who is going to be a staunch advocate for the work that the people from the TIP Office do. They do an incredible job. I think it is difficult, when your work gets crushed from up above, to still have the passion and the commitment. It has to be diminished somewhat. And so this office needs a leader who will not only lead in the work and make sure that the information is as full and as transparent and as powerful to reflect the realities of a given country, but it also needs a leader at the table inside of the Department where, as has been said by Senator Cardin, there are competing interests. And personally, as much as I might disagree, I would be more respectful of the competing interests being said that, look, we need, for example, Malaysia in the Trans-Pacific Partnership. We think that is important to our pivot to Asia. I might disagree with that, but at least I respect that. We need this country because we have a security objective. So I can understand those. I cannot understand when we are told carte blanche that in fact there are upgrades because they did the right thing. I find that really hard to believe.

So with that as the basis, I want to get a sense of what you will do internally in the State Department in this process. When your people have come to conclusions and now it is time to advocate, how strong of an advocate will you be, understanding that you will have superiors that may have a different view. I just want to get a sense of that from you.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

I will be a champion for the individuals in the TIP Office and the work that they do, and I will be that champion year round. Part of my job as a Federal prosecutor is to take the facts, present them to a jury of 12 people, and convince them that those facts are a violation of the law. And that is very similar to the work that the TIP Office does. They gather facts from the field. They present those to the State Department individuals who make the decision and convince them where the tier rankings should be. I view my job is to speak to truth to power, and if power does not like to hear it, then I can be outranked clearly in the State Department, but I will speak that truth.

Senator MENENDEZ. So let me ask you. One thing is presenting facts to a jury. The other thing is did you ever in your 15 years of experience at the U.S. Attorney's Office face a set of circumstances—and I do not need the specifics of it, but I just want to get a sense—face a set of circumstances in which something was taking place that you felt that you had to speak out. Look, it could have been something that should have been prosecuted, that there was a judgment maybe not to prosecute, or something that was going to be prosecuted that you felt there was a judgment that it should not be prosecuted, or anything like that that you had to face in those 15 years that was not the easy flow of saying okay, but that you actually faced a moment in which you felt you had to tell your superiors I think this is the wrong judgment.

Ms. COPPEDGE. I have told my superiors that, Senator. I am a squeaky wheel and I present the facts in the way that I see them and I argue from my position very forcefully. Luckily in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta, we have had excellent leadership that recognizes that no one case is worth tarnishing the reputation of justice in our community. So the office has been very supportive when I have spoken up and felt strongly about issues.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you. I heard your answer to Senator Corker, but I want to understand. If this committee and members ask for information, will you be willingly disposed to give that information to members of this committee as we are making decisions?

Ms. COPPEDGE. I am committed to open dialogue with this committee throughout the year not just right before the TIP Report is released, and I look forward to working with the committee.

Senator MENENDEZ. And so am I to take away from your answers that underneath that Southern genteelness that I gather from you there is an iron will to do what is right here?

Ms. COPPEDGE. There is an iron will to do what is right because of the individuals that I have met in trafficking cases. They do not have a voice. You Senators are their voice. I will remind you of that just as you have reminded me of my responsibilities.

Senator MENENDEZ. Then with that understanding, I look forward to supporting your nomination.

Ms. COPPEDGE. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

The CHAIRMAN. I might add behind that New Jersey tough accent——

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. There is a guy that actually cares about people in this type of situation.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, I am glad you are an interpreter for the committee. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. You know, in her case, I need to be one.

Let me just say we did have a meeting at the end of the week—a closed meeting. We did that for the benefit of the State Department so that we would not have media there and other things. I have, since that time, asked for three specific pieces of information from them, just for you to know because I know people will be asking you that in the hallway, to really understand what has happened. Instead of it being sweeping, three very specific things that came up actually during Tony Blinken's testimony. I do hope they will provide that like now. We are asking for them to reply immediately. This should not take any time to get to us. And if not, then I would like to talk to the committee about next steps to force that to happen. I just wanted to make you all aware. I think most of us are very unsatisfied with the testimony that occurred last week.

With that, Senator Perdue.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Ms. Coppedge. Thank you for the courtesy of our visit last week.

For the record, I want to remind those of us here that this issue could have been swept under. We could have taken that TIP Report, put it on a shelf, and let it sit there. I want to commend the ranking member, Senator Cardin, and our chairman, Senator Corker, for not letting that happen. And I think the fact that you have four of the most distinguished Senators of our time sitting here before you today—I am not one of those. These four gentlemen are very dedicated to this issue I know personally. And they have got other things to do this morning, but they are here because of this nomination and how important it is. And I applaud all of them for that.

I am honored, Mr. Chairman, that our nominee today is from Georgia. I have watched her for the last decade attack this with a vigor. I think your question, Senator Menendez, should have been directed toward her husband to see if she really has the iron will. [Laughter.]

I suspect that she does.

But I applaud the work you have been doing. You are coming on a new level now and a new stage.

And I want to clear a couple things for the record that we talked about last week. In my career in business, I have been very sensitive to this idea of taking advantage of the weak in our societies around the world. Every culture is a little different. This is a major impediment to me for international trade. And one of the things that makes us one world and a peaceful world is the fact that we do not take advantage. We do not stand for people who take advantage of the weak among us. And yet, children, for the last 50 years, have been definitely victims of global issues and power struggles around the world.

Today in this 2015 report—I am not asking for your opinion about the 2015 report, but I do want to talk to you about children soldiers. Child labor has been a topic for the last 50 years as

globalization has taken root, and so a lot of progress has been made. In children soldiers, though, I am not so sure that much progress has been made. There are eight countries in this TIP Report. Countries like Burma, Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen are listed as countries who have forces that openly have children soldiers. I know you have a sensitive spot in your heart about this. This is a little bit different level than what you have been dealing with. And not all of these countries are on this year's report's worst level.

So my question is, as we look forward, will the fact that Tier 3, countries that have children soldiers—is that a major issue with regard to countries being placed on Tier 3?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Well, Senator, child soldiering is certainly a horrible issue that everyone is against in this room. And I am glad that you brought it up. And the TIP Report does list every year countries that engage children as soldiers or children as workers in their armies or armed forces, and that is required by the Child Soldier Prevention Act, which governs this area. It is listed in the TIP Report, and it is certainly one of the factors that is evaluated in the report when looking at the tier rankings.

Senator PERDUE. Are you hopeful we can eliminate that?

Ms. COPPEDGE. I am hopeful we can do lots of things, Senator. That is on the list. Yes, sir.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

Along with that, you have heard discussed here today—and I think one of our concerns looking at this 2015 report is the efficacy of the report. It should be the gold standard that we and others can depend on when we evaluate countries in terms of where we put businesses, how we deal with them in the State Department, and how we think about them here in Congress. But we now learn that in this report in 2015, there are several countries that just do not comply. Several years, Germany has not provided information. Now, we have no reason to suspect they are not a continuing Tier 1 operator, but the fact that they are not providing information gives me pause. The fact that India again has not provided information—they are still solidly a Tier 2 player in the report.

How will you in your role help to maintain the efficacy of this report not just to make sure it is not politicized but also to make sure that the participating countries provide the information that is so important for you to make your determination?

Ms. COPPEDGE. So one of the factors that I understand the TIP Report considers is whether the government provides information and data because that is the best source of prosecutions and support being provided to victims. And if no information is forthcoming, then the TIP Report and the office has to assume that they are not making efforts in that area. So I know that that is built into the review of the report.

I also understand that we get information from civil society in a country and NGOs as well, but certainly governments are encouraged and requested to provide information.

Senator PERDUE. You know, there is a reported tension between JTIP and the regional bureaus of State and U.S. missions overseas. They go back to JTIP's creation back in 2001. Some observers contend that while JTIP is praised for raising the policy profile of

human trafficking, its ability to project its antitrafficking message as a priority is hampered by its perceived unequal footing vis-a-vis the regional bureaus at State.

How will you resolve this? I mean, this goes across all the responsibilities at State, it looks like. How will you weigh in to make sure that does not negatively affect our ability to evaluate these countries?

Ms. COPPEDGE. Senator, I will work to build relationships with regional offices and with our missions in the field. They are also a great source of information to the TIP Office about what is going on with respect to trafficking in that country. I want to get the trafficking message clearly out to the regions and the missions and just build those relationships up so that we are on equal footing with other offices there. Obviously, there are competing priorities, as Senator Cardin recognized, but JTIP and the TIP Office needs to have a loud voice at the table and someone that individuals are willing to work with, and I will strive to be that person.

Senator PERDUE. Well, thank you for your answers, and congratulations on your nomination.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to fully supporting this nominee and her impact on this report going forward. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I do not think there are other questions. I think people have had time to meet with you personally and very much appreciate your willingness to do this.

The record will remain open for questions through the close of business Wednesday. If you would answer those promptly, it helps in you ascending to this position. I know you will do that. And again, thank you and your family's willingness to do this.

With that, the meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 10:50 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF SUSAN COPPEDGE, NOMINATED TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE COPPEDGE'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Of the 20.9 million victims worldwide, the ILO estimates that 68 percent are trapped in labor trafficking. Yet, only 5 percent of the convictions reported worldwide last year were labor cases. Labor traffickers operate with near impunity across the globe, in large part because of the increased resources it takes to recognize, investigate and prosecute these cases.

- How can J/TIP help build this expertise globally and ensure that more labor cases are identified and prosecuted?

Answer. I am deeply concerned with the low rate of prosecutions and convictions for labor trafficking crimes around the world. If confirmed, it will be a key priority for me—including through the dedication of resources—to advocate for increased prosecutions and convictions in these cases.

Labor trafficking takes many forms including bonded labor, domestic servitude, and forced child labor, and it occurs in many industries and work environments—from formal to informal sectors, isolated mines to urban businesses, whether legal or not. One important area that I will prioritize, if confirmed, is government enactment and implementation of laws that encourage prosecution of suspected traffickers and afford sufficient protections for victims. I will also lead robust engage-

ment efforts to press governments to implement fully their own laws and international commitments.

A TIP Office under my direction would continue to work hard to further the U.S. Government's leadership in combating human trafficking in all its forms. In addition to strong diplomacy aimed at pushing governments to increase prosecutions and convictions, I will strategically program resources and forge close relationships with international organizations and NGOs, as well as civil society groups, to address the drivers of human trafficking. If confirmed, I will also encourage business leaders to adopt codes of conduct for employees prohibiting the purchase of commercial sex and the use of unscrupulous labor practices in their supply chains. I will reach out to community leaders to foster the belief that it is everyone's responsibility to do their part to reduce the demand for human trafficking.

I am committed to combating human trafficking in all its forms and, if confirmed, I will push governments around the world to do the same.

Question. Worldwide, convictions dropped 23 percent last year from 5,776 to 4,443. With an estimated 21 million victims worldwide, yet fewer than 45,000 victims reported to law enforcement last year and fewer than 4,500 convictions worldwide, it is a crime of very low risk to the traffickers.

♦ How can J/TIP leverage its diplomatic power to increase the number of convictions over the coming year?

Answer. The low number of trafficking prosecutions and convictions is a problem that I have worked my entire career to change and is one that I am deeply committed to addressing if confirmed as Ambassador. I will also continue the Department's robust and multifaceted efforts to address global shortcomings in protecting trafficking victims and prosecuting and convicting traffickers, and I will use my position to make clear to governments around the world that it is a uniquely governmental responsibility to hold perpetrators accountable for these crimes.

The annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report is an important tool to this end. The Department publicly documents government efforts to identify and protect victims and prosecute and convict traffickers. I understand Department officials engage foreign governments year round to identify the root causes of inadequate victim protection and law enforcement efforts, and urge authorities to take appropriate action to address deficiencies. The TIP Report is used by a range of stakeholders around the world to encourage government action. If confirmed, I will ensure the TIP Report continues to be the gold standard in assessing government efforts to combat human trafficking and prompting tangible progress around the world. I will do my utmost to ensure that the report remains an effective tool in pushing governments to address their deficiencies in this regard.

Another tool is the foreign assistance administered by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. I know firsthand that such assistance plays an important role in supporting government efforts to address this crime and the needs of victims around the world. If confirmed, I will ensure these resources are used effectively to build the capacity of government law enforcement and victim protection efforts.

Governments are ultimately responsible for holding traffickers accountable and protecting trafficking victims. If confirmed, I will use the tools at my disposal to urge all governments to fulfill this responsibility.

Question. For several years, antitrafficking activists have raised concerns about the politicization of the TIP Report—namely that countries are sometimes upgraded undeservedly when it serves other political interests for the U.S. Government. Each time this happens, it sends a strong signal overseas that politics is more important than combating trafficking.

♦ Given the widely held perception that several countries were undeservedly upgraded in this year's report for political reasons, what will be done to rebuild the credibility of the report?

Answer. I have closely followed the release of this year's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report and the concerns expressed by members of this committee regarding the tier ranking decisions and the integrity of the report.

Congress created the TIP Report and the tier rankings to provide a means for the Secretary both to make objective assessments of government efforts to combat human trafficking and to publish the conclusions of those assessments in an effort to prompt tangible progress around the world. Since 2001, the TIP Report has helped make antitrafficking efforts an essential component of United States foreign policy. It is widely—and rightly—recognized as the "gold standard" in assessing government efforts around the world and urging improvements. I understand the Department strives to make the report as objective and accurate as possible, docu-

menting the successes and shortcomings of government antitrafficking efforts measured against the minimum standards established under U.S. law. The power and influence of the report depends on maintaining the integrity of tier rankings and the accompanying country analyses.

If confirmed, I will be a visible and vocal champion of therReport within the Department and I commit to ensuring its impartial standards and using the full range of resources at my disposal to maintain those standards. I will also encourage the Department to continue to use the report to elevate this issue on the global stage, to guide its antitrafficking programming around the world, and to encourage foreign governments to implement recommended improvements in their efforts.

Question. In the 2008 reauthorization of the TVPRA, the State Department was authorized to suspend certain categories of U.S. visas (A–3/G–5) used for guest workers at specific diplomatic missions or international organizations that have abused or exploited such workers in the past. Despite several cases, the State Department has yet to suspend any countries A–3/G–5 visa programs for abuse.

♦ If confirmed, will you ensure that this portion of the TVPRA is enforced?

Answer. The fair treatment of domestic workers employed by members of foreign missions in the United States is a matter of particular importance to the State Department. If confirmed, I will take allegations of domestic worker abuse very seriously.

It is my understanding that an internal Department working group convenes to review allegations of domestic worker abuse and brings them to the attention of the relevant foreign chief of mission, with a requirement to review the allegations and report back to the Department promptly regarding the findings.

The Department also regularly reminds foreign chiefs of mission of their obligations toward domestic workers, as well as their obligation to comply with U.S. laws and Department requirements relating to the employment of domestic workers, including the suspension provision in the 2008 TVPRA.

If confirmed, I will do my utmost to ensure the Department continues to review every allegation of domestic worker abuse that is brought to its attention and take appropriate action. I will support Department of State efforts to work with the diplomatic community on matters related to U.S. investigations into alleged abuse and compliance with U.S. requirements relating to the employment of domestic workers. If confirmed, I will take seriously the suspension requirements of the 2008 TVPRA and make recommendations to the Secretary accordingly.

DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE COPPEDGE'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MARKEY

Question. Trafficking in persons is a crime that has a devastating role in the fishing and maritime industry. U.S. companies should bear some responsibility to prevent goods secured through the use of human trafficking victims from accessing U.S. markets.

♦ Please describe how the State Department, in coordination with other relevant U.S. Government agencies, is conducting outreach to U.S. companies and suppliers to identify and mitigate sources of goods supplied with the use of trafficking victims, particularly in the fishing industry.

Answer. The Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP Office) has long documented the risks of human trafficking in the seafood sector. In recent years, a growing body of reporting has documented forced labor on coastal and deep sea fishing vessels, as well as in shrimp farming and seafood processing. In an industry where a largely migrant workforce faces harsh conditions, isolation at sea, and environmental factors that are forcing boats to travel greater distances for longer periods of time, the risks of trafficking in persons loom large. The 2015 annual Trafficking in Persons Report noted that 54 of 188 country narratives referenced forced labor in the seafood sector.

It is my understanding that the Department is working with the business community to support companies in addressing the problem of forced labor in their supply chains, and also to leverage additional avenues of pressure on governments to establish and enforce clear antitrafficking laws and regulations that ensure respect for human rights and fair trade practices.

I also understand that the Department of State regularly meets and consults with a variety of companies—including from the fishing, electronics, and travel and tourism industries—that have expressed an interest in addressing the potential vulnerability of human trafficking in supply chains. The TIP Office convenes meetings

with industry in coordination with other federal agencies, such as the Department of Labor, the Office of Management and Budget, and USAID. Specifically related to seafood, the TIP Office has convened NGOs, multinational corporations and associations, government officials, and leading academics to discuss the issue of human trafficking in the seafood sector, share model approaches to preventing such forced labor, and forge new partnerships. TIP Office staff members have also given presentations, met with seafood suppliers, and traveled with an industry coalition to Thailand to gain further insight, together with U.S. mission personnel, to examine the risks of human trafficking in the fishing industry as well as consider solutions to address concerns.

Following the release of Executive Order 13627, Strengthening Protections Against Trafficking in Persons in Federal Contracts, the Senior Policy Operating Group's Procurement and Supply Chains Committee and its members participated in a lengthy process for reviewing public comments and developing amendments to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) implementing both the EO and Title XVII (Ending Trafficking in Government Contracting) of the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act. Committee members also participated in updating training for Federal Acquisitions personnel across the U.S. Government.

I know that to support this work, the TIP Office entered into a cooperative agreement with Verité, an NGO leader in supply chain management, to gather data on the areas of greatest risk of trafficking in global supply chains and produced a report on those sectors and commodities with a history or indications of supporting trafficking or trafficking-related activities. In addition, under the agreement, Verité will develop tools for federal contractors and corporations to analyze the risks of trafficking in their supply chains and implement ethical sourcing guidelines. The initiative included outreach to corporations to solicit expertise and advice to inform the development of the tools to be used by federal contractors and businesses. Finally, the initiative includes a pilot project to engage seafood sector companies and then provide tailored guidance for those companies who wish to adopt promising practices consistent with the principles of the EO.

The State Department also chairs the Presidential Task Force on Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing and Seafood Fraud (IUU Task Force), a practice that has significant overlap with issues of human trafficking.

Question. Earlier this year, the State Department named Ghana as the first country in which to implement the Child Protection Compacts, which have a specific focus to prioritize the rescue of children in slave labor conditions and hold perpetrators of child slave labor accountable for these crimes.

- ♦ As the head of the Trafficking in Persons Office, what will you do to ensure that the Ghanaian Government upholds their agreement to focus on the rescue of children enslaved and the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators? Also, how will you ensure that the Child Protection Compacts continue to be implemented in other countries to build successful models for ending child slavery?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the TIP Office closely monitors activities to implement the first Child Protection Compact (CPC) Partnership between the United States and the Government of Ghana. I will ask for regular reports noting any progress and obstacles toward achieving the jointly developed objectives of enhanced child protection, more effective prosecution of child traffickers, and prevention of the crime. If the Government of Ghana fails to adhere to its responsibilities under the CPC Partnership, the authorizing legislation permits the Secretary to suspend or terminate the assistance and to reinstate it after corrective action is taken. I also expect to engage the Ghanaian ministries participating in the CPC Partnership in an annual high-level bilateral dialogue to highlight accomplishments and challenges and to chart corrective action, if needed.

I look forward, if confirmed, and should funds become available for this purpose, to implementing this unique model of foreign assistance by identifying additional prospective countries for such a Partnership, conducting appropriate interagency consultations, assessing the feasibility and likelihood of success, and negotiating future CPC Partnerships. In doing so, I would build on the Office's experience and lessons learned through establishing the first CPC Partnership with Ghana.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2015

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

Hon. Robert Porter Jackson, of Virginia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipoteniary of the United States of America to the Republic of Ghana

Hon. Harry K. Thomas, Jr., of New York, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Zimbabwe

Julie Furuta-Toy of Wyoming, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea

Dennis B. Hankins, of Minnesota, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea

Linda I. Etim, of Wisconsin, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:04 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jeff Flake, presiding.

Present: Senators Flake, Gardner, Barrasso, Markey, Murphy, and Kaine.

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

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

I welcome you all to this hearing.

I was pleased to meet with all of you in my office earlier. I appreciate you making that effort to get to know you better and talk about your history and what you hope to accomplish. As you know, I have long had an interest in African affairs and had some opportunity to spend time there, including in Zimbabwe where one of the nominees is headed.

Today we will hear from nominees for Ghana, Zimbabwe, Equatorial Guinea, and Guinea, and from the nominee to serve as Assistant Administrator at AID in its Africa Bureau. We will also examine a wide variety of issues.

Ghana has embarked on its second MCC compact to address energy issues facing the country while it tries to diversify its economy away from oil.

Zimbabwe's aged dictator, Robert Mugabe, is beginning to show signs that his age may give way to succession at some point, and we will be watching that leadership struggle in that country.

Equatorial Guinea continues to struggle with human rights and developing its resources in a way to benefit all of its citizens.

Guinea, of course, is picking up the pieces from the Ebola outbreak that wrought such devastation there and is looking forward to building a post-Ebola health care system.

Lastly, we will look at how the Africa Bureau and USAID can bridge the gap from this administration to the next one while ensuring little or no disruption in the work that it is doing in sub-Saharan Africa.

I thank all of you for your time, for sharing your experiences and your expertise with us. I look forward to your testimony. We have a PAC scheduled around this today, and so I hope you do not take our desire for brevity in this hearing as anything other than we have a busy schedule and we appreciate you being here and also appreciate—I know many of you have family members sitting behind you, and hopefully you will recognize them in your testimony.

But I would like to recognize Senator Markey for his comments.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much. And thank you for your leadership on the subcommittee and for convening this hearing to consider the nomination of these distinguished public servants to serve as United States Ambassadors to countries in Africa and one to lead USAID's Africa Bureau.

And to all the nominees who are here today, thank you for dedicating your lives in service to our country. Every one of you has served with a commitment and a dedication that we appreciate and admire.

These are important nominations. Africa presents much opportunity but also many challenges.

Mr. Chairman, when you and I joined the President in Africa this summer, we saw firsthand the possibilities to spark Africa's existing entrepreneurial spirit to create unprecedented economic opportunity and growth. We can and we should spur this growth by supporting expanded access to sustainable sources of power, innovative telecommunications, and Internet connectivity. All of these are fundamental requirements for commercial and social success in this modern 21st century era.

At the same time, Africa faces tremendous challenges. We must strongly support efforts to prevent trafficking in persons, protect human rights, including the right of LGBT people, and strengthen democracy and good governance.

So I look forward to the hearing today, and again, we thank all of you for being here and your willingness to serve our country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Markey.

Our first nominee is Robert Porter Jackson, career member of the Senior Foreign Service, most recently at the State Department and prior to that Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon, with previous postings in Morocco, Cote d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Nigeria, Burundi. It is just about all of Africa there.

Our second nominee, Harry K. Thomas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, currently serving as Diplomat in Residence at Arizona State University. A smart man. [Laughter.]

I understand your wife enjoys it there as well. That is a good place to be. Everybody ends up in Arizona at some point, I should mention.

Prior to that he served as Ambassador to the Philippines, previously posted in Washington, DC, and also around the world.

Our third nominee is Julie Furuta-Toy, who is a career member of the Foreign Service as well. Her current posting is at our Embassy in Oslo, previous posts in Ghana, Washington, DC, and around the world. We talked in my office about springing from the equator up to Scandinavia and back. So that is quite a trip. I do not know what kind of clothes you pack wherever you go, but it has to be a variety.

Our fourth nominee is Dennis B. Hankins, career member of the Senior Foreign Service also. He currently serves at our consulate in Brazil, prior postings in Sudan, Mauritania, Mozambique, DRC, and elsewhere.

And also, the last as well, but Linda and I traveled in Africa recently, Linda Etim from Wisconsin, Assistant Administrator to USAID, the Africa Bureau there. I enjoyed being with you and Senator Markey as well and Kenya and Ethiopia. So I look forward to hearing your testimony.

We will start with Ambassador Jackson.

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT PORTER JACKSON, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Ambassador JACKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member. I am honored to appear before you today, and I am grateful for the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me as their nominee to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana.

I am joined by my wife, Babs Jackson, and other friends and colleagues this afternoon.

Since I joined the Foreign Service 33 years ago, as you noted, I have served on three continents, as well as here at home. In these assignments, I have endeavored to promote human rights, strengthen civil society, foster development, and expand U.S. exports. I have repeatedly returned to Africa because I have found that in the course of 2 or 3 years, one can see what one has accomplished. I found that especially true as Ambassador to Cameroon. If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to Ghana, I will draw upon these experiences to advance U.S. interests in Africa.

Ghana is a strong partner of the United States, sharing democratic values and goals of human rights, economic growth, and regional stability. If confirmed, my priorities will be to promote democracy, good governance, peace, trade, education, and health, to unlock Ghana's potential for sustained, inclusive, broad-based eco-

nomic growth, and to help it graduate from traditional development assistance.

Ghana is widely considered one of the leading democracies on the African Continent, with active political parties and civil society organizations. Ghana's democracy benefits from a lively media, a history of peaceful political transitions, an apolitical military, and a good human rights record. Celebrating 58 years of independence in 2015, Ghana has held six national elections since 1992, and power has alternated between its two largest political parties. If confirmed, I look forward to witnessing Ghana achieve its seventh consecutive peaceful and transparent national democratic elections in December of 2016.

Ghana has been hit hard by low prices for its three major exports: cocoa, gold, and oil. Nonetheless, Ghana has the potential to become one of sub-Saharan Africa's leading economies and provides enormous opportunities for bilateral trade and investment. While Ghana takes advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, continued assistance to increase domestic capacity and market competitiveness is needed to help Ghanaian businesses take full advantage of trade benefits provided by this legislation. The recently launched Trade Africa Expansion Initiative, along with USAID's West African Trade Hub, will play key roles in building the capacity of Ghanaian institutions and supporting Ghana's efforts to expand exports. Along with the USAID-led Feed the Future programs, the Trade Hub will also increase regional trade in agricultural products to improve food security. If confirmed, I will explore new and innovative approaches to expand commercial ties.

One of the brakes on Ghana's growth has been inadequate infrastructure, especially in the energy sector. Ghana completed a 5-year Millennium Challenge account compact in 2012 focused on agricultural and rural development, and Ghana signed a second compact during the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit last August, this one focusing on the power sector.

The summit itself highlighted U.S. ties with Africa. People-to-people links between the United States and Ghana have grown ever stronger over the last 50-plus years, and we have enjoyed a continuous and vibrant Peace Corps presence, as well as other exchange programs. Ghana is the original Peace Corps country, and Ghanaians are proud to say that while Peace Corps was born in the United States, it learned to walk in Ghana. More than 4,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in Ghana since 1961, and there are currently 136 Volunteers in agriculture, education, and health projects. In fact, Ghana has made steady but uneven progress in improving health over the last decade.

Ghana and the United States share an interest in countering terrorism, securing maritime borders, and promoting regional stability. We are also working together to combat drug and human trafficking. Ghana is an important supporter of peacekeeping and law enforcement through the Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Center and a regional training center, respectively. A longtime participant in peacekeeping operations, Ghana is also a partner in the Security Governance Initiative and the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Initiative. And its stability has contributed to peace and security in West Africa.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, I thank you for the opportunity to address you this afternoon, and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Jackson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT P. JACKSON

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and other members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today. I am grateful for the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana. I am joined today by Babette Pollard Jackson, my wife and partner for the last 26 years.

Since I entered the Foreign Service 33 years ago, I have served in Canada, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Portugal, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Morocco, and Cameroon, as well as here at home. In these assignments, I have endeavored to promote human rights, strengthen civil society, foster development, and expand U.S. exports. I have repeatedly returned to Africa because I have found that, in the course of 2 or 3 years, one can see one's accomplishments; I found that especially true as Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon. If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana, I will draw upon these experiences to advance U.S. interests in Africa.

Ghana is a strong partner of the United States, sharing democratic values and goals of human rights, economic growth, and regional stability. If confirmed, my priorities will be to promote democracy, good governance, peace, trade, education, and health, to unlock Ghana's potential for sustained, inclusive, broad-based economic growth and to help it graduate from traditional development assistance.

Ghana is widely considered one of the leading democracies on the African Continent, with active political parties and civil society organizations. Ghana's democracy benefits from a lively media, a history of peaceful political transitions between the two main political parties, an apolitical military, and a good human rights record. Celebrating 58 years of independence in 2015, Ghana has held six national elections since 1992, and power has alternated between its two-largest political parties. If confirmed, I look forward to witnessing Ghana achieve its seventh consecutive peaceful and transparent national democratic elections in December 2016.

Ghana has been hit hard by low prices for its three major exports: cocoa, gold, and oil. Nonetheless, Ghana has the potential to become one of sub- Saharan Africa's leading economies and provides enormous opportunities for bilateral trade and investment. While Ghana takes advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), continued assistance to increase domestic capacity and market competitiveness is needed to help Ghanaian businesses take full advantage of the trade benefits provided by this legislation. The recently launched Trade Africa Expansion Initiative, along with USAID's West African Trade Hub, will play key roles in building the capacity of Ghanaian institutions and supporting Ghana's efforts to expand exports. Along with the USAID-led bilateral Feed the Future programs, the Trade Hub will also increase regional trade in agricultural products to improve food security. If confirmed, I will explore new and innovative approaches to expand commercial ties between the United States and Ghana.

One of the brakes on Ghana's growth has been inadequate infrastructure, especially in the energy sector. Ghana completed a 5-year $547 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact in 2012 focused on agriculture and rural development. Ghana signed a second MCC compact to transform the power sector on August 5, 2014, during the U.S.-Africa Leaders summit.

The summit highlighted U.S. ties with Africa. People-to-people links between the United States and Ghana have grown ever stronger through more than 50 years of a continuous and vibrant Peace Corps presence, as well as Fulbright, Humphrey, Community College Initiative (CCI), and Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) exchange programs. Ghana is the original Peace Corps country and is proud of the fact that while Peace Corps was born in America, it learned to walk in Ghana. More than 4,410 Peace Corps volunteers have served in Ghana since the program was established in 1961. There are currently 136 volunteers in Ghana working with their communities on projects in education, agriculture, and health.

Ghana has made significant but uneven progress in improving health over the past decade. One of the key bottlenecks across almost all health indicators is the uneven distribution of wealth between Ghana's impoverished North and the more affluent South. Many of our programs, including basic education, health, and agricultural assistance, therefore, focus on the North.

Ghana and the United States share an interest in countering terrorism, securing the maritime borders, and promoting regional stability. We are also working

together to combat escalating drug and human trafficking. Ghana is an important supporter of peacekeeping through the Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Center and law enforcement-oriented efforts through the Regional Training Center. A longtime participant in the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, Ghana is also a partner country in the Security Governance Initiative and the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership (A–PRRP). Stability in Ghana has contributed to peace and security in West Africa, and if confirmed, I will support Ghana's efforts to promote regional and global stability. Of course, as is the case for all Ambassadors, protecting the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens will be a top priority.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the opportunity to address you today. I welcome your questions.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Thomas.

STATEMENT OF HON. HARRY K. THOMAS, JR., NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

Ambassador THOMAS. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today and grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Assistant Secretary Linda Thomas-Greenfield for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Permit me to thank my family for their support, especially my wife and partner, Mithi Aquino-Thomas; my sister, Nelda Canada; my cousins, Jen and Sharon Boyd; Comitrik and Leslie Smith; and my niece, Alya Thomas. We are also joined by friends from around the globe, and I very much appreciate their attendance to witness how our democracy functions.

I would like to add my sincere appreciation to my mom who is here today, Hildonia Thomas, robust at 91, and my late father, Harry Thomas, Sr., whose guidance and love gave me the opportunity to be before you today.

A special thanks to my in-laws, Colonel Aquino and Dr. Aquino, for their faith and trust in me.

Finally, our three children, Casey, Emmanuel Miguel, and Zoe are away at university but with us today in spirit.

Mr. Chairman, I will summarize my remarks as the entire testimony has been entered into the record.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, my top priorities will be to ensure the security and safety of American citizens and to advance the interests and values of the United States and the American people.

I am excited at the possibility of returning to Zimbabwe where I previously served our Nation during a time of relative harmony. It is the land where our daughter, Casey, learned to walk, talk, and respect the wonderful people of Zimbabwe. It is where I visited the beautiful and important game parks that must be protected, saw the great historic Zimbabwe ruins, experienced the wondrous Victoria Falls, and witnessed the excitement the entire world shared when Nelson Mandela was released from prison and paid his initial visit to Harare as an example of forgiveness, tolerance, and respect for human rights.

With full recognition of the complex challenges Zimbabwe faces, I remain optimistic about the country's future and believe that the United States has an important role to play in helping the people of Zimbabwe build a just, free, and prosperous nation. The trajectory of Zimbabwe's recent past should not obscure the nation's tre-

mendous potential. Though battered by more than a decade of political strife, economic decline, and challenges to its health system, Zimbabwe retains a foundational human and physical infrastructure upon which it can build a strong future. It is in the interest of the United States to be a partner in that process, and if confirmed, I will continue the work of building productive and respectful relationships with all Zimbabweans of good will.

The United States has shown its deep and abiding concern for Zimbabwe through the nearly $1 billion in humanitarian relief and health-related assistance we have provided to its people just in the last decade. There is no more explicit expression of our support for the people of Zimbabwe than our standing by them through their times of greatest need. We need, however, to prepare to move beyond a relationship defined by aid.

U.S. policy in Zimbabwe is not about regime change. Only the people of Zimbabwe have the ability to change their government. Our policies support principles not parties or people. When, however, self-determination is denied, as it is in Zimbabwe through political violence, fraudulent and mismanaged elections, and restrictions on the rights and opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs, the United States cannot ignore such human rights violations. We have taken principled steps to demonstrate our concern about the actions of those responsible for and those who profit from miscarriages of the promise Zimbabwe offered at independence. We will consistently stand for the rights of Zimbabweans to participate fully in their nation's political process.

If confirmed, I will work to enable Zimbabwe to become a just, prosperous, and democratic state that meets the needs of its people, contributes to security and development in the region, and plays an important role in world affairs. We will not always agree with the Government of Zimbabwe, but we will always attempt to maintain a respectful and open dialogue.

The United States seeks the full implementation of the 2013 Constitution: credible, lasting democratic reforms; and respect for human rights and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will work toward those objectives which could be a trigger for the United States to open a much more dynamic relationship.

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

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Thomas follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HARRY K. THOMAS, JR.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today, and grateful to President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Assistant Secretary Linda Thomas-Greenfield for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Zimbabwe. Please permit me to thank my family for their support especially my wife and partner Mithi Aquino-Thomas, a human resources instructor, my sister, Nelda Canada, a retired paralegal, my cousins, Ray and Jen Boyd, retired U.S. Government officials, and Sharon Boyd, who works for the Fairfax County Police. I would like to add my sincere appreciation to my mom, Hildonia Thomas, a former teacher and social worker, and my late father, Harry Thomas, Sr., whose guidance and love gave me the opportunity to be before you today. A special thanks to my in-laws, Col. Aquino and Doctor Aquino, for their faith and trust in me. Finally, our three children Casey, Emmanuel Miguel, and Zoe are away at university but with us today in spirit.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, my top priorities will be to ensure the security and safety of American citizens and to advance the interests and values of the United States and the American people.

I am excited at the possibility of returning to Zimbabwe where I previously served our Nation during a time of relative harmony. It is the land where our daughter, Casey, learned to walk, talk, and respect the wonderful people of Zimbabwe. It is where I visited the beautiful and important game parks that must be protected, saw the historic Great Zimbabwe ruins, experienced the wondrous Victoria Falls and witnessed the excitement the entire world shared when Nelson Mandela was released from prison and paid his initial visit to Harare as an example of forgiveness, tolerance, and respect for human rights. With full recognition of the complex challenges Zimbabwe faces, I remain optimistic about the country's future and believe that the United States has an important role to play in helping the people of Zimbabwe build a just, free, and prosperous nation. The trajectory of Zimbabwe's recent past should not obscure the nation's tremendous potential. Though battered by more than a decade of political strife, economic decline, and challenges to its health systems, Zimbabwe retains a foundational human and physical infrastructure upon which it can build a strong future. It is in the interest of the United States to be a partner in that process and, if confirmed, I will continue the work of building productive and respectful relationships with all Zimbabweans of good will.

The United States has shown its deep and abiding concern for Zimbabwe through the nearly 1 billion dollars in humanitarian relief and health-related assistance we have provided to its people just in the last decade. There is no more explicit expression of our support for the people of Zimbabwe than our standing by them through their times of greatest need. We need, however, to prepare to move beyond a relationship defined by aid. Zimbabweans are fully capable of feeding themselves, meeting the nation's health and education needs, building a dynamic political system, and restoring what was once one of the strongest economies in Africa. Zimbabwe can and should be a nation of economic opportunities, of respect for the rule of law and the human rights of all people. Those are values that reflect the core of what Americans share with Zimbabweans and that we should pursue together.

U.S. policy in Zimbabwe is not about regime change. Only the people of Zimbabwe have the ability to change their government. Our policies support principles, not parties or people.When, however, self-determination is denied, as it is in Zimbabwe through political violence, fraudulent and mismanaged elections, and restrictions on the right and opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs, the United States cannot ignore such human rights violations. We have taken principled steps to demonstrate our concern about the actions of those responsible for, and those who profit from, miscarriages of the promise Zimbabwe offered at independence. We will consistently stand for the rights of Zimbabweans to participate fully in their nation's political processes.

If confirmed, I will work to enable Zimbabwe to become a just, prosperous, and democratic state that meets the needs of its people, contributes to security and development in the region, and plays an important role in world affairs. That was U.S. policy in 1980 when we were the first nation to recognize Zimbabwe's independence, and it continues to be our policy. We will not always agree with the Government of Zimbabwe, but we will always attempt to maintain a respectful and open dialogue.

The United States seeks the full implementation of the 2013 Constitution; credible, lasting democratic reforms; and respect for human rights and rule of law by the Government of Zimbabwe. If confirmed, I will work with toward those objectives, which could be a trigger for the United States to open a much more dynamic relationship.

If confirmed, I will give special attention to the welfare and security of American citizens in Zimbabwe and to meeting with people from across the rich spectrum of Zimbabwe's society, making an assessment of the situation there and offering recommendations on the best way forward. As we continue to urge democratic development, we must also continue to invest in the people of Zimbabwe—the health, people-to-people exchanges, humanitarian aid, and business development work—to preserve the human capital needed to rebuild Zimbabwe in the years ahead. I have faith that with this support, once given the opportunity to communicate, organize, and express their will, the people of Zimbabwe will find the best path forward and pursue it successfully.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and I would be happy to answer questions.

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you, Mr. Thomas. As they say in Zimbabwe, makorokoto. Congratulations for this nomination.

And before Ms. Furuta-Toy says something, we have a home State Senator who wanted to say something.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to congratulate all the nominees and thank you for your commitment to service.

I absolutely do want to take a moment to welcome Julie Furuta-Toy to the committee. I would love to stay. I am chairing a Public Lands Subcommittee hearing this afternoon, but I did want to come and congratulate each of you and to talk specifically about a proud resident of the great State of Wyoming. A number of years ago, Julie and her husband Steven made the wise decision to make Cody, WY, their home. As many of you know, Cody is a wonderful town, full of natural beauty. It is the gateway to Wyoming's crown jewel, Yellowstone National Park, and the home of former Wyoming U.S. Senator Alan Simpson. So if you need any advice, call Al. [Laughter.]

He will put it in terms and he will be able to make it very clear to anyone listening exactly what he has in mind.

But I will just tell you as a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Julie Furuta-Toy has worked in many critical countries across the globe, including Mexico, the Philippines, Haiti, Russia, Ghana, India, Norway. Her 29 years of service has provided her with the knowledge, the skills, the experiences to address the many challenges and adventures ahead. I am very grateful for her willingness to serve our country and to provide strong leadership in implementing the foreign policy goals of the United States. It is clear that she will make her family, the people of Wyoming, and our Nation very proud.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you. You are right to be proud.

Mr. Hankins? Oh, I am sorry. [Laughter.]

I thought he was speaking for you.

Senator BARRASSO. She will take questions later. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. I apologize. Ms. Furuta-Toy.

STATEMENT OF JULIE FURUTA–TOY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Ms. FURUTA-TOY. Thank you very much, Chairman Flake, Ranking Member Markey, Senator Barrasso, Senator Kaine. I am very pleased today to have the opportunity to testify before you. It is a great honor for me to appear this afternoon as the nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. And I am grateful for the confidence that President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed by the Senate, I will do my best to uphold this trust and further the U.S. national interests.

Mr. Chairman, I regret that my husband, Steve, is in Wyoming today and my daughter, Sara, is unable to be here, but I am pleased to introduce to you my son, Eliot. He was born during my first tour in the Foreign Service 27 years ago in Manila, the Philippines.

And since then, as Senator Barrasso has noted, I have served in many places around the world, a disparate group of countries that has demonstrated to me similar disparate attitudes towards the rule of law, good governance, and transparency.

While serving as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Ghana, I am proud to have implemented U.S. foreign policy focused on reducing and eliminating the worst forms of child labor and trafficking in persons. And through interagency dialogue and strong support from the Department of State and U.S. Congress, we were also able to promote important educational exchanges, target assistance towards the country's impediments to growth, and support U.S. commercial interests.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the honorable members of this committee similarly to advance U.S. interests in Equatorial Guinea. U.S. policy priorities in Equatorial Guinea are to encourage the government there to open democratic space to the opposition, increase respect for human rights and civil liberties, strengthen our commercial ties and diversify its economy, and to increase economic, health, and educational opportunities for all its citizens.

Equatorial Guinea, with a population of about 1 million people, is located on the strategic Gulf of Guinea. Although the country is nominally a multiparty, constitutional republic, President Obiang's Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea has been in power since a military coup in 1979. The party controls all but one seat in the Chamber of Deputies and one seat in the Senate. Opposition political parties are severely restricted, and opposition leaders have faced harassment, intimidation, and arrest.

Equatorial Guinea is the third-largest producer of oil in sub-Saharan Africa and has one of the highest per-capita income rates in Africa. Despite this, much of its population lives below the poverty level and official corruption is widespread. Should I be confirmed, I will stress and encourage the country's leadership to respect human rights and rule of law. I will also urge that government leaders pursue multi-party democracy and facilitate the growth of a strong civil society. And I will stress that promoting transparency and ending corrupt practices are key to Equatorial Guinea's long-term growth and stability.

The United States has a robust economic relationship with Equatorial Guinea and remains its largest trading partner. The U.S. Embassy plays a critical trade facilitation and promotion role for U.S. investors in Equatorial Guinea. U.S. oil companies are Equatorial Guinea's largest investors, and they have the lead role in oil and gas exploration and extraction. Moreover, last year, Equatorial Guinea was the ninth-largest African market for U.S. exports. Should I be confirmed, I will continue to work to protect the commercial interests of U.S. oil companies invested in Equatorial Guinea.

Mr. Chairman, while our bilateral dialogue and engagement pays heed to Equatorial Guinea's sovereignty and traditions, we must also be frank in discussing our concerns. If confirmed, I will continue to promote U.S. interests and encourage Equatorial Guinea's further political, economic, and social development while vigilantly protecting the safety of our Embassy personnel and their families.

And finally, if confirmed, no goal will be more important to me than protecting the lives, interests, and welfare of American citizens living and traveling in Equatorial Guinea.

I promise to work closely with you and the members of this committee in this endeavor.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Furuta-Toy follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JULIE FURUTA-TOY

Thank you very much Chairman Flake, Ranking Member Markey, and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify before you today. It is a great honor for me to appear before you this afternoon as the nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. I am grateful for the confidence that President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed by the Senate, I will do my best to uphold this trust and further U.S. national interests.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to introduce my son Eliot. He was born during my first tour in the Foreign Service 27 years ago in Manila, the Philippines.

Since then, I have had the honor to serve in Haiti, India, Russia, Ghana, and Norway. Such a disparate group of countries has demonstrated to me similarly disparate attitudes toward rule of law, good governance, and transparency. While serving as Deputy Chief of Mission in Ghana I am proud to have implemented U.S. policy focused on reducing and eliminating the worst forms of child labor and trafficking in persons. Through interagency dialogue and strong support from the Department of State and U.S. Congress, we were also able to promote important educational exchanges, target assistance toward the country's impediments to growth, and support U.S. commercial interests.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the honorable members of this committee similarly to advance U.S. interests in Equatorial Guinea. U.S. policy priorities in Equatorial Guinea are to encourage the government there to open democratic space to the opposition, increase respect for human rights and civil liberties, strengthen our commercial ties and diversify its economy, and to increase economic, health, and educational opportunities for all its citizens.

Equatorial Guinea, with a population of fewer than 1 million people, is located on the strategic Gulf of Guinea. Although the country is nominally a multiparty, constitutional republic, President Obiang Nguema's Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea has been in power since a military coup in 1979. The Party controls all but one seat in the Chamber of Deputies and one seat in the Senate. Opposition political parties are severely restricted, and opposition leaders have faced harassment, intimidation, and arrest. Equatorial Guinea is the third-largest producer of oil in sub-Saharan Africa, and has one of the highest per-capita income rates in Africa. Despite this, much of its population lives below the poverty level; and official corruption is widespread. Should I be confirmed, I will stress and encourage the country's leadership to respect human rights and rule of law. I will also urge that government leaders pursue multiparty democracy and facilitate the growth of a strong civil society, and I will stress that promoting transparency and ending corrupt practices are key to Equatorial Guinea's long-term growth and stability.

The United States has a robust economic relationship with Equatorial Guinea, and remains its largest trading partner. The U.S. Embassy plays a critical trade facilitation and promotion role for U.S. investors in Equatorial Guinea. U.S. oil companies are Equatorial Guinea's largest investors, and they have the lead role in oil and gas exploration and extraction. Moreover, last year Equatorial Guinea was the ninth-largest African market for U.S. exports. Should I be confirmed, I will continue to work to protect the commercial interests of U.S. oil companies invested in Equatorial Guinea.

Mr. Chairman, while our bilateral dialogue and engagement pays heed to Equatorial Guinea's sovereignty and traditions, we also must be frank in discussing our concerns. If confirmed, I will continue to promote U.S. interests and encourage Equatorial Guinea's further political, economic, and social development, while vigilantly protecting the safety of our embassy personnel and their families.

And, finally, if confirmed, no goal will be more important to me than protecting the lives, interests and welfare of American citizens living and traveling in Equatorial Guinea.

I promise to work closely with you and the members of this committee in this endeavor.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Hankins.

STATEMENT OF DENNIS B. HANKINS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

Mr. HANKINS. Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today and grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea.

I want to recognize my wife, Mira, who is here today. She has been by my side through 31 years in the Foreign Service, and I credit her for providing support for any success I may have had. My son, Danu, cannot be here today due to his service commitments with the United States Navy.

It has been my honor to serve in 16 assignments during my Foreign Service career, with six of those assignments spanning 14 years focused on Africa. Many of my assignments have been in countries in the midst of or emerging from crisis. Despite the challenges of these postings, I have relished the opportunity to engage in diplomacy that can dramatically affect a country's future and advance American interests.

My experience in a number of young African democracies tells me that the transition from dictatorship to an open society requires constant sustained attention and commitment by national leaders and all segments of society. Guineans have made it clear that they want to see the United States working hand in hand with all three branches of the Guinean Government to reinforce Guinea's democratic architecture. Our work to strengthen media reforms and civil society is just as important. As part of our work with the executive branch, we continue to work with Guinea's security apparatus, the military and police, to strengthen its professionalism and bring it firmly under elected civilian authority. Finally, we must sustain our efforts to reduce poverty and disease in Guinea, including by strengthening the health system. Responsible management of Guinea's mineral wealth is key to Guinea's long-term poverty reduction efforts. The challenges are many and will only be overcome through true Guinean commitment, but we need to support those who wish to help their country.

The Republic of Guinea achieved a landmark election in 2010, its first free and democratic Presidential election. If confirmed, I will work hard to ensure U.S. support for Guinea's nascent democracy continues in a meaningful and impactful way. Guinea will hold its second Presidential elections in 11 days. If confirmed, my priority will be to work with the newly elected administration and opposition parties in building an inclusive and constructive political dialogue. Looking toward the new year, my focus will shift to local elections. These upcoming elections provide Guinea the concrete opportunity to further deepen its transition to democracy.

In the midst of Presidential elections, Guinea continues to battle the Ebola outbreak. If confirmed, I will remain firmly committed and fully committed to helping Guinea get to zero in its fight against Ebola. The persistent transmission of Ebola over the past 18 months highlights the fragility of primary health care facilities in the country and deep-rooted public health challenges. The United States continues to provide significant technical assistance to Guinea on restoring and improving the health care system, as well as ending the Ebola epidemic. I look forward to supporting the efforts of USAID, CDC, and NIH in Guinea.

In the long term, if confirmed, I will encourage the Guinean Government to remain a constructive regional and international actor and will work with the government and all segments of society to foster better political and economic decisionmaking at home. In the Republic of Guinea, we have a willing partner on regional and international issues, yet the government's capacity is limited. If confirmed, I will work with the Guinean Government to further strengthen its approach to regional crises. I will also work to strengthen cooperation on counternarcotics issues, as well as other forms of transnational crimes such as trafficking in persons and money laundering. I will make the safety and welfare of my staff and all U.S. citizens my highest priority and seek out commercial opportunities for U.S. companies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the opportunity to address you today. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and representing the interests of the American people in Guinea.

I am happy to answer any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hankins follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DENNIS B. HANKINS

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today, and grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea. I want to recognize my wife, Mira, who is here today. She has been at my side through my 31 years in the Foreign Service, and I credit her for providing support for any success I may have had. My son, Danu, cannot be here today due to his service commitments in the United States Navy.

It has been my honor to serve in 16 assignments during my Foreign Service career with 6 of those assignments—spanning 14—focused on Africa. Many of my assignments have been in countries in the midst of, or emerging from, crisis. Despite the challenges of these postings, I have relished the opportunities to engage in diplomacy that can dramatically affect a country's future and advance American interests.

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support for Guinea's nascent democracy continues in a meaningful and impactful way. Guinea will hold its second Presidential elections in 11 days. If confirmed, my priority will be to work the newly elected administration and opposition parties in building an inclusive and constructive political dialogue. Looking toward the new year, my focus will shift to local elections. These upcoming elections provide Guinea with a concrete opportunity to further deepen its transition to democracy.

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In the long term, if confirmed, I will encourage the Guinean Government to remain a constructive regional and international actor, and will work with the government and all segments of society to foster better political and economic decision-making at home. In the Republic of Guinea, we have a willing partner on regional and international issues, yet the government's capacity is limited. If confirmed, I will work with the Guinean Government to further strengthen its approach to regional crises. I will also work to strengthen cooperation on counternarcotics issues, as well as other forms of transnational crimes, such as trafficking in persons and money laundering. I will make the safety and welfare of my staff and all U.S. citizens my highest priority and seek out commercial opportunities for U.S. companies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the opportunity to address you today. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you in representing the interests of the American people in Guinea. I am happy to answer any questions.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Etim.

STATEMENT OF LINDA I. ETIM, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. ETIM. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the nominee to be the next Assistant Administrator for USAID's Bureau for Africa.

I want to express my appreciation for the confidence that President Obama has placed in me with this nomination and for the strong support of Secretary Kerry and Acting Administrator Lenhardt. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Earl Gast, the Africa Bureau's former Assistant Administrator who ably led the bureau of 3 years.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my family, my sister, Ann Etim, who is here today taking her day off of work, as well as parents and our other sister, Jennifer Etim, who recently passed away but remains a constant source of motivation and strength.

My nomination to this post is deeply personal. As the daughter of an immigrant who fled Nigeria for the United States during the Biafran war, I am intimately familiar with the pressures that a country's fragility places on its citizens. After more than a decade of working on African issues for the United States Government, I have seen development improve people's lives and their ability to take their destiny into their own hands. This is why I believe in USAID's mission to end extreme poverty, to promote democratic societies, to bolster security, and to help encourage prosperity for all.

My professional life has been devoted to supporting U.S. efforts to empower Africa's people to fulfill the promise that resides on

every corner of the continent. I spent the first few years working for the U.S. Government as a security specialist in African affairs, but more recently at the White House as the National Security Director for Sudan, South Sudan, and East African Affairs. I helped to coordinate U.S. policy on security issues, governance, economic growth, and humanitarian crises. In that position, I saw firsthand the important role that development plays for efforts on the continent.

I was then honored to be appointed as Deputy Assistant Administrator to Africa for USAID, and for the past 3½ years in that position, I have stood side by side with the agency's committed men and women. Many of our staff work in difficult environment and tackle really difficult challenges throughout the world.

If confirmed, in addition to focusing on the management for the bureau, I will concentrate on three objectives. First, I believe we need to continue to invest in Africa's greatest resource, which is its people, to further development, democracy, humanitarian, and governance for this and for future generations.

Second, I will continue USAID's focus on accelerating sustainable development through African-led partnerships.

And third, I will ensure that our work is implemented effectively and that we evaluate the results and apply lessons learned going forward.

Although a number of Africa's challenges can seem intractable, I see both the challenges and the remarkable progress that the African Continent has sustained as bright lights of opportunity. With the strong bipartisan support from Congress, our initiatives across the continent have actually led to some really great results. For example, and as you know, Feed the Future has helped more than 2.5 million African farmers using improved technologies and management practices and has led to increased food security. Through Power Africa, U.S. commitments of $7 billion have mobilized more than $20 billion in private capital which is financing access to energy and will add six million new connections across the continent.

Africa is the fastest-growing continent in the world, and its population in the coming decades will double. Many of its citizens will be under the age of 18. We have the opportunity now to harness the intelligence, creativity, and drive of these young Africans who ignited growth and lead reforms throughout the region. They need enhanced skills. They need access to capital. They need jobs. They need the innovations that will help drive tomorrow's development solutions. This is why I am so supportive of the initiatives that we have here today.

There is no denying that Africa is important to the United States, both from the standpoint of our moral imperative to help solve the biggest development challenges on the planet and because of its impact on our own national security and economic growth. USAID is committed to collaborating with donors and private sector partners to amplify the impact of U.S. investments in development, and if confirmed, I am eager to advance this approach to doing business.

If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to deepen our relationship with Congress. Your long-standing and bipartisan support to

the African people has provided the foundation for our programs and is the springboard for our future success.

I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I welcome any questions you might have. Thanks.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Etim follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LINDA I. ETIM

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the nominee to be the next Assistant Administrator for Africa at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

I want to express my appreciation for the trust and confidence President Obama has placed in me by nominating me for this important position and for the strong support of Secretary Kerry and Acting Administrator Lenhardt. I would also like to thank Earl Gast, the Africa Bureau's former Assistant Administrator who ably led the Bureau for 3 years. Most importantly, I would like to thank my family—my sister, Ann Etim, who is here today, as well as our parents and our other sister, Jennifer Etim, who, although no longer with us, remain my rocks.

My nomination to this post is deeply personal. As the daughter of an immigrant who fled Nigeria for the United States during the Biafran war, I am intimately familiar with the pressures that a country's fragility places on its citizens. After more than a decade working on African issues, I have seen development improve people's lives and help countries grow. That is why I believe USAID's mission to end extreme poverty, promote democratic societies, and bolster security and prosperity for all is essential. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing my support for USAID's new model for sustainable development, one built on partnerships with governments, businesses, universities, and civil society, as well as with the new generation of African leaders, thinkers, entrepreneurs, and innovators, who are leading the transformation of their societies.

My professional life has been devoted to empowering Africa's people to fulfill the promise that resides in every corner of the continent. Throughout my career, I have had the honor to work on some of Africa's most pressing challenges. I spent the first years of my career working for the U.S. Government as a specialist in African security affairs. More recently, as the Director for East African Affairs and Sudan, South Sudan at the National Security Council, I coordinated U.S. policy on civilian-military affairs, governance, economic growth and humanitarian crises in the Horn of Africa. In that position, I saw firsthand the important role of development in Africa and was honored to be appointed Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa at USAID. During the past 3½ years at USAID, I have stood side by side with the Agency's committed men and women, many of whom work in difficult environments, to tackle critical development challenges. After nearly 15 years working on African affairs I am intimately familiar with the complex fabric that makes up sub-Saharan Africa's 49 countries.

If confirmed, in addition to focusing on the management of the Bureau, I will concentrate on three objectives for the Africa Bureau that I believe are critical to the sustainability, growth, and success of our development goals. First, I believe we need to continue to invest in Africa's greatest resource—its people—to further development, democracy, opportunity, rights and governance for this and future generations. Second, I will continue USAID's focus on accelerating sustainable development through African-led partnerships. Third, I will ensure that our work is implemented effectively, that we evaluate the results, and that we apply those lessons learned going forward.

Although many of Africa's challenges may seem intractable, I see both the challenges and the remarkable progress, led by our African counterparts, as bright lights across the continent. Both Zambia and Nigeria held successful elections this past year. Nigeria's elections were historic, marking the first-ever democratic transfer of power in Africa's most populous nation. With strong bipartisan support from Congress, our initiatives on the continent are bearing fruit. In fiscal year 2014, Feed the Future, the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative, helped nearly 2.5 million African farmers use improved technologies and management practices while spurring $306 million in new agricultural sales on the continent. Recent data suggest that Feed the Future and other efforts contributed to a 9-percent reduction in stunting in Ethiopia between 2011 and 2014 and a 16-percent decrease in poverty in the rural areas of Uganda between 2009–2010 and 2012–2013. Through Power Africa, the United States is working with a range of partners to accelerate private-sector energy transactions, by leveraging the assistance, financ-

ing, commercial and diplomatic tools of the U.S. Government, as well as the tools and expertise of our bilateral and multilateral partners and the private sector with the aim of expanding access to electricity by 60 million new connections. Two years after Power Africa's launch, the U.S. Government's commitment of $7 billion has mobilized more than $20 billion in private capital from more than 100 private sector partners.

As the fastest-growing continent, Africa's population in the coming decades will double, and many of its people will be under 18. We have a tremendous challenge but also an opportunity to harness the intelligence, creativity, and drive of these young Africans who will introduce disruptive technologies, ignite growth, and lead reforms throughout the region. They will need enhanced skills and access to capital, jobs, and innovations to help address tomorrow's development challenges. Partnerships are key to this engagement. For example, through the Global Development Alliance agreement with USAID, as part of Feed the Future, Partners in Food Solutions (PFS) transfers technology and knowledge to African processors. PFS is a nonprofit organization formed by General Mills that harnesses the global technical expertise of General Mills, Cargill, Royal DSM, and Bühler. Since its inception, PFS has linked 765 volunteers to 119 food processors in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia, impacting 829,000 smallholder farmers. We must also promote inclusive development that recognizes women as key drivers of economic growth. In order to end extreme poverty, feed the planet, and build vibrant economies, women and girls must gain access to capital, land, markets, training, and leadership opportunities. That is why I am so supportive of the President's Young African Leaders Initiative, which is investing in the next generation of leaders, who are eager and able to shape Africa's future.

We are building on the successes of the last generation and accounting for new realities, opportunities, and future challenges. With roughly half of the world's extreme poor residing in fragile and conflict affected states, we are remiss to discuss sustainable development gains without emphasizing the realities, needs, and capabilities of those societies in conflict and those trying to emerge from it. In fragile countries like South Sudan, we are assessing how best to help countries experiencing recurring cycles of conflict. South Sudan's peace agreement, signed in late August, while tenuous and fragile, presents an opportunity to mitigate the impact of the conflict on the people of South Sudan and support strategies for sustainable security.

There is no denying Africa's importance to the United States, both for our moral imperative to help solve the biggest development challenges on the planet and because of its impact on the United States own national security and economic growth. USAID is committed to collaborating with donors, private sector partners, and faith-based organizations to leverage our relative strengths and amplify the effect of U.S. investments in development. These efforts are already having an effect on our work in Africa, and if confirmed, I am eager to advance this new approach to doing business.

I know the road ahead is not an easy one. Nowhere does development show more promise yet pose such challenge than it does today in sub-Saharan Africa.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with my talented colleagues at USAID, our partners throughout the U.S. Government, the private sector, multilateral and nongovernmental organizations, and our counterparts in Africa to address critical development and humanitarian needs on the continent. I also look forward to continuing to deepen our relationship with Congress, whose long-time bipartisan commitment to the African people has provided the foundation for our programs and the springboard for our success.

In conclusion, I am honored to be considered for this position and to contribute to the goal of ending extreme poverty and promoting resilient, democratic societies while advancing security and prosperity for both Americans and Africans.

I am deeply committed to USAID's goals and the integrated role that it plays with the Department of State and the Department of Defense in advancing U.S. policy and national security objectives, and if confirmed, I will work diligently toward advancing these goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome any questions you might have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Ms. Etim.

I will start with a round of questions, and if you could keep your answers as short as possible, we will get as many questions in as we can with five of you there.

Mr. Jackson, with regard to Ghana, you mentioned the challenges on the energy side. Where are most investments needed and how can that be facilitated through the programs that we have? Is it on generation or distribution, transmission, all of the above? Give us a sense of what is needed there.

Ambassador JACKSON. Senator, it is actually all of the above. The Millennium Challenge compact is focused on distribution and construction of an additional gas plant. The Overseas Private Investment Corporation has also invested in an additional gas plant. But there is much more work needed to ensure that many underserved areas of Ghana have access to electricity, and through the Power Africa program, we are attempting to supplement the gains that will be made through the compact. Thank you.

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you.

Mr. Thomas, as we talked about in my office, I actually wrote my master's thesis on Robert Mugabe and his ability to hold onto power at the end of the 1980s. And here we are almost 30 years later with some of the same issues.

But you mentioned in my office that it will take a generation of work to turn Zimbabwe around. Where do we start? What is the place where the United States needs to start?

Ambassador THOMAS. Well, Senator, you make an excellent point. It will take time. And I think working with the business community in Zimbabwe and the United States to lower economic obstacles, to increase opportunity, to reduce corruption, to make more transparency will be an excellent start for our bilateral relationship and to increase their economic opportunity. Over 65 percent of the people of Zimbabwe are under 40 years of age. Eighty-five percent unemployment rate. So they need this opportunity through business and education, and those are the things that we would look at if I am confirmed. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Furuta-Toy, you talked about the issues with regard to government corruption and the lack of distribution of the oil wealth that comes there. Let me turn to security for a minute, maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. How much of an issue is that, and what contributions is Equatorial Guinea making to that? And is that a partnership with other nations, and are we doing enough in the United States to make sure that we do not have a situation there that we had in the Horn of Africa earlier on?

Ms. FURUTA-TOY. Senator, thank you for that question.

The issue of security in Equatorial Guinea is one that involves all of the nations in the Gulf of Guinea. We have encouraged the Government of Equatorial Guinea to collaborate with its neighbors on maritime security and have supported the participation of Equatorial Guinea on a self-funded, funded by the Equatorial Guinea-Guinean Government, in maritime joint practices in the region.

Beyond that, the Government of Equatorial Guinea really prides itself on being able to provide security and safety for its citizens. And we are encouraging the government to try to take that in a bigger point of view of you are providing security and safety, but you also need to be able to provide a larger democratic space for the opposition for the political process so that the future of the country is better secured.

Approximately half of the country is under the age of 19. So the future really is in the youth and in those future generations.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Hankins, between the three countries that have the biggest issue with Ebola, Guinea has had the most difficult time I guess in stamping it out, and some worry that it will be the most likely place for it to flare up again. What can we do on the public health side that we are not doing already to ensure that that does not happen?

Mr. HANKINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is correct then that Ebola started in Guinea and has passed through. We have had more than 3,200 confirmed cases in Guinea of Ebola, and even this past week, we have had four new cases. Where there has been success—and I give great credit to my colleagues from USAID, from CDC—we have helped the government build the capacity to quickly isolate and limit expansion. We are now looking—and if confirmed, I believe I will arrive at a point of transition from Ebola crisis to long-term health care, and we are looking in terms of the global health security agenda in terms of continuing to focus on Ebola but building the other parts of the health system particularly in terms of the vaccination systems. In 2013, the vaccination rate for the country was only 63 percent, putting it in the bottom 10 percent of developing countries. We saw the effect of that recently with a polio case. That carried on into Mali. So we will be looking closely at building these basic systems while not losing sight of Ebola and the risks that that poses.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Etim, you talked in your testimony—and we talked about before the benefits of USAID's action in Africa, alleviating poverty, helping development, improving the quality of life. Those things are important, and that is the first and foremost reason that we take action there. But there are also knock-on effects and impacts from USAID with regard to the security sphere and our ability to work with countries and their willingness to work with us.

Can you talk a little bit about that? Our constituents need to know that story more. Obviously, the reason we want to help with USAID is to help development and improve the quality of life, but there are other benefits as well. Talk about those for a minute.

Ms. ETIM. Thank you, Senator. We did have that conversation. And I think that you can see very clearly with the case that Dennis just brought up with Ebola, when you have health systems that are not strengthened and when you have country governance systems that are not trusted, the possibility and the potential of starting pandemics that cannot be contained and that actually might have flared to actually affect us here in the United States is very real and present.

We are dealing with, I think, a lot of transnational trafficking issues.

I think the migration crisis that we are seeing right now in other parts of the world—Africa is home to 38 percent of the world's refugees. It is hugely expensive for the international community not only to respond but I think as we look at people moving over borders as well, addressing and dealing with a lot of the root causes becomes increasingly important.

I think I will stop there. It could go on for a really long time.

Senator FLAKE. Address for just a second not just the migration issues and refugee issues but arrangements that we have with Kenya to battle terrorist groups, lot of those relationships helped by our other assistance through USAID.

Ms. ETIM. Absolutely. USAID works in partnership with the larger U.S. Government efforts on work on countering violent extremism. As you mentioned, Kenya is a prime example right there. There, USAID works on addressing some of the root causes and so is part of an overall interagency effort. For example, we work on combating wildlife trafficking, and through our community-based programs there and assisting communities and developing plans to work on economic growth, sustain livelihoods, we offer alternatives to moving into violent extremism. We also work in partnership there with a number of wildlife trafficking institutions and the national police services. So USAID is an integral part of that overall interagency effort.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you much.

Senator Markey.

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

Ambassador Jackson, earlier this year, the State Department named Ghana as the first country in which to implement the child protection compacts, which have a specific focus to prioritize the rescue of children in slave labor conditions and hold perpetrators of child labor accountable for those crimes. Talk a little bit about that and what the role is of the U.S. Government in ensuring that this is a successful program.

Ambassador JACKSON. Thank you very much, Senator.

In fact, Ghana has a strong tradition of working to combat trafficking in persons and child labor. It remains a problem. The Ghanaian Government has traditionally been focused on preventing the outflow of trafficked people. We have encouraged, through this new partnership program, which is valued at $5 million, to have Ghana work more on the inside. We have provided assistance for protection, prevention, and prosecution. The prosecution part has worked reasonably well, but we need to do much more on the protection front and I am hopeful that this partnership will allow us to do so.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Ambassador Thomas, the United States has sent a tremendous amount of aid to Zimbabwe to fight HIV/AIDS. Could you update us in terms of what the status is and maybe recommendations that you might make in terms of other health care assistance that we could help to provide to Zimbabwe?

Ambassador THOMAS. Well, thank you for that question, Senator.

Yes, the American taxpayer has been extremely generous in helping the people of Zimbabwe. This year, we have provided over $120 million to combat the scourge of HIV/AIDS. We are looking at not just transmission but prevention through nutrition, through education. And those are programs we have to continue. Under Ambassador Birx's leadership, we are looking at an aggressive way of auditing our program to make sure the taxpayer moneys continue to be well spent.

If confirmed, sir, I would be looking forward to working with the Senate and the House in developing new ways of assisting the peo-

ple in a country where over 15 percent of the population is suffering from HIV/AIDS.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Ms. Furuta-Toy, Equatorial Guinea is—and I did not know this—the third-largest producer of oil in Africa, and yet 75 percent of their people live in poverty. And unfortunately, that is an all too frequent statistic around the world with countries that have oil resources.

Do you have any recommendations as to what help we could give to Equatorial Guinea to diversify their economy to broaden a base of growth so that it affects more families positively in that country?

Ms. FURUTA-TOY. Senator, thank you for that.

The disparities between the income and the poverty levels in Equatorial Guinea are extreme, and it is something that, should I be confirmed, I would like to be able to focus a little bit of the U.S. Government attention on trying to make sure that the revenues from the oil industry and from other businesses are better distributed across the country.

One of the ways that I think we can encourage the government to move forward is by supporting it in its reapplication actually to the Extractive industries Transparency Initiative, EITI. The government announced last year that it would reapply to EITI, and this will mean that it has to bring in civil society. It has to declare its revenues. And the result of that should be that the public will better understand what actually is out there and how better they can benefit across the board.

Should I be confirmed, we will continue to support the improvement in education, health, sanitation, and other social issues that many of the U.S. companies that are in Equatorial Guinea right now are supporting through their corporate social responsibility programs.

Senator MARKEY. Good. Thank you.

Ms. FURUTA-TOY. Thank you.

Senator MARKEY. Mr. Hankins, could you take us back to the outbreak of the Ebola crisis and look at the three countries and give us a little tutorial on why it was that Guinea was so much less effective in its response, in its health care infrastructure capacity to be able to deal with this issue than the other countries?

Mr. HANKINS. Yes, Senator. It started there and it started in the area of the country in the Forestiere region, which is the part that is hardest to reach and historically has been one of those least served. In some sense, there was a basis of a health system. It is the only country of the three where we did not evacuate our personnel because we saw a basis to continue than protection of our personnel there.

It is also a country where there was a huge problem in terms of public acceptance of government response. It is a country where we saw health care workers killed by villagers who were afraid of the response. And when that happened, then the Government of Guinea, trying to figure out how to respond and initially responding with a very heavy military presence, which only exacerbated the situation.

It is also one where, frankly, we do not have and we did not have that strong a French-speaking component within our CDC and

USAID. Those elements were found and eventually helped build then the response.

So it has been a country where trying to get past public distrust of facilities has been difficult. I know Peace Corps staff in the country were, in fact, very important because they had the contacts with traditional leaders, with imams, which eventually helped turn the situation in terms of having a more effective government approach to the population.

Thank you, Senator.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

And, Ms. Etim, when Chairman Flake and I were with the President in Ethiopia, we were part of the signing of a deal to produce 1,000 megawatts of geothermal power, which was just potentially the beginning of that incredible potential growth in electricity from indigenous sources inside of Ethiopia. Can you talk a little bit about, going forward, what you see as the biggest challenges to making it possible to unleash all of this capacity, which is latent, on that continent using USAID and other agencies as kind of the fulcrum, the lever to ensure that we telescope the time frame to ensure that that electrical generation does reach the business and consumer sectors in each of those countries?

Ms. ETIM. Thank you for raising that question.

As you mentioned, being in Ethiopia at the signing of the first phase of Corbetti's power project was very exciting.

We, I think, could only identify two major challenges going forward to the sustainability of Power Africa. One I think is the continued commitment of partners and of people's willingness to stay the course. I think that we have seen tremendous successes over the past few years of Power Africa, but we also know that governance is going to be a major issue. And so when you start coming up against these barriers and looking at where, going forward, the results are—we have a tremendous goal of tripling access to power now—we are very concerned that people will start backing away from the commitments. And I think if you look at the challenge of governance and countries not being as transparent as they need to and not being able to unlock some of the power there but also I think on our partners' and I think the general public's commitment to staying the course and making sure that we have a long-term vision for this initiative.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thanks to all the witnesses. Your records individually are quite extraordinary. And I think we do a good job of always thanking especially now members of our armed services who serve repeated deployments often to places that might not have been their first choice, sometimes in high threat areas where they cannot bring their family, but I do not think we do a good enough job of thanking those like you who are in State or some of the other agencies where you are small "a" ambassadors for us every day. So thank you for your careers in this area. And congratulations on your nominations.

I am on the Armed Services Committee and I sort of have an armed services question. In the aftermath of the horrible tragedy at Benghazi, decisions were made to augment embassy security around certain high-threat posts. A number of those posts are in Africa. So we have built up a little bit of additional military capacity.

But at the same time, there have also been increasing requests from African governments for U.S. presence in joint operations or training. There is a number of special purpose Marine air-ground task forces that are assigned out of AFRICOM that are working in different countries in Africa on joint exercises and counterpoaching, countertrafficking, counterterrorism. I just am curious, especially for my four over on this side in the countries where you are going to be. I would love to know anything about the kind of current state of mil-to-mil relationships, and is U.S. military presence in these kind of exercises accepted, and is it working to our benefit.

Ambassador JACKSON. Thank you, Senator Kaine, and it is great to see you again. I hope you will visit Ghana, just as you visited Morocco when I was there.

Security cooperation in Ghana is excellent. Ghana is a member of the African contingency operations and train and assistance program. It is a member of the African Rapid Preparedness Initiative. And we have done a number of major military exercises there. We deployed about 300 marines there earlier this year as we looked at events in the region on a contingency basis, and there will be a major international exercise there next year. So I am very satisfied with our security cooperation in Ghana. And Ghana's contribution to peacekeeping has meant that our people are safe which is my highest priority.

Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Ambassador Thomas.

Ambassador THOMAS. Thank you, Senator.

Senator, we have sanctions against Zimbabwe and its military because of the pernicious use of the security forces during the elections. This is something that hailed from even the Rhodesian days when the security forces were used to intimidate people. So at this time, we do not have relations. However, if Zimbabwe's Government establishes reform in the future, has free and fair elections, transparency, reduces corruption, and endorses human rights, that is something that we would be willing to talk to the United States Senate and President Obama and the administration about.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Ms. FURUTA-TOY. Senator, thank you.

Because of the current concerns about the human rights situation in Equatorial Guinea, we do not have direct military support for the Government of Equatorial Guinea, but as I mentioned earlier to Senator Markey, we have supported the Government of Equatorial Guinea's participation in some regional exercises.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Mr. Hankins.

Mr. HANKINS. Senator Kaine, in Guinea, we are building a new relationship with the military. It is only in the last 5 years that the military came under civilian authority, having suffered from coups in the past. Our main emphasis right now is using Guinean

troops or helping support Guinean troops for peacekeeping operations in Mali where they have accepted then one of the more difficult regions right on the border with Algeria. But we are still well aware that you have members in the military that were implicated in the September 2008 stadium massacre. So it is a careful relationship on building a democratic military and security system while still taking advantage of Guinea's willingness to participate in regional crises.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Ms. Etim, the United Nations adopted sustainable development goals last week, sort of setting out for the next 15 years a whole series of efforts to reduce extreme poverty, promote public health, educational opportunities, and advance other human development goals. These goals sound very similar to some of the main areas of focus for USAID. But I just wonder if you have thoughts about how in your position in Africa you and your team will work to advance the U.N.'s recently announced goals.

Ms. ETIM. As you rightly point out, Senator, it is not a coincidence that the goals reflect the newly revamped mission statement for USAID. Working in the leadup to the sustainable development goals summit over the course of the past week, USAID has been in partnership with a number of countries to actually come on line and basically say what would happen if the world focused its attention in a coordinated manner with the World Bank, other donors, private sector partners, civil society organizations to look at measuring sustainable ways in the next generation of actually ending extreme poverty. It is an extremely ambitious goal. I think that the agency, coming online with that, has changed the way it has been doing business by really looking at a lot of institutional causes of poverty from looking at food security, through Feed the Future, or looking at infrastructure, poverty, energy, poverty through Power Africa, I think looking at how we deliver relief assistance in effective ways through resiliency—this has been a major goal of ours, and it is something that we are thinking that, as you codify this worldwide, we will be able to take forward and have guiding principles and shared understandings and lessons with the rest of the world in this partnership as we go forward.

Senator KAINE. Excellent. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Murphy.

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

I wanted to stay with you, Ms. Etim. When I travel around the developed world and talk about opportunities for U.S. businesses and U.S. exports, it is rule of law, rule of law, rule of law. And so I wanted to just inquire to you as to the effect of some of the budget decisions we are making here on the ability to promote democracy and governance initiatives in Africa. The amount of money available to USAID and a larger sum to State has been declining to the point now where I think in 2015, it was about $160 million overall for DG and that is down from just 2 years ago being up above 230. The President, I think, has made a request to essentially double that number into the low 300s.

And I just wonder if you can give us a flavor as to what the difference is between having—and again, you are only accountable for a piece of this, but having twice as many resources as you do now to undergo democracy and governance initiatives, is this a matter of expanding programs in existing countries? Is this a matter of getting to countries that have fallen off the list? I mean, there are a number of critical countries that are not receiving any DG programming because of these cuts. What happens if we are successful in fulfilling the President's request?

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

If we are successful in fulfilling the President's request, I think you mentioned that we take an all-of-the-above approach. There are a number of countries that actually have been zeroed out, do not have democracy and governance budgets, and we would look at restoring and retaining those budgets.

But I think most importantly we see Africa right now in terms of its transitioning. You had over 12 exercises, 15 African electoral exercises in 2015. We have 20 coming up in 2016. We know that the urgent needs right now are focused around how do you provide support for both those exercises but also looking at how do we look at the exercises that took place in 2015 in restoring and maintaining democracy there. You may have noticed also in the news we have a number of fragile states and fragile environments from Burkina Faso to Central African Republic to South Sudan to Burundi. We have a lot of conflicts crises there. And there I think we have a role as the United States Government in working in things like constitution strengthening, parliamentary strengthening, institution building.

Obviously, even with this increased request, we will not be able to answer all of the needs on the continent, but I think that what we really look at is being able to deepen, I think, a lot of the investments and commitments that we do have looking to forward to, I think, a lot of the volatility that is upcoming in the next several years.

Senator MURPHY. I have thrown out this comparison before. But it is stunning that we complain about the lack of influence that America has around the world, and then we spend 0.1 percent of our GDP on foreign aid compared to 1950 when we were spending 3 percent of GDP on foreign aid. It is not rocket science as to why we have a little bit less influence in some parts of the world.

Ms. Etim, how about the question of flexibility? Someone came into my office a few months back and made a case as to how we could have done a better job of watching al-Shabaab move into the northern portions of Kenya, and had we had more flexibility of funds within USAID and State, that we could have done some work up front to try to strengthen institutions, governance, economic resources so as to try to prevent this terrorist organization from getting a foothold.

Can we do more to give USAID the necessary flexibility? Are you too compartmentalized in terms of how you are forced to spend this money even as priorities and realities on the ground are shifting within fiscal years?

Ms. ETIM. You raise a very good point, and I think as all of my fellow panelists will probably point out, the increased flexibility for

our missions and the embassies on the ground lead to, I think, more creative thinking and better programming.

At the same time, we are able to focus, I think, within the constraints that we have been given on the main priorities that are actually facing the African Continent. And so a lot of the different ways that our funding comes is in the very critical areas of health and education. These are areas that USAID and I think overall the U.S. Government would be focused on.

With your specific example with Kenya and the idea of how we actually deal with programs in complex crisis environments, there we require, I think, flexible sources of funding, and for that reason, typically when we make programming decisions bureaucratically we put ESF funding—the most flexible funding that USAID has available we direct at those types of countries and accounts because we know that programs are going to change. Like the South Sudans of the world and like the Somalias, these are areas that require flexibility. In more established countries like Kenya, that is where you, I think, come into some of the questions that you have just raised where you have partners over a long period of time, but you also have a lot of dynamic and changing situations. And in that environment, we look at our own programming cycle and we have made changes in the way we have done business so that we can actually work more closely with our friends on the humanitarian side to come up with more flexible ways of using—and making sure that we are using more flexible means of programming humanitarian funds and not just having stark relief to development trajectories but actually applying a resilience model that allows us to use what pots of money are necessary to address the actual challenges that are on the ground.

So, of course, we will always welcome as much flexibility as possible. That is something that I think is a given. But I also think some of the onus is on us as an agency to look at really programming, I think, in more modern ways and looking at the challenges from an entire holistic perspective.

Senator MURPHY. Well, put more of the onus on us. I think we can do more to give you that additional flexibility. I appreciate you taking ownership within the agency. But we certainly can step up to the plate and do more.

Thank you all for stepping up yourselves to this kind of laudable service. I look forward to working with you on your confirmation process.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

And I want to thank our witnesses today and my colleagues for being here. We had five or six members here for one of these hearings on a get-away day. That speaks well for the interest and the importance of your service.

I want to thank also your family members for being here. We are aware and appreciate the sacrifices that they make and that you make in many cases to be away from them. Mr. Hankins, you mentioned 26 years of service or 16?

Mr. HANKINS. Sixteen assignments.

Senator FLAKE. A long time. And we always find that family members—a lot of them end up serving in our military or in our

diplomatic service as well or find other ways to serve based on your example. So thank you for what you are doing and thank you to the family members for the sacrifices that you put in.

The hearing record will remain open until Friday, for the benefit of the members. And if the witnesses could answer any questions that come your way promptly so they can be put as part of the hearing record, it would be appreciated.

And with the thanks of the committee, this hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:07 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF ROBERT P. JACKSON, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE JACKSON'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. In what areas have President Mahama's administration's anticorruption efforts successful, and how could they be made more so? What actions, if confirmed, will you take to assist with the government's anticorruption efforts?

Answer. The Government of Ghana has repeatedly stated its commitment to combat corruption. The recent decision to suspend several High Court judges and lower court judges and magistrates as a result of an expose done by an investigative journalist underscores the Government of Ghana's commitment to this issue. Ghana's national anticorruption efforts are outlined in its National Anti-Corruption Action Plan, which came into force last year. We are supporting anticorruption efforts in Ghana through several programs, including through a grant to the Ghana Integrity Initiative, Ghana's local Transparency International Chapter. USAID supports efforts to improve civil society reporting, tracking and advocacy for stronger anticorruption work in Ghana. The project fosters the participation of civil society institutions in identifying, reporting, and tracking incidences of corruption in public agencies. USAID is also working to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Ghana's Parliament to effectively scrutinize the Auditor General's reports on the financial performance of public institutions, expose malfeasance by persons in public office, and demand followup on recommendations and referrals.

If confirmed, I intend to continue these programs and ensure that anticorruption issues are a regular part of our interactions with the highest levels of the Government of Ghana.

Question. The next general elections are in December 2016, and by all accounts will be closely contested. What programs and activities is the United States funding to ensure credible peaceful elections, and what actions will you take if confirmed as Ambassador to help ensure continued the continued growth of democratic institutions?

Answer. Our assistance aims to enhance the transparency and credibility of Ghanaian Electoral Commission (EC) operations. The EC is developing a new strategic plan for electoral reforms in advance of the 2016 elections. USAID will support the implementation of reforms, with a particular focus on improving the EC's communications capabilities as well as the capacity of its field staff to properly administer elections. We will also enable the EC to develop and implement a communications strategy to more effectively engage all stakeholders on the steps it is taking to ensure a free and fair election process in 2016.

Our assistance will also strengthen civil society's role in ensuring credible and nonviolent elections. USAID will help local organizations engage the EC, political parties and other stakeholders on electoral reform, support civil society organizations or CSOs to conduct civic education programs aimed at promoting tolerance and peaceful and credible elections, and help train CSOs at the grassroots to more effectively monitor elections. We will also train political parties (especially their youth wings) on poll watching and nonviolent dispute resolution to prevent out breaks of election-related violence.

Our assistance will also strengthen conflict resolution mechanisms around elections. Ghana's National Peace Council (NPC)—an independent government council with membership drawn from Ghana's major religious groups—has played an important role in resolving election-related conflict and defusing tensions in previous elections. Our support will enable the NPC to continue to play an integral mediation role during the pre- and post-electoral period.

As Ambassador, I will personally engage Ghanaian political leaders, the EC, civil society and the media in an effort to ensure a fair, transparent, and peaceful election. I will also ensure that after this election, our assistance to strengthen democratic institutions continues apace.

Question. What explains the government's relative failure to more aggressively counter Trafficking in Persons and what will you do if confirmed as Ambassador to encourage the Ghanaians to provide needed resources to the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Ghana Police Service?

Answer. Antitrafficking efforts in Ghana are hampered by a lack of operating budgets for law enforcement and protection agencies. As a result, the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit continues to rely heavily on foreign donors and NGOs to support its efforts. The government also did not provide any funding for the human trafficking victim services or for its two shelters.

In June 2015, the Government of Ghana signed the first Child Protection Compact (CPC) Partnership with the United States, which will facilitate investment of $5 million in U.S. foreign assistance to aid the Government of Ghana to reduce child trafficking and improve child protection. The Partnership, the first of its kind globally, is a jointly developed, multiyear plan aimed at bolstering efforts of the Government of Ghana and Ghanaian civil society to address child sex trafficking and forced child labor within Ghana. The Government of Ghana stated that it intends to dedicate increasing levels of staff resources and operating budget funding to support this initiative, including funding for the Human Trafficking Fund.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue to raise this issue with the highest officials in the Ghanaian Government, impressing upon them that their current budgetary constraints should not preclude the government from providing financial support and resources to all Ghanaian agencies committed to combating trafficking in persons, investigating and prosecuting trafficking cases, and supporting trafficking victims.

RESPONSES OF HARRY K. THOMAS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE THOMAS'S RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. The U.S.-Zimbabwe bilateral relationship has been poor for decades. Do you believe that a possible near-term Presidential transition in Zimbabwe is an opportunity for the growth of democracy and freedom in that country? If so, how would you advise the U.S. to engage during a Presidential transition to promote such values?

Answer. We are focused on principles of respect for the rule of law, human rights, and democratic processes. We would welcome credible, economic, and governance reforms supporting these values at any time, and do not expect a sudden departure from current policy in the near term. Dialogue and respectful engagement remain central to moving our bilateral relationship forward, consistent with our values and policies. The United States continues to support progress toward a Zimbabwe that serves the needs of the Zimbabwean people through humanitarian assistance and continued support for Zimbabwean civil society, which is often the leading independent voice critical of the Zimbabwean government's policies.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE THOMAS'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. What U.S. democracy and governance programs are under way in Zimbabwe, and how effective have they been and what programs would be most feasible at present? What are the primary challenges facing USAID's partners? If confirmed, what activities do you plan to undertake to help Zimbabwean efforts to open political space and support civil society?

Answer. U.S. technical assistance boosts the ability of citizens and nongovernmental groups to participate in discussions on the future direction of Zimbabwe. One local USAID partner coached rural women farmers to engage for the first time with the Parliamentary Committee on Lands and Agriculture and voice challenges they face, including limited access to communal land, lack of access to markets and credit facilities, delayed payments by the Grain Marketing Board, and corruption. This activity shows that with training, rural Zimbabwean women can be compelling advocates to hold political leaders accountable. Grassroots-level programs are effective in empowering citizens to engage government and demand accountability. USAID programs create a more secure environment for communities and civil leaders to engage in political processes and affect a more democratic system of governance. Challenges for partners include long-standing government restrictions on civil society organizations, independent media, political parties, activists, and regular citizens that impede fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I would continue U.S. support for Zimbabwean civil society to promote community development efforts and service delivery, and to retain its role as the leading independent voice calling the Zimbabwean Government to account for policies which undermine democracy and stability.

Question. Impunity for politically motivated violence remains an issue in Zimbabwe. Cases stemming from elections related violence in 2008 remain unsolved. If confirmed, what can you do to encourage the government to make progress in these cases, and end security sector impunity? Do you see a role for USAID in any future efforts to reform the security sector?

Answer. Progress toward ending security sector impunity is a critical component in assessing the status of human rights and rule of law in Zimbabwe. If confirmed, I would continue support for strengthening institutions, such as Parliament, the human rights commission, courts, and civil society to help create a Zimbabwe in which all government institutions are responsive to the needs of the people and support rule of law and just governance. I would aim to strengthen these institutions' responsiveness to constituents, and support for victims of violence and those who advocate on their behalf. I would continue to promote our human rights report to highlight abuses or areas for improvement. USAID plays a role in these efforts, lending its expertise in peaceful conflict mitigation and resolution initiatives.

RESPONSES OF JULIE FURUTA-TOY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF EQUITORIAL GUINEA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE FURUTA-TOY'S RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. The U.S.-Equatorial Guinea bilateral relationship has been difficult for decades. Equatorial Guinea has fabulous natural resource wealth yet its people are some of the poorest in the world. The regime denies basic freedoms to its people, and is profoundly corrupt. Is there anything the U.S. should be doing differently to try to change the status quo in that country? What opportunities are there to promote freedom and democracy?

Answer. The United States diplomatic relationship with Equatorial Guinea is frank and honest. We have repeatedly encouraged President Obiang—the longest-serving leader on the African continent—to embrace democratic reform and rule of law, and support greater political and economic transparency.

If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to remove legal and practical barriers to the formation and free operation of political parties in keeping with the commitments of the November 2014 National Dialogue, and promote a free, fair, and transparent electoral process.

In the lead up to Presidential elections in 2016, I will continue to urge the government to establish an independent electoral commission and invite international observers. The 2016 Presidential elections are an opportunity for Equatorial Guinea to demonstrate its commitment to democracy and tolerance of independent opposition political parties.

I will also emphasize that the success of Equatorial Guinea's reinstatement in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative is largely dependent on its treatment of civil society and will underscore that for the United States to support Equatorial Guinea's candidacy, civil society organizations must be allowed to offer their views on transparency and governance issues freely and without any adverse consequences.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE FURUTA-TOY'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to engage the government of Equatorial Guinea regarding its lack of fiscal transparency and high levels of corruption? What actions can you take as Ambassador to effectively help counter corruption and increase transparency?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Government of Equatorial Guinea to practice better governance, increase transparency and invest more in its people, particularly in education and health.

I will continue to support Equatorial Guinea's efforts to prepare for eventual reapplication to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) as a means to promote transparency and accountability in the receipt and use of oil and gas revenues. I will also emphasize to the Government of Equatorial Guinea that its support for the development of civil society and civil society's participation in EITI is essential to achieve membership in EITI. Setting a good example, U.S. petroleum companies in Equatorial Guinea have held workshops providing information on their operations to members of civil society, which I will continue to encourage.

Question. If confirmed, how will you help improve political, civil and human rights?

Answer. The Department considers human rights promotion the top priority in our bilateral relationship with Equatorial Guinea. If confirmed, I will continue to document human rights abuses in the annual human rights report, press the Government of Equatorial Guinea to fully respect international human rights law, and encourage the implementation of Equatorial Guinea's law concerning human trafficking.

If confirmed, I will encourage the government to allow the political opposition to operate freely, in keeping with the commitments of the 2014 National Dialogue, and promote a free, fair and transparent electoral process that includes input from civil society organizations. I will urge the government to implement an independent electoral commission and invite international observers. The 2016 Presidential elections are an opportunity for Equatorial Guinea to demonstrate its commitment to democracy and tolerance of independent opposition political parties.

RESPONSES OF DENNIS B. HANKINS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HANKINS'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. Based on his past willingness to use all available means to gain and keep power, there is every indication that President Alpha Conde will be reelected President in the upcoming election. What policies would you recommend as U.S. Ambassador to demonstrate the U.S. Government's negative reaction to the elections which are already showing signs of fraud?

Answer. The United States has supported Guinea's transition to democracy since 2010, when Alpha Conde became Guinea's first democratically elected President. The United States is working closely with the international community to encourage a free and fair Presidential election. Our engagement includes sustained dialogue with the government, political party leaders, the press, and civil society; technical support to the electoral commission; and support for civic and voter education, justice and security sector reform, and journalist training. We also focus on the people-to-people aspects, including sending members of the U.S. mission in Conakry around the country to conduct townhall meetings for political parties, NGOs and the media, and partner with alumni of official U.S. exchange and training programs to hear directly from them and carry our message of peaceful, free, and fair elections. In addition, the United States is also deploying an electoral monitoring mission with an unprecedented 120 observers throughout Guinea during the election period. While Guinea's democratic trajectory is generally positive, the United States continues to discuss concerns about electoral processes and broader democratic trends with the government. If confirmed, I plan to continue these important discussions at every opportunity and to seek creative ways to partner with nongovernment actors to amplify these efforts.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HANKINS'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. Guinea does not comply with the minimum standards on trafficking, but granted a waiver from an automatic downgrade to Tier 3, and remains on the Trafficking in Person's Tier 2 Watch List for the third year in a row.

- (a) What steps, if confirmed, do you plan to take to encourage the government to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases?
- (b) Are there specific programs and activities that we should undertake with law enforcement to assist Guinea's efforts?
- (c) What steps will you take to encourage the government to increase penalties for forced prostitution?

Answer. The Government of Guinea does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant progress. If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of Guinea to strengthen its antitrafficking law enforcement efforts and similarly increase measures in place to better protect victims and prevent people from becoming victims of trafficking. My team and I will continue to raise our concerns with the Government of Guinea at all levels.

In September 2015, with funding from the Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) trained law enforcement officials and members of the Guinean National Trafficking in Persons Committee in order to enhance their capacity and coordination efforts to combat trafficking. Our training built upon a similar program in Senegal that in 2014 led to the successful discovery and release of minors destined for forced labor. If confirmed, I will encourage the government to undertake similar training to build the capacity of the authorities to detect, interdict, and prosecute such criminal offenses.

The 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report states that penalties for forced prostitution are sufficiently stringent, but not commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of Guinea to increase penalties for forced prostitution. I will work to ensure the Government of Guinea comes into compliance with this minimum standard of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, and continues efforts to battle the horrible scourge that is human trafficking.

RESPONSES OF LINDA ETIM, NOMINATED TO BE ASSITANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE ETIM'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. African leaders across the continent are maneuvering to extend their terms past constitutional limits. A number of African countries have also enacted security and NGO laws that are being used against civil society and the political opposition. Do you believe the democratic gains made since the 1990s are eroding? What effort is USAID play to reverse this trend in light of a constrained fiscal environment?

Answer. This is a difficult time for democracy—in Africa and around the world. Academic and think tank data, as well as the U.S. Government's own monitoring, points to a trend in recent years of backsliding in both the less democratic countries and the stronger democracies of Africa. Of great concern are the actions by governments in some countries to restrict the freedom of expression and association, and by some leaders to cling to power despite constitutional term limits.

Efforts to remove constitutionally mandated term limits by sitting Presidents are a symptom of deeper democratic deficits, including concentration of power in the executive branch, weak rule of law, lack of political space for opposition political parties and civil society, and limited media freedoms. Although some countries in sub-Saharan Africa may be backsliding, others are reinforcing democratic norms, as evidenced by recent electoral exercises in Nigeria and Zambia. In addition, the USAID-supported Afrobarometer public opinion data confirms that across the continent, democracy continues to be the preferred path.

I understand the challenges of the current budget environment and am confident that USAID can achieve considerable progress within the budget constraints. As an agency, we have made efforts to locate additional resources for some of the highest priority needs on the continent in FY 2015, including in Kenya and Nigeria. In Ni-

geria, for example, sustained, long-term U.S. Government investment in the development of civil society networks and institutions like the Independent National Electoral Commission contributed to the historic transfer of political power witnessed in 2015. Continued investment is necessary to consolidate those gains.

Additionally recognizing the importance of prioritizing democracy, rights and governance (DRG) investments, USAID's FY 2016 request for democracy, rights and governance programming reflects an increase over recent years. The request represents a 10 percent increase over the FY 2015 request and a 100 percent increase over the FY 2014 actual level. USAID is also better integrating DRG principles into other development sectors, working with fellow U.S. Government colleagues in health, education, water and economic growth, to ensure that core human rights and governance principles are embedded in other sectors.

USAID is committed to ensuring it remains a leader in the DRG sector. Guided by government policies, Presidential directives, and agency strategies, USAID supports numerous programs that foster good governance, promote access to justice, strengthen civil society, and reinforce effective and accountable institutions at all levels. As such, in 2013, USAID issued a new strategy on democracy, human rights, and governance, codifying a more holistic approach to DRG sector programming. This policy framework focuses on participation, inclusion, and accountability, while elevating human rights and integration of democratic governance approaches across economic and social sectors. The DRG strategy informs USAID's overall approach to DRG sector programming in Africa and provides guidance to missions appropriate for the context.

For example, in countries making progress on democratization and where the government is generally supportive of human rights, the DRG strategy is designed to consolidate gains, prevent backsliding, and strengthen or create effective democratic institutions and culture that are self-correcting in the face of crisis. Although countries within this category are making progress, they may still be vulnerable to reversals.

In countries where progress on democratic and political development is uneven, with some civil and political freedoms but with no genuine foundation for democratic governance and institutions, USAID programs generally promote political pluralism and citizen participation. Programs often focus on expanding the space for meaningful participation, as well as promoting genuine and fair political competition, through electoral reforms and monitoring and/or political party assistance. In these contexts, support to civil society, including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and independent media groups, helps to elevate citizen voice in, and oversight of, political processes and government practices. Strengthening and protecting an enabling legal and regulatory environment for civil society and media is also critical. Programs may also address the promotion of human rights and issues of inclusion, as well as increased government transparency and accountability through the integration of DRG approaches to social sector and economic growth programming.

Finally, in countries where governments do not maintain democratic systems, respect human rights, or tolerate independent civic action, DRG programming emphasize support for democracy and human rights activists by working with NGOs, watchdog groups, independent media and political parties that are committed to democratic principles and value fundamental freedoms. Although additional precautions must be taken, DRG programming is still possible in these countries. Supporting citizens' access to independent information sources is critical in these environments since it can bolster free expression and strengthen impartial channels of information to citizens in spite of government dominance over official media channels.

If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to work with and seek the committee's guidance as we address these critically important issues.

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE ETIM'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. Corruption is a considerable impediment to development across the world, including in Africa. Endemic corruption has hindered growth in Nigeria, the continent's largest economy. It has significantly undermined development in South Sudan, and is a chronic problem in Angola and Kenya, to name just a few countries.

♦ (a) What actions can the U.S. take to help African partners address corruption, and will you commit to working with your counterparts in the interagency to develop a comprehensive action plan to help Africans combat corruption?

Answer (a). The United States, through numerous assistance programs, works closely with countries around the world to build transparent and accountable financial and legal systems. The Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) devote approximately $1 billion per year to anticorruption and related good governance programs.

USAID's work to combat corruption in sub-Saharan Africa focuses on improving transparency and availability of information and increasing accountability between and among citizens and government institutions. As one of the commitments from the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, the United States and leaders of partner governments formed the Partnership on Illicit Finance (PIF), an initiative that brings African partners and the United States together to jointly address the generation and movement of proceeds from corruption and other financial crimes. The PIF has two main objectives: (1) examine illicit financial flows from Africa, and (2) develop national action plans to improve transparency and accountability in public and private sectors. Current members are Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mauritius, Liberia, Niger, and Senegal.

Building on that commitment, during President Obama's trip to Africa in July 2015, the United States and the Government of Kenya signed a Joint Commitment to Promote Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Efforts in Kenya to improve ethics, end money laundering and expand anticorruption legislation. The Joint Commitment will also leverage technology to reduce or eradicate opportunities for corruption, using tools such as citizen portals and eProcurement systems.

This approach is consistent with the principles outlined in the post-2015 Development Agenda, which focuses on the need to build developing countries' capacity to mobilize domestic resources and attract private sector financing flows and assistance.

In Nigeria, for example, USAID's approach to strengthen institutions of accountability and improve public financial management while increasing the involvement of the private sector and civil society in governance has yielded results. Starting in 2006, USAID support helped civil society, government and the private sector to come together and establish the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI). In 2013, NEITI, working in collaboration with relevant government agencies, recovered $2 billion in taxes owed by oil and gas companies.

Government reform alone is not enough to be successful—support for government reformers must be complemented by support for the work of civil society organizations. Across Africa, USAID is building the capacity of civil society networks and coalitions to promote transparency and accountability. These coalitions engage with civil society organizations to increase oversight of the budget process, raise the level of public discourse on issues of transparency and accountability, and increase participation of the citizenry in governance for equitable growth. In Tanzania, for example, USAID is increasing the capacity of civil society to monitor transparency in local government by engaging citizens in local budgeting, planning and public expenditure tracking.

As a founding member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), the United States partners with governments and civil society leaders around the world to promote the more transparent, effective, and accountable governance and institutions that are necessary for development gains to be sustained. OGP was launched in 2011 with 8 members and has grown to include 65 participating countries that together have made over 2,000 commitments to make government more open, accountable and responsive to citizens. In sub-Saharan Africa, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Tanzania are OGP members and continue to make good on their commitments to open government. Over the last 3 years, USAID has provided just under $1 million to the OGP Support Unit (approximately $300–$350 thousand per year, 2012–15). USAID Missions in Africa have also supported OGP in a variety of ways, from sponsoring government/citizen consultations to implementing OGP-related commitments.

USAID's work in this area is guided by our strategy on democracy, human rights, and governance, which focuses on the principles of accountability and citizen engagement to offer a framework for addressing issues such as corruption more effectively. Our work in these areas is fully complementary of the work of other U.S. Government agencies on combating financial crimes and strengthening the rule of law. The 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) calls upon the entire U.S. Government to use the OGP as a tool to advance transparent, accountable, and participatory governance. If confirmed, I will continue to work with partners in the interagency to address corruption in Africa through mechanisms such as OGP, NEITI, and PIF, as well as engagement with civil society.

♦ (b) Funds for democracy and governance programs and activities in FY 2015 (approximately $160 million) are much lower than allocations in FY 2013 ($231 million), FY 2012 ($266 million), and FY 2011 ($244 million). What will you do to prioritize democracy and governance programs and activities and advocate for additional funding levels if confirmed?

Answer (b). The U.S. Government cannot effectively achieve sustainable outcomes in health, food security and climate change in Africa without simultaneously investing in good governance, transparency, accountability, and inclusion. Decreased or inconsistent funding levels for democracy, rights, and governance (DRG) make it more difficult for USAID to make strategic investments for long-term change in the African countries in which we work.

To ease the impact of reduced DRG funding levels in the immediate term, in my role as Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa, I successfully advocated for the allocation of additional USAID FY 2015 DRG resources for some of the highest priority needs on the continent in countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Nigeria. In Nigeria, for example, sustained, long-term U.S. Government investment in the development of civil society networks and institutions like the Independent National Electoral Commission contributed to the historic transfer of political power witnessed in 2015. Continued investment is necessary to consolidate those gains.

Recognizing the importance of prioritizing DRG investments, USAID's FY 2016 request for DRG programming ($301 million) reflects an increase over recent years. The request represents a 10-percent increase over the FY 2015 request and a 100-percent increase over the FY 2014 actual level. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for a robust budget for DRG programs in Africa to ensure our program needs are met and that USAID remains a leader in the DRG sector on the continent.

At the same time, I understand the challenges of the current budget environment and believe that USAID can take steps to prioritize DRG programs even in the face of budget constraints. For example, USAID issued a new strategy on democracy, human rights, and governance in 2013, codifying a more holistic approach to DRG sector programming. This policy framework focuses on participation, inclusion, and accountability, while elevating human rights and integration of democratic governance approaches across economic and social sectors. The DRG strategy informs USAID's overall approach to DRG sector programming in Africa and provides guidance to missions appropriate for the context. As a result, USAID is also better integrating DRG principles into other development sectors, working with fellow U.S. Government colleagues in health, education, water and economic growth, to ensure that core human rights and governance principles are embedded in other sectors.

For example, in Ethiopia, the Social Accountability project is providing new forums for citizens to monitor the Government of Ethiopia's service delivery commitments and to advocate for improvements, and USAID is integrating these methods in the education sector to drive public oversight of results. Specifically, with USAID support, parent-teacher associations will use methods such as community ratings of education quality to pressure government offices to maintain reading enrichment support through libraries and teachers. Additionally, in the health sector, USAID is standing up 2,500 governance boards for health centers and hospitals across Ethiopia, where local officials decide how to spend patient fees and improve services. USAID's democracy and health teams are collaborating to bring valid citizen input into these boards and feed into budget decisions of hospitals and health centers.

If confirmed, I will continue to support USAID's strategic approach to DRG programming and the DRG integration agenda, while advocating for adequate funding for DRG activities in Africa.

Question. In September 2014, President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum directing agencies engaged abroad to elevate and strengthen the role of civil society; challenge undue restrictions on it; and foster constructive engagement between governments and civil society.

♦ (a) What efforts has USAID undertaken in Africa to date in response to this directive, and in particular how is USAID challenging restrictions on civil society in countries like Ethiopia and Uganda, where governments have sought to tighten control?

Answer (a). In support of the 2014 Presidential Memorandum, USAID is promoting the robust and critical role civil society plays in African countries to ensure effective and inclusive development. USAID has developed a three-pronged strategy to support civil society in closing spaces: focus on prevention, including monitoring the legal enabling environment for civil society; focus on adaptation, designing flexible programs that can respond to on-the-ground changes; and continue to support civil society, even in restrictive environments.

For example, in Ethiopia, we are monitoring the environment while supporting human rights, strengthening civil society engagement, and enhancing governance through social accountability activities that provide forums for citizens to monitor government's service delivery commitments and advocate for improvements.

In Kenya, USAID has supported civil society organizations working to raise awareness and question the restrictive amendments to the Public Benefit Organizations Act. In Uganda, USAID is supporting nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to advocate effectively with Members of Parliament for changes to restrictive language in the draft NGO bill. The updated draft version of the bill under consideration reflects the combined efforts of concerted NGO advocacy.

Within the next year, USAID—with several other donors—also plans to launch two Civil Society Innovation Hubs in the region to facilitate civil society networking and partnerships. USAID held planning workshops with civil society leaders this past spring and summer in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, and Dakar, Senegal. These Hubs will connect civil society organizations at the regional and global levels and enable access to tools and technologies to bolster their work.

Meanwhile, USAID also has developed an analytic tool, the Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index for sub-Saharan Africa, which since 2009 has tracked trends that monitor the progress and setbacks faced by civil society organizations. The latest edition can be found at: https://www.usaid.gov/africa-civil-society.

USAID provides a wide range of assistance, helping civil society organizations to become more effective and sustainable in their roles in service provision, policy advocacy, and government monitoring and oversight. For example, in Liberia, USAID's Civil Society and Media Leadership program aims to help civil society organizations expand their role from delivering services to engaging in governance and policy processes through advocacy training, networking, and mentorship. USAID activities seek to provide organizations with the skills and tools necessary to promote access to information and employ effective watch-dog strategies.

In response to the closing space trend, USAID also supports local civil society efforts to advocate for strong legal protections and operating environments through programs such as the Legal Enabling Environment Program (LEEP). LEEP, a $6 million global instrument funded by USAID, provides technical assistance to civil society organizations and supports local capacity and research to advance local legal reforms. In November 2014, USAID, in conjunction with the Community of Democracies and Civicus, organized a workshop in Pretoria, South Africa, that convened African human rights defenders and lawyers who shared best practices as well as identified recommendations to improve the enabling environment for civil society in their respective countries.

LEEP efforts complement the State Department's diplomatic strategies as well as those of others from the international community. USAID, on behalf of the United States Government, is also an active member of the Community of Democracies which monitors legal restrictions to civil society organizations' freedoms through draft laws and regulations. The Community of Democracies is an international coalition of member states that counters the civil society closing space trend through diplomacy and campaigns.

♦ (b) If confirmed, will you commit to developing a strategy for USAID to undertake democracy and governance activities in Africa?

Answer (b). USAID has been a leader in supporting human rights and democratic governance as fundamental objectives of a whole-of-government strategy toward Africa. The Agency's mission-level strategies are informed by several strategic and policy documents, including the National Security Strategy, the Quadrennial Development and Diplomacy Review (QDDR), the Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) on Africa, and the State/USAID Joint Regional Strategy for Africa. Under the current administration, USAID has also issued a new strategy on democracy, human rights, and governance. The new strategy codifies a more holistic approach to USAID's programming in this sector globally by focusing on participation, inclusion, and accountability, while elevating human rights and integration of democratic governance approaches across economic and social sectors.

One of USAID's unique strengths is its field-based orientation, in which our missions abroad are the incubators and operational nerve centers of its work. With policy guidance and technical support from Washington, USAID bilateral missions in Africa develop their own multiyear country development cooperation strategies (CDCS) in order to tailor development programming to the needs and challenges of particular countries, to reflect the development agenda of the host nation itself, and to align U.S. efforts with host nation, international, and other bilateral donor programs working in the country. They do so in close collaboration with U.S. Embassy counterparts, host-country partners, and often with other donors, foundations, and

the private sector. Virtually every USAID mission in Africa has a medium- to long-term strategic objective focused on supporting democracy, human rights, and governance. These causal theories of change are developed using the principles and approaches laid out in the Agency's DRG Strategy. If confirmed, I remain committed to supporting the implementation of the USAID mission-level strategic objectives.

Question. How is USAID supporting justice and accountability in African countries transitioning from conflict, such as South Sudan and the Central African Republic?

Answer. To promote access to justice and accountability in transitional environments, USAID works to strengthen formal and informal justice mechanisms, coordinates closely on humanitarian and development programming to boost community resilience, and stresses approaches that prioritize women and youth and conflict mitigation programs.

In South Sudan, USAID is addressing cycles of revenge violence driven by cattle theft and land disputes by supporting local dispute resolution initiatives in the absence of formal justice mechanisms. In one area, for example, USAID brought together traditional chiefs and community leaders to resolve disputes by deciding on compensation as a form of restorative justice.

In the absence of strong formal institutions that reach the communities most affected by the ongoing violence in the Central African Republic (CAR), USAID focuses on laying the groundwork for the establishment of community-based mechanisms to address grievances. Moreover, USAID's current activities in CAR focus on addressing the immediate humanitarian and emergency needs of communities affected by ongoing insecurity, banditry, and sporadic intercommunal violence. In addition, USAID efforts aim to address social cohesion through intercommunal dialogue and reconciliation activities in affected areas of the country.

USAID also provides support to both formal and informal justice institutions in conflict-affected countries such as Cote d'Ivoire and Mali, including training judicial actors, expanding paralegal networks, improving court case management systems, and providing and upgrading infrastructure and equipment. In addition, USAID strengthens the ability of national legislatures to fulfill their representational, legislative, and oversight mandates, and trains civil society organizations (with a focus on women and youth) in management, advocacy, and civic education so they can contribute to and monitor the work of elected leaders and commune council members. For example, in Cote d'Ivoire, USAID programming has supported the National Assembly by strengthening its capacity to fulfill basic functions and improving deputy representation and oversight in selected communes. Such programs assist governments to build more accountable institutions over the long-term and can aid political reconciliation efforts in post-conflict environments.

Question. After over 20 months of fighting, the parties to the conflict in South Sudan finally signed a peace agreement in August. The peace agreement is still in the pretransitional phase, but the signatories have already asked for U.S. aid to help with implementation. By many accounts, diversion of state resources has occurred on a massive scale within the South Sudan Government in the past decade, and reports suggest the war has left little for stabilization and reconstruction.

♦ (a) If confirmed, how will you work with other donors to ensure that mechanisms to promote transparency and accountability for government and donor resources are put in place by the South Sudanese?

Answer (a). The United States, along with other major donors, implements projects directly to help the people of South Sudan, and does not provide funds to or through the Government of South Sudan. USAID plays a key leadership role in several donor groups, and, if confirmed, I will continue such coordination to ensure assistance programs are complementary with those of other donors. If confirmed, I will also continue to work closely with key bilateral donors and international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to promote the proper management and safeguarding of South Sudanese resources for the benefit of the people and for future generations.

There are several aspects of the peace agreement, including oversight mechanisms, that will give the United States an opportunity to press—both diplomatically and by supporting civil society efforts—for greater transparency in government spending. If confirmed, I will join my colleagues in the Department of State and donor community in supporting critical structures of the peace agreement that increase transparency and accountability with respect to government and donor resources.

- (b) What is USAID's role in supporting accountability and reconciliation mechanisms put in place through the peace agreement, especially at the grassroots and what resources will we be committing to support such mechanisms?

Answer (b). South Sudan has not had a strong history of holding perpetrators of abuses accountable, which has perpetuated a cycle of impunity and violence. The violent nature of this most recent conflict in South Sudan has had a devastating impact on civilians and further polarized intercommunal relations. I believe USAID can play a critical role in supporting accountability and reconciliation efforts at both the local and national levels.

Since the crisis began in December 2013, USAID has been working to create space for reconciliation at the local level. USAID support at the grassroots level has been primarily focused on: (1) engaging community leaders and supporting dialogues between communities suffering from or on the brink of violent conflict, and (2) supporting structured community dialogues to begin the healing process and mitigate violence due to the impact of exposure to repeated traumatic events.

USAID also has been providing support to emerging community-based conflict management mechanisms and to other conflict mitigation initiatives in the United Nations Protection of Civilian (POC) sites, where conflict within the sites has the potential to spark wider conflict outside, and vice versa. For example in the Bentiu POC site, our support has helped establish a community-based conflict management mechanism that provides a critical service in helping resolve and mitigate destabilizing tensions within the site. And, while our "trauma-informed community empowerment" program is still in its pilot phase, we are testing this idea as a potentially groundbreaking new way of supporting communities to overcome the immense challenges of reconciling and rebuilding in the wake of devastating conflict.

Chapter V of the peace agreement is devoted to the issues of transitional justice, accountability and reconciliation. The State Department has taken the lead on supporting efforts to establish and support accountability mechanisms, such as documentation of human rights abuses that occurred during the conflict and support for the establishment of a credible, impartial, and effective hybrid court whereas USAID has taken the lead on national level reconciliation efforts called for in the agreement. Failure to address the root causes of the conflict and address rightful grievances can often undermine peace-building efforts. For that reason, USAID plans to commit over $10 million in FY 2015 for these programs.

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE ETIM'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR FLAKE

Question. One of the things that the Ebola outbreak taught us is the importance of having healthcare systems to address all diseases. Can you provide me with your perspective on whether we can leverage the existing communicable disease platforms to integrate cost effective solutions that address the growing burden of chronic diseases, and, if so, how?

Answer. At their very heart, communicable disease platforms build health system capacity to diagnosis, treat and manage patients and prevent spread of disease. The foundational capacities required for effective communicable disease prevention, detection, monitoring and treatment are very similar to those needed for chronic and noncommunicable diseases; these requirements can leverage the skills and systems needed for both sets of health care issues. For example, both communicable disease and chronic disease programs must effectively perform the following health systems functions:

- Risk communication: Health systems must provide clear information for people at risk to reduce their chances of acquiring the condition;
- Patient management: Health systems must have a means of tracking affected patients and responding to changes in their conditions in order to mitigate subsequent impacts;
- Management of drugs and medications: Health systems must have strong logistics systems and drug quality systems to ensure that adequately supplies of needed medications are available to patients on an ongoing basis and that diminish the instance of counterfeit drugs into the system;
- Comprehensive laboratory capacity: Health systems must be able to identify these conditions through laboratory services.

All of these activities are components of USAID supported infectious disease and health system strengthening programs which can be leveraged to translate these

basic and cross-cutting skills to chronic and non-communicable disease programs at low cost.

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE ETIM'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. What are your top priorities for your post, if confirmed? What challenges do you foresee in meeting these goals? How could Congress, and this committee, be useful to you in meeting them?

Answer. If confirmed, in addition to focusing on the management issues critical to the successful functioning of USAID's Africa Bureau, I will concentrate on three objectives are critical to the sustainability, growth, and success of our development goals.

First, I believe we need to continue to invest in Africa's greatest resource—its people—to further development, democracy, opportunity, rights and governance for this and future generations. Africa is the youngest continent on the world and one of the fastest growing. For this reason, any successful development approach will need to factor in this demographic shift by investing in human capital through quality education, skills primary and leadership training, and job creation. If confirmed, this will be one of my main areas of focus.

Second, I will continue USAID's focus on accelerating sustainable development through African-led partnerships. For example, through Power Africa, the United States is working with a range of partners to accelerate private-sector energy transactions, by leveraging the assistance, financing, commercial and diplomatic tools of the U.S. Government, as well as the tools and expertise of our bilateral and multilateral partners and the private sector with the aim of expanding access to electricity by 60 million new connections. Two years after Power Africa's launch, the U.S. Government's commitment of $7 billion dollars has mobilized more than $43 billion in private capital from Power Africa's more than 100 bilateral, multilateral and private sector partners, including more than $31 billion in private sector commitments.

Third, I will ensure that our work is implemented effectively, that we evaluate the results, and that we apply those lessons learned going forward. USAID recognizes the need to focus our resources to maximize the impact of our assistance. I understand that we have to measure our results and look to replicate and scale successes, discard failures, and learn from both to design future programs.

Addressing these priorities will not be an easy task. Many African countries continue to face security, governance, and infrastructure challenges that can limit the pace of project implementation and complicate our ability to evaluate our programs. Nonetheless, if confirmed, I look forward to working together with the committee to prioritize people focused African-led programming, inform budget decisions based on sound program evaluations, and leverage our foreign assistance resources to catalyze greater investment in Africa.

Question. Given your experience at USAID Africa, what areas have you found where there is duplication or waste? How can we help you streamline the agency to become more effective and efficient?

Answer. As USAID's Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa, I take the issue of accountability seriously and am singularly focused on delivering results on behalf of the American people and those we serve. To that end, and in partnership with Agency colleagues, I am committed to identifying ways to more efficiently and effectively program our foreign assistance resources and guard against duplication and waste.

An important means of doing so is by maintaining and expanding the Agency's commitment to high quality evaluations, which are then used to inform program design modifications. USAID is grateful for the strong bipartisan support Congress has provided on behalf of the Agency's more rigorous approach to evaluations, which was unveiled by our former Administrator as part of the USAID Forward reform agenda. Between 2011 and 2014, USAID trained over 1,400 USAID staff in sound evaluation methods and practices, created templates and tools to support evaluation design and performance management plans, and worked with missions to implement an approach that allows for collaboration with partners and adaptation of projects based on learning. During that time, over 950 evaluations have contributed to evidence-based decision making by missions and operating units.

One such example in the Africa Bureau were the changes that our mission implemented in Kenya in response to an evaluation aimed at understanding the discrepancies between the number of HIV rapid test kits (RTK) distributed and the number

of tests conducted. The evaluation indicated that the main discrepancies in the RTK supply chain were at the facility level. Based on the report's recommendations, USAID/Kenya changed the supplier to one that uses electronic systems; expanded monitoring activities to include two teams to visit the facilities along with the Ministry of Health, which has since improved data flow; and instructed USAID partners to tighten accounting controls at the facility level.

USAID also works closely with other development agencies and with departments across the U.S. Government to share best practices, avoid duplication, and amplify the impact of taxpayer dollars.

During my time at the National Security Council, I saw firsthand the benefit of enhanced inter-agency coordination and communication as a means to minimize duplication. In my current capacity, I have worked to actively promote interagency coordination by cultivating strong relationships with counterparts at the Departments of State and Defense, the Millennium Challenge Corporation and at the White House, with whom I regularly discuss learnings from across the region and opportunities to leverage our respective capabilities on behalf of the U.S. Government.

If confirmed, I will continue to make this a priority and look forward to working with the Congress to ensure that evaluations are continually used to inform budget decisions, project design changes, and mid-course corrections in USAID development programming.

Question. Please describe the working relationships between missions and AFR's Washington DC offices and bureaus and any notable challenges in these relationships. What are the similarities and differences between AFR's Development Planning and Sustainable Development (SD) offices? Why are both necessary, given some apparent duplication between them, and between functions carried out by SD and functional bureaus? Why are both necessary, given some apparent duplication between them? How do you plan to prevent duplication of efforts moving forward?

Answer. The Office of Development Planning (AFR/DP) and the Office of Sustainable Development (AFR/SD) have distinct roles within the Bureau for Africa.

The Office of Development Planning (AFR/DP) provides leadership for Bureau strategy and policy development and oversees the management of the Bureau for Africa's programmatic and operating expense (OE) budget. AFR/DP manages the allocation and tracking of budget resources, coordinates assistance with other donors, and provides guidance on overall program and budgeting strategy and policies. This office serves as the Bureau's audit and investigation liaison; managing the internal control assessment process and the audit management and resolution program; coordinating the preparation of the Congressional Budget Justification; monitoring and tracking compliance with congressional requests; ; overseeing the process of development and approval of Country Development and Coordination Strategies (CDCS) for field missions; assisting field Missions with program monitoring, evaluation and assessment; and acting as the Bureau focal point for outreach activities. AFR/DP does not directly manage any programs or projects.

The Office of Sustainable Development (AFR/SD) oversees and manages the USAID/Africa Regional Program, and provides leadership on African development issues through support for analysis, strategy development, program design, technical assistance, advocacy, and information dissemination. AFR/SD provides support in areas of capacity building, institutional strengthening, partnership development, information technology, social sciences, democracy and governance, natural resources management and environment, agriculture, population, HIV/AIDS, health, nutrition, education, and crisis mitigation and recovery. Additionally, AFR/SD provides technical assistance to field missions to inform strategic choices and program design; supports, encourages, and strengthens the performance of African regional institutions and other international organizations; leads the Bureau's strategic thinking in technical areas; and reviews performance by operating units and programs within the Bureau.

Activities under the USAID/AFR Regional Program focus on extending health care services, including protecting maternal and child health, expanding immunization, and directly confronting the HIV/AIDS crisis; promoting new agricultural methods and technologies; promoting economic growth through the expansion of markets; supporting education activities in Africa, with a special emphasis on the education of girls and women; and preventing and mitigating the effects of conflict by linking crisis management with long-term development programs and by helping African nations integrate democracy and good governance principles across development sectors to consolidate democracy and good governance in their societies.

The Bureau for Africa closely coordinates and cooperates with USAID's functional bureaus to leverage our teams' comparative strengths and technical capabilities in furtherance of the Agency's development objectives. Broadly speaking, both regional

and functional bureaus serve as a resource to our field missions as they design their programs and/or undertake evaluations to inform follow-on activities. Regional bureaus such as the Bureau for Africa are typically a mission's "one stop shop" to field requests for support and technical assistance. In supporting these requests, the Bureau will typically look first to its relatively lean team of technical experts—mostly housed in AFR/SD—who are well-versed in both the country and regional context as well as the specific sector of concern. These individuals will work with counterparts in the regional bureaus to ensure that assistance being provided is reflective of best practices across the world and incorporates lessons learned across USAID's vast global presence. Where deep technikcal expertise is needed, the pillar bureaus will also provide direct support to field Missions.

Working together, these shared responsibilities result in better, more in-depth support to missions that leverages the expertise of both the technical and regional bureaus at USAID.

Question (a). What improvements would you recommend to evaluation and reporting on USAID Africa projects?

Answer (a). USAID has established systems to ensure that quality evaluations are undertaken and that results are used for program improvements and redesigns. If confirmed, I will work to elevate the quality and use of evaluation tools by missions and offices in the Africa Bureau. I will also encourage and support training in monitoring and evaluation for all officers to ensure that important lessons are identified and appropriate adjustments are made to strategies and projects to increase the impact of our foreign assistance programs. USAID's Office of Inspector General recently issued an audit of USAID's Evaluation Policy Implementation across the Agency, which recommended USAID implement additional training programs, including an online tutorial on the main differences between impact and performance evaluations, a recommendation I fully support.

The Africa Bureau has been proactive in its support for evaluation. In May 2015, the Africa Bureau brought together its officers charged with the planning and implementation of the Agency's evaluation policy in Ghana to look at ways to strengthen how evaluations are planned, carried out and applied to USAID's work. Conference participants confirmed the importance of increasing to build evaluation and monitoring capacity within USAID and externally for its implementing partners in the Africa Region in order to effectively implement the Agency's evaluation policy, as strengthening monitoring and evaluation also requires strengthening capacity. In addition, program officers stressed the need to further integrate a collaborative learning environment, in such a way that adaptation is a cornerstone of business operations throughout the USAID Program Cycle. USAID anticipates that a follow-on summit will be held in Spring 2016 to further strengthen our ability to carry out evaluations, identify cross-cutting issues, and share their lessons broadly so that our officers can make appropriate and timely adjustments to our strategies and projects.

If confirmed, I will focus on this critically important aspect of USAID programming in the Africa region and ensure that evaluations are used to guide project design changes and midcourse corrections in development programming, as well as inform budget allocation decisions as appropriate.

Question (b). How can we improve transparency in how taxpayer dollars are spent on aid projects in Africa? What obstacles do you face in reporting and evaluation, and how can we start to remedy those issues?

Answer (b). Aid transparency is essential for helping recipient governments manage their aid flows, empowering citizens to hold governments accountable for the use of assistance, and supporting evidence-based, data-driven approaches to foreign aid. The administration has placed great emphasis on transparency and openness across the government and USAID is taking a leading role in helping the U.S. Government further its commitment to enhancing aid transparency as a way of increasing the efficacy of development efforts and promoting international accountability. For example, in October 2014, USAID released its first ever Open Data policy and regularly posts datasets to www.usaid.gov/data.

I believe that the transmission of foreign assistance data and evaluation outcomes to the public is a critical step toward increasing transparency in development. If confirmed as Africa's next Assistant Administrator, I will work with USAID leadershipto advance efforts that are currently underway to increase the transparency of our funding and programming, including regularly posting data to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and ForeignAssistance.gov.

Question (a). What factors led USAID to redeploy staff from the Nairobi East Africa mission to elsewhere, where were they moved, and how many staff and which key programs were affected?

Answer (a). Due to the increasing security concerns in Kenya, in July 2014, the USAID's East Africa mission eliminated 27 U.S. citizen positions. Of those positions, 24 were NSDD–38 approved U.S. Direct Hires, and 3 were U.S. Personal Service Contractors (USPSC). Fourteen of the U.S. Direct Hire positions were realigned as follows:

- Five were transferred to the USAID mission in Ethiopia,
- Five were transferred to the USAID mission in South Africa, and
- Four were transferred to the USAID mission in DRC.

The Agency continues to assess how best to realign the remaining ten U.S. Direct Hire positions across the Africa portfolio. Based on revised staffing levels and an analysis of capacity remaining in Nairobi, 39 ongoing programs remained in Nairobi, 12 were cancelled or closed, and 12 were transferred to other Missions.

Key program impacts include:

- *Trade Africa:* There were no significant changes to staff and programs supporting the implementation of Trade Africa, though disruptions to contracting, financial management and legal support services resulted in programmatic delays.
- *Limited and Non-Presence Countries (Burundi, Djibouti, Central African Republic and Somalia):* The USAID East Africa Mission-recently renamed USAID Kenya and East Africa mission (USAID/KEA)-no longer oversees or provides support to the Limited Presence Country offices in Burundi and Djibouti. USAID's mission in Burundi has since been consolidated with USAID's mission in Rwanda, and USAID's Djibouti office has been consolidated with the Ethiopia Mission. The Somalia Office was not affected and continues to be managed from USAID/KEA.
- *Conflict and Governance:* USAID/KEA's $32 million conflict mitigation and governance portfolio continues to focus on mitigating cross-border conflict in the Horn of Africa. The management and staffing for programs to counter the Lord's Resistance Army, Central African Republic and the management of mineral trade in the Great Lakes has been transferred to USAID/Democratic Republic of Congo Mission.
- *Health and HIV/AIDS:* USAID/KEA has refocused its regional health activities on infectious disease outbreaks and phased out the majority of its support for regional health policy strengthening, except for USAID's key assistance to the East, Central, and Southern Africa Health Community. The management of this program will move to South Africa. USAID has moved or closed 11 health programs, while retaining a $21 million program managed from Nairobi.
- *Agriculture and Resilience:* USAID/KEA's $85 million agriculture and resilience portfolio remains in Nairobi. The Mission transferred four programs focused on advancing agricultural development by scaling up successful innovations to Washington.
- *Environment:* USAID/KEA will maintain most of its $42 million environment portfolio (global climate change adaptation, biodiversity, water, and sanitation). USAID/KEA transferred responsibility for a regional engineering contract and is unable to program water and sanitation funds proposed for FY 2014.

Question (b). What, if any, changes in AFR programming has the USAID Forward development reform initiative spurred?

Answer (b). USAID Forward represents major development and organizational reforms to ensure that USAID and its partners efficiently, effectively, and inclusively address the global challenges of today and achieve results that outlast our assistance in the future. It is based on three separate, but mutually reinforcing principles:

- Delivering results on a meaningful scale through a strengthened USAID;
- Promoting sustainable development through high-impact partnerships; and
- Identifying and scaling-up innovative breakthrough solutions to intractable development problems.

USAID Forward has enabled the Agency to increase its in-country presence with skilled professionals proficient in the discipline of development; adaptive, innovative approaches focused on both short- and long-term results that sustain; and partnerships that engender local ownership of results and greater prospects for sustainable impact. Through implementation of the USAID Forward reforms, the Agency has changed the way it conducts business. The Africa Bureau has embraced the USAID Forward reforms and tailored them to the regional and country context based upon

the given sector's focus and available funding. Below are some examples of progress achieved in Africa.

Currently 18 operating units in Africa have completed five year Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCSs), one operating unit has completed a 3-year strategy, and the Bureau has completed four Regional Development Cooperation Strategies, for a total of 23 out of 24 required strategies for the Africa Bureau (the 24th strategy is in progress). These documents serve as guideposts for strategic decisionmaking in the allocation of our resources and implementation of results-oriented programming throughout the region.

- In FY 2014, our Africa missions exceeded targets for leveraging commercial private capital through the Development Credit Authority (DCA) mechanism across all development sectors by 10 percent. For example, the USAID/Nigeria Mission leveraged private sector financing in under-served sectors, with particular emphasis on renewable energy, agriculture, water, and health. The mission's efforts resulted in increased resources for Nigerians in support of U.S. Government food security, private sector development, and clean energy objectives; increased numbers of companies able to access credit for profitable agriculture, water, health, and renewable energy activities; and increased numbers of banks providing access to credit using the DCA facility.
- In an effort to ensure the sustainability of our investments by building local capacity to carry this work forward in the future, the Africa Bureau has also made progress in increasing the share of assistance dollars going directly through local partners, taking pains to ensure that such partnerships are rigorously monitored and evaluated to safeguard taxpayer dollars.
- In FY 2014, the Africa region obligated $538 million in so-called "Local Solutions" funding, an increase from $389 million in FY 2013 and $355 million in FY 2012. This figure represented 14.4 percent of all obligations, up from 11.7 percent in FY 2013 and 9.6 percent in FY 2012.
- In FY 2014, Africa missions completed 69 evaluations in accordance with USAID's Evaluation Policy, which demands a high level of rigor for all evaluations. In FY 2013, Africa missions conducted 71 evaluations. This represents a significant increase from FY 2012 when 41 evaluations were conducted. Despite ongoing challenges related to the Ebola outbreak, USAID/Guinea's health sector implementing partners were able to complete four evaluations on activities pertaining to health management information systems, gender-based violence, and post-partum health.

Question (c). Please describe the emergent Sustainable Development Goals and USAID's approaches to achieving them.

Answer (c). Last week, over 150 world leaders gathered at the U.N. General Assembly and took action to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Agenda builds on the progress achieved by Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and endorses a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the next 15 years. The MDGs contributed to tangible, concrete progress in development. Rates of those in extreme poverty and maternal mortality figures were cut nearly in half globally and we made progress in global education, with a 20-percent increase in primary school enrollment in sub-Saharan Africa and a nearly 50 percent decrease in the number of out-of-school children of primary school age, among other advances.

The SDGs take the focus of the MDGs on social and economic aspects of human development and add emphasis on the environment and good governance. The SDGs importantly also include known drivers for development like sustainable energy, inclusive economic growth, gender equality in addition to the foundational role for peace, security, and effective institutions.

From the U.S. perspective, the SDGs bring focus, attention and resources to more inclusive development globally. This is no longer an agenda just meant for donors to implement in developing countries. This is an agenda that every country, regardless of level of development, has voluntarily adopted. It incorporates the Addis Ababa Action Agenda which promotes financing for development, not from official development assistance only, but also through domestic resource mobilization and private sector investment.

Implementation followup and review including tracking progress and the discussion about which indicators will be monitored is ongoing and expected to be completed in March of next year. Primary responsibility for implementation and followup is at the national level. Countries are expected to integrate the SDGs into national development plans and strategies, supported by integrated national financing frameworks. As a guide for how USAID will approach this ambitious agenda and build momentum for implementation we recently released a "Vision for Ending Ex-

treme Poverty." The Vision articulates how USAID defines extreme poverty and frames the Agency's role in this worldwide effort.

We see this global development agenda as a powerful instrument to eradicate extreme poverty within a generation; focus on transformative priorities that can have wide- reaching and long-lasting impact, particularly for the most vulnerable; and help put all of our societies on a more sustainable path.

Question (a). Please describe USAID's strategic approach toward development in Africa.

Answer (a). In 2012, USAID's Africa Bureau and the State Department's Africa Bureau developed a Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) for sub-Saharan Africa, as an outgrowth of the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) process. The JRS for Africa covers fiscal years 2015 to 2017 and guides USAID's strategic approach in Africa. Every three years, the JRS process provides Regional Bureaus at State and USAID a method for longer-term planning that is collaborative and conceptually rigorous. The process incorporates input from relevant functional/technical Bureaus and Mission stakeholders, serves as a tool to better coordinate activities in the region around shared goals and objectives, and informs annual resource requests and mission-level planning in USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) and State-USAID Integrated Country Strategies (ICS). The goals of the JRS for sub-Saharan Africa include strengthening the United States economic reach and positive economic impact; strengthening the United States' foreign policy impact on our strategic challenges; promoting transition to a low emission, climate-resilient world, while expanding global access to sustainable energy; protecting core U.S. interests by advancing democracy and human rights and strengthening civil society; and modernizing the way we do diplomacy and development.

The JRS reflects the goals, objectives, and strategies articulated in the Presidential Policy Directive for Sub-Saharan Africa (PPD–16). PPD–16 is centered on four overarching and complementary policy goals: Strengthen Democratic Institutions, Improve Governance, and Protect Human Rights; Spur Economic Growth, Trade, and Investment; Advance Peace and Security; and Promote Opportunity and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa. The JRS is also consistent with the Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development (PPD–6) and reaffirms U.S. interest in and commitment to the administration's global development priorities, including key initiatives such as Feed the Future, the G–8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, the Global Health Initiative, the Partnership for Growth, and the President's Global Climate Change Initiative.

Question (b). Why are there strategies for some regions and countries but not others?

Answer (b). All bilateral USAID Missions and regional platforms are expected to develop a CDCS or Regional Development Cooperation Strategy respectively, with the exception of those that are: (1) implementing a single sector program, such as health; (2) phasing down or closing the mission; and (3) special purpose offices such as those in nonpresence countries lacking a USAID mission. Agency guidance outlines the conditions under which an operating unit might be exempted from preparing a CDCS.

Currently 18 operating units in Africa have completed 5-year Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCSs); one operating unit has completed a 3-year strategy, and the Bureau has completed four Regional Development Cooperation Strategies, for a total of 23 out of 24 required strategies for the Africa Bureau (the 24th strategy is in progress). These documents serve as guideposts for strategic decisionmaking in the allocation of our resources and implementation of results-oriented programming throughout the region.

Question (c). How are these strategies formulated?

Answer (c). The CDCS formulation process relies on technical analysis, program evaluations, and extensive consultations to establish an evidence base by which the mission defines development objectives that will maximize the impact of development cooperation. The gathered evidence is used to establish a development hypothesis and define a results framework that outlines the strategy's overarching goal, its development objectives, and the results necessary to achieve those objectives. The CDCS helps ensure that USAID implements programs and activities in coordination with other donors and U.S. Government agencies and with host-country governments and local stakeholders as partners to end extreme poverty and promote resilient, democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity. The mission follows the steps outlined in Agency guidance to develop a CDCS in collaboration with strategic planning specialists in the Bureau for Africa and the Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning, along with technical counterparts across the Agency.

The process includes several opportunities for technical review and advice throughout the year-long planning process.

The commitment to strategic planning and multi-year CDCS remains a core component of the USAID Forward reform agenda launched in 2010. USAID's agency-wide CDCS guidance is now being updated based on lessons learned from the first 5 years of CDCS design and implementation. Feed the Future, Global Health Initiative, Global Climate Change, and other sector-specific strategies are incorporated under the umbrella of the CDCS.

Question (d). What new programmatic trends are you pursuing?

Answer (d). Some of the new programmatic trends being pursued by USAID Missions in Africa reflect the changes in Agency operations associated with USAID Forward, the value of incorporating science and technical innovation, and the evolving landscape of development aside from foreign assistance. Missions are developing new alliances with the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and academia that contribute to partnerships that deliver development results in novel ways and spur new development solutions. Many programs increasingly aim to build local capacity of governmental and nongovernmental partners in ways that will ensure greater ownership and more sustainable results that will endure over time.

Question (e). Please discuss the thrust and impact of the global Development Lab and other USAID development innovation efforts in Africa.

Answer (e). The U.S. Global Development Lab, created in 2014, has been established to leverage science, technology, innovation, and partnerships to address international development challenges, such as ending poverty in a better, faster, cheaper, and more sustainable way. This is done by casting a wide net to find ideas for innovations, tools, and approaches that disrupt traditional development solutions; use hard evidence and quick iteration to develop those that are most promising; and work across the Agency and with implementing partners to mainstream proven solutions. The Lab is heavily involved in Africa and works closely with the Africa Bureau.

For example, the Lab has been working closely with the Africa Bureau on Ebola recovery through Information Communications Technology (ICT). This work directly supports the U.S. Government objectives to mitigate the second order impacts of Ebola and enable the Ebola affected countries to prevent, detect and respond to future outbreaks. The Lab is using ICT to strengthen health information systems to enable two- way communication between front line health care workers and Ministries of Health for to shorten the time to collect information enabling faster response. USAID is also working to expand ePayments for health care workers and Ebola recovery programs to help overcome the significant logistical challenge of transporting cash payments to health care workers.

Although the Lab's work focused on Ebola recovery is in early stages, support from technology, data and information management specialists from the Lab during the height of the outbreak helped improve the flow and quality of information for decision making. For example, USAID worked with partners in Guinea to expand the use of mobile technology, specifically the mobile phone app CommCare, a Fighting Ebola Grand Challenge winner, to support contact tracing-the daily monitoring of individuals who had come in contact with an Ebola patient and were at risk of developing the virus. In districts using this tool, district health managers reported that the tool helped improve accuracy and accountability of contact tracer activities, through the tool's decision- support dashboard which enables district health managers to quickly identify areas where support is needed, as well as the geo-tagging feature which verifies location for each contact visit.

The Lab is also seeing impact from other innovation efforts in Africa. For example, the Lab's Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) is supporting Off-Grid: Electric—an innovative organization that is working to bring affordable electricity to one million Tanzanian homes. After receiving initial funding of $100,000 from DIV in 2013 and an additional $1 mMillion of follow on funding in late 2014, Off-Grid: Electric successfully aised $16 million in equity financing and an additional $7 million from the International Finance Corporation and its partners earlier this year.

Additionally, the Lab is a cocreator of the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI), which has grown to more than 65 members in just over 1 year, including Nigeria, Ghana, Mozambique and Liberia. In each country, stakeholders have rallied around regulatory reforms that seek to drive down the cost of broadband to levels within 5 percent of household monthly income. In late 2014, through A4AI's direct work, Ghana agreed to abolish the 20-percent import duties that comprise 35 percent of the cost of smartphones in-country.

Question. Please discuss how GHI is strategically structured and implemented in Africa. How, if at all, is complementarity and synergy between individual disease initiatives and USAID's many other health goals pursued? To what extent does general health system capacity-building remain a core goal under GHI?

Answer. The United States plans to invest nearly $5 billion in FY 2016 through Global Health Programs accounts across health programming in Africa, with the aim of reducing preventable mortality. Improvements in mortality can be achieved by increasingly effective efforts to link diverse health programs, including maternal and child health (MCH), malaria, family planning's contribution to the healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, and sanitation and hygiene improvement programs. To support the strategic priority of ending preventable child and maternal deaths, USAID has closed operations in 26 countries to concentrate its effort in 24 high-priority countries, of which 16 are in sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly 75 percent of all maternal deaths occur in those 24 high-priority countries.

USAID's strategic focus on ending preventable mortality brings together the efforts of the U.S. Government MCH and Family Planning and Reproductive Health (FP/RH) programs, the President's Malaria Initiative, Feed the Future, and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. In addition, a focus on health systems strengthening has helped to bring these diverse initiatives together around the common need for a strong health system in order to achieve sustainable results across all health sectors.

USAID's investments in health are saving lives and improving health around the world and have contributed to impressive outcomes. For example, fewer children are dying from preventable causes, more people are accessing care and treatment for HIV and AIDS, and entire communities are facing a future free from debilitating diseases, such as blinding trachoma. For these trends to be sustained and accelerated, countries need stronger, more robust health systems that are able to address current and future challenges. As such, USAID continues to prioritize the Global Health Initiative principle of health systems strengthening as paramount in its global health work in Africa. Health systems strengthening activities supported in Africa include service delivery; human resources; information; medical supplies, vaccines and technology; electronic and mobile health; and governance.

Given the centrality of strong health systems to achieving USAID-supported health goals, USAID also recently released the Vision for Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) 2015-2019. The Vision for HSS is a key document that will help guide USAID's work and investment focus to evidence-based HSS approaches that contribute to positive health outcomes and help create an environment for universal health coverage. It will also help the Agency meet its goals of ending preventable child and maternal deaths, creating an AIDS-free generation, and protecting communities from infectious diseases, including achieving the goals of the Global Health Security Agenda. USAID's vision for HSS is to partner with countries to provide sustained, equitable access to essential, high-quality health services that are responsive to people's needs without financial hardship, thereby protecting poor and underserved people from illness, death, and extreme poverty.

Question. Africa is set to receive about $4.9b, more than half of all U.S. foreign aid for global health in FY 2016. This funding request is an increase from last year's actual spending, which totaled 51 percent of all global health aid last year. Given the increased goal-orientation for more country ownership and in-country staffing, please explain your plan for ensuring that this aid funding gets distributed accurately and effectively? Does this plan include training and oversight to minimize the possibility of corruption?

Answer. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for more than half of maternal deaths, has the highest rates of mortality for children under five, and bears approximately 70 percent of the HIV/AIDS global burden. Africa comprises a disproportionate share of FY2016 resources targeted at improving global health outcomes principally because of the enhanced need for this assistance and the Agency's assessment of opportunities to achieve sustainable results in this sector, all the while safeguarding taxpayer money against waste, fraud, and abuse. Accordingly, USAID has taken steps to ensure that missions are well-staffed with trained personnel who are equipped to rigorously design, execute, and monitor programs such that U.S. foreign assistance funds are expended appropriately.

USAID takes great pains to ensure that taxpayer funds are used for their intended purposes, and the Agency has a number of mechanisms in place to monitor the use of funds, including pre-award assessments, regularly required reporting, audits and evaluations. USAID health assistance is planned and executed in compliance with the Agency's Automated Directive System (ADS), which outlines the policies and procedures that guide the Agency's programs and operations. The ADS in-

cludes "Guidance on the Definition and Use of the Global Health Programs Account A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 200" which describes the use of funds for the Global Health Programs (GHP) account. The guidance outlines several ways in which GHP funds can be used to support health governance and finance activities that include a focus on corruption reduction within the health sector as a goal.

The Agency also uses numerous financial systems and controls, as well as internal and independent audits to enable the Agency to effectively manage, track, and safeguard funds. For example, during the performance of a contract, USAID personnel are responsible for approving vouchers for invoices submitted by the awardee and conducting site visits to monitor program activities. USAID also regularly conducts evaluations of its programs, including external evaluations, to ensure they are on track to achieve the stated goals, and posts these evaluations online. If a program is not performing as it should, the Agency works to modify it—or, as appropriate, to terminate it, directing resources toward higher impact programming.

USAID staff, including those working on global health programs, receive specific training in ensuring USAID funds are properly programmed and monitored and Mission Orders are in place to require compliance with the ADS. As noted above, USAID has been able to increase critical staffing in areas of priority, including health offices in USAID's missions in Africa, to ensure sufficient oversight of U.S. foreign assistance programs. Given the significant global health resources invested in Africa, USAID leadership routinely monitors staffing vacancies in Africa's health missions to confirm that programs have the continuous support they need at the country level.

If confirmed, I will continue to remain vigilant in ensuring that the Agency deploys all relevant mechanisms to prevent corruption and guard against waste, fraud, and abuse, including with respect to Africa's global health portfolio. I will also work to ensure that our missions remain well-staffed and support continued training for USAID employees on USAID best practices as outlined in the ADS in order to equip USAID personnel with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively protect taxpayer money and efficiently implement foreign assistance programs.

Question. Please assess FTF's 6 years of implementation in Africa, including with respect to possible unanticipated outcomes or challenges. How, if at all, have FTF goals and focus areas changed over time to reflect changing needs and lessons learned?

Answer. Feed the Future relies on rigorous monitoring and evaluation of investments to track progress and facilitate results-driven planning and performance-based management-all of which feed into the Feed the Future Results Framework. The Feed the Future Results Framework is the conceptual and analytic structure that establishes the goals and objectives of Feed the Future, with the top line goals of reduction in poverty (through agriculture sector growth) and improved nutritional status (measured as reduction in stunting). The Framework also includes the Initiative's whole-of- government common indicators for tracking progress.

As part of the Feed the Future Results Framework, USAID developed the Feed the Future Learning Agenda, which is a set of strategic questions for which the Initiative intends to produce evidence, findings, and answers-primarily through impact evaluations, but also through other methods, such as performance evaluations and policy analysis. Using the information and data gathered through the Feed the Future Learning Agenda and informed by the Feed the Future Results Framework, USAID is able to adjust and improve interventions in agriculture and nutrition, Feed the Future's two top line goals.

According to available data, before 2010, Feed the Future focus countries saw an annual average rate of reduction in stunting of about 2 percent per year. Since Feed the Future has been active, some of these countries have seen an annual average stunting reduction of more than 4 percent per year. In 2015, Feed the Future will complete repeat population based surveys to determine additional progress against poverty and stunting baselines. As part of this analysis, Feed the Future asks the following questions:

- What are Feed the Future investments improving?
- Are Feed the Future activities, projects, and programs accomplishing what we intended?
- Are Feed the Future efforts impacting our overall goal to reduce poverty and hunger?
- Are barriers hindering the progress or performance of Feed the Future programs?
- What changes would support broader or deeper Feed the Future program impacts?

Over time, Feed the Future has made program adjustments to address challenges in implementation. For example in Mali, while significant political and security gains were made in 2013 through early 2014, it has not fully recovered from the compound effects of the 2012 coup and subsequent events. This political insecurity was compounded by a 2012 food security crisis that affected millions of Malians. Although implementation of Feed the Future programming, including the collection of baseline information, was delayed, Feed the Future Mali was able to adapt and quickly begin making strategic program investments that will garner the most impact and strides towards achieving objectives that include launching and completing a full-year of the Cereal Value Chain; beginning a new Livestock for Growth program; scaling programs for improved cereal varieties, horticulture, fertilizer technologies, and agroforestry—resilience; and developing two joint activities between health programs and FTF, ensuring full coverage of the FTF zone of influence with nutrition programs.

In Malawi, due to localized drought conditions in 2014 and flooding in early 2015, as well as poor seed germination and poor quality seeds, yields have been lower than targeted. Given the multidimensional cause of these lower yields, USAID has actively worked to incorporate our best thinking across multiple offices, including the Bureau for Food Security, the Office of Food for Peace, and Office of Disaster Assistance, to design a comprehensive response. Feed the Future is supporting smallholder farmers with climate resilient crop varieties, aiming to assist farmers maintain yields in difficult conditions. Activities also help smallholders access improved training on improved agronomic practices, including increasing plant density, integrated pest management, and improved drying and storage techniques.

Additionally, after a cost-benefit analysis in Malawi showed the limited benefit of the program, dairy was dropped as a value chain for Feed the Future investments. Instead, Feed the Future activities focus on groundnuts, soy, and orange-fleshed sweet potato, crops that are grown by smallholder farmers and benefit a large number of people. Similarly, a 2014 survey on agricultural technology adoption in Zambia by the International Food Policy Research Institute found some farmers discontinue the use of new technologies at a high rate, even within 1 year of adoption. Sustainable adoption of new technologies is far more likely to occur as a result of repeated, intensified exposure via demonstrations or training. Noting that technology retention occurs through repeated exposure, Feed the Future in Zambia decided against expanding the zone of influence to increase the number of target farmers. Instead, activities are targeting the same total number of farmers and concentrating resources to intensify farmer exposure and ensure high technology retention rates.

Question. Please describe some key examples of GCCI clean energy and low-emission, sustainable landscape management, and adaptation goals and programs. How are outcomes in this area measured? What are the main climate and other macro economy shocks to which GCCI programs are responding?

Answer. As part of the broader Presidential Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCI), USAID is supporting countries to foster low-carbon growth, promote sustainable and resilient societies, and reduce emissions from deforestation and land degradation.

For example, one USAID clean energy program in Namibia is helping the Namibian government establish a renewable energy feed-in-tariff program to create incentives for private sector investment in small-scale renewable energy projects. The program is currently being implemented, with 27 companies competing for the opportunity to develop projects which will produce up to a total of 70 megawatts of electricity.

In addition, a USAID sustainable landscapes program in Malawi is supporting the implementation of Malawi's national Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) Action Plan, which will address the drivers of deforestation on a wide scale. In Malawi, agricultural practices and demand for charcoal for cooking are leading causes of deforestation and forest degradation. In close collaboration with national and district governments, USAID will support supply-side measures such as community wood lots and agroforestry, demand-side measures such as improved cook stoves and more efficient charcoal production technologies, and policy measures such as continued decentralization of forest management authority. These investments are expected to generate livelihood opportunities for thousands of vulnerable households, a greenhouse gas emission reduction of more than 8 million metric tons, and to leverage at least a million dollars of additional investment that supports Malawi's mitigation priorities.

A USAID adaptation program in Mozambique helped develop vulnerability maps that municipalities will use to identify vulnerable areas prior to issuing building

permits. In the future, the cities will use these maps and other tools to create local adaptation plans to address the climate change challenges municipalities face. These processes can be scaled up to be used in other coastal cities in Mozambique or worldwide. Another adaptation program in Tanzania is supporting river flow assessments for the Ruvu River Basin, which supplies water to Tanzania's key agricultural producing regions. The assessments will provide information for better decisionmaking on seasonal and yearly water use, even under climate change conditions. Pilot land use planning in three villages is incorporating mechanisms for water resource management, increasing household capacity to adapt to climate variability and change. In addition, water storage and water harvesting activities are being implemented in drought-prone areas.

USAID uses a variety of indicators to measure outcomes from climate change programming. USAID investments in clean energy or sustainable landscapes must report on the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), estimated in metric tons of CO_2 equivalent, reduced and/or avoided as a result of U.S. Government assistance. USAID investments in adaptation must also report on the number of institutions with improved capacity to assess and/or address climate change risks as a result of U.S. Government assistance and the number of stakeholders with increased capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change as a result of U.S. Government assistance. Additional standard indicators to measure the outcomes from climate change programming include: the number of megawatts of clean energy generation capacity supported by U.S. Government which have achieved financial closure; the number of people receiving livelihood cobenefits (monetary or nonmonetary) as a result of REDD+ and low emission development strategies implementation; the number of people implementing risk-reducing practices/actions to improve resilience to climate change as a result of U.S. Government assistance; and the amount of investment mobilized for climate change, as supported by USG assistance.

The main climate and macroeconomy shocks confronted by GCCI programs include low access to energy in Africa coupled with price shocks, increased frequency of droughts, unpredictable precipitation patterns, extreme temperatures, pressures on forests for fuelwood and other products, and poor or weak governance and fiscal management. USAID considers these factors when designing GCCI programs to ensure that programs account for shocks and address key development priorities as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation issues.

Question. The GCCI seeks to support clean energy and low-emission energy initiatives. Yet, more than 4 billion people in Africa are currently living without power, and many of these green initiatives are more expensive than conventional fuel and power sources. As Assistant Administrator for the Africa Bureau, how would you go about striking a healthy balance between promoting clean energy programs and increasing reliable electricity infrastructure at prices that developing countries can afford? Please identify the factors you would use to come to these decisions.

Answer. The administration is committed to working with African countries to promote energy access in environmentally responsible ways. Through Power Africa, we are taking significant steps to expand clean energy access throughout sub-Saharan Africa, supporting the development of Africa's diverse energy resources, and in particular its vast wind, solar, hydro and geothermal resources. We seek to promote investment in generation mixes that ensure affordable and reliable access to modern energy services for all people, optimize available resources, and enhance energy security. This means support for development of indigenous resources like natural gas, as well as renewables. Power Africa prioritizes projects based on private sector demand; potential for transformational impact; buy-in from the government; opportunities to exploit vast resources on the continent; project viability; and overall impact.

An example of Power Africa's support to conventional power sources include working with Nigeria's Government and the private sector to realize the successful completion of Azura-Edo, a landmark 450 MW open cycle gas turbine power plant that potentially represents Nigeria's first new project financed Independent Power Producer in over a decade. In November 2014, the transaction reached the first stage of financial closure thanks in part to USAID's significant transaction advisory assistance to develop the Power Purchase Agreement, OPIC's commitment of $50 million in financing, and additional financing and hedging tools from the World Bank Group.

Power Africa also supports grid-connected renewable energy projects. For example, the Agency is providing technical support to the Government of Zambia to develop and adopt a Renewable Energy Feed in Tariff with a target of 160 MW of additional renewable energy by 2017.

Recognizing that Power Africa cannot achieve its energy access goals through grid-scale projects alone, Power Africa launched "Beyond the Grid," a subinitiative

that focuses on expanding access to electricity in areas not connected to the national grid. These off-grid, small-scale energy solutions more reliably, rapidly, and cost effectively bring power to communities that may not otherwise have access to power, and enable the poorest households to access electricity in a way that fits their needs and ability to pay.

USAID also provides support to low-emission energy initiatives in Africa through the Enhancing Capacity for Low Emission Development Strategies (EC–LEDS) program. EC–LEDS is a flagship interagency U.S. Government program designed to support developing countries' efforts to pursue long-term, transformative development while reducing their long-term greenhouse gas emissions.

Since its launch in June 2013, Power Africa has successfully mobilized significant investment in renewable technologies as well as in natural gas throughout sub-Saharan Africa, helping to diversify energy portfolios and accelerate countries' transitions toward energy security. Like any modern power sector, we recognize that African countries need to rely on a broad array of generation sources, including wind, solar, hydropower, geothermal, and natural gas. If confirmed, I will continue to focus USAID's assistance under Power Africa to achieve maximum results in increasing energy access across sub-Saharan Africa.

Question. How, if at all, do GCCI programs affect local farming practices in country?

Answer. USAID programs help improve local farming techniques through changes in focus crops or cropping techniques in a country. For example, a USAID program in Ethiopia shifted its focus from pepper, which is highly sensitive to temperature, to vegetable crops which can be grown in greenhouses and are therefore more resilient. In addition, USAID programs support activities such as intercropping with trees (which can provide shade and/or nutrients to the soil), enhanced water management, use of predictive climate services, and financial risk management, which help farmers better respond to shocks. For example, in Uganda, USAID supports enhanced local farming practices policy implementation on the ground by investing in field experiments to assess crop response to projected moisture and temperature extremes and test various adaptation technologies. By engaging the private sector, three equipment suppliers have worked closely with 11 wholesalers to jointly organize and conduct trainings and demonstrations of spraying and irrigation equipment necessary for adaptation. Two of the suppliers have organized similar events on their own with several other wholesalers in other districts. Through the Uganda National Farmers' Federation (UNFFE), USAID has to date reached about 2,000 farmers with adaptation messages. The long-term goal is to cover UNFFE's 78 District Farmers' Associations, reaching over two million individual members with innovative adaptation messages, practices and technologies.

Crop losses caused by variable rainfall patterns (timing, quantity, and intensity) directly threaten production financing, farmers' livelihoods and food security, and overall sustainability of agricultural development. To address these threats, a program in Senegal worked with farmers, financial institutions, and insurance providers to support two critical risk management mechanisms: index-based insurance for rain-fed crops in different rainfall zones and conventional insurance in the northern irrigated industrial production zone. The program now insures more than 10,000 producers.

Question (a). Please discuss the main areas of progress and key challenges under Power Africa.

Answer (a). Since its launch, Power Africa has leveraged $7 billion in U.S. Government commitments to mobilize nearly $43 billion in external commitments, including more than $31 billion in private-sector commitments. Through Power Africa, the United States is working together with a range of partners to accelerate private-sector energy transactions, by leveraging the assistance, financing, commercial and diplomatic tools of the U.S. Government, as well the tools and expertise of our bilateral and multilateral partners, including the African Development Bank, the World Bank Group, the Swedish Government, the European Union, and more than 100 private-sector partners.

Over 4,100 MW of transactions have reached financial close in sub-Saharan Africa with Power Africa's involvement, representing roughly 13 percent of the 30,000 MW goal. This additional power generation has the potential to enable approximately 4 million new connections through increased availability of power. Additionally, under Beyond the Grid, a Power Africa sub-initiative that drives private investment in off-grid and small-scale energy solutions, the U.S.-Africa Clean Energy Financing facility and the U.S. African Development Foundation have funded companies and projects expected to reach 1 million new connections.

Power Africa is working with its partners to overcome key challenges constraining electricity access in sub-Saharan Africa. These challenges include access to financing, particularly for smaller-scale and early-stage projects; limited institutional capacity among utilities, regulators, and ministries of energy; and building political will to advance critical reforms to attract private sector investment.

Question (b). What U.S. interests does the initiative serve?

Answer (b). Power Africa, through its partnership with the private sector, provides opportunities for American companies to reach new markets. For example, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) links U.S. businesses with energy markets across sub-Saharan Africa through trade missions to sub-Saharan Africa and United States. These events provide a platform for African delegates to present upcoming procurement needs to U.S. businesses and to observe the design, manufacturing, demonstration, and operation of American products and services. By assisting American companies with investment opportunities in Africa, Power Africa helps partner countries achieve their development goals while creating jobs and business opportunities in the United States.

At a macro level, Power Africa's support to the energy sector in sub-Saharan Africa also helps enable economic growth, contributes towards stability in the region, and supports U.S. foreign policy objectives. Lack of access to electricity has been identifiedas a major constraint to growth in many sub-Saharan African countries. Access to electricity is critical for the development of diversified economies, including the growth of supply chains that add value to African exports and opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses to grow, as well as improved access to health care and education. Broad based economic growth and perceptible improvements in government service delivery bolster stability by increasing trust in government, decreasing incentives for criminality, and reducing some of the grievances and vulnerabilities upon which extremist elements prey when seeking new recruits.

Question (c). What criteria are used to select Power Africa assisted projects, which in some cases may receive substantial U.S. credit backing?

Answer (c). To identify priority transactions, Power Africa uses the following criteria: private sector demand; potential for transformational impact; buy-in from the government; opportunities to exploit vast resources on the continent; project viability; and overall impact. Additionally, each U.S. Government agency performs its own due diligence in choosing to extend credit or grants; Power Africa partners are not exempted from this process.

Question (d). How does USAID coordinate with the multiple other U.S. agencies that are also involved in this endeavor?

Answer (d). USAID convenes biweekly Power Africa Working Group (PAWG) meetings with interagency participation from Power Africa's 12 U.S. Government agencies, including staff based in Washington, DC and the Coordinator's office in Pretoria, South Africa. The PAWG provides a forum for each agency to shareproject and pipeline updates, as well as for the interagency to discuss cross-cutting issues such as expansion of Power Africa activities and interventions across the continent; updates on coordination efforts with our bilateral and multilateral partners; monitoring and evaluation updates; and discussion about gaps and tools that are still needed to grow the sector. In addition, most teams in the field conduct interagency calls at least monthly to share details specific to activities in country. To further solidify this, the Power Africa Coordinator's office has developed and deployed several specific liaison positions with interagency partners including the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and USTDA in order to enhance interagency collaboration.

If confirmed, I would continue to focus USAID's assistance under Power Africa, and leverage the combined technical resources of the 12 U.S. government agencies as well as our bilateral, multilateral and private sector partners to achieve maximum results in increasing energy access across sub-Saharan Africa.

Question (e). To what extent and in what ways, if any, is Power Africa supporting large hydropower projects?

Answer (e). Hydropower does and will continue to play a major role in power sectors throughout sub-Saharan Africa. While Power Africa may provide support to hydropower projects at any scale, to date, Power Africa has focused its support for the development of Africa's hydroelectric resources on small scale hydropower projects. Consistent with existing statute, projects involving the creation of large hydroelectric dams require a more critical assessment that fully considers projected environment and social impacts, economic risks and returns, and robust management and oversight. In addition, while hydropower development has traditionally been

driven by the public sector, Power Africa seeks wherever possible to prioritize private sector participation and public-private partnerships.

Question. Please describe key approaches across the major U.S. development initiatives in Africa to expand the impact of U.S. development aid and boost country "ownership" of development. What are some key examples of how country "ownership" is actualized in practice? How have the initiatives changed program M&E, and approaches to innovation in recent years? How is "stove-piping" between initiatives avoided and complementarity promoted? What "whole of government" innovations or best practices have arisen as a result of initiative implementation in Africa?

Answer. The major U.S. development initiatives in Africa are components of USAID's overall strategic approach. While they focus on specific development sectors, all initiatives are implemented with the goal of promoting both country ownership and program integration. Our direct partnering with local actors and local systems, referred to as "local solutions," reflects USAID's commitment to supporting development that is locally owned, locally led, and locally sustained. Country or local ownership implies ownership of priorities, implementation, and resourcing. This includes not only governments, but also the private sector and civil society.

Integrating Presidential Initiatives in Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) is the primary means to avoid stove piping and promote complementarity. USAID uses strategic planning to define development objectives and maximize the impact of development cooperation, integrating individual country-based Presidential Initiative plans and strategies to ensure that the investments being made under these Initiatives promote sustainable development outcomes and maximize the impact of development cooperation. The CDCS demonstrates how the country-level strategies developed for the Presidential Initiatives use causal logic, are integrated with the overarching strategy, and incorporate appropriate democratic governance and economic growth interventions. Missions have the flexibility to reflect country-team developed plans for the Global Health Initiative (GHI), Feed the Future (FTF), and Global Climate Change in the CDCS and performance indicators that support Initiative-specific results frameworks are included in the CDCS and Performance Management Plans.

Descriptions of key approaches from the Feed the Future, Trade Africa and the President's Malaria initiatives are provided below.

Feed the Future

Feed the Future, a whole-of-government initiative to address global hunger and food security, renews the U.S. Government's commitment to invest in sustainably reducing hunger and poverty. Feed the Future invests in country-owned plans called Country Investment Plans that support results-based programs and partnerships. These plans have produced impressive results—country allocations dwarf total donor allocations, demonstrating the depth of country ownership. Those country allocations are creating the foundation for the type of transformational development needed to secure stronger agricultural growth. In Africa, these multiyear investment plans are being reframed and updated to incorporate goals from the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) and the 2014 African Heads of State-agreed Malabo Declaration, which sets out African agricultural development goals over the next decade. These Country Investment Plans reflect countries' needs and priorities, identified through consultative processes led by country governments with civil society and private sector inputs and reviews. They serve as the foundation for countries to mobilize resources and coordinate with development partners to engage in meaningful dialogue on a common framework for action. Another key example of how country ownership is actualized in practice are the decisionmaking structures the Feed the Future program has put in place, such as the country-level Agriculture Sector Working Group. These groups include government officials and in-country donors that make decisions on agricultural sector planning and prioritization. The Working Group is frequently chaired by a government official who facilitates coordination.

To promote complementarity, Feed the Future has also better integrated agriculture and nutrition, working with USAID's health and nutrition programs. USAID is maximizing results by implementing both Feed the Future and Global Health programs in the same geographic area, where possible. Feed the Future and Global Health programs intersect around nutrition, due to the multisectoral nature of the causes, consequences, and solutions to undernutrition. Integrated nutrition programs reflect the specific determinants of undernutrition and are an important innovation, reflecting the evidence that producing more food is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for improving nutrition.

Finally, the Initiative has also developed an extensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, collecting critical baseline information and tracking a set of specific indicators across all of its programs. Using this M&E framework, Feed the Future reports on the impacts of its programs at the household level, and utilizes data to redesign programs when necessary.

Trade Africa Initiative

The Trade Africa Initiative supports implementation of the U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa by enabling regional economic communities to improve Africa's trade competitiveness, encourage export diversification, and ensure that the benefits from growth are broad-based. USAID's Trade and Investment Hub supports country ownership through strategies that are aligned with the plans and priorities of the regional economic communities that they support. Specifically, USAID has direct assistance agreements with the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel, providing tailored assistance to support these groups' efforts to increase regional integration, based on their needs. For example, USAID's activities with TradeMark East Africa are guided by the EAC Secretary General's CEO Forum, which determines its activities twice a year. In the five Trade Africa expansion countries of Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mozambique, Senegal and Zambia, USAID works with its interagency partners, including the U.S Trade Representative, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce and the Department of State to develop joint work plans with respective host country governments to ensure mutual accountability.

This initiative represents a whole-of-government integration of M&E through the Trade and Investment Hubs, which share a top-line results framework with shared goals, and a standard method for collecting data.

The President's Malaria Initiative

The President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) began in 2005 as a $1.2 billion, 5-year program with the goal of reducing malaria-related deaths by 50 percent in 15 focus countries. Under the PMI Strategy 2015-2020, the U.S. Government's goal is to work with PMI-supported countries and partners to further reduce malaria deaths and substantially decrease malaria morbidity, towards the long-term goal of elimination. In 2015, PMI launched its next 6-year strategy, which takes into account progress over the past decade and the new challenges that have arisen. Malaria prevention and control remains a major U.S. foreign assistance objective, and PMI's Strategy fully supports the whole-of-government approach through its alignment with U.S. Government's vision of ending preventable child and maternal deaths and ending extreme poverty. PMI actualizes country ownership by supporting the strengthening of the overall capacity of health systems. Specifically, PMI helps build national capacity in a variety of cross-cutting areas that benefit both malaria and other health programs, including strengthening supply chain management, laboratory diagnosis, and monitoring and evaluation systems. In highly endemic countries, malaria typically accounts for up to 40 percent of outpatient visits and hospital admissions. Reducing malaria transmission levels in these countries has a positive effect on the rest of the health system by allowing health workers to focus on managing other important childhood illnesses, such as pneumonia, diarrhea, and malnutrition. PMI has developed an extensive M&E approach that monitors activities and collects data toward the following goals: sustaining gains against malaria by using preventive measures, particularly the increased coverage and use of insecticide treated nets and expanding and improving integrated approaches for diagnosis and treatment of childhood illnesses that have already been developed at facility and community levels.

Question (a). Please describe the status of administration efforts to upgrade and transform the three USAID trade hubs into "U.S.-African Trade and Investment Hubs," making them resource centers both for African exporters targeting U.S. markets and U.S. firms targeting African markets.

Answer (a). The first Trade and Investment Hub, the East Africa Trade and Investment Hub, was launched in September 2014. The West Africa Trade Hub was transformed into a Trade and Investment Hub in September 2015. The new Southern Africa Trade and Investment Hub is under procurement and is expected to launch in early 2016.

Question (b). What are USAID's main activities and current and prospective challenges under Trade Africa?

Answer (b). Under Trade Africa, USAID manages the three Trade and Investment Hubs and maintains a relationship with the TradeMark East Africa program, focus-

ing on the hard and soft infrastructure necessary to reduce the time and cost tomove goods across borders. USAID is also working with an Interagency Steering Group to expand Trade Africa beyond the five East African Community countries to include new partners: Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mozambique, Senegal, and Zambia. With all of our Trade Africa partners we are focused on capacity building to support trade facilitation, improved compliance with sanitary and phytosanitary standards, elimination of technical barriers to trade, and increased private sector competitiveness. We are also working to support the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to improve regional trade. Challenges include a wide infrastructure deficit, which stifles the productivity of African companies, as well as breaking down barriers to intraregional and U.S.-Africa trade to increase the countries' competitiveness, which we are addressing through Trade Africa and other initiatives such as the Borderless Alliance and Food Across Borders.

Question (c). With what other regional communities is USAID working to advance economic growth and regional integration?

Answer (c). Through a combination of direct assistance, joint activities and/or short-term technical assistance, USAID programs advance economic growth and support regional integration. Support is tailored to the needs of the regional economic community including the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control (CILSS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU).

Question (d). What other trade and investment focused activities is USAID supporting in Africa?

Answer (d). President Obama launched the Africa Private Capital Group (APCG) at the U.S.- Africa Leaders' Summit in August 2014 as part of the U.S. expanded commitment to trade and investment. This program is committed to unlocking commercially driven capital to achieve development impacts across sub-Saharan Africa. APCG consists of a highly experienced USAID team based in South Africa pursuing a strategy with three primary focus areas: (1) Facilitating development-related transactions sourced from private sector investors; (2) Improving municipalities' ability to finance and service debt for public service projects, and; (3) Engaging South African pension funds to encourage investments in development-related transactions within sub-Saharan Africa. USAID also actively participates in the work of the President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa.

Question. What is USAID's role in implementing the Young African Leaders Initiative? What is the approximate annual cost of the initiative, and what concrete outcomes, if any, has it produced? What impacts on future U.S. engagement arising from YALI are foreseen, and how will they be measured?

Answer. The President's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) is implemented by a coordinated interagency team that includes U.S. Department of State, USAID, and the U.S. African Development Foundation to support young Africans as they work to spur growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance, and enhance peace and security across Africa. USAID supports two major components of the initiative, the Mandela Washington Fellowship and the YALI Regional Leadership Centers. Both programs support young leaders working in business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership, and public management.

To implement the YALI Mandela Washington Fellowship, USAID provides professional practicums for Fellows to work at businesses and organizations in Africa; mentoring matches for Fellows upon return to Africa; competitive travel grants for selected Fellows to present at major conferences; and regional conferences in Africa that bring Fellows together for major networking and peer collaboration opportunities. With the skills developed during the program, the first classes of Mandela Washington Fellowship alumni are already building innovative businesses, connecting with American and African investors, forging new relationships with young leaders across Africa, and serving their communities. USAID's support to the Mandela Washington Fellows will average $4.8 million a year over the next 5 years.

USAID also manages four YALI Regional Leadership Centers (RLCs), which offer expanded professional and leadership development opportunities to thousands of additional young African leaders on the continent. RLCs in Nairobi and Accra opened in July and August 2015, respectively, and initial feedback from participants indicates the program is meeting its goals to empower and connect young leaders. RLCs in Dakar and Pretoria are expected to open before the end of 2015. USAID's funding for the RLC is anticipated to be approximately $72 million over 5 years. To leverage

USAID funding, and to ensure that the RLCs provide high quality and market-driven training, each RLC is designed as a public-private partnership. Partners including Microsoft, McKinsey & Company, Procter & Gamble, General Electric, Intel, Dow Chemical Company, and The MasterCard Foundation, have already committed more than $80 million in financial and in-kind resources to support the Centers. The MasterCard Foundation alone has committed $15 million in financial resources. USAID continues to create new partnerships that will further increase private sector engagement in the future.

USAID is tracking alumni Mandela Washington Fellows and RLC participants over time to capture the ultimate impacts of YALI activities. USAID monitoring includes detailed implementation indicators, such as surveys and interviews with YALI beneficiaries. This monitoring includes tracking progress toward the overarching goals of enhancing young Africans' leadership skills, knowledge, and attitudes so that they may more effectively drive economic and social progress, serving their communities, and building enduring regional networks. By cultivating a critical mass of highly motivated and skilled young leaders, USAID anticipates that many of the highly motivated young leaders who participate in the program will return to their home countries with new skills and connections that will enable them to better contribute to their countries' economic development and political dialogue.

Question (a). In what ways does USAID's Ebola response support durable medium- to long-term capacity-building goals?

Answer (a). USAID's Ebola response activities have prioritized eliminating the spread of the outbreak. However, USAID's programs also work to build the capacity of government counterparts and local actors to address medium- and long-term goals, such as the strengthening of health systems. Capacity-building work to support medium-term goals has included: supporting County Health Teams responding to death alerts and transferring capacity of screening, isolation, and triage from stand-alone Ebola Treatment Units (ETU) to hospitals and other health facilities in Liberia; supporting Non-Government Organizations (NGO) conducting community social mobilization activities in Liberia; and providing Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) training for health workers in all three countries. Additionally, USAID is working to transfer capacity of isolation and treatment, safe burial, IPC training, and supply chain management to relevant government actors in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone.

As we transition from the emergency response, USAID is implementing efforts that will support longer-term recovery. These recovery efforts will enable the three countries to better prevent, prepare for, and respond to future Ebola outbreaks. Activities are focused on recapturing development gains lost due to the outbreak; strengthening key institutions and infrastructure whose weakness helped enable the rapid spread of Ebola; and addressing the low levels of citizen trust in government that reduced the willingness of peoples to accept social messaging on Ebola.

Question (b). What have been or may be the key USAID Ebola response achievements and challenges, including currently and prospectively.

Answer (b). USAID has helped bend the epidemiological curve and averted the horrific worst-case scenarios predicted by initial computer modeling through the following activities: command and control of the response, case management, surveillance and epidemiology, social mobilization, and logistics management. As a result of USAID's efforts, Liberia has been declared Ebola-free, Sierra Leone currently has no cases and is in its countdown phase towards an Ebola-free declaration; and Guinea's last four cases were from known contact lists, meaning that contact tracers were aware prior to diagnosis that the infected individuals may have been exposed to the Ebola virus.

Key challenges to responding to the Ebola outbreak include a lack of public health systems infrastructure, slow behavior change by the public, and mistrust of government within impacted communities. All three create significant hurdles for those attempting to detect, diagnose, and track cases of Ebola, both presently and prospectively. USAID will continue to work with the three affected countries to address thesechallenges.

Question (c). What lessons have been learned?

Answer (c). USAID is collecting lessons learned as we continue our response and recovery efforts. USAID and the larger donor community have learned that the speed of a response is essential and that international, regional and national early warning and surveillance systems and mechanisms are critical to ensure rapid response. In terms of coordination, emergency response requires internationally coordinated communication of needs, identification of capability gaps, and efforts to increase transparency of activities across partners. After many years of work in de-

veloping countries, USAID recognizes the importance of collaborating with community leaders and existing networks, particularly in crises such as the Ebola epidemic. Additionally, collaborating with local religious leaders to understand and adapt traditional burial rituals was and continues to be critical to controlling the spread of Ebola. Finally, fears must be addressed by sharing knowledge about the disease to prevent stigmatization and facilitate the social reinsertion of survivors and victims' families.

Question (d). How, if at all, are current Ebola programming efforts changing in relation to the spend plans submitted to Congress in early 2015?

Answer (d). Programming efforts have not significantly changed from how they were planned and articulated in the initial January Spend Plans and succeeding Section 9004 Monthly Reports. Since January, USAID has adjusted the amount of funding programmed according to the current needs on the ground. For example, since there were fewer cases of EVD than predicted, USAID is supporting some activities such as case management to a lesser degree than planned, and putting more focus on IPC, social mobilization, and transition activities.

Question. Please describe the USAID AFR approach to working with the Office of Transition Initiatives and, more broadly, in preventing and mitigating conflict. What has been the focus of and relative progress under USAID conflict mineral programs?

Answer. The Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) is currently operating in five countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and South Sudan. I am pleased to report that within each of these countries, OTI is working closely with Mission staff and USAID's Africa Bureau to identify programs that complement other assistance efforts and lay a foundation for longer-term development. In addition, OTI, USAID's Africa Bureau, and Mission staff work together to facilitate a transition from OTI activities to longer-term, complementary development efforts in post-conflict situations.

The risk of instability in African countries is linked to many different factors including poor governance, corruption, and rising transnational threats, such as violent extremism, drug trafficking, illegal exploitation of natural resources, and piracy. USAID's Africa Bureau works closely with individual missions to address these challenges, notably by conducting assessments to understand the underlying dynamics that are driving state fragility and then providing technical expertise for program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation that address those dynamics. USAID conducts extensive conflict analysis in high-risk countries and is working to ensure that development programming across all sectors is conflict sensitive. USAID also supports conflict early warning and prevention mechanisms with the aim of mitigating violence before it starts.

USAID's $17 million Responsible Minerals Trade Program in the Democratic Republic of the Congo focuses on establishing a conflict-free supply chain, promoting civilian control of the minerals sector, ensuring vulnerable populations are protected and supporting regional auditing and monitoring of conflict-free minerals (gold, tin, tantalum, and tungsten). USAID is also an active participant in the Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals Trade (PPA). The PPA is a multisector and multistakeholder initiative to support supply chain solutions to conflict minerals challenges in the Great Lakes Region.

Pilot conflict-free supply chains have been established, allowing global markets to purchase minerals consistent with existing statute and generating 200 percent more revenue for artisanal miners, traders, exporters and the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo through transparent taxes. The PPA membership has grown since its launch in 2011 and is creating links among companies, advocacy groups, regional governments, end-users and civil society. Formal legal and regulatory frameworks have been put in place to promote conflict-free supply chains.

Question. Please describe USAID's key current and prospective approaches to crisis responses, conflict mitigation, delivery of key, life-saving services, and foundation building for an eventual transition from relief to development.

Answer. Across Africa, USAID is doing everything possible to assist those affected by conflict. In fiscal year 2014, USAID provided approximately $1.2 billion in emergency food assistance and an additional $481 million in other lifesaving humanitarian assistance, to displaced and conflict-affected people across the continent.

To ensure our assistance is responsive and adaptive, USAID has early warning systems, including the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET), and assessment tools that measure the risk of armed conflict. These systems inform programs to prevent and respond to crises—from droughts to electoral violence—in a timely manner.

At the heart of Africa's conflicts are unstable relationships between societies and their states. That is why, in addition to our humanitarian response, USAID invests in programs that prevent and mitigate conflicts, address state fragility, and lay the groundwork for more inclusive, participatory governance.

Since 2011, USAID has supported and promoted the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. The New Deal, endorsed by the United States and nearly 40 countries and multilateral organizations, establishes peace and state-building goals and action plans, to enable democratic, resilient communities in Africa that can overcome complex crises, and thus lessen their humanitarian need.

Building on existing capabilities, USAID is working to improve our use of tools for analyzing, tracking, and forecasting outbreaks of armed conflict. The FY 2016 budget request seeks to strengthen funding for conflict and atrocity prevention through the Complex Crises Fund and the Transition Initiatives account. Doing so gives USAID the flexibility to respond quickly in crises and to devote resources where they can have the greatest impact.

These programs are playing a critical role in addressing the root causes of instability in Africa. For instance, USAID's Nigeria Regional Transition Initiative provides small, strategic assistance to local groups in northeastern Nigeria to improve government responsiveness to citizen expectations and reduce perceptions of marginalization that have contributed significantly to Boko Haram's ability to grow. Additionally, programs in the Central African Republic (CAR) are helping to prevent genocide and mass atrocities, expanding the space to safely provide humanitarian assistance, and supporting conditions favorable to a peaceful political transition.

Question. Please describe the evaluation and analysis process USAID is pursuing to assess how to best support the fragile peace accord in South Sudan.

Answer. The peace accord in South Sudan represents a key opportunity to help the people that are affected by recurrent cycles of violence come together to forge a brighter future. The United States and other members of the international community have quickly moved to support the steps laid out in the implementation of this agreement, working with the men and women of South Sudan who are committed to peace, and holding to account those who would undermine the agreement or violate the cease-fire. Since the signing of the peace agreement, USAID has been working closely with the State Department's Office of the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan and other State Department Bureaus and Offices, as well as other donors, to determine how best to support the peace process. In doing so, we are using the following assessment criteria to evaluate our current programs and inform potential future programs:

- Drawing from lessons the international community has learned from past experiences in providing assistance in countries recovering from conflict, including in South Sudan.
- Identifying the elements of the agreement that are the most critical to its success and which require programmatic assistance.
- Determining what resources and institutions—financial and other—are in place or available to support the peace process.
- Considering where USAID has unique capabilities or a comparative advantage vis-à-vis other donors.

For example, we understand that long term peace will be depend on addressing the impact of the crisis and developing an approach to ensure communities, religious leaders, and local partners understand and feel included in the process. To do this effectively, we will ensure that our programming takes a conflict-sensitive approach, includes wide stakeholder involvement and addresses reconciliation and trauma healing.

Rebuilding trust and restoring confidence of citizens across communities will be imperative to ending continuing violence and building a foundation for a peaceful future. This approach recognizes and goes hand-in-hand with the massive humanitarian intervention to mitigate and address the human costs of the war. In concert with other donors, USAID continues to press secure humanitarian access to enable relief actors to rapidly assess evolving needs and scale up life-saving assistance in response to unmet needs. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that our programs best help the South Sudanese people as the situation continues to evolve.

Question. What is USAID doing to ensure the sustainability of stability and recovery gains made in Mali since 2013? What are the main areas of focus for USAID's efforts to prevent conflict and violent extremism in Mali? What roles should USAID play in addressing security challenges in the Sahel and the need for long-term regional development, stability, and better governance?

Answer. Ensuring the sustainability of stability and recovery is a primary goal of USAID programming in Mali, as USAID's recently approved Country Development Cooperation Strategy for Mali includes the goal Malians Securing a Democratic, Resilient and Prosperous Future." USAID programming in Mali has focused on humanitarian and community stabilization assistance, as well as basic health and education services and was designed to be flexible and scalable should opportunities emerge for increased engagement. Now that the peace agreement has been signed, USAID will move into providing longer term development assistance using a Relief-to-Development Transition approach, taking advantage of the increased opportunities offered by the agreement. The Relief-to-Development activities will focus on conflict mitigation, and countering violent extremism (including a focus on Women, Peace and Security), livelihoods, food security, nutrition, climate change, and health and education services.

As security permits, USAID intends to expand core Governance, Resilience and Prosperity programming to areas in the North, emphasizing engagement with youth and women. This programing includes strengthening public service delivery of health and education services and fostering economic growth, particularly in the agricultural sector, to boost incomes, nutrition and employment opportunities. USAID will support increased government accountability and access to justice in direct partnership with the Malian Government and through engagement with civil society, furthering the Government of Mali's decentralization goals and strengthening the public's trust in their government. Working in select northern communities found to be most at-risk for extremism, USAID's program to counter violent extremism will work with Malian government actors and local communities to address priority development and reconciliation needs and link isolated communities so that they work together to resolve issues.

More broadly, USAID is playing an important role in addressing stability challenges in the Sahel region by modifying its approach to development assistance to better address and keep pace with the vulnerabilities emerging across borders in the region as a whole. Programs work to link justice and security issues more effectively, help local communities hold their governments accountable, and improve services and livelihoods for Malians These activities can provide economic opportunities and bolster popular support for friendly, but poorly functioning partner governments in the region.

Question (a). What have been the impacts of large cuts in estimated actual FY 2015 DG funding compared to the requested level (including for key countries, e.g. the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, and Nigeria) on the potential to realize U.S. DG priorities in Africa?

Answer (a). The U.S. Government cannot effectively achieve sustainable outcomes in health, food security and climate change in Africa without simultaneously investing in good governance, transparency, accountability and inclusion. Decreased, or inconsistent funding levels make it more difficult for USAID to make strategic investments for long-term change in the environment for democracy, rights and governance in the countries in which we work, in line with the Country Development Cooperation Strategies we have in place.

At the same time, I understand the challenges of the current budget environment and am confident that USAID can achieve considerable progress within the budget constraints. As an Agency, we have also made efforts to locate additional resources for some of the highest priority needs on the continent in FY 2015, including in Kenya and Nigeria. In Nigeria, for example, sustained, long-term USG investment in the development of civil society networks and institutions like the Independent National Electoral Commission contributed to the historic transfer of political power witnessed in 2015. Continued investment is necessary to consolidate those gains. USAID is also better integrating DRG principles into other development sectors, working with fellow U.S. Government colleagues in health, education, water and economic growth, to ensure that core human rights and governance principles are embedded in other sectors, as integrated DRG programming alongside core DRG programming will ensure that development investments in all sectors are sustained and protected.

Additionally, to address budget constraints, USAID's FY 2016 request for democracy, rights and governance programming reflects an increase over recent years. The request represents a 10 percent increase over the FY 2015 request and a 100 percent increase over the FY 2014 actual level. It is a testament to the goodwill of the American people and the U.S. Congress that USAID is able to continue providing much-needed assistance abroad.

Question (b). Why was there zero funding of DG programming in Ethiopia in FY 2015 given widespread concerns over negative democratic trends there?

Answer (b). Ethiopia was one of the countries subject to budget reductions for democracy, rights and governance work in recent years, however $1.25 million in FY 2015 funds have now been identified for Ethiopia to support human rights, enhance governance through social accountability activities, and strengthen civil society engagement, and additional funding was requested for FY 2016. USAID is also better integrating DRG principles into other sectors in Ethiopia, as integrated DRG programming alongside core DRG programming will ensure that development investments in all sectors are sustained and protected.

For example, Social Accountability (SA) is providing new forums for citizens to monitor the Government of Ethiopia's service delivery commitments and to advocate for improvements, and USAID is integrated these Social Accountability methods in the education sector to drive public oversight of results. Specifically, parent-teacher associations will use methods such as community ratings of education quality to pressure government offices to maintain reading enrichment support through libraries and teachers. Additionally, in the Health Sector, USAID is standing up 2,500 governance boards for health centers and hospitals across Ethiopia, where local officials decide how to spend patient fees and improve services. USAID's democracy and health teams are collaborating to bring valid citizen input into these boards and feed into budget decisions of hospitals and health centers.

Ethiopia is a key partner for progressing development and security in the region, and through this close relationship we promote the importance of democracy, rights and governance for peace and prosperity. In addition to our DRG programming, we recognize that U.S. diplomatic engagement is critical to promoting DRG. USAID works with the State Department, the White House and other agencies to ensure the United States consistently raises DRG with Ethiopian officials at the highest levels.

Question (a). How do USAID's education programs and country priorities align with national and regional development strategies?

Answer (a). USAID missions work closely with host country governments and citizens, civil society organizations, the private sector, multilateral organizations, other donors, the State Department, and other U.S. Government agencies to develop a Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) that supports U.S. foreign policy priorities, ensures strategic alignment with host country development priorities, and promotes mutual accountability.

USAID's Education Strategy provides the overarching goals and parameters for the development of activities in the education sector in the countries that USAID supports, and those goals and parameters are incorporated in the CDCS. USAID's Education Strategy focuses on three goals: improved reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades; improved ability of tertiary and workforce development programs to generate workforce skills relevant to a country's development goals; and increased equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments for 15 million learners. By setting focused, measurable goals and targets, the Education Strategy holds the Agency accountable for results.

Sixteen USAID Missions in Africa address education in their CDCSs. For example, one of the development goals for Ghana's CDCS is a focus on improved reading performance in primary schools, with the ultimate goal of assisting individuals to reach middle income status and achieve personal economic stability, contributing to national economic growth.

Question (b). How do USAID's higher education programs partner with universities in Africa as well as businesses to promote innovation, economic development, and job growth?

Answer (b). Improved ability of tertiary and workforce development programs to generate workforce skills relevant to a country's development goals is the second goal of the USAID education strategy, which was developed based on a research review from the World Bank that presented evidence indicating that tertiary education attainment raised developing countries' productivity and GDP significantly. Increased access to vocational/technical and tertiary education and training for underserved and marginalized groups; improved quality of tertiary education and research; and improved relevance and quality of workforce development programs are all critical components of USAID programming in higher education. There are a variety of approaches to programming and partnerships in these areas, each tailored to the context and specific objectives of the USAID mission.

For example, a consortium of U.S. universities (Rutgers University, North Carolina State University, and the University of Michigan) is working with Liberia's leading universities to transform the higher education fields of engineering and agriculture to be more dynamic and responsive to evolving national needs. Concur-

rently, they are supporting linkages between employers and higher education institutions ensuring that students are equipped with skills relevant to employers in Liberia, so that they will be job-ready upon graduation. Coordination and collaboration with the private sector has also been successful. For example, last year the consortium organized an employer forum that included 65 university students and key employers in the fields of engineering and agriculture. The forum helped to bolster employer support for providing internship and employment opportunities for students as well as increased private sector engagement with the universities.

Additionally, a partnership between the Ethiopian Institute of Water Resources (EIWR) at Addis Ababa University and the University of Connecticut provides invaluable institutional assistance in sustainable water resources management. With USAID's support, Addis Ababa University has assumed responsibility for a number of innovative initiatives that will greatly benefit the country in the long-term, including building graduate-level education programs, increasing the institution's ability to conduct research, and improving outreach and recruitment.

As part of the Young African Leaders Initiative, the USAID Africa Regional program is in the process of establishing four Regional Leadership Centers to enhance leadership and training opportunities in Africa and better leverage over $200 million in ongoing youth programs and initiatives, such as university partnerships and vocational training, on the continent. The centers will focus on engaging leaders between the ages of 18 and 35 from a variety of backgrounds and a diversity of experience, providing accessible leadership training, incubating organizations and entrepreneurship, and supporting professional connections among African leaders. Based in Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa, each center will be run as a public-private partnership, capitalizing on the ingenuity and dynamism of the private sector and the programmatic and educational resources of USAID. Ten private sector partners and foundations have joined USAID in supporting the effort.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2015

U.S. SENATE,
Committee on Foreign Relations,
Washington, DC.

John Morton, of Massachusetts, to be Executive Vice President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation
Kenneth Damian Ward, of Virginia, to be U.S. Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
Hon. Peter William Bodde, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to Libya
Marc Jonathan Sievers, of Maryland, to be Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman
Elisabeth I. Millard, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Tajikistan

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:35 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jim Risch, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch, Murphy, and Markey.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JIM RISCH, U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO

Senator RISCH. All right. Subcommittee meeting will come to order. And appreciate all of you attending today. Certainly have an interesting agenda.

And I would say this. We will start briefly with some opening statements, and then we will hear from each of you, and then Senator Murphy and I will have deep and probing questions, I have no doubt.

We have an interesting mix of countries and of interest groups represented here. And certainly, I think we will use this opportunity, obviously, to learn more about the areas that you are going to and the challenges that you are going to face here. And I am sure you will have the opportunity to tell us what is the highest thing on your mind as you approach your assignment.

So, as always, we want to thank each and every one of you for your service to the United States.

So, with that, Senator Murphy.

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

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

We are going to cover a pretty diverse array of issues, from keeping the world safe from chemical weapons, to national security interests in the Near East and Central Asia, to our investment strategy abroad.

So, I will match your brevity, Mr. Chairman, and get straight to the statements from our witnesses today. Look forward to the hearing and to their confirmation process.

Thank you very much, Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Wise decision, Senator.

Mr. Morton, we will start with you, and—welcome to the committee. We would like to hear what you have to say.

STATEMENT OF JOHN MORTON, NOMINATED TO BE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION

Mr. MORTON. Thank you very much. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Murphy, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am honored to be considered by this committee for the position of executive vice president at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

After spending most of my career in the private sector, I have had the privilege of serving at OPIC for the last 5½ years, first as vice president for policy, then chief of staff, and now as chief operating officer. The agency and its 250 professionals exemplifies efficient and effective government delivering results for the American taxpayer and for the citizens of the world's most challenging and, often, fastest growing emerging markets.

As the U.S. Government's development finance institution, OPIC mobilizes private capital to help solve critical development challenges, advancing U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives at the same time. Simply put, OPIC represents a commonsense solution for development, for U.S. national security, and for America's own economic interests.

With respect to development, OPIC has an outsized impact on global development by bringing the stabilizing and sustaining force of private investment to some of the world's most difficult areas and poorest peoples. Over 40 percent of the agency's financial commitments last year were to projects in the world's poorest countries, like Rwanda, Cambodia, and Haiti. Over 40 percent were to projects in Africa, an agency record. And OPIC also catalyzes critical investment flows to projects in middle-income countries, where the majority of the world's poorest now reside.

In support of U.S. national security, OPIC has increased its lending operations to conflict-affected areas by over 50 percent during my time with the agency. And today, roughly one-third of OPIC's investments are in conflict-affected or buffer countries, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Jordan, Georgia, Ukraine, and South Sudan.

Investments made by the U.S. private sector, in partnership with OPIC, are critical components of ensuring that we help build solid economic foundations in vulnerable regions of foreign policy priority. In Ukraine, for example, we are working to support U.S. businesses investing in the agriculture, energy, and financial services sector. And in Jordan, one of our strongest partners in a troubled region, we are proud that U.S. companies, supported by OPIC

investments and insurance, are providing nearly one-fifth of the country's power and water supply.

Finally, OPIC delivers strong results for U.S. taxpayers, contributing positively to the Function 150 account for 38 consecutive years. With 80 percent of global economic growth expected to occur in emerging markets over the coming decades, OPIC helps U.S. companies gain footholds in fast-growing markets by crowding in private-sector investment and enabling America's entrepreneurs and business leaders to join the ranks of distinguished Americans, like my fellow nominees here today, representing the best of U.S. values and ideals.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, on any given day OPIC has far more demand from American businesses than we can answer, far more shared development challenges than we can answer, and far more incoming inquiries for investment support channeled through U.S. embassies than we can answer.

Filling the role of executive vice president would allow us to respond to this demand in a more efficient and effective way at an agency which consistently delivers on its developmental mission.

I thank you again for your consideration of my nomination, and I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Morton follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN E. MORTON

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Murphy, members of the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am John Morton. I am honored to be considered by this committee for the position of Executive Vice President at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

After spending most of my career in the private sector, I have had the privilege of serving at OPIC for 5½ years, first as Vice President for Policy, then Chief of Staff, and now as Chief Operating Officer.

The Agency, and its 250 professionals, exemplifies efficient and effective Government, delivering results both for the American taxpayer and for the citizens of the world's most challenging and, often, fastest-growing emerging markets.

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markets, by "crowding in" private sector investment—and enabling America's entrepreneurs and business leaders to join the ranks of distinguished Americans like my fellow nominees today—representing U.S. values and ideals.

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Filling the role of Executive Vice President would allow us to respond to this demand in a more efficient and effective way at an Agency which consistently delivers on its developmental mission.

I thank you again for your consideration of my nomination and I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Morton.

My mistake. I should have invited you to introduce any guests you have here, or family.

Mr. MORTON. I do have my wife, Tamar Shapiro, my son, Leo Shapiro Morton.

Senator RISCH. All right.

Mr. MORTON. My daughter is on a camping trip today and could not be here.

Senator RISCH. She is the lucky one.

Mr. MORTON. And my boss, the president of OPIC, Elizabeth Littlefield, is also sitting in the second row.

Senator RISCH. Thank you so much. We appreciate that.

Mr. Ward, we would like to hear from you on your nomination to be Representative to the Organization of Chemical Weapons. Would you like to introduce people you have here with you today?

STATEMENT OF KENNETH DAMIAN WARD, NOMINATED TO BE THE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Mr. WARD. Well, I have no immediate family with me here today, but I would like to introduce the former Ambassador to the OPCW, Dr. Robert Miklak, who is behind me, and also the brother I never had, Robert Kadlik, who is the deputy staff director on the SISI Committee. I am honored to have both of them here with me today.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Mr. WARD. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Senator Murphy, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Barack Obama's nominee to be the United States Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with the rank of Ambassador. I greatly appreciate the trust and confidence that President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry have shown in nominating me for this position.

After decades of negotiation, the Chemical Weapons Convention was signed in 1993, and the Convention entered into force in 1997. Since then, the international organization charged with implementing the Convention, the OPCW, has established itself as an effective and respected international body. OPCW inspectors have overseen and verified the destruction of chemical weapons in Russia, the United States, Albania, Libya, Syria, and other states parties. Inspectors have conducted thousands of routine inspections in national military facilities and commercial enterprises around the world to ensure that states parties are abiding by their CWC obligations.

In the fall of 2013, these efforts toward achieving a world free of chemical weapons were acknowledged by the Nobel committee, and the OPCW was awarded the Peace Prize. Despite the historic accomplishments of the Convention and the OPCW, chemical weapons continue to be a threat to international peace and security.

The ongoing strife in Syria is a stark and tragic reminder that such weapons are not relics of World War I or the cold war. On August 21, 2013, the Syrian Government unleashed a barrage of rockets filled with the nerve agent sarin against opposition-controlled suburbs of Damascus, killing an estimated 1,400 civilians, many of them children. Three weeks later, under international pressure, Syria joined the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Of great concern, there remains compelling evidence that Syria continues to use chemical weapons against its own people. The factfinding mission of the OPCW, an entity created to establish the facts surrounding allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as a weapon in Syria, has concluded, with a high degree of confidence, that chlorine was used in April and May 2014 against opposition-controlled villages in northwest Syria. The factfinding mission is now investigating additional allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria.

In early August, the U.N. Security Council established the joint investigative mechanism for the purpose of identifying those individuals, entities, groups, or governments responsible for these chemical weapons attacks.

Of additional concern, an OPCW technical team has raised a host of issues calling into question whether Syria has declared all of its stocks of chemical weapons and associated munitions. The United States shares these concerns. We have assessed that Syria has not declared all of the elements of its chemical weapons program, and may continue to retain some of its stocks of traditional chemical agents and munitions.

In sum, Syria continues to violate the most fundamental obligations of the CWC against possession and use of chemical weapons. If confirmed by the Senate, I will make every effort to ensure that the people of Syria no longer face the threat of chemical weapons at the hands of their government.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Senator Murphy, the ongoing chemical weapons crisis in Syria, as well as the allegations of the use of chemical weapons by nonstate actors in both Syria and Iraq, is a potent reminder of the essential role of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW in promoting international peace and security. In years to come, the world will continue to look to the OPCW as the repository of technical expertise.

The OPCW will face many challenges in the years to come to achieve the promise of a world filled with chemical weapons—free—excuse me—free of chemical weapons. We must achieve universal membership. We must counter the ongoing threat of chemical weapons terrorism. We must prevent the reemergence of chemical weapons. If confirmed by the Senate, I will work to ensure that the OPCW achieves these goals and remains an effective force for promoting international peace.

I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ward follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KENNETH DAMIAN WARD

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Barack Obama's nominee to be the United States Representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) with the rank of Ambassador. I greatly appreciate the trust and confidence that President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry have shown in nominating me for this position.

After decades of negotiation, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was signed in 1993 and the Convention entered into force in 1997. Since then, the international organization charged with implementing the Convention—the OPCW—has established itself as an effective and respected international body. OPCW inspectors have overseen and verified the destruction of chemical weapons in Russia, the United States, Albania, Libya, Syria, and other states parties. Inspectors have conducted thousands of routine inspections in national military facilities and commercial enterprises around the world to ensure that states parties are abiding by their CWC obligations. In the fall of 2013, these efforts toward achieving a world free of chemical weapons were acknowledged by the Nobel committee and the OPCW was awarded the Peace Prize.

Despite the historic accomplishments of the Convention and the OPCW, chemical weapons continue to be a threat to international peace and security. The ongoing strife in Syria is a stark and tragic reminder that such weapons are not relics of World War One or the cold war. On August 21, 2013, the Syrian Government unleashed a barrage of rockets filled with the nerve agent sarin against an opposition-controlled suburb of Damascus killing an estimated 1,400 civilians—many of them children. Three weeks later under international pressure Syria joined the Chemical Weapons Convention. Of great concern, there remains compelling evidence that the Syria continues to use chemical weapons against its own people. The Fact-Finding Mission of the OPCW—an entity created to establish the facts surrounding allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in Syria—has concluded with a high degree of confidence that chlorine was used in April and May 2014 against opposition-controlled villages in northwest Syria. The Fact-Finding Mission is now investigating additional allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria. In early August, the U.N. Security Council established the Joint Investigative Mechanism for the purpose of identifying those individuals, entities, groups or governments responsible for these chemical weapons attacks.

Of additional concern, an OPCW technical team has raised a host of issues calling into question whether Syria has declared all of its stocks of chemical weapons and associated munitions. The United States shares these concerns. We have assessed that Syria has not declared all the elements of its chemical weapons program and may continue to retain some of its stocks of traditional chemical agents and munitions.

In sum, Syria continues to violate the most fundamental obligations of the CWC against possession and use of chemical weapons. If confirmed by the Senate, I will make every effort to ensure that the people of Syria no longer face the threat of chemical weapons at the hands of their government.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my career in government spans over 30 years with 20 of those years dedicated to strengthening our security against the threat of chemical and biological weapons. Since the beginning of 2011, I have headed the State Department's Office of Chemical and Biological Weapons Affairs. In this capacity, I have been directly involved in the international initiative to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons program and have played a central role in efforts to verify the accuracy of Syria's CWC declaration and investigate allegations of CW use. Previously, during the 2004–07 trilateral operation to dismantle Libya's WMD programs, I served as the deputy negotiator, working to achieve the removal or destruction of nuclear, missile, and chemical materials and equipment.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the ongoing chemical weapons crisis in Syria—as well as the allegations of the use of chemical weapons by nonstate actors in both Syria and Iraq—is a potent reminder of the essential role of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW in promoting international peace and security. In years to come, the world will continue to look to the OPCW as the repository of technical expertise on chemical weapons and eliminating the threat they pose. The effectiveness the Technical Secretariat has demonstrated in recent years has been founded on the efforts of a highly skilled and experienced cadre of inspectors.It is essential that the OPCW continue to command the expertise and resources it needs to perform this vital role. It will face many challenges in the years to come to achieve the promise of a world free of chemical weapons. We must achieve uni-

versal membership; we must counter the ongoing threat of chemical weapons terrorism; we must prevent the reemergence of chemical weapons. Indeed, we must ensure that the OPCW retains the political will to confront and surmount each of these challenges.If confirmed by the Senate, I will work to ensure that the OPCW achieves these goals and remains an effective force for promoting international peace, security, and a world free of the scourge of chemical weapons.

Thank you. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions from the members of the committee.

Senator RISCH. Mr. Ward, that was very comprehensive. Appreciate that. Thank you much.

Mr. Bodde, you have been nominated to be the Ambassador to Libya. Could you enlighten us, please?

STATEMENT OF HON. PETER WILLIAM BODDE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO LIBYA

Ambassador BODDE. Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce the members of my family who are here today first.

Senator RISCH. Please.

Ambassador BODDE. I would like to introduce my wife, Tanya, who is a retired member of the Foreign Service; my son, Christopher, who works at USAID; my dad, who is a retired ambassador; and, unfortunately, my daughter cannot be here, because she is accompanying her husband on assignment to our Embassy in Kuwait.

Thank you.

Senator RISCH. A lot of service in your family, Mr. Bodde.

Ambassador BODDE. Yes.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Murphy, members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Libya. I am grateful for the trust placed in me by President Obama and Secretary Kerry. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee and colleagues from across the U.S. Government to promote a strong relationship between the United States and Libya during this challenging moment in Libyan history.

Four years after the uprising of the Libyan people led to the fall of Qadhafi and his brutal dictatorship, Libyans continue to face enormous challenges as they work to establish a Government of National Accord and build institutions that are inclusive and representative of all Libyans. The Libyan political dialogue has required determination and compromise at every stage, and the process of political reconciliation in Libya will be a long journey.

The recent October 8th announcement of proposed leadership for a Government of National Accord resulting from these Libyan negotiations was a welcome step in the process, and we urge all parties to endorse the agreement as quickly as possible.

The rise of ISIL-aligned groups, human smugglers, and dramatically reduced oil production demonstrate the immediate need for a unified national Libyan Government that can effectively partner with the United States and the international community to begin the hard work of restoring peace and security in Libya.

Over the course of my career, I have led interagency teams in challenging environments, and I understand the difficulties and opportunities ahead. My experience as the U.S. Ambassador to Nepal during and after the tragic earthquake in April, as Assistant Chief of Mission for Assistance in Baghdad, and as Deputy Chief of Mis-

sion in Pakistan confirm my belief that strong interagency coordination and a cohesive country team are the foundations of successful United States missions overseas.

Mr. Chairman, I make it a point to come to the Hill when I am back in Washington, and I believe that regular interaction, whether at post or in Washington, is critical to our continued success. Frank exchanges of accurate information that build trust are essential for the Congress to make difficult resource and policy choices. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing this relationship.

I have always been deeply conscious of the most important duty I have as Chief of Mission: ensuring the safety and security of all Americans in Libya, and particularly those serving under my leadership. While our mission is no longer physically located in Tripoli, balancing safety considerations with a deep desire to engage Libyans will be an essential task, one for which, if confirmed, I will be responsible and accountable.

Libya has the potential to play a vital role in regional security cooperation and trade over the long term. Establishing a safe and secure environment must be the first step Libyans take to move their country forward. Continuing to support the establishment of a stable, prosperous, and democratic Libya is consistent with the values and strategic interests of the United States. If confirmed, I will work with Libyan partners to assist in the establishment of that environment.

In closing, I want to note that anyone who represents the United States abroad has a unique responsibility. More often than not, we are the only nation that has the will, the values, and the resources to solve problems, help others, and to be a positive force for change in our challenged world. Being nominated to serve as an Ambassador representing our Nation is, in itself, an incredible honor. With the consent of the Senate, I look forward to assuming this responsibility again while serving as the next U.S. Ambassador to Libya.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Bodde follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR PETER BODDE

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Murphy, members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Libya. I am grateful for the trust placed in me by President Obama and Secretary Kerry. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee and colleagues from across the U.S. Government to promote a strong relationship between the United States and Libya during this challenging moment in Libyan history.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce my family this morning—my wife Tanya, a retired career Foreign Service employee, and my son, Christopher, are here with me today. My father, Ambassador William Bodde, is also here with me today. Thirty-six years ago, I sat where he is when he appeared before the late Senator Paul Tsongas during my dad's first confirmation hearing prior to becoming Ambassador to Fiji.

Four years after the uprising of the Libyan people led to the fall of Qadhafi and his brutal dictatorship, Libyans continue to face enormous challenges as they work to establish a Government of National Accord (GNA) and build institutions that are inclusive and representative of all Libyans. The Libyan political dialogue has required determination and compromise at every stage, and the process of political reconciliation in Libya will be a long journey. The recent October 8 announcement of proposed leadership for a Government of National Accord resulting from these

Libyan negotiations was a welcome step in the process, and we urge all parties to endorse the agreement as quickly as possible.

The rise of ISIL-aligned groups and other extremist organizations, the coercive power of militias over Libyan civilians and government institutions, the consistent harassment and targeting of civil society activists, and dramatically reduced oil production demonstrate the immediate need for a unified national Libyan Government that can effectively partner with the United States and the international community to begin the hard work of restoring peace and security in Libya.

In 2011, the Libyan people summoned the courage to stand up to a brutal dictator after 42 years of manipulative and violent rule. The United States supported Libyans then, and we must stand by our Libyan friends now. With the support of Congress we have allocated resources to enable the United States to support Libya's democratic transition, when conditions allow. We will continue to work with our international partners and the U.N. Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to focus on the key areas that will enable a Government of National Accord (GNA) to respond to the urgent needs of the Libyan people. It will be incumbent on members of the international community and regional partners to assist a new Libyan unity government in its early days while building capacity so Libyans can sustainably take on the tough work of border security, counterterrorism, and effective governance in the future.

In the absence of an effective central government that can secure Libyan territory, violent extremist groups have proliferated. Terrorist groups operate freely in Dernah and Sirte and have mounted attacks in Tripoli and other Libyan cities. Parts of southern Libya are plagued by tribal fighting, banditry and general lawlessness. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Ansar al-Sharia elements, and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-aligned groups have all been operating in Libya. These terrorist groups have raided unprotected stocks of weapons, using them in Libya and smuggling them across the region. These groups have also attacked oil facilities and vital economic infrastructure in an effort to undermine a political solution to the instability that allows them to thrive. The presence of ISIL-aligned groups challenges the stability of Libya and our partners in the region and Europe, and is a very real threat to U.S. national security. If confirmed, I will do everything in my power to coordinate resources and strategies across the U.S. Government to respond to the threat ISIL and other terrorists pose to Libya, the region, and our U.S. national security interests.

Human smugglers have also capitalized on the absence of effective law enforcement and Libya's porous borders. In 2015 alone, over 120,000 people have attempted to enter Europe by crossing through Libyan soil, and nearly 3,000 of them have perished in that attempt.

Peace is not just a political imperative, but an economic one as well. In 2011, Libyans exported 1.6 million barrels per day of oil. Today, that number stands at just 430,000, below what a Government of National Accord will need to cover current spending, much less the reconstruction and development that the country will require to recover from this period of strife. Getting back to historic production levels will be critical to rebuilding Libya's economy, achieving national reconciliation, and equipping a Government of National Accord for the many challenges Libya faces.

Over the course of my career, I have led interagency teams in challenging environments, and I understand the difficulties and opportunities ahead. My experience as U.S. Ambassador to Nepal during and after the tragic earthquake in April, as Assistant Chief of Mission for Assistance in Baghdad, and as Deputy Chief of Mission in Pakistan confirmed my belief that strong interagency coordination and a cohesive Country Team are the foundations of successful United States missions overseas. Chairman Risch, I make it a point to come to the Hill when I am back in Washington and I believe that regular interaction—whether at post or in Washington—is critical to our continued success. Frank exchanges of accurate information that build trust are essential for the Congress to make difficult resource and policy choices. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing this relationship.

I have always been deeply conscious of the most important duty I have as a Chief of Mission—ensuring the safety and security of all Americans in Libya, in particular those serving under my leadership. While our mission is no longer physically located in Tripoli, balancing safety considerations with a deep desire to engage Libyans will be an essential task, one for which, if confirmed, I will be responsible and accountable.

Libya has the potential to play a vital role in regional security cooperation and trade over the long term. Establishing a safe and secure environment must be the first step Libyans take to move their country forward. Continuing to support the establishment of a stable, prosperous, and democratic Libya is consistent with the

values and strategic interest of the United States. If confirmed, I will work with Libyan partners to assist in the establishment of that environment.

In closing, I want to note that anyone who represents the United States abroad has a unique responsibility. More often than not, we are the only nation that has the will, the values, and the resources to solve problems, help others, and to be a positive force for change in our challenged world. Being nominated to serve as an Ambassador representing our Nation is in itself an incredible honor. With the consent of the Senate, I look forward to assuming this responsibility while serving as the next U.S. Ambassador to Libya.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Mr. Bodde.

Mr. Sievers, you have been nominated the Ambassador to Oman. And, please, you have the floor.

STATEMENT OF MARC JONATHAN SIEVERS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE SULTANATE OF OMAN

Mr. SIEVERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

If I may, I would like to introduce my family members——

Senator RISCH. Please.

Mr. SIEVERS [continuing]. Who are here today: my wife, Michelle Huda Rafael; our son, Samuel; my son, David; and my daughter, Miriam. And I am very grateful for their support and their attendance at this hearing.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Mr. SIEVERS. Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Murphy, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman.

I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust they have placed in me, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and other Members of Congress to advance the interests of the United States in Oman.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent much of my 34-year Foreign Service career working in the Middle East. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Oman, my highest priority will be protecting the dedicated men and women at our mission, as well as all Americans living in and visiting Oman. I will work with our Omani partners to ensure that American businesses realize the full benefits of the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement. I will engage with a wide range of Omani citizens so that Oman may continue to make strides in establishing an independent civil society. Rest assured, I will employ the full range of diplomatic tools to deepen our cooperation with Oman on counterterrorism and counterpiracy issues.

In recent years, Oman has demonstrated the value of its relationship to the United States by helping to facilitate the nuclear negotiations with Iran, securing the release of American detainees in Yemen and hikers held by Iran, and by assisting the evacuation of American Government personnel from Yemen.

Overlooking the Strait of Hormuz, Oman works closely with the United States, and especially the United States Navy, to promote freedom of navigation in a region through which approximately 30 percent of seaborne global oil exports flow. The United States and Oman maintain excellent security cooperation to ensure that the Strait of Hormuz remains open to international trade.

Since the implementation of the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement in 2009, U.S. private industry has received broad access to the rapidly developing Omani market. The United States held a billion-dollar trade surplus with Oman in 2014. If confirmed, I will work to ensure American private industry enjoys free access to an Omani market eager to purchase American goods and services.

Sultan Qaboos has gradually increased the level of representation Omani citizens hold in government. If confirmed, I will support the efforts of the people and government of Oman to establish a more inclusive and transparent government and to strengthen civil society.

Finally, I would like to once more express my appreciation for this opportunity to appear before the committee today. If confirmed, I look forward to welcoming Members of Congress and congressional staff to Oman.

I have served in a number of war and conflict zones during my career, and I can assure the committee I do not take lightly the responsibility an Ambassador holds to protect the men and women serving our country overseas. If confirmed, my highest priority will always be the safety and security of every American in Oman, as well as the advancement of our national interests, and I pledge to carry out these duties to the best of my ability.

I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sievers follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARC J. SIEVERS

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust they have placed in me, and if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and other Members of Congress to advance the interests of the United States in Oman. I would like to pause for a moment to recognize my wife, Michelle Huda Raphael, our son, Samuel, my daughter, Miriam, and my son, David, who are here with me today. They have provided unwavering support throughout my career and I am very grateful for their love and understanding.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent much of my 34-year Foreign Service career working in the Middle East, including assignments in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Israel. My previous assignments have provided me with an extensive background in economic and counterterrorism issues that are essential to our partnership with Oman, and a deep appreciation for the importance of political and economic reform to long-term stability. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Oman, my highest priority will be protecting the safety and security of the dedicated men and women at our mission, as well as all Americans living in and visiting Oman. I will work with our Omani partners to ensure that American businesses realize the full benefits of the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement. I will engage with a wide range of Omani citizens so that Oman may continue to make strides in establishing an independent civil society and preventing trafficking in persons. Rest assured, I will employ the full range of diplomatic tools to deepen our cooperation with Oman on counterterrorism, maritime security, and counterpiracy issues.

The United States and Oman share a long history of friendship and trade. The bilateral relationship was formalized in an 1833 Treaty of Amity and Commerce. Oman was the first Arab Gulf State to host the United States at its military facilities, and Oman has supported United States Forces during almost every U.S. military operation in the region since 1980.

Oman plays a helpful role in multilateral diplomacy. As a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab League, and the United Nations, Oman maintains close ties with American allies in the region. Oman has helped advance the interests of the United States by serving as a mediator with other countries in the region. In recent years, Oman has demonstrated the value of its relationship to the United

States by helping to facilitate nuclear negotiations with Iran, securing the release of American detainees in Yemen, and the young American hikers held by Iran, and finally, by assisting the evacuation of American Government personnel from Yemen. Since 1997, Oman has hosted the Middle East Desalination Research Center, an institution that brings Israelis and Arabs together to address regional water challenges through science and knowledge-sharing.

Bordering Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, and overlooking the Strait of Hormuz, Oman collaborates with the United States to promote security and freedom of navigation in a region through which approximately 30 percent of seaborne global oil exports flow. Oman provided critical logistical support during both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. The United States maintains excellent security cooperation on counterterrorism, countersmuggling, and counterpiracy to ensure the Strait of Hormuz remains open to international trade. As the situation in Yemen has deteriorated, the United States and Oman have worked together to prevent destabilizing nonstate actors such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula from exploiting Yemen's porous border and coastal areas. If confirmed, my priority will remain the safety and security of Americans. Maintaining a strong relationship with Oman on border and maritime security and counterterrorism will keep Americans in Oman and the United States safer.

Economic cooperation between the United States and Oman continues to grow. Since the implementation of the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement in 2009, U.S. private industry has received broad access to the rapidly developing Omani market. The United States held a billion dollar trade surplus with Oman in 2014, and economic cooperation continues to expand. American businesses such as General Cable and GlassPoint Solar have benefited from access to a diversifying Omani economy. If confirmed, I will work to ensure American private industry enjoys free access to an Omani market eager to purchase American goods and services, and benefit from the world's best quality, customer service, and corporate social responsibility programs.

Oman has made dramatic gains since emerging as a modern state shortly after Sultan Qaboos bin Said came to power in 1970. The 2010 U.N. Human Development Report listed Oman first of 135 countries in human development from 1970 to 2010. Omanis have benefited from dramatic increases in access to education, quality health care, and improved living standards. As Oman moves to further diversify its economy in the coming decades, American private industry is well-suited to provide the technical expertise necessary to expand the scope of prosperity in the United States and Oman.

Oman has increased the number of opportunities available to women in recent years. Omani women serve in political offices and have held Cabinet- level positions in government. Oman was the first Arab State to appoint a woman, the Hon. Hunaina al-Mughairy, as Ambassador to the United States. Omani women now constitute over 30 percent of the workforce. Oman should maximize the role of women as it builds a modern, diversified economy. If confirmed, I will encourage the development of more opportunities for women in Omani private enterprise, government, and civil society. I will also prioritize our efforts to combat and prevent human trafficking. Human trafficking violates fundamental rights and corrodes a society from within. Oman is primarily a destination and migrant country for men and women who are subjected to forced labor, but Oman is working hard to improve its response to human trafficking. If confirmed, I will partner with Oman to improve its record by prosecuting and convicting human trafficking offenders, identifying and protecting trafficking victims among vulnerable populations, and allowing broader victim access to government shelter care.

Sultan Qaboos has gradually increased the level of representation Omani citizens hold in government. Following Arab Spring-related protests in 2011, Sultan Qaboos empowered the popularly elected portion of the legislature to draft laws. He also appointed members of the elected Council into Cabinet positions. If confirmed, I will support the efforts of the people and government of Oman to establish a more inclusive and transparent government and strengthen civil society.

Approximately 50,000 American tourists visited Oman last year. Oman also serves as a model for tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the region. If confirmed, I look forward to welcoming members of Congress and congressional staff to Oman. Oman is an important partner for the United States in the region, and I hope to have the opportunity to work to expand the scope of our cooperation.

Finally, I would like to once more express my appreciation for this opportunity to appear before the committee today. I have served in a number of war and conflict zones during my career and I can assure the committee I do not take lightly the responsibility an Ambassador holds to protect the men and women serving our coun-

try overseas. If confirmed, my highest priority will always be the safety and security of every American in Oman, as well as the advancement of our national interests, and I pledge to carry out these duties to the best of my ability.

I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you might have. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Mr. Sievers.

Ms. Millard, you have been nominated to be Ambassador to Tajikistan, and the floor is yours for introductions.

STATEMENT OF ELISABETH I. MILLARD, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

Ms. MILLARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In the interest of time, I will summarize my statement, but ask that the full statement be submitted for the record.

Senator RISCH. Certainly.

Ms. MILLARD. And I would like to say, of my five children, my oldest daughter, Charlotte, and my youngest son, Richard, were unable to come today, but the other three are here with their spouses: my daughter, Olivia; my daughter, Sasha; and my son, James. And we also have Alex, age 4, who is my granddaughter, here today.

Senator RISCH. Thank you so much.

Ms. MILLARD. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, it is a great honor and privilege to appear before you today as the United States Ambassador-designate to the Republic of Tajikistan. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to testify this afternoon, and I am humbled by the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and all Members of Congress to advance the interests of the United States in Tajikistan.

I would like to recognize the members of my family, without whom my 23-year career in the Foreign Service would not have been possible. Above all, my husband, Vaughan, who retired after serving in the Navy for 30 years and became my most enthusiastic and steadfast teammate during our tours in Prague, Copenhagen, New Delhi, Kathmandu, Casablanca, and Astana. Vaughan, tragically, died after a brief illness last year, but he knew this posting to Tajikistan was a possibility, and was excited at the prospect. And our five children and six grandchildren are a testament to our partnership.

Throughout my career, I have focused on ensuring the security and safety of American citizens and advancing the interests and values of the United States and the American people. Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will bring the same dedication to our Embassy in Dushanbe.

Tajikistan is a challenging post in a dynamic region. Per capita, it is in the poorest quarter of countries in the world. It has a porous 800-mile-long border with Afghanistan. And problems like illegal narcotics trade, terrorism, and violent extremism in the region are deeply concerning. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen our partnership with Tajikistan to address these serious challenges.

Tajikistan, given its difficult neighborhood, must maintain its security and stability, goals which the United States strongly supports. But, the security, stability, and prosperity that Tajikistan seeks can only come with a strong commitment to improving human rights and governance, respect for the rule of law, and pro-

tection and promotion of its people's rights and freedoms. These are critical components of security and stability for any country. If confirmed, I will encourage the government to promote and protect the space for civil society and for international and domestic non-government organizations to register and function freely.

Being an American Ambassador is not only a great honor, but also a great responsibility. If confirmed, I will endeavor to be a good steward of the American people's trust and property, and a caring leader for my Embassy colleagues, and a faithful representative of our values and our interests. I will also ensure that our missions continues to provide U.S. citizens residing in or visiting Tajikistan the highest quality of services and our steadfast protection in times of need.

Communication and trust build the best relationships. This applies not only to our engagement with foreign governments and societies, but also to engagement with Congress. If confirmed, I will always be available to this committee, its members and staff, to discuss the—and work with you in pursuit of our national interests in Tajikistan.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Millard follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ELISABETH MILLARD

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, and distinguished members of the committee, it is a great honor and privilege to appear before you today as the United States Ambassador-designate to the Republic of Tajikistan. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to testify this afternoon, and am humbled by the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and all members of Congress to advance the interests of the United States in Tajikistan.

For 23 years, I have had the honor to serve as a career Foreign Service officer, and my work has been defined by a strong commitment to advancing U.S. interests, including universal values of democracy, rule of law, and the protection of human rights and dignity.

Having served twice as Deputy Chief of Mission and once as Principal Officer, if confirmed, I will bring years of substantive and management experience to the position of Ambassador to Tajikistan. I have served in Central Asia and covered that area from the Washington perspective as well, and these experiences have prepared me for the unique demands of the region.

I successfully led interagency teams in Nepal, Morocco, and Kazakhstan to further U.S. priorities such as advancing good governance and democracy, strengthening counterterrorism efforts, and promoting American business interests. In these and all my previous assignments, my top priorities were to ensure the security and safety of American citizens and to advance the interests and values of the United States and the American people. Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will bring the same dedication to our Embassy in Dushanbe.

Tajikistan is a challenging post in a dynamic region. Per capita, it is in the poorest quarter of countries in the world and its GDP is the lowest in Central Asia. Youth under 24 are 53 percent of Tajikistan's population—a statistic that is only predicted to grow. Tajikistan has a porous 800-mile-long border with Afghanistan, and problems like the illegal narcotics trade, trafficking in persons, terrorism and violent extremism in the region are deeply concerning. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen our partnership with Tajikistan to address these serious challenges.

Tajikistan is a critical partner in the administration's New Silk Road initiative. Through electricity grids and transit corridors, Tajikistan links Central Asia with South Asia and beyond. With almost half of its national income reliant on remittances from migrant workers, Tajikistan must diversify its economy. But Tajikistan cannot succeed on its own. If confirmed, I will encourage Tajikistan to continue building energy, economic, infrastructure and people-to-people connections with all its neighbors.

Tajikistan, given the threats it faces, is fully entitled to take steps to maintain its security. For that reason, the United States has supported Tajikistan's security in a number of ways over the years, including by providing training and equipment to its military and border security forces, police and counternarcotics units. A stable and prosperous Tajikistan is squarely in U.S. national interests.

But we also recognize that the long-term security, stability, and prosperity that Tajikistan seeks can only come through a strong commitment to improving governance, respect for rule of law, and protection of its people's rights and freedoms. Without these essential elements, stability will prove elusive in any country.

If confirmed, I will seek to increase our positive engagement with the government and people of Tajikistan, not only with respect to our shared interest in stability and economic prosperity but also on other important issues such as preventing arbitrary arrests, addressing allegations of torture and mistreatment in prisons, and allowing the free practice of all faiths by all people, regardless of gender or age. I will also encourage the government to promote and protect space for civil society and for international and domestic nongovernmental organizations to register and function freely.

Direct engagement with the people of Tajikistan will also be a priority for me, if I am confirmed. People-to-people contact remains at the core of our diplomatic efforts. If confirmed, I look forward to interacting with people throughout Tajikistan and strengthening ties between the American and Tajik people. Public diplomacy efforts, outreach, and educational exchanges promote mutual understanding and foster deeper bilateral ties.

Being an American Ambassador is not only a great honor but also a great responsibility. If confirmed, I will endeavor to be a good steward of the American people's trust and property, a caring leader for my Embassy colleagues, and a faithful representative of our values and our interests. I will also ensure that our mission continues to provide U.S. citizens residing in or visiting Tajikistan the highest quality services and our steadfast protection in times of need.

Communication and trust build the best relationships. This applies not only to engagement with foreign governments and societies, but also to engagement with Congress. If confirmed, I will always be available to this committee, its members and staff to discuss and work with you in pursuit of our national interests in Tajikistan.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity, and look forward to your questions.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Ms. Millard.

I am going to go through and ask questions of each of you, because I have individual questions, and I think there are matters that you have on your mind that are of interest to us and you can probably enlighten us on.

And I want to start, Mr. Morton, with you. You are undoubtedly aware of the fact that a number of us here in the Senate wrote a letter raising concerns about a conflict of interest on a director, and—are you familiar with the letter that I am talking about, the response that was made to it?

Mr. MORTON. I believe I am, sir, yes.

Senator RISCH. What—first of all, do you think that the concerns that we—we were concerned not only about a conflict of interest, but an apparent conflict of interest. And, you know, we, as Americans, as we go around the world, try to persuade people that the only way society can prosper is if, indeed, you get rid of corruption and you get rid of any type of undue influence, and, for that matter, the appearance of it. So, we were concerned not only about what appeared to be a conflict of interest, and could have been a conflict of interest, but also the appearance of it. What are your thoughts on that?

Mr. MORTON. Well, Senator, thank you for the question.

I believe, when we looked into the matter that was raised by you and several other Senators, we were very comfortable with the arrangement that OPIC had supported in this case, and I believe that the director in question had recused himself of all relevant

matters during the course of his time on the—serving on the board. So, I—we took a close look at it and felt that we had followed both process-related matters well, but also we had stayed on the proper side of the perception issue. I would be happy to follow up in more detail with a further conversation if that—if our response was not to your satisfaction.

Senator RISCH. Well, I think probably a little more detail would not hurt. I fully appreciate that the person in question recused himself from the actual vote on something, but, you know, again, the appearance is very difficult to shake under these circumstances, because obviously, if you are a codirector with other directors, you have influence over them, you have access to them that others do not. And so, I would be interested—you do not need to do this now, you can take the question for the record, but I would appreciate some followup on it, because, as I say, that really does not resolve the issue of the appearance versus the actual conflict.

Mr. MORTON. Senator, I would be happy to get back to you. And I would say that, you know, with a portfolio of 600 projects across 105 countries around the world, we are constantly looking at investments that have complex structures, boards of directors, governance structures that we do very, very careful due diligence on to avoid the very issue that you are raising here. So, we take these issues quite seriously, and I would be happy to follow up with you in more detail.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Morton.

Mr. Ward, you have a responsibility that is enormous, really, when you are dealing with the product or the material that you are dealing with. We are seeing some open-source reporting that mustard gas is being used in Syria. Can you enlighten us any on that? Realizing we are not in a classified setting, but is there anything you can say in an open-source sort of fashion that would talk about that?

Mr. WARD. We certainly have had concerns, for years, that ISIL has been seeking such weapons. And there have been allegations and reports that they have actually used these types of weapons. It is something the United States is looking at very seriously. Because it involves ISIL, as you know, Mr. Chairman, there is an intelligence dimension to all of this.

But, something I can bring to the attention to the committee is that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, its factfinding mission, one of the missions has focused on the allegations that such chemicals were used in August. And we expect, by the end of this week, for that factfinding mission to issue a public report on the information it has acquired on this subject. It will not address the issue of attribution. The mandate of the group does not extend to assigning responsibility. But, it will seek to either confirm or refute the allegations that these chemicals will be used. And I think you will find their report to be a very helpful open-source document.

If you have seen the previous report that was done by the factfinding mission on the April-May 2014 incidents, you know, it is hundreds of pages long, very detailed information based on interviews and the like. And I know that some of your staff colleagues

have found it to be very, very helpful as an open-source document. Hopefully, by the end of this week, that will be issued and be able to provide you with a much more open type of access that would not involve classified information.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Ward. I think everyone is aware, because of the reporting of the use of chemical weapons in Syria—after Syria, would be the next country that you would be most concerned about? Obviously, I think—would you agree with me, Syria would be at the top of the list of concern in today's world? Am I right or wrong on that?

Mr. WARD. Absolutely. This is a country that we believe has not fulfilled its obligations to declare and destroy all of its chemical weapons, and there is mounting evidence that it is been using chemical weapons against its own citizens.

Senator RISCH. And so, what country would you go to after that? Is there anybody close to that, or do you kind of drop down the scale quite a ways?

Mr. WARD. Well, you know, what is interesting is, you know, we have concerns about some countries, which are reported in our classified compliance report, but, you know, use of chemical weapons by countries is something that really has not taken place since World War II. The real immediate threat of use, versus the concerns about countries possessing chemical weapons, is nonstate actors. You know, we wonder if a new era of chemical terrorism has come along. And it will be interesting to see if these allegations that ISIL has been using chemical weapons turn out to be true, because we may be worrying much more about terrorists who, when they acquire a chemical weapon, immediately use it, versus countries of concern that acquire a chemical weapons capability, but it sits on the shelf and never becomes an immediate threat to the world community.

So, Senator, I worry most about nonstate actors, and I hope we can put that genie back in the bottle and that we are not seeing a new era now of chemical terrorism.

Senator RISCH. Given the lack of moral turpitude of the people who are doing this in Syria, I would say that I am not very optimistic that some type of moral obligation would drive their decisionmaking.

Let me ask this. As far as—you said no country had used it, no state actors had used it, since World War II. Are you excepting Syria, given the use near Damascus?

Mr. WARD. Actually, no, I am. And let me correct myself. I am forgetting the obvious example of the Iran-Iraq War and the allegations that Iraq, and then later Iran, exchanged large amounts of chemical weapons between 1980 and 1988. Forgive my historical lapse.

Senator RISCH. Appreciate that.

What—do you feel—does your organization feel like they have a—at least somewhat of a decent handle on how much chemical—what is the quantity of chemical weapons that are left in Syria after the supposed removal of the chemical weapons?

Mr. WARD. They do not, Mr. Chairman. But, they believe that the answers that the Syrian Government has provided about what happened to chemicals that they allegedly destroyed a few years

ago—they just cannot document anything, and there are grave suspicions that they have not come clean about all their capabilities. We do believe the bulk of their program was declared, but there remain very serious suspicions that a residual chemical weapon capability has been maintained by Syria.

And, thankfully, the organization established a very dedicated group of experts to focus on this issue. Just a few weeks ago, they reported that they have serious concerns about the veracity of Syria's declaration with respect to chemical agents, to the munitions that would deliver them and the facilities that were involved in research and development and production. So, the international organization has clearly identified a serious problem. Unfortunately, they do not know where the hidden weapons are, but it is important that they put an international spotlight on it. The last thing any of us wants, and most especially myself, is for Syria to hold itself out as a member in good standing of the Chemical Weapons Convention. They are not, Senator.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate that.

Can you comment at all on the transfer—obviously, not voluntarily—from the Syrian Government to ISIS or ISIL or Daesh, whatever you want to call it?

Mr. WARD. In a classified context, that could be addressed.

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Mr. WARD. But, let me just say that—let us not think that there was any deliberate transfer from—by the—from the Assad regime to ISIL. These are enemies. Obviously, any acquisition that took place was not intended. But, in a classified context, be happy to provide more information, Senator.

Senator RISCH. Mr. Bodde, we all know that the—Libya is attempting to form a government. Can you enlighten us on the status of that?

Ambassador BODDE. Yes. Mr. Chairman, we have been making, with our international partners and our regional partners in the area, some progress over the last few weeks to establish a Government of National Accord. We were very hopeful, on October 8, as I mentioned in my statement, that, when the Special Representative of the U.N. announced the possible officers of the new government, that that would move forward quickly. It has not, but we are still hopeful that this is the direction it will take. We are not there yet. All of the regional partners, our international partners, there is still dialogue going on. My counterpart, Special Representative Jonathan Winer, was just out in the region doing outreach on this stuff. But, our goal is that they will work towards establishing this Government of National Accord.

We feel it is critical, because, without an inclusive government that brings in all the parties, as many parties as possible, we do not see that substantial progress can be made.

Senator RISCH. What is your personal assessment of the prognosis of that? Could they succeed?

Ambassador BODDE. I think it has the potential to succeed, but it is going to be a very difficult road. And, like everything, even reaching its—reaching agreement—my own sense, Senator, is that that will be easier than implementation. But, that is why I am going there.

Senator RISCH. Mr. Sievers, regarding Oman, you did not mention, or refer to in your opening statement, succession. So, could you talk about that for a minute? And your concerns in that regard, if you have any.

Mr. SIEVERS. Yes, Senator, thank you very much.

Succession obviously is a very important question. The Sultan has been in power since 1970. He has established most of the institutions that currently exist in Oman. He is widely viewed as kind of the father of the modern Omani state. And due to his health, there is certainly the potential that he could leave the scene in the near future. There is a mechanism in place. There is something called the Ruling Family Council that would meet if the position became vacant suddenly. And they are to select a successor, because the Sultan has no children of his own. Should they fail to reach a consensus on who that individual would be, there is a sealed letter from the Sultan to the Council that would be opened in the event that they do not reach agreement among themselves.

So, I think we are—I am pretty confident that they will manage this process, but I do acknowledge that it is untested and it could pose a challenge for them.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

Mr. SIEVERS. You are welcome, sir.

Senator RISCH. Finally, Ms. Millard, I think one of the things, for those of us that serve on both Foreign Relations and the Intelligence Committee, is the flow of fighters from Tajikistan to ISIS. What can you tell us about that and what—you know, what is the prognosis of stemming that?

Ms. MILLARD. Mr. Chairman, it is, indeed, a worrying phenomenon. The number that the Tajiks have given to us is about 600, as of now. And if confirmed, I would be focusing on this important issue, and to deepen our already robust relationship with the Tajik government to address issues such as this one.

Senator RISCH. Do the Tajiks have any system in place to do anything about this?

Ms. MILLARD. My understanding is that some of the recruitment is actually happening in Russia. The guest workers—as you may know, many, many young Tajiks actually are guest workers in Russia. And so, the issue—the problem is mostly happening in Russia. But, as far as what the Tajiks themselves are doing within Tajikistan, I will be looking into that, and hopefully become smarter on that once, if confirmed, I get to Dushanbe.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Ms. Millard.

Senator Murphy.

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

As the father of a 7-year-old and a 3-year-old, let me remark on how remarkably well behaved——

[Laughter.]

Senator MURPHY [continuing]. The youngsters are, that are here with us. Frankly, they will do more credit to the United States in these new roles than their parents, given their disposition.

Thank you all for being here today. Let me sort of go down the row in the same order to let everybody catch their breath.

Mr. Morton, you and I had the chance to talk about this a little bit, but in open session. You know, I am intrigued by the messages

that we send as China stands up the AIIB, providing new access to capital, new pathways to alliances and partnerships with countries all around the world, and we sit here today still with the inability to simply reauthorize the Eximbank. Tell us a little bit about what this new Asian development bank means for the United States, what this new competition may mean for the work that you do, and recommendations for how we should be thinking about it. It sort of bewilders me that we do not understand that the military is not the only way that you project your power as a nation abroad, that, these days especially, your economic reach matters as much, if not more, than your military reach. And you have limited resources. But, tell us what we should be learning from what the Chinese are doing.

Mr. MORTON. Thank you for the question.

You know, I think the creation of the AIIB is only the latest in a longer series of developments that have occurred within the development-finance arena over the last decades. Just briefly, for context, you know, when OPIC was carved out of USAID 40 years ago, the vast majority of U.S. flows overseas was in the form of official development aid or grants—seven to one, grants to foreign direct investment. Now it is the exact opposite—10 times more U.S. foreign direct investment flows out than does official development assistance. So, the interaction that the U.S. economy and the U.S. nation is having with developing countries is very much driven now by foreign direct investment and by the business ambassadors that are our businesses and our companies that are investing overseas.

So, even before you had the creation of the AIIB, you had governments like Germany, the Netherlands, et cetera, significantly enhancing the ability of their development finance institutions to promote foreign direct investments overseas.

Now, I think the AIIB is certainly the latest and probably the most consequential of these developments. And it is one that I think we need to understand—we need to look at carefully and understand. The amount of liquidity that China will be injecting into overseas markets will be—is already significant, and will continue to grow. And I think there is a question of what, if any, U.S. response there might be.

I will say that, when OPIC invests alongside U.S. companies in overseas markets, we do so with a set of environmental, labor, social, human rights standards that have been set by Congress and that are far superior to those that are—than those that are being promulgated currently by the Chinese banks. And I really do think that we lead by example when we invest overseas.

Senator MURPHY. But, does that pose the risk of a race to the bottom? As you have more entrants into these global capital markets that come with, sort of, political agendas rather than simply financial agendas, the expectation that they will get their money back with return, does that jeopardize the high standards that we traditionally have set?

Mr. MORTON. So, I mentioned before that over 40 percent of our portfolio last year was in Africa, and I have probably spent more time in Africa during my 5½ years with the agency than on any other continent. There is not a country or capital that you can go to on the African Continent where the government is not crying out

for U.S. investment and U.S. standards and U.S. values and U.S. leadership. And so, there is always a temptation, I think, for a race to the bottom, but I think that countries that have come into contact with U.S. investors and U.S. capital understand the different standards that come with that, and crave it. And there really is a strong desire, in embassy after embassy that we have spent time with, for U.S. companies to be actively investing into these markets.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Morton.

Mr. MORTON. Thank you.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Ward, tell us a little bit more about chlorine and about the role of OPCW in addressing these new reports of the use of that chemical inside Syria.

Mr. WARD. What is interesting is that the first major use ever in World War I of a chemical weapon was chlorine. In April 1915, the Germans, at Ypres, released many cylinders filled with chlorine gas. It is heavier than air. It went across No Man's Land and down into the trenches, killing thousands. But, very quickly thereafter, both the allies and the axis powers developed much better chemicals than chlorine to use—phosgene, mustard, lewisite—and then eventually, of course, later came nerve agents after World War II.

So, chlorine, we all think of it as the thing associated with your pool. It is a cleansing agent. It is used around the world in order to sanitize the water, to turn it into drinking water. So, it is ubiquitous, and it is all over Syria for that purpose.

Well, the Syrians evidently decided to take chlorine canisters, wrap detonation cord around them, and turn them into improvised barrel bombs, which we believe were very likely rolled out of helicopters. There is strong evidence, from the factfinding mission report from April and May of 2014, that all of the witnesses who survived the attacks with the chlorine bombs, helicopters were overhead whenever this happened. Well, only the Syrian government has helicopters. The opposition does not. And it is a very strong incriminating indicator.

What happens, though, is, you know, when the bombs start to drop, people naturally go into the basement, and the chlorine being heavier than air goes down into the basement. It has not killed in hundreds or thousands, the way nerve agent can, but the systematic and repeated use—the number of casualties is accumulating more and more over time, and it has become a terror weapon to be used by the Syrian Government.

Senator MURPHY. And so, to your role, this is not on the list of—educate me as to what your organization can do and what role you play.

Mr. WARD. There is a list that goes with the treaty, and that list of chemicals defines not what a chemical weapon is, but what types of facilities around the world will be subject to routine inspections. What happens is that chlorine is so ubiquitous, the organization would spend an enormous amount of time just inspecting chlorine facilities around the world, so it is not on the list for inspection purposes. However, anyone—any country that uses a toxic weapon to kill people has violated the Convention. The Convention covers all toxic chemicals. The inspection regime, of necessity, had to narrow itself down to the most likely suspects. And chlorine, being a

chemical that quickly became outdated as a chemical weapon even in World War I, was not included on the list. But, you know, in the case of Syria, they have found a use for it once again, a very lethal one.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Bodde, sort of a common saying around here that there are not military solutions to many of the problems we face in the Middle East. And that probably oversimplifies the fact; there are military components to most of these fights. But, our military action in Libya is probably as good an example of our failure to understand that you cannot have a military solution without a political component and political plan underlying that military action, given that it was our military action that led to the fall of Qadhafi that created this vacuum that still exists today.

This is probably an unfair question to ask somebody who is not on the ground yet, but you are studying your new post. What lessons have we learned about our military engagement in Libya that, at the time, was not partnered with a political plan that was realistic on the ground? Is the lesson that we just should not get into the business of trying to use military power to depose brutal dictators if we do not have a political plan? Is the lesson that you need to do more planning ahead of time? What should we be thinking about as the lessons coming out of our, I think, at this point, failed military intervention in Libya?

Ambassador BODDE. Senator, I will not characterize your question as an unfair question, but I think it is a question I have been asking myself in a different fashion, and it is one that I think I am going to be finding the answer out over the months to come.

It does take me back, though, to a—what we are looking to do right now, as I think one of the things that is happened, post what happened 4 years ago, is the lack of governance, the lack of rule of law, the lack of security. The sum total of all this has created a situation that is untenable, and that is why I think it is so important that we continue our efforts on this Government of National Accord. Until we can have some form of inclusive government, until we can bring as many of the parties in Libya together to get things back on a new normal, all of the problems that—will continue to exist.

But, what I would like to do is take that question, come back to you in a few months after I am on the ground, and give you a much more realistic and an answer based on my experience there.

Senator MURPHY. I think that is fair.

Mr. Sievers, talk to me about the potential role that Oman plays in the Syrian political process. This is a government that prides itself on trying to be a broker, or at least put themselves in the position to be a broker. We have heard some optimistic testimony from the administration about a political process that is going to kick off at the end of this week. What role may Oman be able to play as that continues?

Mr. SIEVERS. Senator, I believe that there was a meeting a couple of days ago between the Omani Minister for Foreign Affairs, Yusuf bin Alawi, and President Assad. That was the first Omani contact that I am aware of at that level. So, it does appear that they are stepping up their engagement. They have not been, so far, a major player in regional efforts to find a negotiated solution, but

it does appear that they are now becoming more engaged as various elements of diplomacy come into play.

So, I think it is something that we need to engage with them on very intensively in the days ahead, but it is a—it is actually a pretty new development. Their role elsewhere has been to promote diplomatic solutions to regional crises, when they have been able to do so.

So, that is their approach.

Senator MURPHY. Do they have a position on whether Assad has to go, has to stay, has to stay for an interim period of time?

Mr. SIEVERS. As far as I am aware, they have not taken a public position yet on that. But, I think we should get a more detailed readout from the Omanis about this meeting, and hopefully we will know more about that. I would be happy to arrange for a briefing for you on that once we have that information, but I do not know, at this time.

Senator MURPHY. Ms. Millard, was a really touching tribute to your husband, and we are very sorry for your loss.

You talked—I thought it was very interesting, your response to Senator Risch about the location of some of this recruitment. And it speaks to this dependence that Tajikistan has on Russia, a country that has potentially massive undeveloped economic capacity—natural resources, potential for hydro power. Sort of linking you to the guy at the other end of the table here, what is the opportunity for U.S. aid and U.S.-backed development to try to bring this country to a point where it is not so reliant on Russia for the economic well-being of so many that travel across the border to bring home a paycheck for their family?

Ms. MILLARD. Thank you for the question, Mr. Senator.

Certainly, the links that Tajikistan has with its immediate neighbors and Russia, we—are there; they are historic fact. That said, Tajikistan wants a multivector foreign policy, and that gives us an opportunity to work with them on—in a number of different areas. And there are a lot of needs there, so in our assistance program, we focus on a broad range of areas, including, you know, improving the investment climate, you know, food security, education, health, women, girls. So, I think there are a lot of opportunities for us, and I will be sort of taking an inventory of what we are doing, if confirmed, and seeing where there might be more opportunities for us.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Chairman, if I could ask just one last question. It is actually for all three of you.

You know, I have just been in this role on the Foreign Relations Committee for 3 years, but I have had the chance to travel to a lot of posts around the world which are difficult places for foreign officers, especially young foreign officers, to serve. And that would be the category of all three of your posts. So, as you have served in a variety of leadership capacities, what have you learned about the ways in which you can create a—and, Mr. Bodde, you are going to, you know, a place that everyone who gets assigned will think twice about, given the history—what have you learned about the way in which you can create a positive working environment and culture for your employees, despite the fact that it is pretty tough territory?

Ambassador BODDE. Mr. Chairman, if I can answer first.

One of the things I have learned, Senator, is, the tougher the post, the—usually the higher the morale is. And it speaks to the dedication of my colleagues, particularly my young colleagues, in the Foreign Service. But, young colleagues are new colleagues, and they need nurturing, they need mentoring. And I have found that, for every moment I spend mentoring, the payoff both to the mission, to the post, and to the State Department, writ large, is so large, it is just something we all have to do. It is something, even as an Ambassador—normally, in a post, this falls to the Deputy Chief of Mission, who has the line responsibility for this. In Nepal, I spent an hour every 2 weeks, after our country team meeting, with all of my untenured officers, all the specialists, talking about a leadership issue and then talking about a life experience, just trying to teach them the lesson that, "Here is how I did it, here is the mistake I made. You are going to make different mistakes, but at least you have the benefit of mine." And what I found is, they are like sponges, they soak it up.

The other thing, sir, is, we are blessed with—I think all of us would agree, we are in one of the best careers and jobs in the world. And most people in the Foreign Service, once they realize the interesting work they get to do, that is a motivation itself, and it is our job, as leaders, to keep that spark going and to give them real responsibility and get them out there.

Mr. SIEVERS. Senator, if I may, these are really tough questions, particularly in areas of the world where posts are often going unaccompanied, people cannot plan very well. They go into a post, expecting one set of circumstances, and then it changes and families are evacuated. I think the State Department is investing enormous efforts in helping people cope with these situations, but it is very tough. It varies considerably from place to place.

I feel very fortunate that Oman is a country that—where we still—we have families, we have an excellent American school, we have very good morale, by all indications that I have received. But, that obviously—maintaining that is something that has to be a very, very high priority.

I agree with my colleague, Ambassador Bodde, that we are attracting excellent people to the Foreign Service in all of our agencies. And I have also worked very closely with colleagues in the military and in other agencies. And, across the board, I think people feel a sense of commitment to American values and to representing the United States abroad and to promoting American interests.

But, they want to hear from us, from those of us in leadership position, how we see things, where we see things going. They want a certain amount of transparency about the challenges that we face. And so, it is incumbent on us, as leaders, to share that information with them on a regular basis and to try to address their questions as often and as accurately as we can. Sometimes, they are things that we cannot talk about, but most of it can be shared, and I think that pays a great deal of benefit.

Ms. MILLARD. So, Senator, both of my colleagues have mentioned a number of things that have been certainly high on my agenda, such as mentorship, leadership. I would like to add, in a—isolated,

difficult posts, I think people-to-people contacts can be tremendously rewarding for everyone at the Embassy, from the most junior person, to feel that they can get out and perhaps give a presentation on some aspect of American life or American culture. And these kind of presentations can be tremendously rewarding for the young person giving them, but also give wonderful new contacts for us as we represent the United States abroad. So, that is something I have observed and something I hope to continue in Tajikistan, if confirmed.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator.

I am going to wrap up, here, in just a minute, but, before I do, I want—one of the line of questioning for you, Mr. Ward—and if you are uncomfortable in going down this road, please say so and we can pursue it in a different setting. You talked about the—and I think it is fairly well accepted by the international community—that the Assad regime has used chemicals, even after they said they would not, even after they jointed the CWC, even after they made all the commitments, and—they have a partner today: Russia. What role does Russia play in the organization? And, you know, when you are standing on this side of it, these things are stunning, because—I mean, if the United States was involved with a partner that was doing this sort of thing, I mean, we would wash our hands of it very quickly, or stop it, one or the other. And they obviously are not lifting a finger, and yet they would have the same information that you would, that the international community has.

What can you tell us about that?

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

You know, this has been a bit of an education for me in international diplomacy, because what you learn sometimes is that, even though we might disagree with a country on a whole host of issues, sometimes we can find common cause on an issue. And I know when Secretary Kerry and Foreign Minister Lavrov got together in September 2013, and basically found a way to at least remove chemical weapons from the Syrian civil war equation, even though they probably could not agree about anything else about that civil war, both of them saw the value in removing chemical weapons from it. And Russia has been a good partner in helping to address this dimension of the problem.

When the factfinding missions came out and said use has taken place, Russia—they were a little resistant at first, but they came along, and, in August, a U.N. Security Council resolution was adopted, with Russian support, Resolution 2235, which established a mechanism, the joint investigative mechanism, to actually attribute responsibility for the attacks that had been confirmed by the OPCW. Russia actually supported that step. And that process is just coming up and running now, and the allegations from 2014, as well as any new confirmation of use that comes along, is going to be investigated by this U.N. group and then reported to the Security Council.

So, I went into this process with your skepticism. You know, "We are having issues with them in other areas. How can they be a good partner here?" But, the time I have spent traveling from my current job to The Hague and working with Russian colleagues,

they have been cooperative on this issue, and pushing this forward, and now we are in a position to actually try to hold people accountable, governments accountable, for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. It is a remarkable achievement, given, as you have emphasized, the other areas where there really is a complete disconnect between the United States and Russia.

Senator RISCH. Well, let me say that—I am not going to be as generous as you are to the Russians. First of all, I appreciate them supporting the resolution. And that was the right thing to do, and they should have done it. Having said that, everything we get is, they have got virtual control, jointly with the Iranians, over the Assad regime, which could not survive a day without those two supporting them. It would seem to me that, if they are as serious and as—acting in good faith as you perhaps suggest, it would not take but a phone call from an individual—you know who I am thinking of—to Assad, saying, "This is not going to happen again, or we are out of here." And so, I am not going to be as generous to them as you are. And we will—you know, I have got some other questions in that regard, but probably a different setting is appropriate for it.

So, with that, thank all of you for your service. Thank you to your families for supporting this service to the people of the United States. These things are incredibly important to our success around the world.

And, with that, we are going to close the hearing. The record will remain open, however, for questions, until the close of business on Friday. So, you may get some more probing questions.

But, you have been very generous with your time and, I think, very candid with your answers. And Senator Murphy and I both deeply appreciate that.

So, with that, the hearing will be adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:40 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF JOHN MORTON, NOMINATED TO BE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

JOHN MORTON'S RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM SENATOR RISCH

Question. Given the development of more advanced financial instruments to price risk in developing economies, do you believe the role of OPIC should change, and what should it focus on?

Answer. In the more than 40 years since OPIC was created, financial markets in emerging countries have continued to evolve. An early example of this was the rise of a competitive, private sector political risk insurance (PRI) industry. Indeed, at OPIC's creation, no such market existed and OPIC is credited with having created modern day PRI.

For the first two decades of the OPIC's existence, political risk insurance accounted for the majority of the Agency's business. Then, having created and catalyzed this market, OPIC stepped back as the private PRI market began to take hold. Today, political risk insurance accounts for less than 15 percent of the Agency's total portfolio and, consistent with our statutory mandate, OPIC PRI is limited to countries and sectors where the private PRI market is not present.

As financial markets continue to evolve, OPIC is committed to ensuring that we remain as catalytic a force as possible for private capital mobilization. A central con-

cern in every OPIC-supported project is providing maximum catalytic impact with the least financial exposure to the Agency and the U.S. taxpayer.

Based on my 5½ years at this agency, I am confident that OPIC plays a critical role in promoting positive developmental outcomes, at no net cost to U.S. taxpayers, in some of the world's poorest countries and regions—countries and regions which are otherwise largely untouched by the growth of financial markets in the more advanced economies.

OPIC's congressionally mandated mission to bring the private sector into international development is more timely today than at any time since the Agency was created. There are simply not sufficient public funds to solve the world's daunting development challenges. Food and energy scarcity, water shortages, infrastructure needs, and limited access to credit and banking services—are all issues where private-sector-based solutions are emerging, but still require a small amount of risk mitigation from development finance institutions like OPIC to take root in the most challenging emerging markets.

Up to 80 percent of global economic growth over the coming decades is expected to occur in these emerging markets. Private capital will flow to the most stable countries, regions, and sectors. OPIC's role is to catalyze that flow in promising but challenging countries, regions, and sectors. In carrying out this mission, OPIC will maintain its focus on low-income countries, on underserved populations, and on working with small and medium-sized U.S. enterprises.

RESPONSE OF KENNETH DAMIAN WARD, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

KENNETH WARD'S RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM SENATOR RISCH

Question. The increasing use of very different chemical weapons around Islamic State territory seems to indicate that IS has developed at least a small-scale chemical weapons program, and may be able to manufacture low-quality blister agent or obtained chemical arms from undeclared Syrian Government stocks. How do you assess the proliferation risk in Syria right now?

Answer. We are very concerned about allegations that ISIL has been producing and using chemical weapons. Syria continues to be a country of significant proliferation concern. We monitor its proliferation activities closely and have worked with like-minded countries for years to sensitize the international community to the proliferation risks of exporting dual-use items to Syria. We are equally concerned with two of the October 29, 2015, reports of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Fact-Finding Mission. One report confirmed with the "utmost confidence" that mustard agent was used in Syria near the Turkish border. The other concluded that several incidents that occurred in Idlib, Syria, likely involved the use of one or more toxic chemicals as a weapon.

We would be pleased to provide a classified brief on this issue. In conjunction with this response, the State Department is providing the committee with the three OPCW Fact-Finding Mission reports issued on October 29, 2015, regarding alleged chemical weapons use in Syria.

RESPONSES OF PETER WILLIAM BODDE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO LIBYA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE BODDE'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RISCH

Question. Even if the parties to the Government of National Accord are able to finalize an agreement, what is your assessment of the institutional capacity of the country to move from getting an agreement to actually implementing one?

Answer. The political crisis in Libya has lasted over a year. The existence of two competing governments has weakened Libyan institutional capacity. The level of engagement by all sides, especially over the past month, is a testament to the importance stakeholders attach to ensuring a new Government of National Accord (GNA) meets the needs of its constituents and is politically sustainable in the future. Implementing the proposed framework for a GNA will be challenging on several levels, and we will do what we can to support and build the institutional capacity of the new government. The new GNA will need to devote significant attention

to promote economic recovery, improved security, and progress on the political transition.

Question. Under what conditions could you see a return of U.S. personnel to the country?

Answer. Once a GNA is seated in Tripoli, our diplomatic engagement will be critical to bolster its legitimacy. A GNA must secure the support of major actors in the security sector to govern effectively.

Assuring the safety and security of the people under Chief of Mission authority will be my priority, if confirmed. When it is clear that Tripoli is sufficiently secure for returning members of the international community, the State Department will explore the possibility of re-establishing our Embassy in Tripoli.

However, personnel will return to Tripoli only when a thorough, rigorous, deliberate policy and operational planning process conducted in accordance with Accountability Review Board recommendations determines that it is safe for them to do so.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE BODDE'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PAUL

Question. In your testimony you stated you were going to coordinate resources and strategies across the U.S. Government in response to the terrorist threat in Libya. Specifically, how do you plan on coordinating resources with no U.S. presence in Libya and no dependable neighboring allies? By what mechanism will the U.S. transport arms to pro-U.S. factions in Libya to regain order? Will the U.N. or the U.S. be the primary partner in assisting in promoting a civil government and will that require a U.N. or U.S. presence on the ground in Libya?

Answer. It is certainly challenging to maintain continued engagement and delivery of assistance to the Libyan people. However, the Department of State is actively engaged in coordinated efforts to protect U.S. interests in Libya by combating terrorism and supporting programs to improve Libya's security climate. Regional states are deeply concerned and affected by instability in Libya and have played important roles in encouraging negotiation and a final agreement.

The U.N. arms embargo establishes a stringent notification and approval process for weapons transfers to Libya. At this time, our focus is to encourage parties to establish a Government of National Accord (GNA) as the best vehicle to achieve consent from all regions in the country. No one faction can project sovereignty across the whole of Libya or deal effectively on its own with the security and counterterrorism challenges Libya faces. Under current conditions, sending more weapons to one faction could fuel additional civil strife and exacerbate the threat of terrorism. Libya needs a stable, inclusive government capable of uniting the country against ISIL affiliates and other terrorist groups. Coordinating with the United Nations Special Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) will continue to be a key aspect of responding to Libya's political and security challenges.

Establishing a permissive environment for a GNA in Tripoli will be essential to the government's success. We are working with our Libyan and international partners to identify methods to secure such an environment. When it is clear that Tripoli is sufficiently secure, we will explore the possibility of reestablishing a diplomatic presence in Tripoli through a rigorous, deliberate policy and operational planning process conducted in accordance with Accountability Review Board recommendations.

Question. In Libya there have been years of constant tribal fighting and general civil unrest due to the U.S.'s and broader coalition military intervention in the overthrow of Qaddafi. Libya is now a breeding ground for ISIL and other extremist organizations operating across North Africa. Libya's current ruling body has no mandate to govern. What needs to occur in Libya by way of a functioning government and a dependable domestic security force before you would recommend to the President that the United States is ready to reestablish an embassy in Libya?

Answer. Libya needs a stable, inclusive government capable of uniting the country against ISIL affiliates and other extremist organizations in order to address terrorism effectively. Tribal rivalries are a longstanding feature of Libya's political landscape. If a Government of National Accord (GNA) is to succeed, it will have to secure support from the many sources of tribal, religious, militia, and institutional defense leadership in the country. Libyans will need to work together, with international support, to establish a secure and permissive environment in Tripoli that allows a GNA to govern free from the threat of coercion. When it is clear that Tripoli is sufficiently secure for returning members of the international community, we

will explore the possibility of reestablishing our diplomatic presence in Tripoli through a rigorous, deliberate policy and operational planning process conducted in accordance with Accountability Review Board recommendations.

RESPONSES OF MARC JONATHAN SIEVERS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE SULTANATE OF OMAN, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SIEVERS'S RESPONSE TO A QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RISCH

Question. Given that Oman has always maintained a close relationship with Iran while allying itself with the United States and the Gulf Cooperation Council, do you believe a future leader of Oman would maintain the country's current foreign policy?

Answer. Oman's foreign policy is pragmatic and deliberate and the Omanis have emphasized that their intent is to maintain working relations with every country in the region. We anticipate the future leader of Oman will maintain this traditional policy.

As a result of this policy, Oman has been able to mediate on several thorny issues, producing important results. In 2010 and 2011, for example, Oman helped secure the release of three American hikers who had been held in an Iranian prison since 2009.

RESPONSES OF ELISABETH I. MILLARD, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MILLARD'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RISCH

Question. China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative has seen them push into Central Asia as they seek to create bridges to Europe and access to Central Asian energy. How concerned do you believe we should be about rising Chinese influence in Tajikistan?

Answer. Central Asia is one of the least economically integrated regions in the world. There is a pressing need for both infrastructure investment and harmonization of border regulations to improve regional economic connectivity.

The State Department's New Silk Road initiative focuses on "soft" infrastructure in the five Central Asian countries, including support to harmonize customs and regulatory regimes, institute international best border practices, reduce barriers to trade, and facilitate transit of people through the region. These efforts are critical to help Central Asian economies connect more efficiently and diversify. The State Department also supports the development of a regional energy market linking Central Asia and South Asia, through projects like CASA–1000.

China's focus in Central Asia over the last few years has largely been on investments in "hard" infrastructure such as pipelines, rail, and roads. Improved "hard" infrastructure could complement these New Silk Road efforts to increase economic connections in the region. In Tajikistan, China has focused on improving transit corridors such as a cross-country highway system and pipes carrying gas and oil from Turkmenistan. The State Department will urge China to utilize global standards and best practices in order to ensure sustainable economic growth.

The State Department encourages our Central Asian partners to maintain close ties with all their neighbors, in keeping with their multivector foreign policies. Tajikistan does not have to choose between good relations with the United States and other regional powers. By working together with our Central Asian partners, other influential countries including China, and a wide range of other international actors, the State Department can collaborate to create prosperous economies, including in Tajikistan, that are not overly dependent on any one country.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2015

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

Hon. Thomas A. Shannon, Jr., of Virginia, to be an Under Secretary of State (Political Affairs)

Laura S.H. Holgate, of Virginia, to be U.S. Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency, and to be U.S. Representative to the Vienna Office of the U.N.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Corker, Perdue, Cardin, Menendez, Coons, Kaine, and Markey.

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

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

Today the Committee on Foreign Relations will consider the nomination of Thomas Shannon to serve as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. We welcome Ambassador Shannon and thank him for the more than 30 years of service to our country. As I said to him when he came into our office—and I am sure, Ben, you said the same thing. All of us are gratified when people who committed their life in this way end up ascending to these types of positions. So we are very happy for you.

The Under Secretary for Political Affairs manages regional and bilateral policy issues and oversees the Bureaus for Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe—and Eurasia, the Near East, South and Central Asia, the Western Hemisphere and International Organizations. Just a note to staff, we could say the world. [Laughter.]

It would be a little easier. Thank you.

The nomination we are considering today is for the most senior and influential Under Secretary in the State Department. This is a key nomination for this committee at this time. The person that the Senate confirms for this job will not just serve this administration but will also be an institutional bridge to the next administration.

With that, I will turn to Senator Cardin for any opening comments he may wish to make.

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

Senator CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, let me first thank you for the speed in which this confirmation hearing as been set. I really appreciate it, and I know your commitment so that the State Department has a full complement in dealing with the urgent international issues. There is not a shortage of that.

We could not have a better person than Ambassador Shannon, and we thank you very much for your career of public service. We thank you and your family for what you have done for our country.

This position was vacated by Secretary Sherman, who did an outstanding job representing the interests of our country.

As I think Senator Corker has already pointed out, Ambassador Shannon is a career diplomat. He is currently the Counselor at the State Department. He was the Ambassador to Brazil. He was the Assistant Secretary of State and Senior Director of the National Security Council staff for Western Hemisphere Affairs. He has had posts in Venezuela, South Africa, and other critically important positions.

Mr. Chairman, as I think you pointed out, we have conversations with key nominees before we actually have the formal hearings. And it gives us a chance to sort of explore and get a sense as to the commitment to the issues that we are concerned about. And I just want to share with my colleagues that in my conversation with Ambassador Shannon, I was very impressed with his understanding of the importance of this committee, our oversight role, and the importance of transparency and openness between the position of Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And I think that is going to bode well for the type of relationship that we need in order to speak strongly for our country, and conduct our proper oversight role of the United States Senate.

I do want to mention that there are many issues. We could talk about the implementation of the Iran agreement and the increased U.S. engagement in the Middle East. We could talk about Russia's engagement in Ukraine and whether they will comply and how we will assure that they are held to the standards of the Minsk Agreement and then, of course, Russia's engagement in Crimea, Russia's engagement in Moldova, Russia's engagement in Georgia and now in Syria.

But I just want to mention one point that I know the chairman and I are going to be very much engaged with you, Ambassador Shannon, and that is the advancement of good governance, transparency, human rights, anticorruption. And the focal point this year was on the TIP Report. You hold a critically important position to make sure the TIP Report, which is the gold standard for judging conduct globally on the commitment to fight modern-day slavery and trafficking, is held to the highest standards and the tier ratings are based solely on the facts on the ground. In our conversations, I know you are committed to that, but we want you to know this committee is going to do everything we can to support

that type of analysis on the tier ratings of the countries of the world.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to our exchange.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you for bringing up the TIP issue, and we talked extensively about that in our meeting too. And certainly one of the questions I will ask later will be about that. But I really appreciate you emphasizing that in an appropriate way.

With that, we will turn to our nominee. Our first nominee is Ambassador Thomas Shannon, who has been nominated to serve as Under Secretary for Political Affairs. Ambassador Shannon earned the rank of Career Ambassador, the highest in the Foreign Service. Currently he serves as Counselor of the State Department, a position he has held since 2013. Previously Ambassador Shannon has served as our Ambassador to Brazil, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director at the National Security Council, and assignments abroad, apparently having some difficulty keeping a job. [Laughter.]

He received a bachelor of arts from the College of William and Mary and both a master's and doctorate of philosophy from Oxford University.

We thank you for being here. We know you may have some people to introduce, which we hope you will, and we look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS A. SHANNON, JR., NOMINATED TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Ambassador SHANNON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Senator Cardin, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Under Secretary for Political Affairs. I very much appreciate the opening remarks, especially the comments regarding TIP, and I am going to be very happy to answer those questions as we advance in this hearing.

As you can imagine, I am very honored by this nomination. I am also humbled by the nomination. Its pedigree is distinguished. From its first occupant, Robert Murphy, to such great diplomats as Philip Habib, Walter Stoessel, Larry Eagleburger, Tom Pickering, Bill Burns, and Wendy Sherman, the position of Under Secretary has been defined by the extraordinary quality, ability, and the dedication of its occupants.

Throughout my career, I have sought to serve in challenging and complicated places where the power and influence of our great Republic could be brought to bear in pursuit of our interests and promotion of our values.

As you consider my nomination I can offer you the following.

First, I have dedicated my life to public service. My Foreign Service career began in 1984 and it has spanned five administrations, two Democratic and three Republican.

Second, I understand the efficacy of American power and purpose. I have worked in countries and regions in transition and transformation. From Latin America to Africa, I have seen the important and positive influence the United States can bring in help-

ing countries move from authoritarian to democratic governments, from closed to open economies, from autarkic or import substitution models of development to development based on regional integration, and from isolation to globalization. In this process, I have seen and understood the attraction we hold for many and the unique role we play in shaping world events and order.

Third, I believe that diplomacy is an act of advocacy. Our great diplomats from John Jay to John Kerry have had a deep understanding of power politics and its global dimensions. They have used this understanding to protect and advance American interests. However, the vision of order and purpose they brought to American diplomacy was infused with values that reflect our democratic ideals and our conception of individual liberty.

Fourth, I know how to get things done and what needs to be done. As noted, my professional experience has spanned assignments in the White House, the State Department, international organizations, and embassies. And as the chairman noted, I probably do have a problem keeping a job. I am familiar with the machinery of our foreign policy and diplomacy and have experience at every level.

Finally, I understand the importance of consultation with the Congress. I entered the Foreign Service during the Central American wars. This was a time of sharp partisan and institutional divide on our policy in the region. This divide limited our ability to successfully implement our policy. It was only when broad consensus was formed around an agenda based on democracy, human rights, and economic development that we were able to form a bipartisan approach to Central America. This experience shaped how the legislative and executive branches faced foreign policy challenges in Colombia, and the broad bipartisan support enjoyed by Plan Colombia and its successful implementation led to further bipartisan cooperation on hemispheric trade policy, reconstruction and development in Haiti, and the Merida Initiative in Mexico. These experiences taught me that engagement with Congress is an essential part of our foreign policymaking process and its only long-term guarantee of success.

As noted, if confirmed, I will consult with the Congress. I will consult with this committee. I will consult with its staff.

As I reflect on my experience in American diplomacy, I am struck by the tremendous changes I have seen in three decades. But as dramatic as these changes have been, they will not compare to what awaits us. The factors that are driving change, political, economic, social, and technological, are accelerating due to globalization. This, in turn, will increase the velocity of change and challenge our ability to understand and respond to events in the world.

During the past 2 years as Counselor of the Department, I have worked on a variety of issues that have been emblematic of the kinds of changes we face.

First, I worked with our partners in Africa to fight jihadist ideology that has spread from the Middle East into Somalia, Nigeria, and Mali along an historic fault line of conflict that divides northern Africa and the Sahel.

Second, I have worked with our Special Envoy to South Africa on a long, complicated, and ongoing effort to bring peace to South Sudan.

Third, I worked in Southeast Asia on the Lower Mekong Initiative, a sustainable development effort designed to improve coordination and cooperation among the countries of the Lower Mekong River Basin to ensure the long-term viability of the river as a source of food, energy, and water.

Fourth, I worked on maritime security, counterpiracy, and trade issues within the Indo-Pacific region through the Indian Ocean Rim Association.

Finally, I worked to develop a response to the crisis of unaccompanied Central American child migrants who appeared in large numbers across our southwest border in the summer of 2014. The result was the Alliance for Prosperity, a plan and program designed by Guatemala and Honduras and El Salvador, with the help of the Inter-American Development Bank, to address the root causes of migration in the communities of origin of these children.

If confirmed, it will be my assignment to ensure that the Department of State, under the direction and guidance of the President and the Secretary of State, can meet the challenges and seize the opportunities that confront us. It would be my job to ensure that our bureaus and missions and the remarkable individuals who serve there have the policy and programmatic guidance to be successful and the high-level access, assistance, and support to shape and implement our foreign policy. This is a responsibility that I take seriously and again acknowledge the important role of the Congress.

Let me close by thanking the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me. Let me thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Cardin, and the Senators present for this opportunity to appear before you.

Finally, let me thank my family. Today I have present with me my mother, Barbara Shannon. Along with my father, she instilled in me the values that led to my public service. I have with me also my brothers, Paul and Terry, both special agents of the FBI and both veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts.

I would also like to recognize my wife, Gisela, and our sons, Thomas and John. Unfortunately, they are not here today. I would not be here today without them. As our colleagues in the Foreign Service know well, our service to country is a family affair, and the joys and dangers of that service abide in our families.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Shannon follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR THOMAS A. SHANNON, JR.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Cardin, and members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

I am honored by this nomination. If confirmed, I would be the 22nd Under Secretary since this position was created in 1959. I would be the 15th Foreign Service officer to hold this position. For someone such as myself, who has had the honor and privilege of serving the American people and its elected leaders for 31 years as an FSO, there could be few higher honors.

I am also humbled by this nomination. Its pedigree is distinguished. From its first occupant, Robert Murphy, to such great diplomats as Philip Habib, Walter Stoessel,

Larry Eagleburger, Tom Pickering, Bill Burns, and Wendy Sherman, the position of Under Secretary has been defined by the extraordinary quality, ability, and dedication of its occupants.

These sentiments, however, are matched by a quickening of the blood as I contemplate the challenges and opportunities facing our foreign policy as the United States navigates through an increasingly complex and dangerous world.

Throughout my career, I have sought to serve in challenging and complicated places where the power and influence of our great Republic could be brought to bear in pursuit of our interests and the promotion of our values. Today that place is the entire globe. Not since the end of the First World War and the collapse of the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires has the world seen such effervescence. While many of the dangers and challenges of the world have been thrown into sharp relief, I believe they are outnumbered by the opportunities that lie before us. I hope to be able to pursue these opportunities.

As you consider my nomination, I can offer you the following:

First, I have dedicated my life to public service. My Foreign Service career began in 1984 and has spanned five administrations, two Democratic and three Republican. Everything important that has happened to me as an adult has happened within the Foreign Service. I began my professional life in the Foreign Service, I married in the Foreign Service, my wife and I brought forth and raised two sons in the Foreign Service, and I have matured and come of age in the Foreign Service. In other words, my life and my public service are so entwined that they define each other. My desire is to continue to serve.

Second, I understand the efficacy of American power and purpose. I have worked in countries and regions in transition and transformation. From Latin America to Africa, I have seen the important and positive influence of the United States in helping countries move from authoritarian to democratic governments, from closed to open economies, from autarkic or import substitution models of development to development based on regional integration, and from isolation to globalization. In the process, I have seen and understood the attraction we hold for many, and the unique role we play in shaping world order and events.

Third, I believe that diplomacy is an act of advocacy. Our great diplomats, from John Jay to John Kerry, have had a deep understanding of power politics and its global dimensions. They have used this understanding to protect and advance American interests. However, the vision of order and purpose they brought to American diplomacy was infused with values that reflect our democratic ideals and our conception of individual liberty. In this regard, our diplomacy has always had a human face and purpose. We are not a status quo power, but instead a nation comfortable with change and determined to advocate for the values that define us.

Fourth, I know how to get things done and what needs to be done. My professional experience has spanned assignments at the White House, the State Department, international organizations, and Embassies. I am familiar with the machinery of our foreign policy and diplomacy, and I have experience at every level. Most immediately, this means I can assume quickly the policy management role the Under Secretary plays within the State Department, and I can move with equal dispatch into the interagency process that determines our foreign policy. It also means that I know how to link the work of our embassies and regional bureaus to the work of our functional bureaus, ensuring comprehensive policy development and execution.

Finally, I understand the importance of consultation with the Congress. I entered the Foreign Service during the Central American wars. This was a time of sharp partisan and institutional divide on our policy in that region. This divide limited our ability to successfully implement our policy. It was only when broad consensus was formed around an agenda based on democracy, human rights, and economic development that we were able to form a bipartisan approach to Central America. This experience shaped how both the executive and legislative branches faced foreign policy challenges in Colombia. The broad bipartisan support enjoyed by Plan Colombia, and its successful implementation, led to further bipartisan cooperation on hemispheric trade policy, reconstruction and development in Haiti, and the Merida Initiative in Mexico. These experiences taught me that engagement with Congress is an essential part of our foreign policymaking process, and its only long-term guarantee of success.

As I reflect on my experience in American diplomacy, I am struck by the tremendous changes I have seen in three decades. When I entered the Foreign Service in 1984, our major adversary was the Soviet Union and the cold war was in full swing. Over time, I watched the collapse of the Soviet Union and its East European client states, the decline of communism as a viable economic and political ideology, the emergence of the United States as the world's sole super power, the democratization

of the Western Hemisphere, the fraying of the new world order with the emergence of regional warfare in the Balkans, the rise of global terrorism, the attacks of September 11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and now the emergence of ISIL and the upheaval it has caused in Syria and Iraq.

As dramatic as these changes have been, however, they will not compare to what awaits us deeper in this century. The factors that are driving change—political, economic, social, and technological—are accelerating due to globalization. This, in turn, will increase the velocity of change and challenge our ability to understand and respond to events in the world.

During the past 2 years, as Counselor of the Department, I have worked at Secretary Kerry's direction on issues that are emblematic of these changes. Some of these were:

First, I worked with our partners in Africa to help fight the jihadist ideology that had spread from the Middle East into Somalia, Nigeria, and Mali along an historic line of conflict that divides northern Africa and the Sahel. Working with the United Nations, the African Union, subregional organizations, and our bilateral partners, we fashioned an approach that combined diplomacy, security, and economic development to enhance the ability of states and civil societies to protect themselves from the violence of such groups as al-Shabab and Boko Haram.

Second, I worked with our Special Envoy to South Sudan on the long, complicated, and ongoing effort to bring peace to South Sudan. I participated in the talks sponsored by the Intergovernmental Development Authority (IGAD) that led to cessation of hostilities agreements and the recent peace accord. Our efforts have been central to addressing the humanitarian consequences of the fighting in South Sudan, and to shaping a diplomatic approach that attempts to harness South Sudan's neighbors, regional organizations, the donor community, and the United Nations to address the complex array of ethnic, geographic, personal, and political rivalries that shattered South Sudan in December 2013.

Third, I worked in Southeast Asia on the Lower Mekong Initiative, a sustainable development effort designed to improve coordination and cooperation among the countries of the Lower Mekong River Basin to ensure the long-term viability of the river as a source of food, energy, and water. This involved building technical capacity among our partners, bringing to bear global resources from other major river basins—such as the Mississippi and the Danube, developing civil society ability to articulate community views within the authoritarian political systems that still exist in many of these countries, and deepening engagement and confidence in the United States.

Fourth, I worked on maritime security, counterpiracy, and trade issues within the Indo-Pacific region through the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Working with Australia, the European Union, and India we enhanced the IORA's profile as an organization and diplomatic space to address issues that profoundly affect global food and energy security, freedom of navigation, commerce, migration, and the well-being of one of the fastest growing regions of the world.

Finally, I worked to develop a response to the crisis of unaccompanied Central American child migrants who appeared in large numbers across our southwest border in the summer of 2014. The result was the Alliance for Prosperity, a plan and program designed by Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador (with the help of the Inter-American Development Bank) to address the root causes of migration in the communities of origin of these children. Combined with law enforcement, anti-smuggling, public messaging, and multilateral cooperation efforts, we were able to significantly reduce the migration of unaccompanied children while we built our larger strategy. Our success in implementing this strategy will have a long-term impact on Central America, Mexico, and the United States, with important consequences and lessons for other parts of the world facing similar migration crises.

If confirmed, it will be my assignment to ensure that the Department of State, under the direction and guidance of the President and the Secretary of State, can meet the challenges and seize the opportunities that confront us. As Under Secretary, I would sit atop the engine room of the Department of State: the six geographic bureaus and the Bureau of International Organizations that oversee our 275 diplomatic missions, the nearly 10,000 Foreign Service and Civil Service employees assigned to these missions, and the 47,000 Locally Employed Staff at these missions.

It would be my job to ensure that our bureaus and missions, and the remarkable individuals who serve there, have the policy and programmatic guidance to be successful, and the high level access, assistance, and support to shape and implement our foreign policy. This responsibility is institutional. While we must be prepared to meet the challenges presented to us each and every day, we also need to understand the long-term needs of the Foreign Service and the Department of State. Cur-

rently, the Department of State is experiencing a quiet but profound generational change. Nearly 60 percent of our Foreign Service officers and our Civil Service have served 10 years or less. These 10 years have been shaped by our war fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, and many of our officers have served in combat theaters. Not since the Vietnam war have we had so many officers shaped by conflict. The lessons these officers have learned will be carried with them throughout their careers. It is incumbent upon us the ensure that they have the mentors, training, and assistance they need to grasp the nature of the challenges and opportunities they will face in the future, and to advance successfully the interests and values of the United States.

Secretary of State Dean Acheson, surveying the international landscape in the aftermath of World War II, said the task that lay before the United States was as big as Genesis: "to create a world out of chaos." Today, our task is the reverse: to prevent the world from collapsing into chaos. This task, like that facing Acheson, requires us not to be distracted from "the effort to affect the world around us." It also requires us to remember that our diplomacy is about responding to the great changes that modernity has unleashed in the world and finding a means to shape and affect those changes in ways that benefit our interests and are consonant with our values.

Thank you for your time today. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much. We typically are much nicer on people coming before us when their kids are here, but when your mother is here, it will probably be the same. [Laughter.]

Obviously, just for the record, we talked in our office about the TIP Report. We were very dissatisfied. Many of us are very dissatisfied with the way it was handled this last year. And I, just for the record, wonder if you would share with us how you plan to handle it differently this year.

Ambassador SHANNON. Thank you very much.

I had the opportunity to talk about the TIP Report with a whole range of members of this committee, and I was struck by the consensus of concern about the TIP Report. And this worries me deeply.

As you noted, the TIP Report is a gold standard report, and it is one in which the credibility that the report holds, both in the Congress and publicly, is an essential part of that gold standard. And so it will be my intention, working with my colleagues in the State Department who manage this process both on the functional bureau side in J/TIP, on the regional bureau side, and especially in our embassies, that we have as clear and transparent a process as possible and one that can address the concerns expressed.

Trafficking in persons is an important issue for me. It is an issue that I have dealt with at different moments in my career, especially as a chief of mission. The information that our Office on Trafficking in Persons collects regarding the actions of states, governments, and municipalities regarding trafficking comes from our embassies in many instances. And so how our embassies respond and how they engage with the Office of Trafficking in Persons is an important part of this process. And I have seen this work and I know it can work. And so I can assure you, sir, and I can assure members of this committee that I will do everything in my power to make sure that we restore the credibility in your eyes of this report and that we can address the concerns you have expressed.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we appreciate that. I will say in some cases, I would imagine, that ambassadors want to see good things happen in the countries that they are involved in. I know the ambassadors play a role. In some cases it can be an advocating role

for their country. I hope that you will figure out a way to ensure that that does not cause things to be out of balance.

Ambassador SHANNON. No. We will do that, sir, and I will do that. But I can assure you that the American Foreign Service, as I noted in my remarks, understands our diplomacy as advocacy, and we understand the importance of trafficking in persons to you and this committee, broadly to the Congress, but also to the President. And so I will do everything in my power to make sure that this advocacy is powerful.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, my last comment. You know, certainly I respect tremendously those people who offer themselves for foreign service. I just understand the dynamics that can sometimes take place, human nature dynamics that can happen on the ground.

You have watched and been a part of and worked with so many people who have been in this position. You gave a litany of those who have come before you, many of whom are highly respected. You have watched this and you have seen how people have operated. What is it that you think you might uniquely do that is different from those who have come before you?

Ambassador SHANNON. Thank you for that question. It is a very good one.

To begin with, there is a bureaucratic and policy management process to this job that infuses the work of all Under Secretaries. As you noted, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs sits atop a variety of bureaus, the six geographic bureaus and the bureau that manages international organizations, in an effort to manage and focus policy so that it can be as successful as possible.

But I am one of the first nominees really in a long time, really since Tom Pickering, who comes with strong experience in Latin America and Africa, the larger developing world, and really a world of transition and transformation. And although my purview will now be the globe—and I have already over the last 2 years done a variety of work in the Middle East, more deeply in Africa, in Southeast Asia, and in the Indo-Pacific region, I do think that I understand the impact and the importance of helping countries manage transition and transformation, and I understand how the United States has done it in a variety of environments but especially in Africa and Latin America.

I began my career in Central America during a transition from an authoritarian government, a military government to democratic government. I have worked in a variety of countries that were making a similar transition, such as in Brazil, and in South Africa from 1992 to 1996, I was part of a U.S. team that helped manage and promote a transition from an apartheid government to the government of Nelson Mandela.

And so I think I bring an understanding of transition and transformation. I think I bring an understanding of post-conflict societies, and I think I can inject and add a dimension to our foreign policy that could be very important.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much.

And with that, I will turn to Ranking Member Cardin.

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

Again, Mr. Ambassador, thank you for your service, and we very much appreciate the members of your family that are here. We do recognize this is a family commitment, and we thank them also.

You mentioned your experiences with Congress in the Central America conflict, that there was a deep division in Congress, but where we spoke in unity, the United States was stronger in carrying out its mission. There has been a division in Congress over the support for the Iran agreement, but there has been no division in Congress about the importance of the congressional review and the ongoing commitment that Congress has in the implementation of the Iran agreement.

The Iran Review Act that was passed in a very bipartisan vote, almost an unanimous vote in the United States Congress spells out certain continuing commitments by the administration to keep Congress informed. We had a conversation yesterday about Iran's compliance with the agreement. There has already been a violation of the U.N. resolution dealing with ballistic missiles. And how the United States responds to that is, to many of us, is an indication of whether we will demand zero tolerance for violations and strict compliance.

So we need to be kept informed in a very open way as to how the compliance issues are being addressed. They may not elevate to the type of violation that would warrant the United States taking actions to reimpose full sanctions, but they may be of interest as to how we can make sure that there is full compliance with the agreement.

We also have the concerns of recognizing that Iran is not going to change its nefarious activities, particularly as it relates to support of terrorism and its human rights issues. So being able to trace the funds that Iran will be receiving through sanction relief, and how they utilize those funds is going to be of great interest to the members of this committee and to the Members of Congress.

So I just would like to get your assurances about keeping us fully engaged. We know what the law requires, but what I am asking for is, as you pointed out in your relationships with Congress in the past, that we are going to have a very open relationship and full information so that we can carry out our critical responsibilities of oversight.

Ambassador SHANNON. Thank you very much, Senator. Again, I appreciate the question and I especially appreciate its intent and purpose.

The implementation of the JCPOA is going to be what makes it a good agreement or a bad agreement. And we are intent on ensuring that implementation is to the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. And in that regard, we intend to consult with the Congress along the way and will consult with Congress along the way at different steps in the implementation process.

I think it is worth noting that Secretary Kerry and President Obama have selected Ambassador Steve Mull to manage the implementation process, both the interagency side but also our engagement with the Iranians. He has a group of experts working with him that have deep experience in this, and he has chosen myself as the nominee for Under Secretary to manage, along with Ambassador Mull, our work in the Joint Commission, which will meet

regularly to assess the implementation process. It is worth noting that in choosing us, he has chosen career Foreign Service officers and he has chosen two people who did not participate in the negotiations of the agreement. And therefore, he is bringing fresh eyes and objective eyes to an implementation process. I think this is smart and I think it is important.

But as Ambassador Mull and I carry out this work, we will be consulting with you, the other members of this committee, and your staff, and I can assure you that we recognize and understand the importance of having the executive branch and the legislative branch having clear understandings of what needs to be done in the implementation process.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Perdue.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador, it is an honor to have you here today. I appreciate the courtesy of a private meeting with you recently. And I want to publicly for the record applaud your career. I know you have raised your kids abroad. You probably saw your mother much less than you would have liked through your career. I just applaud your career and thank you for being here and for being willing to take on this new responsibility.

I would like to move to the global security crisis that we talked privately about. I see it on three levels. One, we have got a power vacuum out there that has created a rise again of these power rivalries, China and Russia. We saw another power vacuum in Iraq into which ISIS has stepped and created all sorts of problems in Syria, Iraq, and several other countries in the region and in sub-Saharan Africa. And then, of course, now the Iran nuclear deal, as you well said privately and I think just now, that it is all in the implementation.

I would like to focus on Syria. I know we have got talks coming up tomorrow. What are the prospects of those talks? And are you concerned that in your new role—I mean, are you concerned about Iran being a part of the dialogue this early in the conversation and also Russia as far as I can see? I mean, Bashar al-Assad has been propped up by Putin and by Khamenei. Without their help, he would have been gone in my opinion a long time ago, and he would not have had the wherewithal to continually barrel bomb his people and gas his own people. So are you a little concerned about having the arsonist trying to help put the fire out in these talks this weekend?

Ambassador SHANNON. Thank you very much, Senator. And again, I am very grateful for your willingness to see me and to talk about these issues.

As Secretary Kerry I think noted in his testimony here, and I know as Assistant Secretary Patterson and General Allen noted, our objectives in Syria remain degrading and defeating ISIL, fostering a negotiated political transition, and helping Syrians lay the foundation for a free and pluralistic future, a future without ISIL and without Bashar al-Assad.

In this regard, Secretary Kerry——

Senator PERDUE. I am sorry. Is it still the administration's position in your understanding in your role as Counselor—is it still our position that Bashar al-Assad has to go? Is that a prerequisite for this?

Ambassador SHANNON. Correct.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you.

Ambassador SHANNON. And Secretary Kerry, in his effort to fashion a global response to events in Syria, as he said, trying to chart a course out of hell, he has determined that there is a moment in time in which it is important to bring together major players and actors to address events inside of Syria. Part of this process builds off of earlier processes, such as the meetings in London and Geneva.

But the insertion of Russia and Iran in a very aggressive way in Syria has also created a different kind of dynamic. The Russian and Iranian presence or support for Assad is nothing new, but the Russian military presence and air strikes is something new. The presence of Iranian troops and special forces is something new and worrisome.

And for this reason, the Secretary thought it was time to bring everybody together and effectively call their bluff, determine whether or not their public commitment to fighting ISIL and terrorism is a meaningful one and the extent to which they are prepared to work broadly with the international community to convince Mr. Assad that during the political transition process he will have to go.

Senator PERDUE. So as you stated earlier, I think you said you have got great experience in post-conflict societies. So is it possible that Iran would support a secular government after Bashar al-Assad prospectively leaves?

Ambassador SHANNON. I do not know the answer to that question, sir, and I think we are only going to determine whether or not that is possible by engaging. Our engagement is not going to affect our intent or our purpose. We are hopeful that we can establish an environment in Syria where we can address the underlying political problems and allow the Syrians to determine their future and to do it in a way in which they are not responding to Iran or to Russia.

Senator PERDUE. I am almost out of time, but I do want to move on to Venezuela because of your vast experience there. I know that you have led conversations there. Talk to us just a minute about our role in ensuring that they have a true and open and free election in the upcoming election.

Ambassador SHANNON. Thank you for that question. It is an important one.

As we have engaged with Venezuela, we focused on a variety of issues that are important to us.

First, when we first began our engagement, it was about insisting that Venezuela establish a date for legislative elections. When we first engaged, they had not established such a date, and there was concern about whether or not they would establish such a date.

Secondly, we focused on political prisoners, not just high-profile prisoners like Leopoldo Lopez and Antonio Ledezma and Daniel

Ceballos, but also a group of students and other political prisoners, between 1977 and 1980 depending on who is doing the counting, who were being held by the Government of Venezuela for what we believe to be political purposes. We wanted to make it very clear that we do not agree with that and we thought it important that these people be released and allowed to participate in public life.

And then finally connected to the broader purpose of elections, trying to convince Venezuela that it was in their interest to ensure international electoral observation of the upcoming elections in order to validate the results of the elections and allow all Venezuelans to understand that their votes were freely cast and counted in a valid fashion.

These remain our principal objectives. We do have an electoral date. We were able to accomplish that. The political prisoners for the most part are still in prison. Some have been released, but we continue to advocate for them, and we have helped create a larger environment in Latin America where advocating for these political prisoners is now more common and more direct. We see it in the OAS. We see it in the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, and we see it in a variety of other fora. And we continue to work with our partners around the issue of electoral observation.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Menendez. Or go ahead, Senator Kaine. We have a very courteous committee.

Senator KAINE. New Jersey civility is always appreciated. [Laughter.]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MENENDEZ. Notwithstanding what Governor Christie said last night. [Laughter.]

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Ambassador Shannon.

A couple of points. Your long career has included service in some very dangerous areas. Talk about the evolving security conditions under which our folks have to operate around the globe and your sensitivity to those issues in this new role.

Ambassador SHANNON. Senator, thank you very much. I am a proud member of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and thank you for your service both as Governor and as Senator. We are very lucky to have you.

I live in Crystal City and I take the bus to work, which means I get off on Constitution and 22nd and I walk up 22nd Street and enter the State Department through the C Street entrance. And aside from seeing the array of flags of all the countries with whom we have diplomatic relations, I also see on both walls, on either side, both the right and the left side of our entranceway, the names of all the Foreign Service officers, locally employed staff and family members who have given their lives in the service of the United States of America. So every day it is impressed upon me the danger of our job, but also the honor of serving and the importance of being able to make that kind of commitment. This is really a wall of honor for us, and it is also a wall of inspiration. But at the same time, we do not want to add any more names.

The first name was Walter Palfrey who died. He was lost at sea in 1780, the first American diplomat lost in service. So from 1780 to today, we realize that we operate in a dangerous world.

But as I noted, we are in an especially dangerous and dynamic moment around the globe. And so how we manage security and the kinds of structures we put in place are going to be key to how well we can protect our people and how well we can manage risk. And whether it is through our kind of high-threat post review process, whether it is through the determinations we make on whether or not we keep embassies open, whether it is how we determine expedited or, I mean, authorized departure or ordered departure in missions, these are all processes that have to be fluid. They have to be dynamic. They have to be agile, and they have to reflect the facts on the ground.

But aside from that, I believe we need to do more in terms of training our officers to be their own security officers, in other words, allowing them to understand better the environment they are going to be in and allowing them the training and the tools necessary to protect themselves.

The reality is we are an expeditionary diplomatic service. We have 275 diplomatic missions around the world. We have about 10,000 American diplomats and civil servants posted around the world, and we have over 47,000 locally employed staff and we are responsible for them all.

Senator KAINE. This is something that Senator Perdue and I have worked on a lot, and I hope that we will reach a point soon where we can give a green light to the State Department's long plan to build an enhanced security training facility for embassy personnel.

A point on Iran, to pick up the comments that both the chair and ranking member made. When we were working on the Review Act, the administration's attitude really was that they did not think Congress should have a role in approving an Iran deal, which I thought was odd given the fact that the congressional sanctions were such an integral part of the negotiation.

And I would just say I hope the administration will have a different attitude going forward in terms of Congress' role and oversight in implementation of the deal. The deal puts Congress right in the middle of it because in year 8, Congress is required under this deal to dismantle the congressional sanction statutes or we are in breach of the agreement, just as in year 8, the Iranian Parliament is required to permanently accept the additional protocol requirements or they are in breach of the agreement.

There is not going to be a scenario where Congress will kind of be kept in the dark and uninvolved, and then suddenly in year 8, we will be asked, okay, repeal the sanctions statute. It is hard to get a Mothers Day resolution passed in two Houses of Congress. The notion that you would get 60 votes in the Senate and a majority vote in the House to repeal the sanction statutes in year 8, if there has not been very significant dialogue and trust building and assurances that Congress feels comfortable about—we will be in breach of the agreement if we do not have this really tight kind of communication, dialogue, and accepted level of congressional over-

sight over the implementation. So I hope that will be your philosophy in the position.

Ambassador SHANNON. Thank you for that. It will be my philosophy. And the challenge we are going to face as both an executive branch and the legislative branch is that 8 years is a long time, and we will pass through at least one other administration and maybe more. And so trying to find ways to ensure continuity of purpose and continuity of dialogue is going to be a central part of what we are going to do.

Senator KAINE. One last. Just congratulations. It is premature but it is congratulations on the effort. The State Department's commitment to really aggressive diplomacy—we are aware of the Iran deal. We are aware of taking a new tack with Cuba. But also, the United States has played a really important role in accompanying the Government of Colombia in the negotiations with the FARC. And yesterday, I know there was an announcement by President Santos of, hey, we would hope to get to an internationally monitored ceasefire on New Year's Day.

This is the last war that is going on in the Americas. I mean, there are plenty of problems in the Americas, but the notion of two continents without war, I am not sure that there has been a time in recorded history where the Americas have been without war. And we are close to that. And the United States has played a really important role in accompanying Colombia and being an advocate and an ally in those negotiations. And I just give credit to the State Department for this kind of focus on important multilateral diplomacy and appreciate your efforts there.

Ambassador SHANNON. Thank you for raising Colombia. And I want to thank the Congress and this committee in particular for the tremendous work that has been done over the years, along with the House and the Members of the House who have dedicated themselves to Colombia. It has really been a stellar group of people, and they have been a pleasure to work with and I have an opportunity to do it in so many different incarnations from the Director of the Office of Andean Affairs to Deputy Assistant Secretary. I worked on the Andes from my posting at the NSC and then as Assistant Secretary, and also as Counselor I have been involved in this.

And you are right. If the Colombians are able to negotiate this deal, it will be the first time not only in living memory, but probably since the formation of most of the South American republics in the early 19th century that this hemisphere has been at peace, at least in terms of state-on-state wars and internal conflicts.

But the challenge we are going to face—and in this we are going to be engaging with you, sir, and Mr. Chairman, and Senator Cardin, with this committee—is about how to ensure that having been Colombia's best partner in war, we are going to be Colombia's best partner in peace because Colombia is going to be—is a great nation, but it is going to be a greater nation. And with Brazil, it will be one of the defining powers of South America as an Andean power, as a Caribbean power, as an Amazonian power, and as a Pacific power, and as a country that will, if it is successful in the peace process, have consolidated its society and been able to extend the reach of the state into the plains of Colombia. It will be a major

producer of oil and gas. It will be a major producer of minerals. It will be a major agricultural power. But it also has a very dynamic and entrepreneurial people who will be very, very important players throughout the hemisphere. So how we shape that, how we engage with them going forward is going to have a big impact on how successful we are in the hemisphere.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador, congratulations on your nomination. And considering your distinguished career, I think having your mom and dad and here and two FBI agents is over the top——

[Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ [continuing]. In terms of guaranteeing your nomination.

On a serious note, we had a good conversation. And I listened to some or your responses today, and I just want to quickly go over some ground because I think it is incredibly important.

So would you agree with me that consultation with this committee and the Senate is an important factor in us having a united front on U.S. foreign policy?

Ambassador SHANNON. Yes, it is.

Senator MENENDEZ. Because what I have experienced, both as the former chairman of this committee and as a member, is that we get a lot of notification, but not a lot of consultation. And there is a difference. We may not agree at the result of consulting, but at least you will understand some thoughts of those of us who represent the Nation. And maybe there will be ways to achieve a common goal but to do it in a different way. And so what I have experienced is a lot of notification but not a lot of consultation. So I am glad to hear that you are committed to consultation.

Secondly, do you agree with me that the TIP Report needs to be the gold standard?

Ambassador SHANNON. Yes, I do.

Senator MENENDEZ. I think I could probably not find anybody on this committee who believes that the last report did not meet that standard in the questions of Malaysia and Cuba and some other places. The justifications belie the facts, and the reality is that you cannot say that certain things in a reporting period that happened to be good for that country will be included even though they are beyond the reporting period, and certain things that are bad that are also beyond the reporting period do not get included. So either we include everything beyond the reporting period, good and bad, or we stick to the reporting period, but you cannot go beyond the reporting period for what is good but not beyond the reporting period for what is bad.

And I am referring particularly to Malaysia and the mass graves that we found with the Rohingya. So that was not considered, what Malaysia was doing in that context, but some passage of a law that was not even yet in force was considered.

So we need to make that the gold standard, and I hope that we can—understanding the pressures within the Department from regional bureaus and whatnot, but it just does not work the way it

worked the last time and it undermines our credibility in trafficking in persons.

Thirdly, would you agree with me that we must respond to violations by Iran of whether it is its nuclear agreement or Security Council resolutions with significant responses, or else we will be down a slippery slope in terms of what they think they can get away with?

Ambassador SHANNON. Yes, I do.

Senator MENENDEZ. So I say that because regardless—and there are members of this committee that have voted both ways. I oppose the agreement. I think it is aspirational. I hope it works now that that is the law. But by the same token, I do not think any of it can work if Iran thinks it can get away with violating, as it largely has done for the past decade and a half in violating international—United Nations Security Council resolutions, international law, and still largely developed a nuclear program.

If we are going to get anything out of this agreement, it has to be enforced. And with the ballistic missile test that they had, I do not think you are going to end up with a U.N. resolution that is going to sanction them because Russia will probably negate it with its veto. So we have to be thinking about how we are going to respond to that otherwise we are headed down a slippery slope. And I know this will not be the mainstay of your portfolio, but the reality is you are going to have as the third-highest ranking person at the State Department some say in this, and I hope that you will hold the view that you have publicly described here saying it is important within the deliberations of the Department.

Fourth, Venezuela. You and I had a long discussion of this. And I have to be honest with you. I appreciate what you were trying to do when you met with Diosdado Cabello, who is supposedly by some of our agencies described as someone who is involved in narcotrafficking. I also realize he has an elected position inside of Venezuela. But that is a question for the future: as a policy how far do we go with individuals who, while they may hold a position, are involved in this context of narcotrafficking?

But in Venezuela, you have a process in which we do not have yet international observers. You have a sham trial where a prosecutor ultimately flees—one of the prosecutor flees the country and says that he was under pressure to ultimately pursue the case in the manner in which he did. Lopez is convicted in a sham trial, I think 13 years in jail. And you have a series of other human rights activists and political dissidents jailed. And you have the Maduro regime saying publicly in essence, well, we are going to win the elections, which basically means we are going to win it one way or the other. The polls do not indicate that we will at the ballot box, but we are going to win it.

So my concern is—and the thing I think you do bring to this job that others do not have is your combination of Latin America and Africa experience.

But my concern is that we are not willing to challenge regimes, whether it be in Venezuela or in Cuba where we have ceded everything to the regime and have seen nothing—nothing—in terms of human rights and democracy issues.

So talk to me about challenging a regime when the diplomacy has not achieved what we want. You know, we passed this law that came out of this committee on Venezuela and sanctions. The President invoked some it. There is still a lot more that could be invoked, but when is the demarcation in which we say, okay, our diplomacy has not worked at this point. How do we back it up with some strength?

Ambassador SHANNON. Thank you very much, Senator. And let me thank you for your tremendous commitment to Latin America and also to the State Department and diversity within the State Department. It has been an important motivator for us, an important driver of how we shape the diplomats of the future.

In regard to the TIP Report, let me reiterate that I am committed to addressing the concerns of this committee and members of the committee have expressed their concerns to me. As I noted previously, it is very worrisome for me that a report that should be a gold standard is seen as not being that. And so I will do everything I can to address those concerns and ensure that we are examining countries under the rubric of the report with all the rigor that is required by law.

And in regard to Iran violations, sir, I can guarantee you that we will be responding to them. We recognize, as important as the JCPOA is, it has a set of sanctions tied to it that are nuclear-related, but there are sanctions related to ballistic missiles, to human rights, and to terrorism. And we will continue to pursue those sanctions and pursue violations whenever we see them. We understand that our relationship with Iran is a complicated one, but again, our success in the JCPOA and its implementation will only happen if we show a clear willingness to pursue violations elsewhere under other sanctions regimes.

And in regard to Venezuela, we did have a good conversation yesterday, and I appreciated the conversation. I appreciated your point of view. I understand it and I appreciate the concerns that others have expressed.

As we look at what is next in Venezuela, so much of our own relationship with Venezuela will depend on what happens around the legislative elections and what happens around the issue of political prisoners. When I met with Diosdado Caballo, as I noted to you earlier, it was with the purpose, first of all, of winning from them an electoral date for legislative assembly elections, which we thought was important and essential, first of all, to create a political process that would allow the Venezuelan people to express themselves but also to begin to create a larger environment for dialogue inside of Venezuela.

Its secondary purpose was to save the life of Leopoldo Lopez, who at the time was in the fourth week of a hunger strike, and we were looking for an action by the Venezuelan Government that would convince Lopez to come off his strike. We believe that Lopez, along with the other political prisoners being held, are an essential part of a broader solution to the kinds of internal challenges that Venezuela faces today, and we will continue to advocate for his release, as we have done over time.

It should be noted that as we have engaged with Venezuela, we have never backed off our criticism of Venezuela regarding some of

its political behavior and activity. And we have expressed our concern about the politicization of the judiciary and the continued holding of political prisoners. And we will continue to do so.

As we look toward the elections, the ability of the elections to be perceived as free elections and the vote count as valid is going to be a very important part of how we manage the next step in the relationship. And in that regard, the legislation that you worked on and that other members of this committee and Senate worked on will be an important tool for us, and we will use it if necessary.

Senator MENENDEZ. I hope you use the tool.

I look forward to supporting your confirmation before the committee and the Senate.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Ambassador, for your service. Thank you to your family for sustaining and supporting Ambassador Shannon's service over so many years in many challenging environments. I concur with my colleague from New Jersey that your long service in Latin America and in Africa brings a particular and needed strength. Your service as a member of the career Foreign Service also brings an important and vital perspective.

So let me just broadly reference three questions, and then you take as much time as you wish and allocate your time accordingly.

I would be interested in hearing on behalf of the 10,000 Foreign Service and Civil Service employees of the Department of State what you think are the most important, most needed steps to continue to attract and retain and motivate the best and brightest to serve in these difficult and demanding and important posts around the world.

I am also interested—you succeed Wendy Sherman. Hopefully you will be confirmed. I will support your confirmation. She placed a real focus on peacekeeping. Peacekeeping is difficult business. It is expensive. It is full of complications. There is an African standby force that is in the early stages of being perhaps ready to actually serve on the continent. They have been doing some recent exercises in South Africa, and I would be interested in how you see the future of peacekeeping and how we make it sustainable from a cost perspective.

And then last, I am concerned about how we support economic growth in Africa while also supporting democracy and governance. There has been a hotly contested election in Tanzania. The results were just announced in the last hour. They were invalidated in Zanzibar earlier today. We have a number of critical other elections this year. How do we balance those two, promoting economic growth and development, while still advocating for our values over the values of some of our competitors in Africa?

Ambassador SHANNON. Well, thank you very much, Senator. I appreciate the questions. And let me thank you for the trip you made to the State Department to meet with some of our mid-level officers. It was a great experience for them. But we really appreciated the respect you showed us and we look forward to inviting you back. So thank you for that.

You know, in regard to your first question, how to attract and keep the best people, that is something we struggle with every day.

Luckily we have a really interesting portfolio, and so we tend to attract people who are smart, motivated, and expeditionary in mindset. They want to go places and they want to do things. And so that is important to us.

But the challenges we face are real. The challenges that dual-career families face in the Foreign Service, the challenges that families with children with special needs face, and then the broader security environment that we spoke about earlier also affects how people understand the Foreign Service and the degree to which they enter the Foreign Service or stay as officers.

We are really at this point in time going through a generational change in the Foreign Service. Sixty percent of the Foreign Service—nearly 60 percent—it is about 57-something percent of the Foreign Service has served for 10 years or less. And this is quite remarkable. It means that we have a whole cadre of younger officers who are going to be our next generation of leaders who have served in the Foreign Service during a period of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan and a larger global struggle against terrorism. And in many instances, some of these classes have gone in large numbers to Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other areas first where they are unaccompanied postings but secondly where the challenges they face are quite significant. And how we help these officers understand the larger world, how we mentor them, how we train them, how we enhance their language capability is going to be a big part of our success in the future.

And so one of the assignments I am going to take on myself is really a mentoring assignment, and it is intent on engaging with our geographic bureaus, with the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, with the Foreign Service Institute, and with the Secretary to ensure that he can leave behind a legacy of enhanced language training, enhanced regional studies, and an ability to do more in the field to help officers become familiar with the areas they are working on and areas they want to continue to work on.

But let me share one quick anecdote with you. As I go around and talk to younger officers, especially in the Middle East, one of their biggest concerns is security but not whether they are going to be okay. Their concern is are they going to be able to do their job. And this is what we talked about earlier. They want the tools to be able to do their job, and that means a security environment that protects them but also their ability to understand and interpret the environment they are in. And in this regard, we have got a lot of work to do because there are some places that are just deadly for us, and we just either cannot go there or we have to go there under very careful conditions.

But again, this is something I am really focused on because this is going to have a big impact on some of our best and brightest as to whether they stay. If they think their career is going to be spent in a container or behind an embassy wall and if they can only go out in force and with interpreters, they are not going to stay. So we have to find a way to deal with this.

And then finally, Africa is a special interest of mine. I have served in Washington on African affairs but also in the field on African affairs, and I have been able to travel to Africa a lot.

The economic growth side is really important for this continent. This is the continent of the 21st century, and President Obama, through his Africa Leaders Summit, highlighted the importance of commercial engagement and presented a different vision of Africa to the American people, one of opportunity and growth. And as we look into the future, we need to understand that the Chinese have figured this out and the Chinese are present in Africa in a big way. And so we have to be present in a big way. And that means looking for ways to push American businesses, American investment and create the connectivity around economic growth that is necessary for Africa to continue to grow at the rate that it is growing. I think it is the fastest growing continent in the world in terms of commerce and investment.

But that said, the governance issues are really striking in different parts of Africa. And the issues we are facing, whether it be in Tanzania, whether it be in the DRC, whether it be in Burundi, whether it be in Rwanda or beyond, how leaders understand their role as elected leaders, how they understand their ability to perpetuate themselves in power, and the degree to which they use state structures to further themselves in power and do not address the transparency, accountability, and anticorruption issues that are really going to be the basis for long-term economic growth and development is going to be key. And it has to be a central part of our engagement in Africa. And I believe it is.

And I think with our Assistant Secretary, Linda Thomas Greenfield, we have been really dynamic, really pushing hard on these issues, not always successfully because of the nature of some of the countries that we have been working in, but we have not given up. And I can assure you that governance is going to be a big part of how we engage in Africa because absent the right kind of governance economic growth is not going to have the social impact it needs to have.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

As you know, there will be some followup questions, and we will keep the record open until Monday for both of the nominees.

But at this point, again, thank you for your willingness to serve, for having your family here, for their service to our country, and we look forward to your confirmation.

Ambassador SHANNON. Thank you very much. I am very grateful.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, sir.

Next we will consider the nomination of Laura Holgate, nominee to be U.S. Representative to the Vienna Office of the United Nations and U.S. Representative to the International Atomic Energy, commonly called the IAEA.

This role requires an agile ambassador capable of representing U.S. positions with a diverse array of U.N. organizations, from the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime to the U.N. Division of Management, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization, of which we are not a party, the Wassernaar Arrangement, and the U.N. Commission on International Trade Law, among others.

Perhaps the most visible to this committee given the ongoing engagement on the JCPOA with Iran will be the nominee's representation of the United States at the International Atomic Energy

Agency. I recognize that you, Ms. Holgate, have dedicated your career, as we have discussed privately, to promoting nuclear security and establishing an environment that staunches the spread of nuclear materials.

But the challenges of the position may be daunting. You will be called upon to hold a strong line in the face of pressure from our partners who, in order to open economic relations with Iran, may seek to close the door on old allegations and turn a blind eye to previous military dimensions of the program that may provide indicators necessary for the IAEA to monitor the program going forward.

You may be called upon to defend key U.S. positions in the face of opposition from the nonaligned movement. You may have to stand alone to adequately defend U.S. national security interests.

I hope you will explain how you intend to fulfill these obligations in this role and the expectations you have for your ability to successfully represent the United States.

While we have the opportunity, I would also like for you to discuss our Government's current efforts to counter nuclear smuggling and how you may use this position, if confirmed, to further ensure the security of nuclear material globally.

I appreciate your attendance before the committee today and look forward to growing our relationship, should you be confirmed.

With that, I would like to recognize our distinguished ranking member, Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Well, let me also welcome Laura Holgate. Thank you very much for your long-standing public service. As was pointed out with the previous witness, this is a family commitment. We thank you and your family for your willingness to serve our country in this critically important position.

You bring a host of qualifications to this nomination, a senior position at the Department of Energy and Department of Defense, a career that prevents states and terrorists from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction. You are currently the Senior Director of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism and Threat Reduction at the National Security Council. You come well prepared for the challenges in Vienna. And I say that because, yes, there are the direct responsibilities that you have in the organizations in Vienna under the United Nations and the IAEA and others, but also working with two other very important missions that we have. The host mission for Austria, as well as the OSCE mission that you and I had a chance to talk about, all are housed in Vienna. So you are part of a diplomatic team that we have in a critically important place where major decisions are being made.

Obviously, the focus today is very much on the responsibilities and the implementation of the Iran agreement by the IAEA. And as we talked privately, what I will repeat now and as I also pointed out to Ambassador Shannon, your openness with us is critically important, and I appreciate the commitments that you have made in that regard.

Mr. Chairman, I am also pleased to note that Sam Nunn, a former member of this body, who worked closely with Laura Holgate during the 8 years she spent at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, has written a letter on her behalf touting Mrs. Holgate. And

I quote, "super knowledge, diplomatic skills, and strong passion for reducing global dangers." And I would request that that letter be made part of our record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The information was not available at the print deadline.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

We will now turn to the nominee. Our second nominee, as we have mentioned, is Laura Holgate who has been nominated to serve as Ambassador and U.S. Representative to the Vienna Office of the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Currently Ms. Holgate has advised the President for over 6 years in the position of Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Weapons of Mass Destruction, Terrorism, and Threat Reduction at the National Security Council.

She received her bachelor of arts from Princeton University and a master's in science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

We welcome you. If you could summarize your thoughts in about 5 minutes, we will look forward to questions. And again, congratulations on your nomination.

STATEMENT OF LAURA S.H. HOLGATE, NOMINATED TO BE THE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY AND TO BE THE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE VIENNA OFFICE OF THE U.N.

Ms. HOLGATE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the Vienna offices of the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and other international organizations in Vienna. I am grateful to President Obama and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me.

This is a critical moment for the United States interests in the IAEA and the other U.N. offices in Vienna. Full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, successful transition of the Nuclear Security Summit's work to secure and reduce global stockpiles of nuclear materials to the relevant, enduring international institutions, safe and secure expansion of nuclear energy and other peaceful nuclear technologies, and innovative peaceful applications of space science demand active, focused leadership and engagement by the United States to promote our national interests and to advance our contributions towards shared global priorities.

My experience inside and outside the U.S. Government has prepared me to play this vital role in Vienna. I have worked on reducing nuclear, biological, and chemical threats since 1989. I have served a combined 14 years in the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and at the National Security Council where I led programs and developed policies to keep nuclear materials out of terrorist hands, to destroy chemical weapons in Russia, Libya, and Syria, and to prevent bioterrorism. For 8 years, I headed the nongovernment Nuclear Threat Initiative's programs in the former

Soviet Union and pioneered projects such as the IAEA's low enriched uranium fuel bank. Most relevant to the position for which I am being considered, I have led the preparation of four nuclear security summits, working closely with counterparts from 52 diverse countries and four international organizations, including the United Nations and the IAEA. Each of these positions has contributed to my ability to represent the United States and the President with authority and respect.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, I would like to introduce to you and the committee three very special people who have joined me here today. My husband, Rick Holgate, has for 27 years steadfastly supported my career even as he has built his own impressive accomplishments in Government service and in the private sector. I am proud and grateful for his encouragement and partnership as we consider this new opportunity to serve.

My parents, Susan and Bert Hayes, are here from Richmond as well. My father, as a TWA pilot, opened my eyes, ears, and mind to the wide world beyond Overland Park, Kansas. And my mother set the example of opening our doors and our hearts to people who are different from us. These early influences launched me on the path to today's hearing, and I hope to honor their faith in me by my service.

And I deeply appreciate the support of friends and colleagues who are watching these proceedings today.

Mr. Chairman, if I am confirmed in this position, I pledge to strengthen and broaden the partnerships with other member states and with the U.N. agencies in Vienna and further develop the coalitions that we need to achieve U.S. priorities. Key among these goals is that the IAEA has the tools it needs to monitor implementation of the P5+1/Iran Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Going forward, the IAEA, with its proven record of technical expertise, offers us an agency well placed to ensure robust implementation. I pledge to play my role in keeping Congress informed and engaged as this implementation process proceeds.

Another opportunity I see is to leverage the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime's technical assistance to counter and prevent terrorism and trafficking through training and other support for judges and prosecutors especially those in high-threat regions and countries. UNODC's efforts complement our own counterterrorism objectives and reach countries we may not be able to engage directly.

Finally, if confirmed, I will press international organizations in Vienna to continue to make progress on management reforms, transparency, and fairness. I will encourage intensified efforts towards achieving greater diversity, including at the senior and policymaking levels. I will continue the efforts of my predecessors to strongly support the hiring of qualified American citizens to these organizations.

Mr. Chairman, the specialized and technical agencies in Vienna foster activities and technologies that affect the lives of every citizen every day from combating the spread of nuclear weapons and human and arms trafficking, to harnessing the power of the atom to promote human health and reduce and eliminate hunger, to utilizing space for communication, disaster early warning, and exploration and research.

If confirmed, I would work in close consultation with this committee and the Congress to ensure that U.S. values and priorities are fully reflected in our positions and that U.S. contributions and resources are expended with care. We owe the American people and the people all over the world no less.

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

[The prepared statement of Ms. Holgate follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LAURA S.H. HOLGATE

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations (U.N.), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other International Organizations in Vienna. I am grateful to President Obama and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me.

This is a critical moment for the United States interests in the IAEA and the other U.N. offices in Vienna. Full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, successful transition of the Nuclear Security Summit's legacy of achievement to the relevant enduring international institutions, safe and secure expansion of nuclear energy and other peaceful nuclear technologies, effective efforts to combat transnational crime and corruption, and innovative peaceful applications of space science demand active, focused leadership and engagement by the United States to promote our national interests and to advance our contributions toward shared global priorities.

My experience inside and outside the United States Government has prepared me to play this vital role in Vienna at this critical time. I have worked on reducing nuclear, biological, and chemical threats since 1989, when I wrote my MIT masters thesis on chemical weapons destruction. I was part of the team led by Ash Carter and Bill Perry in 1991 that conceived what became the landmark Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. I have served a combined 14 years in the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and at the National Security Council, where I led programs and developed policies to keep nuclear materials out of terrorist hands, to destroy chemical weapons in Russia, Libya, and Syria, and to prevent bioterrorism. I was a founding member of the nongovernment Nuclear Threat Initiative, where for 8 years I headed the programs focused on Russia and New Independent States and pioneered projects that gave rise to major international outcomes such as the Department of Energy's Global Threat Reduction Initiative and the IAEA's low enriched uranium fuel bank. In my current position on the National Security Council staff, I oversee and coordinate the development of national policies and programs to reduce global threats from nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons; detect, identify, secure, and eliminate nuclear materials; prevent malicious use of biotechnology; and secure the civilian nuclear fuel cycle. Most relevant to the position for which I am being considered, I have led the preparation for four Nuclear Security summits, working closely with counterparts from 52 diverse countries and four international organizations, including the IAEA. Each of these positions has contributed to my knowledge, experience, relationships across parties and around the world, and enhanced my ability to represent the United States and the President with authority and respect.

Many of the U.N. agencies and organizations headquartered in Vienna have emerged as key partners for the United States as our country seeks to resolve some of the most difficult challenges and threats to our own national interests. The IAEA and the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, for example, have proven track records in providing the kind of expertise, technical knowledge, and credibility that the United States needs in its tool box as we lead the world in forging international responses to the most urgent and critical threats to international peace and security.

If confirmed, I fully recognize that I will be leading American engagement with these agencies at a critical time. I see an array of challenges that will require strong U.S. leadership so that the work of the Vienna agencies continues to fully reflect U.S. values and priorities. At the same time, I also see numerous opportunities for the United States to promote sound management practices; transparency; accountability; and good stewardship of U.S. and other Member State contributions. Ultimately, I see great potential for the United States to use its presence among the

U.N. agencies in Vienna to promote and advance strong partnerships and coordination with our friends and allies in a complex and often dangerous world.

In this context, I would like to share with you today more details regarding what I see as these challenges and opportunities as well as what my priorities would be if I have the honor to be confirmed for this important post. But before I do that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to pause briefly to introduce to you and the committee a few very special people who have joined me here today. My husband, Rick Holgate, has for 27 years steadfastly supported my career even as he has built his own impressive accomplishments in government service and in the private sector. I am grateful for his encouragement and partnership as we consider this new opportunity to serve. My parents, Susan and Bert Hayes, instilled in me a love of country and a commitment to excellence that continue to motivate me, and they have set inspiring examples of service in their own lives and in how they raised me and my sister, Gregg. And I am honored and humbled by the support of friends and colleagues who are watching these proceedings today.

Mr. Chairman, if I am confirmed in this position, I pledge to strengthen and broaden the partnerships with other member states and with the Vienna U.N. agencies, and further develop the coalitions that we need to achieve U.S. priorities. Key among these goals is to work to make sure the IAEA has the mandate and the capacity to address evolving challenges and the greater demands being placed on it. In particular, the IAEA must have the tools it needs to monitor implementation of the P5+1/Iran Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Going forward, the IAEA, with its proven record of technical expertise, offers us an agency well-placed to ensure appropriate implementation.

Another opportunity I see is to leverage the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to better address today's breaking and long-term crises. I would seek, in concert with other member states, to focus the UNODC's technical skills and expertise efficiently on threats that directly affect our interests, including anticorruption and the rule of law, border security, combating trafficking of persons and migrant smuggling, and counterpiracy. This will involve identifying threats and applying UNODC's resources in the regions in which they may be needed most.

A key challenge is to fend off other countries' attempts to distort the important technical and scientific work of key international organizations such as the IAEA and the U.N. Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS). These organizations' work should not be stymied by grandstanding on issues such as the procedure for approving Israel's application for membership.

Finally, if confirmed, I will press international organizations in Vienna to continue to make progress in management reforms, transparency, and fairness. I will encourage intensified efforts toward achieving greater diversity, including at the senior and policymaking levels. I will continue the efforts of my predecessors to strongly support the hiring of qualified American citizens in these organizations.

I would like to briefly highlight just a few examples of the work being done by international organizations in Vienna—work that affects not only our national security but also the everyday lives of not only our citizens but of people around the world.

The International Atomic Energy Agency

Since its inception in 1958, the IAEA has been central to international nuclear nonproliferation regime, encouraging peaceful uses of nuclear technology while preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. Today, the IAEA will need our support more than ever as it steps up to meet the huge challenge of monitoring implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The IAEA's central role is to implement monitoring and verification as set forth in the JCPOA. On October 15, the IAEA reported that activities set out in the IAEA/Iran "Roadmap for the clarification of past and present outstanding issues regarding Iran's nuclear program" were completed. The IAEA indicated that by December 15, 2015, the Director General will provide, for action by the Board of Governors, the final assessment on the resolution of all past and present outstanding issues, as set out in the annex of the 2011 Director General's report. I know the JCPOA is an issue of intense interest to the members of this committee, the Congress, and the public, and if confirmed, I commit to keep an open and candid dialogue with the Congress.

In addition to the JCPOA, the IAEA has been nothing short of remarkable in its successful efforts to adapt to the evolving challenges of its safeguards mandate. The IAEA has safeguards agreements with 182 countries, under which it verifies that nuclear material is not diverted and nuclear facilities are not misused for weapons. Over the last two decades, 126 countries have concluded Additional Protocols with the IAEA, designed to enable the IAEA to confirm that there are no undeclared

nuclear materials or activities in the country as a whole. The United States works closely with the IAEA Secretariat and with other IAEA Member States to ensure that the Agency has the financial, technical, and human resources and the political support it needs to fulfill those demanding responsibilities. And Congress plays a critical role in funding these programs.

Equally important is our collaboration with IAEA on nuclear security. The effort to prevent a terrorist from acquiring a nuclear weapon has been a top priority for this administration. The President's Nuclear Security Summit, for which I have had the honor to serve as U.S. Sherpa, has raised the issue of nuclear security to the head of state level which has, in turn, produced major national commitments to minimize and secure nuclear materials, as well as increase efforts to interdict such materials outside of regulatory control.The summit has strengthened the global nuclear security architecture through support for international institutions and initiatives, as well as creating new standards for the security of nuclear materials. As we prepare to host the final Nuclear Security Summit, this spring, it is more evident than ever that the IAEA will play a central role in coordinating international institutions which will continue the work undertaken in the summit process. If confirmed, I would promote the IAEA's role in coordinating nuclear security activities worldwide and maintaining the momentum created by the summit process on this important issue.

Meanwhile, as global demand for nuclear power grows, the demands on the IAEA to help promote strong national nuclear safety standards will accelerate. The Fukushima Daiichi disaster in March 2011 demonstrated once again that no nation—no matter how prepared or technically advanced—is invulnerable to disasters involving nuclear material. In the wake of these kinds of crises—and to prevent future disasters—the IAEA is there to assist member states in managing risk and offering technical guidance to build safety capacity.

More broadly, the IAEA plays a key role in assessing member states' power needs and infrastructure capacity, and in identifying where capacity needs to be improved before nuclear power becomes a viable option. Also, the IAEA is engaged in the establishment of a Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) Fuel Bank in Kazakhstan. This Bank will serve both as an assurance of supply mechanism so that countries can access peaceful power and as a disincentive to the spread of enrichment technology to countries that do not already have it. It underlines the central roles the IAEA plays in both the promotion and nonproliferation aspects of nuclear energy.

Finally, in addition to nuclear safeguards and nuclear safety and security, the IAEA's third core mandate relates to fostering the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science, and technology for all member states. During the last several years, the IAEA has been engaged in essential work in promoting human health, agriculture and food security, clean water, and the environment through nuclear techniques and its partnership with U.N. and other international organizations.

If confirmed, I would work toward adapting the IAEA's efforts in promoting peaceful uses of nuclear power; continue to address the evolving needs and interests of member states in nuclear power; and to a fully informed decisions by member states embarking on such a course.

The U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime

The UNODC is also a key U.S. partner in countering terrorism; strengthening criminal justice systems and respect for the rule of law; and fighting crime. UNODC has shown leadership in addressing these threats and in building member states' capacity to address them. In East and West Africa; for example, U.S. funding to UNODC has shown tangible results in stemming human trafficking and migrant smuggling. There and elsewhere, UNODC has also led international efforts to address wildlife trafficking, environmental crime, and cybercrime. Finally, UNODC's Terrorism Prevention Branch also plays an important role in providing technical assistance to enhance member states capacities to counter and prevent terrorism. Since 2002, the United States and other partners have worked closely with this program to develop and strengthen its technical assistance programs for criminal justice sector officials, especially those in high threat regions and countries. UNODC's efforts complement our counterterrorism objectives. If confirmed, I would look to expand on this good work, and to increase efforts to address the global phenomena of foreign terrorist fighters and illicit diversion of precursor chemicals that could be used to build improvised explosive devices.

Other organizations

Other Vienna-based organizations also play important roles and touch the lives of our citizens in fundamental ways.

For example, the U.N. Office on Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) in Vienna implements the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly and of the UNCOPUOS). These are traditionally consensus-based organizations that focus on ensuring that satellite capabilities and space technology operate peacefully, safely, and for the broad benefit of all. A challenge we face within these types of agencies is occasional attempts by certain member states to politicize their work or decision-making. If confirmed, I would strive for these cooperative, technical organizations to continue to work smoothly in the performance of their mandates, free from politicization that could undermine their consensus-based procedures.

Finally, if confirmed, I would also serve as the Permanent Representative of the United States to the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. The United States continues to engage with member states of the Preparatory Commission and with its Provisional Technical Secretariat to complete the verification regime that would be required to implement the CTBT should it enter into force. The International Monitoring System (IMS), the heart of that regime, is nearly complete. It is a technically advanced, global network of sensors that can detect even relatively low-yield nuclear explosions. The IMS has enjoyed the financial and diplomatic support of every administration since the United States signed the Treaty in 1996. Although data from the IMS is not used to monitor compliance with the treaty, as it has not yet entered into force, it is noteworthy that a still incomplete IMS successfully detected all three North Korean nuclear explosive tests in 2006, 2009, and 2013.

Conclusion

The specialized and technical agencies in Vienna foster activities and technologies that affect the lives of every citizen every day—from combating proliferation and human and arms trafficking, to harnessing the power of the atom to promote human health and reduce and eliminate hunger, to addressing climate change, to utilizing space for communication, disaster early warning, and exploration and research.

I believe that strong U.S. engagement, partnership, and leadership in these organizations is vitally important not only to our national security but also to the individual well-being of each of our citizens, and the prospect of a better life for all.

If confirmed, I would work in close consultation with Congress to ensure that U.S. values and priorities are fully reflected in our positions, and that U.S. contributions and resources are expended with care.

I recognize that there may be many areas of disagreement and contention within these organizations and among their memberships, but I believe that it is only through strong U.S. engagement and leadership in these multilateral technical forums that can they achieve a positive and lasting impact on the welfare and quality of life of our generation and those to come.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to close with a personal note. Growing up in Overland Park, KS, this kind of opportunity to serve my country was unimaginable: I had no idea what an ambassador did, and I was 27 before I met one. I credit my parents for the upbringing that created this occasion. My airline pilot father opened my eyes, ears, and mind to the wide world beyond the American Midwest, and my mother set the example of opening our doors and our hearts to people who were different from us. Most importantly, they offered support, encouragement and pride as I slowly formed the notion that I might do good in the world by figuring out ways to prevent nuclear war, which, when I was a Princeton undergraduate during the cold war, seemed like it might break forth at any moment. The end of the cold war coincided with my first jobs as a national security professional, and many new WMD threats begin to crowd to the forefront—the collapse of a nuclear superpower, the advances in biology that made pathogens both more dangerous and more accessible, and, as we turned the corner into a new millennium, the stark reality of terrorists with apocalyptic ambitions and the skills and resources to achieve them. In the years since the cold war, we have created new tools—programs, technology, organizations, partnerships—to deal with these new and pressing threats. It has been my privilege to have helped invent some of these tools, and to have used them to reduce these threats and keep America safe. Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I would make the most of the opportunity to continue this commitment by vigorously promoting U.S. interests at the IAEA, and at the U.N. and other international organizations in Vienna.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much.

If you would, explain—I know we have a gentleman, former Ambassador Stephen Mull, who will be overseeing the implementation. How will your role and his role interact?

Ms. HOLGATE. Thank you, sir.

If confirmed, I would be part of Ambassador Mull's team of interagency partners. The current Chargé in the UNV mission participates in those conversations, those interagency meetings remotely and is in regular contact with Ambassador Mull. I would expect to continue and intensify that level of engagement in the interagency policy process. And the role in Vienna is to be the eyes and ears on the ground of what is going on, not just the formal presentation of information from the Secretariat but understanding the trends, the issues, the mood, how the conversations are going, and being sure that those are reported back into the U.S. policy process, also being alert to opportunities to improve activities or steps that may need to be taken and to be sure that those are incorporated into our Government-wide implementation efforts.

The CHAIRMAN. If confirmed, who will you actually receive direction from here in Washington relative to positions that you take?

Ms. HOLGATE. The letter of commission for ambassadors typically says that directions come from the President and from the Secretary of State, sir. My reporting chain goes through Assistant Secretary Crocker and then up through the position that we just had the nominee for. But these issues are addressed in an interagency process and a whole-of-government effort, and I will, if confirmed, play the role that I am assigned in that context.

The CHAIRMAN. I know you are going to get some questions from someone whether QFR and personal—in a personal way relative to whether you are involved in the negotiation of the JCPOA. And so I would like to give you the opportunity publicly to state what your involvement was.

Ms. HOLGATE. I appreciate that question, Senator.

As we discussed in our conversation, which I appreciated, I was not part of the negotiating team, nor was I privy to the judgments made in the process of that negotiation. I am, however, familiar with its contents and I am fully prepared to vigorously support its implementation at the IAEA.

The CHAIRMAN. And will you have the opportunity in this position, if confirmed, to be able to read the side agreements that were negotiated?

Ms. HOLGATE. Mr. Senator, the side agreements that are referred to are actually safeguards agreements that are bilateral agreements between the IAEA and the member state. Those are safeguards confidential, and those are not shared with any member states.

The CHAIRMAN. I had not planned to go down this route, but I am just curious then. What kind of oversight role do you have in this position? In other words, so you have the director. So the director is just able to negotiate whatever the director wishes and the folks who do what you do have no oversight role, no board of directors-type role relative to the entity.

Ms. HOLGATE. Senator, it is my understanding that safeguards agreements are bilateral agreements between the Secretariat and the member state. That is true for every country that is a member of the IAEA. The United States has a similar safeguards agreements that is not public, is not available to other member states.

This is part of how the IAEA maintains the confidentiality of information that is supplied in connection with that.

The IAEA is, however, required to report on its findings on confirmation and verification of the commitments made in these safeguards agreements, and those are the reports that are provided to member states and that we will be providing to the Congress as they come from the secretariat.

The CHAIRMAN. And again, I know you have nothing to do with how this has been set up. This is not directed to you. Again, I had not planned to go down this route.

So that is odd, it would seem to me, that the safeguards agreement is the agreement as to how the work is going to be carried out. So you are not really conveying any confidential information. You are just talking about how you are going to deal with that entity to find out or that country to find out how they are progressing in the agreements that are made. Why would that be kept away from the folks, if you will, that are overseeing this particular organization? I am just curious as to why you think that would be the case.

Ms. HOLGATE. Mr. Senator, the safeguards agreements include a range of technical details, including design of nuclear facilities, including proprietary information about how those facilities operate, an extreme amount of technical detail that helps the agency understand where it needs to apply safeguards, how it has to do with the process that is executed in that facility. That is not information that countries are eager to share with other countries, and frankly, from a nonproliferation point of view, that is not information that we are eager to have made public.

The CHAIRMAN. One of the things that concerned people, no matter how they ended up voting relative to the agreement—I think there was a universal concern about the issue of possible military dimensions. And the fact that all Iran had to do was go through the process, and whether the IAEA came up with a report that was an A plus report or a D minus report, it did not matter as long as the process was gone through, if you will. That was very concerning I think to a lot of people and somewhat shocking.

And I guess I would ask you let us say you are confirmed and the report comes back as a D minus, in other words, we really did not learn much because they did not provide much information, which again concerned a lot of people. What is it in this particular role that you would be able to do about that, if anything?

Ms. HOLGATE. Senator, as I understand it, the IAEA will be delivering its report in mid-December. If I am fortunate enough to achieve your confidence by then in order to be there at that time—that report will be provided to the Board of Governors of the IAEA, and the board will have a chance to act and engage on the basis of that information.

The JCPOA is focused on the future rather than the past, and so its mission is to make sure that those activities do not occur again, that if, in fact, there are steps taken toward possible military activities of Iran, that those are alerted to, that those are identified by the IAEA, and alerted to member states and in a timely fashion that allows us to take steps to prevent them from happening again.

The CHAIRMAN. But you do agree, with all the technical background that you have, that having knowledge as to how far they have gone in the past towards weaponization is an important element in discerning how quickly in the future they will be able to move toward that same goal. Is it not?

Ms. HOLGATE. Yes, sir. Knowledge is absolutely an important component of approaches to a military program, but all the knowledge in the world does not get you to a weapon if they do not have material, if they do not have the wherewithal to make material that could be used as a weapon. And that is the mission of the IAEA to monitor in an unprecedentedly intrusive way from the mines all the way through to the reactor and after every piece of nuclear material that is used in Iran. And that is where we gain the confidence that that knowledge will not be misapplied.

The CHAIRMAN. I will move on to Senator Cardin. My time is up. I probably will have some more questions.

Senator CARDIN. I am going to follow up on your question first. The Director General of the IAEA reports to the Board of Governors. You are our representative on the Board of Governors. We expect that you will have access to all information you need to properly manage the Director General, the IAEA, and represent the United States.

And I do not disagree with your analysis that the agreements we are referring to are confidential agreements negotiated by the IAEA and the member states and that confidentiality is maintained.

Iran is somewhat different. During the negotiations of the JCPOA, a representative of the United States was allowed to review those documents, and I do not know whether that was done directly by the IAEA or by Iran, but it was done. And I mention that because I think, as Senator Corker has pointed out, we are going to need a clear understanding as to how Iran is proceeding, particularly as it relates to its military dimensions, but there is more to it than that. Developing a working understanding of the arrangements between the IAEA and Iran is going to be essential for you to be fully read into that, and I think you will. And then we need your candid assessments as to how much information we receive and whether it is in compliance with the JCPOA.

So I just really wanted to underscore that point. I understand confidentiality, but I also understand responsibilities to the Board of Governors and you are the key player in that regard. So you have responsibility there.

Let me just ask you an open question on this, which is where do you see the greatest challenges within the IAEA in assuring compliance by Iran of its commitments under the JCPOA, that part that comes under the responsibilities of the IAEA?

Ms. HOLGATE. Senator, thank you for that question.

I think the most challenging components of this agreement are going to be these novel aspects of the safeguards activities that the IAEA is being asked to undertake under the JCPOA. The work that they are doing at the mine, in the milling, and the conversion process of how uranium is handled within the country is unprecedented.

Now, the United States has continued its long tradition of providing training, information, technical support, equipment to the IAEA safeguards community, and that continues to be the case, and it will be even more important as these safeguards inspectors are trained for these new roles. So the United States stands fully ready to play its traditional role of strong support to make sure the agency has the people, the resources, and the technology it needs to carry out these new roles.

Senator CARDIN. And even though they will not be inspectors carrying U.S. passports, the United States plays a critical role here as far as training and information, et cetera. I assume that is what you were referring to?

Ms. HOLGATE. That is precisely what I am referring to, Senator. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Now, outside of Iran, there are other issues that you are going to be engaged with, the implementation and the safe handling of nuclear materials, particularly by those states that are involved in the use of nuclear materials, and the NPT commitments. With such a focus on Iran and the resources being used there, where do you see the challenges and a strong commitment toward the NPT safeguards?

Ms. HOLGATE. The safeguards requirements of the IAEA are going to be critical to be applied globally under their role under the treaty. The United States and other member states have committed to make sure that this is not a zero sum game from a resource point of view with the resources that are going to be required in support of JCPOA implementation. And there is a formula being worked out as we speak on the balance between regular assessments and voluntary contributions to be sure that the agency's work in the JCPOA implementation does not interfere with or take away from the work it needs to do all over the world to assure that material is not diverted to weapons programs.

Senator CARDIN. And then lastly, if I might, how do you see your role working with other representatives from other countries, some who were directly involved in the JCPOA but others that were not, in getting firm international support for U.S. policies?

Ms. HOLGATE. Senator, that is the essential role of the diplomat, and it is one that I am eager to have the opportunity to play, if confirmed. Many of these permanent representatives and ambassadors in Vienna are individuals that I have worked with because they represent their countries in the Nuclear Security Summit process. So I begin with some familiarity with some of the key members of the Vienna diplomatic community.

Certainly the work to do to assemble coalitions around supporting particular decisionmaking processes to represent a common face in discussions in the Board of Governors in the general conference is something that I look forward to and will commit to doing effectively as I am able.

Senator CARDIN. Well, once again, we appreciate your willingness to continue to serve.

Ms. HOLGATE. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thanks, Ms. Holgate. As somebody who grew up in Overland Park and has lived in Richmond for the last 31 years, I am particularly happy to see you and your family here.

The IAEA has an interesting track record. I think it is an organization that generally has a positive track record, not unmarred by challenges certainly. After Iraq and North Korea developed nuclear weapons programs and the covert means, that was I think an admitted weakness of the IAEA and others that allowed that to happen. But then the IAEA said we need a fix, and so they went back to the table to develop the additional protocol that nations now must follow to try to route out that possibility. So that was a bad incident in the IAEA's history, but then they reacted to fix it in a good way.

The IAEA was, I mean, to our kind of remaining sadness, right in March 2003 when they said that Iraq did not have a program of weapons of mass destruction, or at least they could find no credible evidence that it did. That conclusion of the IAEA was heavily trashed by a lot of people here, and it turned out the IAEA was right and we were wrong. That was a momentous moment.

But I am impressed with the organization, but boy, the tasks on the shoulders of this organization are pretty monumental.

First, does the IAEA have the budgetary resources that it needs to do the work that is on its shoulders, especially in the JCPOA, the commitment? There would be, I guess, 130-plus IAEA inspectors in Iran to monitor the JCPOA. Talk to us about the resources the organization has.

Ms. HOLGATE. Well, sir, I appreciate the question, and may I say "Go Royals"?

Senator KAINE. Yes, indeed. 2-zip. We are thrilled. [Laughter.]

Ms. HOLGATE. The agency's resources to support the JCPOA have been estimated at around 10 million euro. They believe that about half of that can be accommodated within the existing safeguards budget without detriment to the other missions that it has inside that budget, and that about 5 million euro will need to be raised from voluntary contributions from other countries. The United States is the largest contributor of voluntary contributions for a range of projects and activities within the IAEA. I fully expect that we will play our appropriate role. But that is clearly an area where other countries can contribute to the success of the JCPOA, including many of those who may have been on the sidelines but supporting the diplomatic solution that we pursued. And so we do not expect that this will be a large challenge for the agency to identify the resources.

Senator KAINE. Well, next to Iranian intent, the single most important element that will determine whether this JCPOA works or not is the verification. So Iranian intent—you know, we are going to keep our focus on their actions. Their intent is still the most important factor. But the verification mechanisms are what give us the ability to determine that intent. And so the IAEA doing a good job and having the resources to do a good job is absolutely critical. And I know you share that view.

One of my hopes is this. The deal certainly talks about traditional IAEA protocols, the additional protocol which Iran accedes to for the first 8 years, and then I guess legislatively has to decide

whether they permanently accept. But in addition, this extra inspection of the supply chain, as you point out, you know, kind of from mine to mill to reactor, the whole supply chain of fissile material is incredibly important. And what I would love to see—I would hope at the end of that 25-year agreement that this might have been incorporated as a best practice into the additional protocol so that it would not just be a 25-year commitment that Iran would make, but if Iran agrees to the additional protocol, over time this supply chain monitoring could be added to the additional protocol for Iran and for all nations. I think this is a new best practice in the agreement in terms of verification. Right now it is only applicable to Iran and only for the 25-year period.

And I would like to ask, since I do not know about this, kind of has the additional protocol been modified over time. Does it get modified to include new best practice elements, and would that be a realistic hope that I would have that maybe by the end of 25 years, this would become the norm?

Ms. HOLGATE. Thank you, sir. And it is always important that the safeguards processes of the IAEA improve over time, and in fact they have done so.

The JCPOA is explicit, however, that these specific innovations are unique to this agreement and do not form a precedent. That was important to gain agreement to this document, and that is the intent of those who associated with it.

That having been said, as you said, there are best practices that are developed in the implementation of these activities. There are lessons learned. There are new technologies that are identified. There are ways to accomplish the same goal with fewer people or fewer resources. And so the IAEA and, indeed, the whole international community will be learning a lot during this 25-year period, and in our constant effort to improve and enhance IAEA safeguards, we may find that some of those techniques can be applicable to the broader safeguards activities of the agency.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you so much for your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for your willingness to serve. As you heard with the last witness, there will be questions that will be coming in until the close of business Monday. Obviously, you understand the importance of responding to those fairly quickly.

We thank your family for being here and their willingness to participate in this.

With that, the meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF THOMAS SHANNON, NOMINATED TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

THOMAS SHANNON'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. Corruption.—Corruption is a global scourge. It damages confidence in governments and institutions, undermines our rule of law and accountability efforts, and places a huge cost on consumers and businesses. As we have seen, corruption is inherently difficult and complex to measure. But by fostering greater public scru-

tiny of corrupt practices and behavior, I believe our government can achieve greater accountability.

♦ a. What are the key indicators that you believe are most effective in measuring corruption in a particular country?

Answer. The best indicators of measuring corruption are the existence or lack of strong legal frameworks (on both preventing corruption and its criminalization), effective and impartial institutions, sound public administration, and enforcement and application in practice. Other factors, such as political accountability, media freedom, and space for civil society are also important indicators. We have strongly supported international initiatives that enshrine these measures (in the form of binding treaties or political commitments) and that establish processes to evaluate them impartially and promote compliance.

♦ b. Shouldn't we publicly name corrupt countries and individuals to encourage greater accountability?

Answer. Thank you for raising the corruption issue. We share your concerns about corruption, which is why we have emphasized the importance of fighting corruption in countries where there is clearly a confluence between graft and poor governance. Corruption is often the reason why authoritarian leaders seize and cling to power, but it is also often one of their greatest vulnerabilities—the abuse of power that generates the greatest domestic opposition and that they are least able to justify on the world stage. The United States has led the creation of global standards and binding legal frameworks to prevent and combat graft, and to foster the international legal cooperation that is increasingly necessary. We have forged a consensus in the G20 to strengthen safeguards against the flow of illicit funds, including by cracking down on the use of anonymous shell companies.

Congress originally mandated the submission to Congress of an annual "Country Report on Human Rights Practices" to help ensure that human rights and democracy concerns are factored into foreign policy funding considerations. Congress also wisely includes in appropriations legislation prohibitions against direct funding for countries considered the worst of the worst, as well as country notification requirements for specific countries under congressional scrutiny.

The administration already enforces a global visa policy to deny entry to certain human rights violators and individuals involved in public corruption. Presidential Proclamation 8697(human rights) and 7750 (corruption) and Section 7031(c) of the FY 2015 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act allow the Department to deny visas to gross human rights violators and individuals involved in corruption that would not already be denied under existing ineligibilities. Also, the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) already includes ineligibilities that can be applied to human rights abusers and who have engaged in torture, extrajudicial killings, genocide, use or recruitment of child soldiers, among others.

We also rely on objective and multilateral approaches, such as the expert compliance reviews we have developed for each anticorruption treaty—which have the benefit of relying on shared international standards and the voice of the international community, rather than the voice of any one country.

♦ c. What actions are you going to take to identify illicit financial flows, particularly in the natural resource and real property sectors?

Answer. We are actively taking action to identify illicit financial flows. The State Department continues to work with the Departments of Treasury and Justice to support strong antimoney laundering standards globally and build foreign countries' capacity to implement them. The Department is also promoting ownership transparency, including through the G7 and G20 to reduce illicit flows through shell businesses. We also promote transparency in the extractives sector through our participation in, and support of, the Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), and strongly support the objectives of Section 1504 of the Dodd-Frank Act, which set a new standard for transparency in the extractive industries. Section 1504 requires oil, gas, and mining companies listed on a U.S. stock exchange to publish their payments to U.S. and foreign governments for the commercial development of these natural resources. In addition, the Department promotes efforts to stem foreign bribery connected with business transactions in any subsector. These efforts bolster international cooperation and ultimately facilitate asset recovery.

Question. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is currently rewriting the rule for Section 1504 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. As you may know, Section 1504 requires oil, gas, and mining companies listed on a U.S. stock exchange to publish their payments to U.S. and foreign gov-

ernments for the commercial development of these natural resources. Information about payments made to governments by extractives companies promotes a number of U.S. goals. For example, greater transparency in the oil, gas, and mining sector will deter corrupt behavior and ensure that foreign aid dollars are being used in conjunction with natural resource revenues to promote development.

♦ Given the foreign policy objectives of the Section 1504 rule please discuss how, if confirmed, you intend to engage with the SEC to ensure that they issue a strong rule that serves U.S. foreign policy goals?

Answer. We strongly support the objectives of Section 1504, as it directly advances the United States foreign policy interests in increasing transparency and reducing corruption in the oil, gas, and minerals sectors. We recognize the importance of the SEC's rule both domestically and for the United States foreign policy interests and we hope to see a strong rule issued. Corruption and mismanagement of these resources can impede economic growth, reduce opportunities for U.S. trade and investment, divert critically needed funding from social services and other government activities, and contribute to instability and conflict. Transparency has long been widely identified as a key component of the fight against corruption in this sector. Efforts to increase transparency have been a high priority for this administration as part of the U.S. Government's good governance promotion, anticorruption, and energy security strategies.

As section 1504 sets a new standard for transparency in the extractive industries, we have encouraged other governments and regional organizations to adopt similar strong transparency measures. Additionally, we are encouraging the SEC to produce a strong Section 1504 rule that improves transparency by ensuring that a sufficiently detailed level of information concerning payments from the extractive industry to foreign governments for the development of oil, natural gas, and minerals will be made public and accessible to civil society and investors. In the absence of this level of transparency, citizens have fewer means to hold their governments accountable, and accountability is a key component of reducing the risk of corruption. Finally, we will continue to work with our colleagues at the SEC, USAID, Department of Treasury, and Department of the Interior—the lead for U.S. implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (USEITI)—to ensure robust implementation to this important initiative. We look forward to reviewing the SEC's draft rule once it has been released for public comment.

Question. Based upon the first meeting of the Joint Commission, do you believe it will be an effective forum for ensuring Iranian compliance with the JCPOA? How did the other P5+1 states, particularly the Russians and Chinese, approach the work of the Joint Commission? Did the Iranians provide any indications about when they will complete the nuclear related steps necessary to reach Implementation Day?

Answer. We believe the Joint Commission (JC) will play an important role in promoting the successful implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We are committed to ensuring the JC functions effectively and serves as a useful forum for monitoring Iran's fulfillment of its nuclear-related commitments and facilitating the resolution of issues in a timely fashion. All of the JCPOA participants—the P5+1, the European Union and Iran—attended the first meeting of the JC, and remain committed to the implementation of the JCPOA. Participants focused on establishing the JC's modalities and operations. Iran briefed on its plans for getting to Implementation Day, which they are eager to reach in order to receive sanctions relief as soon as possible. The timeline for reaching Implementation Day will be dependent on Iran and when it can complete the required nuclear steps. Our focus is not on reaching Implementation Day as quickly as possible, but rather on ensuring that Iran completes these steps in a verifiable fashion.

Question. I remain concerned about our ability to hold Iran accountable for its support to terrorism, its human rights abuses, and its ballistic missile program while implementing the JCPOA.

♦ Can you assure me that we have the flexibility and will to respond to Iranian actions in region in light of our obligations under the JCPOA?

Answer. We have been clear, both publicly and privately with Iran that we will continue to take action to counter Iran's destabilizing activities, to block its support for terrorism, and to call attention to its human rights record. This includes the use of sanctions.

We are working with our regional partners to counter Iran's destabilizing activities in the region in a number of ways. First, we are undermining Iran's capacity to execute attacks directly or through its partners and proxies by expanding our cooperation with and strengthening the capacity of regional partners. Second, we are

working to restrict Iran's ability to move money and material for illicit purposes through sanctions and direct action when necessary. Third, we remain committed to Israel's security and that of our other regional allies and we continue to build up our partners' capacity to defend themselves against Iranian aggression. Fourth, we are working unilaterally and with allies to weaken Hezbollah's financial networks. Finally, we are working to disrupt Iran's relationships with its proxies by publicizing Iran's meddling wherever we can, and we are strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law in countries facing threats from Iranian proxy activities.

U.S. policy regarding Iran's human rights abuses has not changed as a result of the JCPOA. We will continue to publicly express our concerns regarding Iran's human rights abuses, and to work with the international community to press Iran to meet its international human rights commitments. Our unilateral sanctions focused on human rights abuses will not be affected by the JCPOA, and we will continue to enforce them.

Iran's October 10 missile launch violates UNSCR 1929, which requires Iran not to "undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using ballistic missile technology." We have strongly condemned the launch and U.N. Ambassador Power raised Iran's violation in the U.N. Security Council in mid-October. We also submitted a joint report on the launch, together with France, Germany, and the U.K., to the Iran Sanctions Committee, calling upon the committee to review the matter and recommend appropriate action.

Beyond the U.N. Security Council, we continue to use a variety of tools to counter Iran's missile-related activities. These include continuing to work with the more than 100 countries around the world that have endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) to help limit Iranian missile-related imports; urging all countries to implement and enforce missile-related export controls, such as those established by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), to limit the proliferation of missile technology and equipment to Iran; and employing our unilateral tools such as domestic authorities that provide us ways to impose sanctions on entities or individuals supporting Iran's missile program. We are reviewing the facts from the recent launch to determine whether additional unilateral action is warranted in this case.

Question. In a letter that President Obama sent to Senator Wyden, he stated that there are a wide range of unilateral and multilateral responses that the United States could take with its partners if Iran fails to meet its JCPOA commitments. This letter also referenced incremental options to "apply calibrated pressure in the event of noncompliance issues by Iran."

- In your view, what are those incremental options and what will your approach be in making recommendations to the President and what and when to apply such options?

Answer. The United States is committed to promoting the effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and ensuring that Iran is fulfilling all of its nuclear-related commitments in a verifiable and complete fashion. Should we detect a violation of the agreement by Iran, the State Department will not hesitate to discuss appropriate actions with the President. We retain a wide range of options to deal with any failure by Iran to fulfill its nuclear-related commitments, whether significant nonperformance by Iran or more minor instances of noncompliance. For example, the United States has the ability to reimpose both national and multilateral nuclear-related sanctions in the event of nonperformance by Iran. In the case of United Nations (U.N.) sanctions, under U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231, we could do so even over the objections of any member of the Security Council, including China or Russia. Additionally, we have a range of other options for addressing minor noncompliance, including reimposing certain domestic sanctions to respond to minor but persistent violations of the JCPOA, and using our leverage in the Joint Commission on procurement requests.

Question. Are you confident that the IAEA has the capacity to meticulously verify Iranian compliance?

Answer. Yes. The IAEA has an established record of implementing safeguards agreements worldwide, and in verifying the compliance of states with their nuclear obligations. In addition, the IAEA has a proven track record of performing additional verification responsibilities based on its experience in verifying the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) among the P5+1 and Iran since November 2013.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) puts in place vigorous, intrusive, and unprecedented transparency measures to enable the IAEA to verify whether Iran is fulfilling its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. The

sanctions-related steps in the JCPOA will not be implemented until the IAEA is able to verify that Iran has completed key nuclear-related measures.

The JCPOA ensures continuous monitoring of Iran's key declared nuclear facilities. Not only will the IAEA have the right to a constant physical or technical presence in Iran's primary nuclear sites, Natanz and Fordow, but it will be able to conduct regular monitoring of Iran's uranium mines and mills and its centrifuge production, assembly, and storage facilities. This means that the IAEA will have information, access, and/or instrumental observation concerning the entire nuclear fuel cycle in Iran, as well as its nuclear-related procurement. This kind of monitoring makes it exceedingly difficult for Iran to divert materials for clandestine sites without being rapidly detected. Moreover, the establishment of a dedicated procurement channel for Iran's nuclear program will further enable the close monitoring and approval of all nuclear-related imports so as to minimize the chances of any diversion to a secret nuclear weapons program.

Under the Additional Protocol, which Iran will implement under the JCPOA, IAEA inspectors can request access to any location they have reason to suspect relates to undeclared nuclear activities. This is separate and in addition to the continuous access described above at declared nuclear facilities. The IAEA may use environmental sampling, visual observation, and radiation detection and measurement devices to detect clandestine nuclear activity at these locations. Moreover, if Iran were to deny an IAEA request for access to a suspicious undeclared location, a special provision in the JCPOA would trigger an access dispute resolution mechanism.

Question. The United States has been a leader in providing humanitarian assistance to the Syrian conflict, but how do we address the hard fact that humanitarian needs are far outstripping the available resources?

In the tradition of being a beacon of hope for refugees across the globe fleeing violence and persecution, shouldn't we in the United States be willing to resettle significantly more Syrian refugees—who undergo the toughest security vetting available—to our country? The German Government will be accepting 1.5 million asylees this year alone. Should the United States be capable of identifying, conducting security screening and then resettling more than just 10,000 Syrian refugees announced for next year?

Answer. We agree the needs stemming from the Syria humanitarian crisis are outpacing the international community's response. We have provided more than $4.5 billion in humanitarian assistance since the start of the conflict; however, despite these efforts the U.N. appeal for the response is only 45 percent funded. To address this crisis, we are executing a five-pronged approach by: (1) engaging in robust international humanitarian diplomacy to encourage countries to contribute to the U.N. appeals for the Syrian crisis; (2) working to significantly increase the number of countries resettling Syrian refugees; (3) working with countries of first asylum to identify opportunities for refugees to pursue employment and become more self-sufficient in ways that do not exacerbate existing unemployment issues in host countries; (4) expanding methods to coordinate humanitarian and development assistance to support nations hosting large numbers of refugees; and (5) helping Europe focus on saving lives, improving reception, registration, and immediate assistance while it grapples with huge migration policy issues.

The United States aims to admit up to 85,000 refugees in FY 2016, including 10,000 from Syria. This is a 21-percent projected increase in total arrivals over FY 2015, and a more than 500-percent increase in the number of Syrians admitted over the number admitted in FY 2015. The Department of State believes that 10,000 Syrian admissions is achievable given the number of referrals we have received from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees as well as U.S. Government capacity to interview and security and medical screen Syrian applicants in the coming year. We will continue to evaluate the U.S. response to this humanitarian crisis, and if we can do more, we will.

Question. The U.N. estimates that some 422,000 people inside Syria are "besieged"—meaning completely cut off from receiving aid. Another 4.8 million are estimated as "hard-to-reach."

- What can the international community do differently to ensure that humanitarian access expands and that aid reaches those in Syria who need it the most?

Answer. We remain very concerned about the people in Syria living in what the United Nations (U.N.) designates as "hard to reach" or "besieged areas." These are vulnerable populations in great need of our support, and receive minimal to no assistance. "Besieged" areas are the most challenging in terms of access because those areas are cut off from humanitarian aid—in most cases because of the actions of the Assad regime. We continue to call on the regime and its allies to allow aid

throughout the country. The U.N. now estimates 4.5 million people are residing in designated "hard to reach" areas, more than half are in areas under the control of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Despite the urgent need to reach civilians in need trapped under ISIL rule, our partners have found it increasingly challenging to operate in areas they control, given their violent and unpredictable nature. However, we continue to work to reach people in critical need of life-saving assistance in these areas, in cases where we are able to do so without ISIL stealing or benefiting from the assistance.

The United States has worked through the U.N. Security Council and has supported Resolutions 2139, 2165, and 2191 calling for unhindered access to people in need. We continue to call on all parties to the conflict to act consistently with the calls in those resolutions. However, the single greatest factor limiting access for humanitarian aid remains the ongoing, intensifying conflict. Humanitarian assistance will not end the bloodshed in Syria.

In addition, to maximize the reach and effectiveness of our support, we are working through various channels to ensure our assistance reaches throughout the entire country. These channels include the U.N., international organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and local Syrian organizations and networks. It includes assistance that originates in Syria, assistance delivered across conflict lines, and cross border assistance.

United States Government humanitarian assistance is provided based on humanitarian need and the ability of our partners to access the populations in need of assistance. We work closely with the U.N., NGOs, and our Disaster Response teams on the ground to ensure we have the most current and detailed information on what the most pressing needs are and how we can reach those populations. We are in constant communication with our partners to discuss our programs and to ensure we are reaching the intended beneficiaries. Our programs also remain flexible should we need to modify methods or activities to minimize safety and security concerns or risk of diversion.

The United States has provided more than $4.5 billion in humanitarian assistance since the start of the Syrian crisis—more than any other single donor—to help address dire humanitarian needs faced by millions of Syrians. For 5 years, our partners have fearlessly crossed conflict lines—at great personal risk—to help approximately 5 million people inside Syria every month who are in need of assistance and caught in the cross-fire If confirmed, I will ensure we continue these efforts to reach all those in need in Syria.

Question. During the annual tier ranking negotiations with the J/TIP office, the regional bureaus often have an outsized role in determining the tier rankings of a country. If confirmed as the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, you will represent the regional bureaus in these negotiations.

- If confirmed, how will you work to ensure that credibility of the TIP Report—which was the gold standard—is restored?
- In tier ranking discussions, how will you approach the large footprint of the regional bureaus with the much less resourced and weaker J/TIP office to ensure that the TIP office's recommendations are given serious consideration, not dismissed out of hand, and taken on board if reasonable?

Answer. Over the past 15 years, the TIP Report has consistently drawn public attention to the problem of modern slavery and foreign government efforts to address it. The report is widely regarded as the gold standard for antitrafficking information about government efforts around the world to address this crime.

The Department strives to make the report as objective and accurate as possible, documenting the successes and shortcomings of government antitrafficking efforts measured against the minimum standards established under U.S. law. However, the perception that unrelated political concerns played a role in the 2015 tier ranking process is a significant threat to the report's credibility.

The Department continuously reviews how we can use the report even more effectively as a lever to motivate tangible progress around the world. Specifically, the Department is working to improve internal communication and institutionalizing a process that ensures high-level engagement in a timely way throughout the course of the reporting period to urge governments to take needed action to fulfill the TIP Report recommendations. In addition, we are reviewing the individual country recommendations in the report, which inform the Action Plans we prepare annually for each country. We are considering ways we can strengthen the recommendations in the report and use them more effectively to push progress in individual priority countries through engagement year round.

Producing the TIP Report is a year-round and whole-of-Department effort. It has and will continue to reflect the Department's assessment of foreign government

efforts in 188 countries and territories during the reporting period to combat trafficking. Dedicated staff from the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP) and officers in the regional bureaus and at posts around the world work together, including with senior Department officials, to gather information year round from foreign governments, media, and civil society to inform each of the narratives.

The final narratives and rankings, which the Secretary approves, reflect the Department's best assessment of government efforts to combat human trafficking. If confirmed, I commit to you that I will continue this work with the utmost integrity—understanding both J/TIP's essential role and voice in this process, as well as the importance of our missions on the ground in working with host governments to implement the recommendations in the TIP Report.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the J/TIP Office, our regional bureaus, and our missions around the globe to ensure TIP issues are integrated into our broader foreign policy efforts. If confirmed, I also look forward to a robust and ongoing engagement and consultation with Congress to ensure that the TIP Report remains the gold standard for antitrafficking efforts for years to come.

Question. In an effort to respond to the humanitarian crisis of unaccompanied Central American minors arriving at the United States Southwestern border, the United States has deepened its engagement with Central American nations and their governments in an effort to respond to challenges to citizen security, bolster democratic governance, promote economic growth, and facilitate regional integration. However, U.S. relations with Nicaragua remain minimal.

- ♦ As part of its efforts to promote political and economic integration in Central America, is there an opportunity for the United States to pursue greater engagement with the Nicaraguan Government? Please identify areas where the United States and Nicaragua could increase bilateral cooperation.

Answer. Currently, our engagement with Nicaragua has produced positive collaboration on trade, counternarcotics, search and rescue, disaster preparedness and response, the return of fugitive U.S. citizens, and protection of cultural patrimony. We believe we can continue to deepen our cooperation in these areas. The Nicaraguan Government also resolved all U.S. citizen property compensation claims subject to foreign assistance restrictions under Section 527. Our engagement on issues of democratic governance has been less productive. However, we will continue to use our engagement to promote democracy and greater defense of human rights.

In keeping with our larger engagement in Central America, we will work with Nicaragua to increase regional prosperity and security, particularly given Nicaragua's relatively strong economic growth, renewable energy production, and counternarcotics efforts. We will also seek to work with Nicaragua and its neighbors to promote regional integration and peaceful and enduring resolution of border and maritime boundary disputes.

Question. How do you think this decision will impact the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan? Upon confirmation, do you anticipate playing a role in the reconciliation process?

Answer. The United States continues to support an Afghan-led reconciliation process by which all Afghan opposition groups, including the Taliban, enter a political dialogue so that Afghans can talk to other Afghans about the future of their country and eventually resolve the conflict in Afghanistan. As part of the Department of State team, I will support U.S. efforts to work with the Afghan Government in its efforts to establish an Afghan-led reconciliation process.

The Taliban have an opportunity to make genuine peace with the Afghan Government and rebuild their lives. The Government of Afghanistan has invited the Taliban to join the Afghan political process. The Taliban have a choice. They can accept the Government of Afghanistan's invitation to engage in a peace process and ultimately become part of the legitimate political system of a sovereign, united Afghanistan, supported by the international community. Or, they can choose to continue fighting fellow Afghans and destabilizing their own country.

The President's decision will help the United States to continue playing an important role in setting the conditions for peace and reconciliation.

Question. In the past 2 fiscal years, combined funding from the Departments of State and Defense for security assistance to Africa has grown from $542 million to $1 billion, while democracy building assistance has fallen from $230 million to $160 million during the same time period. Though I understand myriad security challenges in the region, this imbalance in funding comes at a time of serious governance challenges and sends the wrong message to our partners.

♦ Will you commit, if confirmed, to ensuring that there is an appropriate balance between engagement on security assistance and in the area of democracy and governance?

Answer. Democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) programs remain a significant priority for this administration. This commitment is strongly reflected in the President's Budget for FY 2016, which requests $312 million for critical DRG programs in Africa to foster good governance and fight corruption, strengthen the rule of law, and promote civil society. In the past, annual appropriations bills have reduced funding for the key foreign assistance accounts that support DRG, which can make it difficult to fully fund these important activities. Our goal is to increase support for these important democracy-building programs, particularly in Africa.

The Department of State also views the enhancement and improvement of security sector capabilities in Africa—both military and civilian—as an integral part of improving the human rights situation. Past events have shown us that security forces that lack robust civilian oversight and have not been appropriately educated on the importance of civilian security and respect for human rights norms can quickly descend into becoming perpetrators of human rights violations. For this reason, all of our military and police training includes a strong human rights component. In addition to traditional security assistance programs, the Security Governance Initiative (SGI) is an example of an important State Department-led effort specifically targeted to strengthen the institutions that govern the security sector. Our security sector reform efforts seek to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the security forces of African partner countries by improving the management, oversight and accountability of security sector institutions. Our engagement focuses at the strategic level to enhance military, law enforcement, and justice sector governance and capacity of African partners. We plan to continue those efforts, working toward the common goals of adherence to human rights norms and the protection of the citizenry, that militaries and police forces are established to protect.

Question. What specific steps has the administration taken to improve human rights and political freedoms in Angola over the past several years through both diplomatic efforts and programmatic activities?

Answer. We regularly meet with civil society, including human rights activists, attorneys, and independent journalists and discuss these issues in depth with government counterparts, including Vice President Vicente and Foreign Minister Chikoti. The Embassy has an ongoing relationship with the Minister of Justice and Human Rights that will continue at the first ever Human Rights Dialogue, tentatively scheduled for this November. On human rights cases, the Embassy attends court trials engaging with the defendants and their legal team. DRL Deputy Assistant Secretary Feldstein raised these points with the government during his August 2015 visit to Luanda. We will continue to press the Government of Angola to combat corruption and improve human rights such as freedom of press, assembly, and speech, including through the AGOA eligibility annual review process in early 2016.

Question. What is your assessment of the actual—as opposed to stated—reasons for the arrest of the so called "Angola 15," and what specific actions has the State Department taken in the context of their arrest and detention to make clear that the government should respect freedom of assembly, association, and speech, and follow due process related to this case and others?

Answer. We note the Government of Angola's claims that they arrested the 15 activists due to fears of an attempted unconstitutional change of government. They have indicated they have additional evidence in this case and we will monitor further developments as the trial progresses. We continue to engage the government on this case and all other human rights cases urging an open and transparent due process be observed. U.S. Embassy Luanda has discussed detention conditions with the detainees' lawyers. During DRL Deputy Assistant Secretary Feldstein's visit to Luanda in August 2015, he met with human rights defenders, the activists' lawyers, and the government. As a followup to his visit, a Human Rights Dialogue with the government is tentatively scheduled for this November in Washington, DC.

Question. If confirmed, how will you make sure that the Asia-Pacific region remains a priority in our foreign policy and balance it with other competing regional priorities?

Answer. The Asia-Pacific is a critical region for the United States because we are, and will remain, a Pacific power. The former Under Secretary for Political Affairs worked to increase U.S. presence in the region and establish a "new normal" of engagement. If confirmed, I will work to sustain and increase this "new normal" of intensified engagement, while exploring fresh efforts to expand our influence. I will

also work to strengthen our partnerships and alliances, and develop maritime domain awareness (MDA) and law enforcement capacity in Southeast Asia. In the future, I look forward to seeking new opportunities to empower our partners in the region to more capably tackle global challenges such as climate change, global public health, human rights, counterterrorism, nonproliferation, transnational crime, and other traditional and nontraditional security challenges.

THOMAS SHANNON'S RESPONSES TO
QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Unfortunately, Venezuela's December 6 parliamentary election will not include democratic figures like Leopoldo Lopez, who remains in jail, on the ballot. During your confirmation hearing, you stated that those political prisoners are essential to the democratic process in Venezuela, and that you will continue to press for their release.

- Can the elections be truly considered fair and free while prominent opposition figures remain imprisoned and barred from participating?

Answer. We remain deeply concerned by the Venezuelan Government's continuing efforts to prevent opponents from participating in the political process. Arresting and imprisoning leading political figures, declaring others ineligible to hold public office, and restricting the ability of candidates to campaign and communicate with voters are significant violations of democratic principles and practices. In such an environment, it is hard to see how an election could be fair. However, the upcoming legislative elections could still be free, if Venezuelans are allowed to go to the polls and there is sufficient guarantee that their votes will count.

While we join the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and the European Union in calling on Venezuela to release political prisoners and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, we also call on the government to invite credible international election observers to participate in the December 6 elections. We believe that such observers will guarantee the votes of all Venezuelans, and help Venezuelans exercise a fundamental right no matter how challenging the political environment.

Question. Last year, Moises Naim of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace noted in The Financial Times that, "the enormous influence that Cuba has gained in Venezuela is one of the most underreported geopolitical developments of recent times."

- Do you believe that Cuba has contributed to the weakening of democratic institutions in Venezuela?
- How much influence do you believe Cuba has with Venezuela's military and security services?
- Should Cuba's regime be held accountable for the deterioration of democracy and supporting repression in Venezuela?
- Has the Obama administration's new Cuba policy, which unconditionally recognized and promotes business with the Western Hemisphere's sole totalitarian dictatorship, sent a message to the Maduro government that there are no consequences for similarly radicalizing his regime?

Answer. Cuba's interests in Venezuela are threefold: securing a reliable source of cheap energy, obtaining cash transfers to meet fiscal needs, and gaining an ally in South America and the greater Caribbean. Cuba has pursued these interests assiduously, and in return has provided the Venezuelan Government with much-needed security and intelligence assistance, doctors, teachers, and other personnel to run Venezuela's social programs. While Cuba is interested in the stability of Venezuela, it has no interest or investment in Venezuela's democratic institutions.

That said, the challenges facing Venezuelan democracy are the responsibility of the Government of Venezuela. However important Cuban influence might be, we should not deflect that responsibility. It is the Venezuelan Government that is holding political prisoners, declaring political candidates ineligible for public office, weakening the separation of powers, politicizing the judiciary, and limiting freedom of the press.

The United States consistently makes clear to the Government of Venezuela that their acts of repression and oppression will continue to impact the bilateral relationship negatively. Each iteration of dialogue with the Venezuelans is anchored by direct and candid engagement on human rights, rule-of-law, and public trust.

In our engagement with countries throughout the region we press governments to live up to the hemisphere's shared commitment to democracy as articulated in

the OAS Charter, the Inter-American Democratic Charter, and other fundamental instruments related to democracy and human rights. In the process, we will continue to call on the Venezuelan Government to respect the human rights of all Venezuelans, regardless of their political affiliations and views, and afford them the ability to exercise their rights and freedoms of expression and assembly and due process.

Question. Please explain why each of the individuals in the attached list have not been sanctioned under the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014.

Answer. While I was not involved in the implementation of the Venezuela Defense of Human Rights and Civil Society Act of 2014, I believe this law, and Executive Order 13692, are important foreign policy tools that we should use as appropriate and necessary. Each determination on whether and when to impose targeted measures, including visa restrictions or asset blocking, takes into account the specific factual information we have on the individuals at issue in light of the requirements under U.S. law for imposing sanctions. Our implementation of sanctions is also carried out in the context of U.S. foreign policy interests, in consultation with all relevant agencies, including respect for human rights, democratic governance and pluralism, and regional security and stability.

Separately, since July 2014 the Department has restricted visa eligibility for certain Venezuelans believed to be responsible for, or complicit, in human rights abuses and undermining democratic governance, including public corruption. The Secretary of State took these steps pursuant to Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

We will continue to monitor the situation in Venezuela, and stand ready to take action against other individuals as additional information becomes available and is assessed to meet the criteria for sanctions.

Question. Did you or any U.S. official, including persons in the White House, indicate to representatives of the Venezuelan Government that the United States will refrain from applying additional sanctions on human rights violators or other corrupt persons?

Answer. No. We have been clear that all diplomatic options remain on the table and, should the situation warrant it, we would deploy these tools.

Question. During your time as Counselor of the State Department, please provide a list of specific times and circumstances in which you have met Diosdado Cabello, Speaker of Venezuela's National Assembly?

Answer. I traveled to Port-au-Prince on June 13, 2015, at the invitation of Haitian President Michel Martelly, who hosted U.S. and Venezuelan officials for a trilateral meeting to discuss Haitian elections and support for its reconstruction and development. National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello was a member of the Venezuelan delegation. Following the trilateral meeting, I met with Mr. Cabello and Foreign Minister Rodriguez in a bilateral meeting. These were the only times I have met with Mr. Cabello during my tenure as Counselor.

Question. In June 2015, you were photographed meeting with Mr. Cabello in Haiti. Were you aware in advance that he would be attending this meeting? If so, when did you find out?

Answer. The Venezuelan Government chose the members of its delegation for the June 13, 2015, trilateral meeting in Port-au-Prince. We did not know of Mr. Cabello's inclusion in that group until we arrived in Haiti on June 13.

Question. Is it the Obama administration's policy to send high-ranking State Department officials to meet with senior foreign officials that are the targets of U.S. federal investigations?

Answer. No. In pursuit of U.S. national interests, we regularly meet with a broad spectrum of political, private sector, and civil society leaders. We are mindful of those instances when such leaders are accused of wrong doing or are under investigation. There are moments when such engagement is necessary, either to communicate clearly U.S. positions or achieve U.S. policy goals.

Question. Have you been briefed about the ongoing investigation of Diosdado Cabello by anyone in the U.S. law enforcement community? If so, when and whom were you briefed by?

Answer. In the course of my duties as Counselor, I have been briefed by federal law enforcement agencies regarding the situation in Venezuela, specifically in April

and June 2015. The exact subject and nature of these briefings is sensitive law enforcement information.

Question. Have you ever discussed the status of any ongoing law enforcement investigations with any Venezuelan officials, including Diosdado Cabello?

Answer. No. I have not discussed the status of any ongoing law enforcement investigations with Venezuelan officials.

Question. Has the Drug Enforcement Administration or Department of Justice provided a list to the Department of State of individuals cooperating with U.S. law enforcement investigations in Venezuela? If so, when?

Answer. No. I am unaware of any such list.

Question. Has the State Department revoked visas for any Venezuelan officials that the U.S. law enforcement community has indicated are cooperating with the U.S. Government? If so, what was your role in that decision?

Answer. I am not aware of any visa revocations of Venezuelan officials that are cooperating with U.S. law enforcement officials.

Question. Please explain the length and nature of your relationship with Pedro Mario Burelli, a Venezuelan citizen.

Answer. I first met Pedro Burelli when I served at our Embassy in Caracas from 1996–99. At the time, he was a member of the PDVSA Board of Directors and his father, Miguel Angel Burelli Rivas, was the Foreign Minister in the government of President Rafael Caldera. Mr. Burelli is a friend of mine.

Question. During your nomination hearing, you stated that if confirmed, you will make sure that you will work to restore the credibility of the TIP process. If confirmed, what are your specific recommendations for making the TIP process more transparent?

Answer. Over the past 15 years, the TIP Report has consistently drawn public attention to the problem of modern slavery and foreign government efforts to address it. The report is widely regarded as the gold standard for antitrafficking information about government efforts around the world to address this crime.

The Department strives to make the report as objective and accurate as possible, documenting the successes and shortcomings of government antitrafficking efforts measured against the minimum standards established under U.S. law. However, the perception that unrelated political concerns played a role in the 2015 tier ranking process is a significant threat to the report's credibility.

The Department continuously reviews how we can use the report even more effectively as a lever to motivate tangible progress around the world. Specifically, the Department is working to improve internal communication and institutionalizing a process that ensures high-level engagement in a timely way throughout the course of the reporting period to urge governments to take needed action to fulfill the TIP Report recommendations. In addition, we are reviewing the individual country recommendations in the report, which inform the Action Plans we prepare annually for each country. We are considering ways we can strengthen the recommendations in the report and use them more effectively to push progress in individual priority countries through engagement year round.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the J/TIP Office, our regional bureaus, and our missions around the globe to ensure TIP issues are integrated into our broader foreign policy efforts. If confirmed, I also look forward to a robust and ongoing engagement and consultation with Congress to ensure that the TIP Report remains the gold standard for antitrafficking efforts for years to come.

Question. Please provide the Cuban's Government's National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking that the Department cited as one of the reasons Cuba was upgraded in the most recent TIP report.

Answer. The Cuban Government informed the Department in March 2015 that they were developing a national action plan, which would include trafficking in persons. This information was provided at the end of the 2015 reporting period and was not considered in decisions regarding Cuba's tier placement in the 2015 report. In fact, the 2015 TIP Report recommends that the Cuban Government "develop an action plan to address sex trafficking and forced labor for males and females."

To date, the Government of Cuba has not shared with us a national action plan, although in 2013 and 2014 they provided reports of their efforts to combat trafficking in persons, which were considered as part of our evaluation process.

Cuba was upgraded in the 2015 TIP Report because of significant efforts to comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, including the

prosecution and conviction of 13 sex traffickers in 2013 and the provision of services to victims in those cases.

The Cuban Government's antitrafficking efforts, including efforts to develop a national action plan to address sex trafficking and forced labor, will be one of the many factors taken into consideration when determining Cuba's tier ranking in the 2016 TIP Report.

Question. What actions has the U.S. Government taken since the conclusion of the JCPOA to sanction Iran for its ongoing human rights abuses and sponsorship of terrorism?

Answer. The administration's policy regarding Iran's human rights abuses and sponsorship of terrorism has not changed as a result of the JCPOA. Our unilateral sanctions focused on human rights abuses and terrorism will not be affected by the JCPOA, and we will continue to enforce them.

On human rights, we continue to publicly express our concerns regarding these abuses, and to work with the international community to press Iran to meet its international human rights commitments. We have consistently and publicly expressed our concerns about Iran's human rights abuses through a range of channels and call on Iran to grant all prisoners and detainees full due process rights, in accordance with its international commitments.

The administration will continue to highlight our concerns and document human rights violations in our annual Human Rights, Trafficking in Persons, and International Religious Freedom reports. Additionally, we have partnered with other countries to support and adopt resolutions in the U.N. General Assembly and the U.N. Human Rights Council highlighting human rights concerns in Iran, and in supporting the mandate of the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran.

Iran's support for terrorism also remains a serious concern for the administration, and we are committed to working with our partners in the region and around the world to take the necessary steps to counter Iranian aggression. The United States has designated Iran as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, and that designation and the sanctions consequences that flow from it will remain in place under the deal. Iranian individuals and entities designated for terrorism will remain subject to sanctions, including IRGC–QF Qasem Soleimani and the IRGC–QF itself.

Question. Recent press reports indicate that Russia has facilitated Iran's efforts to ship weapons to the Assad regime in Syria. Is Russia in violation of existing UNSCRs regarding Iranian arms sales?

Answer. Full and robust enforcement of all relevant U.N. measures is, and will, remain critical. We continue to deter and respond to arms sales violations, including through interdiction, sanctions and law enforcement measures, and will continue to press the Security Council to address and respond to any violations of U.N. Security Council resolutions. Where legal and appropriate, we have shared information with Russia when transactions might violate U.N. Security Council resolutions on Iran.

The United States takes seriously all credible allegations of states facilitating violations of a U.N. arms embargo, and we are prepared to pursue action in the Security Council, its sanctions committees, other multilateral fora, bilaterally and unilaterally. The Department would be happy to brief you on further details in a classified setting.

Question. What specifically is the administration doing to punish Iran for its recent ballistic missile test, which, according to the United States, was a violation of UNSCR 1929?

Answer. We believe that Iran's October 10 launch of the "Emad," which is a new variant of the Shahab-3 medium range ballistic missile inherently capable of delivering a nuclear weapon, was a clear violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929 (2010).

In a meeting of the U.N. Security Council on October 21, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, highlighted this violation and condemned the launch as destabilizing. Other Security Council members joined the United States in condemning the launch as a violation, highlighting the widespread international concern with this act. These actions alone have demonstrated to Iran that there is a political cost for such provocation.

Additionally, on October 21 the United States, together with France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, submitted a joint report on the launch to the U.N. Security Council's Iran Sanctions Committee. We anticipate that the committee will discuss our report in a meeting this month. We have called on the committee, with the support of the independent U.N. Panel of Experts, to review this matter quickly

and recommend appropriate action. We also intend to press the committee to engage Iran directly, including to express concern and to ask Iran to explain its behavior.

Further, beyond the U.N. Security Council, we have a range of unilateral and multilateral tools available to counter Iran's missile-related activities. We have imposed on multiple past occasions penalties under domestic authorities on foreign persons and entities engaged in proliferation-related activities. We are reviewing the facts from the recent launch to determine whether such action is warranted in this case.

In the meantime, we are continuing to combat the proliferation of missile technology and equipment by working with the more than 100 countries around the world that have endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and by urging all countries to implement and enforce missile-related export controls, such as those established by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

Moving forward, full and robust enforcement of all relevant U.N. measures will remain critical. We will continue to press the Security Council to address and respond to any violations by Iran. While all of the provisions of the previous U.N. Security Council resolutions on Iran's nuclear program remain in effect, we will continue to insist that these resolutions be enforced and that the committee and the Panel continue to carry out their respective mandates. We have repeatedly underscored this point to all relevant international actors.

Question. Has Iran violated the arms embargo that it is subject to under several UNSCRs since the conclusion of the JCPOA? Please provide a list of specific violations as part of a classified response if necessary.

Answer. We believe it is likely that Iran has continued in recent months to provide support to the Assad regime in Syria and to the Houthis in Yemen in violation of UNSCRs. We would be happy to provide additional details in a classified setting.

We are certainly concerned that Iran continues to violate the U.N. sanctions imposed against it, including through illicit procurement and arms smuggling. Iran's trafficking of weapons, including to some of the most extreme and irresponsible actors in the region, remains a serious threat to peace. We continue to deter and respond to such violations, including through interdiction, sanctions and law enforcement measures, as appropriate.

To support these efforts, we will continue to invoke the U.N. arms restrictions on Iran that exist now in Security Council Resolution 1929 (2010) and those in Security Council Resolution 2231(2015), which will come into effect once we reach Implementation Day. We will also continue to invoke other existing U.N. arms embargoes as appropriate, including those in Security Council resolutions that target arms transfers to the Houthis in Yemen, Shia militants in Iraq, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Libya, and North Korea. Full and robust enforcement of all relevant U.N. measures is and will remain critical.

In addition, we still have a number of ways, including through our unilateral sanctions authorities, to impose penalties on foreign persons and entities involved in Iranian conventional arms transfers. The size of the U.S. economy, the power of our financial system, and the reach of U.S. unilateral measures give us enormous leverage to pressure other countries to abide by restrictions on Iranian arms activity.

Question. Do you agree with Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif's statement that Iran does not "jail people for their opinions?"

Answer. No. As we noted in our most recent Country Report on Human Rights for Iran, during 2014 "the government arrested students, journalists, lawyers, political activists, women's activists, artists, and members of religious minorities, charged many with crimes, such as 'propaganda against the system' and 'insulting the Supreme Leader' and treated such cases as national security trials."

We also noted in the report that "Iranian law limits freedom of speech, including by members of the press. Individuals were not permitted to criticize publicly the country's system of government, Supreme Leader, or official religion. Security forces and the country's judiciary punished those who violated these restrictions and often punished as well persons who publicly criticized the President, the Cabinet, and the Islamic Consultative Assembly. The government monitored meetings, movements, and communications of opposition members, reformists, activists, and human rights defenders. It often charged persons with crimes against national security and insulting the regime based on letters, e-mails, and other public and private communications."

Question. What specifically do you intend to do to bring home American citizens currently detained in Iran and to obtain information about the whereabouts of Floridian Robert Levinson?

Answer. The President and the Secretary of State have repeatedly and publicly called for the immediate release of Saeed Abedini, Jason Rezaian, and Amir Hekmati, and for the Government of Iran to work cooperatively with us to locate Robert Levinson. We will not rest until these Americans are reunited with their families in the United States.

The Secretary consistently raises the cases of detained and missing U.S. citizens with his Iranian counterpart when they meet. I also raised this issue with the Iranian Government at the first meeting of the Joint Commission in Vienna in October. If confirmed, I will continue to raise the detained and missing U.S. citizens with Iranian officials at all levels at every opportunity.

THOMAS SHANNON'S RESPONSES TO
QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. What would you say are the most significant implications of the JCPOA for U.S. foreign policy broadly? What would be the consequences for the region, and our Nation, should this deal unravel, or fail to be implemented? To what extent, if any, does the Iran deal represent a turning point in United States-Iran relations? Do you view this as a limited agreement that does not change the trajectory of decades of United States-Iran animosity? What type of future engagement do you hope to have with Iran? What do you think is realistic?

Answer. The goal of the JCPOA is to eliminate the imminent threat that Iran will acquire a nuclear weapon. The deal itself will not erase decades of Iranian anti-American and anti-Israeli rhetoric and actions. We will continue to aggressively counter Iran's support for terrorism and its destabilizing activities in the region, working closely with Israel, the gulf countries, and our other regional partners. We have been clear that we are not suspending or removing sanctions related to non-nuclear issues, such as Iran's support for terrorism, its ballistic missile activities, its abuse of human rights, or its support for the Assad regime, Hezbollah, or the Houthis in Yemen.

Question. You have mentioned before that this deal with Iran will be "made or broken in its implementation." Would you be willing to provide to this committee with a list of potential or foreseen Iranian violations, and what specific actions would be taken to punish Iranian cheating?

Answer. We remain committed to consulting closely with Congress throughout implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and to ensuring that Iran fulfills all of its nuclear-related commitments in a verifiable and complete manner. Should Iran fail to fulfill any of its nuclear-related commitments, we retain a wide range of options to respond, whether in the case of significant nonperformance by Iran or more minor instances of noncompliance. For example, the United States has the ability to reimpose both national and multilateral nuclear-related sanctions in the event of nonperformance by Iran. In the case of United Nations (U.N.) sanctions, under U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231, we could do so even over the objections of any member of the Security Council, including China or Russia. Additionally, we have a range of other options for addressing minor noncompliance. These include reimposing certain domestic sanctions to respond to minor but persistent violations of the JCPOA, and using our leverage in the Joint Commission on procurement requests.

Question. Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei formally endorsed the JCPOA, but he also included some caveats. He said that this deal commits the West to lift all sanctions and prohibits it from imposing any new ones. Khamenei specifically noted that sanctions for terrorism or human rights abuses would be violations of the JCPOA, and would then oblige the Iranian Government to cease abiding by it.

- How does this interpretation of the deal from Iran impact our ability to counter their hegemonic moves in Syria? Is our toolkit limited now? Will this administration support further sanctions on Iran for human rights abuses or terrorism?

Answer. We are aware of the October 21 letter from the Supreme Leader to President Rouhani and note that all sides understand what they must to do to reach JCPOA Implementation Day, when the IAEA verifies that Iran has taken all of its nuclear related steps under the JCPOA and in turn Iran receives relief from nuclear-related sanctions. The JCPOA clearly lays out this process, and that will remain the focus of the administration. As long as Iran keeps its commitments under the JCPOA, we will not reimpose the nuclear-related sanctions lifted under the JCPOA.

We have been clear with Iran, both publicly and privately, that we will continue to take the actions we feel necessary, including through the use of sanctions, to counter Iran's destabilizing activities, to block their support for terrorism, and to address their human rights abuses.

We have condemned Iranian support to Syria's Assad regime—support that includes providing not only billions of dollars in funds, but also weapons, strategic guidance, training, and mobilization of Shia paramilitary fighters from around the region, thus enabling the regime's continued repression. We have imposed targeted sanctions on Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its Ministry of Intelligence and Security for their support to the Assad regime.

Question. As you know, on October 10 Iran launched a medium-range ballistic missile called the "Ebad" missile, which Ambassador Samantha Power concluded was capable of delivering a nuclear weapon.

♦ Do you believe this constitutes a violation of the U.N. Security Resolution 2231? How should the U.S. respond to such a violation?

Answer. The administration is deeply concerned that Iran continues to develop a ballistic missile capacity that threatens regional and international security. Iran's October 10 missile launch violates UNSCR 1929, which requires Iran not to "undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using ballistic missile technology."

We have strongly condemned the launch and are now working with allies to raise Iran's violation at the U.N. and increase the political costs to Iran of violating its international obligations. As you note, Ambassador Power raised the matter in the U.N. Security Council in mid-October. As followup, together with France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, we submitted a joint report on the launch to the Security Council's Iran Sanctions Committee. We called on the committee, with the support of the independent U.N. Panel of Experts, to review this matter quickly and recommend appropriate action.

Beyond the U.N. Security Council, we have a range of unilateral and multilateral tools available to counter Iran's missile-related activities. We have imposed on multiple past occasions penalties under domestic authorities on foreign persons and entities engaged in proliferation-related activities. We are reviewing the facts from the recent launch to determine whether such action is warranted in this case. In the meantime, we are continuing to combat the proliferation of missile technology and equipment by working with the more than 100 countries around the world that have endorsed the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and by urging all countries to implement and enforce missile-related export controls, such as those established by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

Question. Soon the United States, Russia, and a group of European and Middle Eastern countries are preparing international talks to accelerate efforts to end the war in Syria.

♦ At this point, are you expecting a negotiated, diplomatic solution? How will President Assad play into this equation? Do you agree with having Assad stay in power for any period of time? What is your opinion of Iran being at the table? Do you think they can play a productive role? Is a negotiated settlement possible with ISIS involved?

Answer. There is no military solution to the crisis in Syria. Attempting to end the civil war by military action will only cause greater violence and create further refugee flows, human casualties, destruction of institutions and public services—exacerbating human suffering. That is why, while we work to degrade and defeat ISIL, we are trying to advance a managed, negotiated political transition through diplomacy; Secretary Kerry initiated last week's meeting in Vienna to do just that.

Assad cannot unite or govern Syria. His brutality against the Syrian people, including chlorine attacks and indiscriminate barrel bombing, has cost hundreds of thousands lives and resulted in the current crisis in which half of the prewar Syrian population is displaced. Last week in Vienna, all participants agreed that any future "elections must be administered under U.N. supervision to the satisfaction of the governance and to the highest international standards of transparency and accountability, free and fair, with all Syrians, including the diaspora, eligible to participate."

The Secretary of State is clear it is important for all key stakeholders to be present, including Iran. However, the invitation for Iran to participate in these discussions does not overlook Iran's ongoing support for the Assad regime, continued support for terrorist organizations like Hezbollah, and its destabilizing regional behavior. As the President has said, there cannot be a return to the prewar status quo.

While it is unclear whether the current round of talks will succeed in bringing about the transition that the Syrian people deserve, the United States is committed to pursuing a negotiated settlement to the crisis. As we pursue this diplomatic track, we are also pursuing a comprehensive effort to degrade and defeat ISIL in Syria—a goal that was affirmed by all participants at last week's Vienna meeting. We have conducted over 2,700 strikes against ISIL targets in Syria, and we have seen marked success in the campaign over the last year. ISIL's access to border crossings has been eliminated from all but 68 miles of the 600-mile long Turkey/Syrian border and we continue to pursue these efforts with over 65 coalition partners.

Question. Russia's increased military actions in Syria are concerning. Particularly when they have said they are targeting ISIS, when in reality some 80 percent of their strikes are targeting areas not controlled by ISIS. Instead, they are helping to further prop up Assad by striking rebel groups.

♦ How willing do you think the Russians are to actually participate in the anti-ISIS coalition?

Answer. Russia's actions in Syria—where its focus has not been on striking ISIL—indicate it is not interested in participating in the U.S.-led 65-member Counter-ISIL Coalition. If the Kremlin changes course and employs its military in a constructive manner that works with the coalition, we would welcome Russia's contribution. We appreciate that Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov has agreed to participate in the upcoming meeting in Vienna, which will bring together 19 international stakeholders to discuss how to end the violence in Syria as soon as possible, but Russia still needs to recognize that there must be a political transition in Syria that includes Assad's departure in order to stop the bloodshed as well as the refugee and humanitarian crises.

Question. What do you see as Russia's motivations for intervening in Syria? What are likely consequences for Syria, Russia, and the region?

Answer. It appears that the Russian Government intervened to prop up the Assad regime when it observed significant setbacks to the regime on the ground. The Kremlin has maintained its actions are driven by a desire to fight terrorism, but is also likely motivated by an interest in portraying itself as a global leader, while redirecting attention away from Ukraine.

Russia has aligned itself against the vast majority of the Syrian people and interjected itself into a sectarian conflict. Moscow asserts that its military action is directed at ISIL, but about 80 percent of Russian strikes target areas like Hama, Homs, and Aleppo where the Assad regime has lost territory to forces led by the moderate opposition.

There is also credible reporting that Russian actions are exacerbating an already dangerous refugee outflow, straining European countries' ability to cope. Just over the last month, the United Nations reports at least 120,000 Syrians have been internally displaced as a result of regime offenses aided by Russian airstrikes. In less than 2 weeks, 52,800 people were displaced in northern Hama and southern Idlib alone.

We have repeatedly conveyed our concerns to Russian officials that its intervention in Syria has aggravated the sectarian divide and the humanitarian crisis. We have urged Russia to use its influence to compel the Assad regime to stop its attacks against innocent civilians and to agree to a political transition.

Question. What are implications of Russian intervention for U.S. military operations against ISIS? What are potential implications of Russian intervention for U.S. policy in the region, and U.S. bilateral relationships with traditional regional partners?

Answer. The implications of Russian intervention for U.S. military operations against ISIL are twofold: (1) Russian pilots' behavior over Syria has been dangerous—indeed, reckless at times—and thus we have made efforts to mitigate the danger to our pilots; (2) Russian airstrikes have targeted moderate opposition fighting ISIL and allowed ISIL to gain territory in some areas, making our counter-ISIL fight more difficult.

On October 20, senior officials from our Department of Defense and the Russian Ministry of Defense signed a memorandum of understanding on measures to ensure our pilots' safety by minimizing the risk of inflight incidents among coalition and Russian aircraft operating over Syria. There is no agreement between our two sides on broader military coordination beyond flight safety. Some countries neighboring Syria, including Israel, Turkey, and Jordan, have also established working level

military communication mechanisms to avoid misunderstandings and unintended confrontations.

About 80 percent of Russian strikes target areas like Hama, Homs, and Aleppo where the Assad regime has lost territory to forces led by the moderate opposition. In northern Syria, reports suggest that since Russian strikes began, ISIL has acquired more territory, not less.

We have encouraged our allies and partners to push Russia to employ its military to target ISIL and compel the Assad regime to stop its attacks against innocent civilians and agree to a political transition.

Question. Do you think Russia's involvement in Syria is in any way good or helpful to U.S. policy interests?

Answer. We and our allies and partners are pushing Russia to play a constructive role in the fight against ISIL and to use its influence with the Assad regime to compel it to end its attacks against the Syrian people and to agree to a political transition to end the crisis. If the Kremlin changes course and employs its military in a constructive manner that works with the coalition, it could have a positive effect on policy goals in the region, and we would, as President Obama has said, welcome Russia's contribution.

Question. We can see from the latest developments in the Middle East that traditional U.S. allies in the region are starting to turn toward Russia more in the absence of a stronger U.S. presence. Just this weekend, Iraq gave Russia the green light to begin airstrikes there, despite U.S. objections. And on October 23, 2015, Russia signed an agreement with Jordan to cooperate militarily against ISIS.

- What do you think of these moves toward Russia? Is our lack of commitment to Iraq and Syria leading our regional allies to turn to Russia? Do you view that as a problem?

Answer. The United States remains the most powerful force in the Middle East with a web of alliances and partnerships as well as a physical presence that is unrivaled. Regional actors have reacted to Russia's intervention in various ways, but we are confident that our deep and long-standing partnerships with countries such as Jordan and Iraq will remain strong as we share the same objectives on the core issues of how to best combat ISIL and promote a transition in Syria.

The Government of Iraq has not approved Russian airstrikes in its territory, though some parliamentarians have pressured Prime Minister Abadi to do so. Prime Minister Abadi has assured us that the Government of Iraq will not invite Russia to conduct airstrikes. We have not seen Russia conduct any strikes there, nor take any practical steps in preparation to do so in the near term. Similar to the United States, Jordan has worked with Russia to ensure the safety of its pilots as they conduct operations in regions where Russian aircraft are also present.

Question. In April of 2015, the State Department released its second Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR). Please describe what you see as the principal outcomes of the QDDR.

- What progress, if any, has been made toward implementing the review's recommendations? What impact, if any, will the review have on the day-to-day conduct of U.S. diplomacy and on the role and functioning of the office of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs?

Answer. The principal outcomes of the 2015 QDDR are its identification and focus on a few big challenges and opportunities, both strategic and operational. The review identified four global strategic policy priorities that are, in many cases, interrelated: preventing conflict and violent extremism, promoting open democratic societies, advancing inclusive economic growth, and mitigating and adapting to climate change. These policy objectives are relevant to our work in nearly all parts of the world and the QDDR provides the State Department and USAID with detailed guidance on how we should focus our efforts. All four of these strategic priorities were included in both the 2015 National Security Strategy and the 2014 State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan, but the QDDR makes very specific commitments detailing what the Department and USAID will do to advance our objectives in these areas.

Furthermore, the 2015 QDDR includes specific recommendations for the bureaucratic reforms we must undertake in order to adapt our organizations to support our policy priorities. The QDDR outlines the steps we must take to build dynamic organizations including harnessing knowledge, data, and technology; promoting innovation; managing physical risk; advancing strategic planning and performance management; and increasing our engagement with broad sectors of American society, economy, and culture.

Lastly, another principal outcome of the 2015 QDDR is the attention given to building a skilled, diverse, and agile workforce. The review also presents steps to improve work-life wellness for our employees and give support to those who face the greatest risks.

As the nominee to be Under Secretary for Political Affairs, the ongoing implementation of the QDDR recommendations affects a broad variety of what would be my portfolio, either directly or via the regional and functional bureaus that I would oversee. This includes aspects of the strategic policy priorities, organizational reforms, as well as workforce issues.

Since the QDDR's release in late April 2015, progress has been made in implementing a broad range of the review's recommendations related to the four strategic objectives.

- Countering Violent Extremism: Following the February White House summit on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) the Department supported the organization of eight regional conferences to improve regional coordination. These events have given rise to many ongoing initiatives that are building the capacity of governments, civil society, and local communities to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism. In order to elevate CVE as a priority and improve coordination, the Secretary approved centralizing the Department's expanding CVE activities in the Counterterrorism Bureau.
- Promoting Resilient, Open, Democratic Societies: The Department, in coordination with interagency partners, is working to create and maintain civic space, promote democratic governance, and support regional frameworks, including through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, foreign assistance, and partnerships with civil society and the private sector. The Department does so through such international fora as the Community of Democracies, the Open Government Partnership, the Freedom Online Coalition, and such funding initiatives as the Lifeline Embattled Civil Society Organizations Assistance Fund and LIFT (Leading Internet Freedom Technology), in which the Department and like-minded partners assist civil society actors in both open and restrictive environments to engage governments to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Department actively defends the human rights and the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups. It also advocates for the strengthening of international human rights frameworks, institutions, and oversight in an effort to amplify the voices of women, youth, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, indigenous persons, survivors of violence and human trafficking, as well as members of other traditionally marginalized groups. Information-sharing mechanisms are being strengthened to ensure that human rights abuses are taken into account when considering visa eligibility.
- Advancing Inclusive Economic Growth: Considerable progress has been made in implementing the QDDR's reform recommendations related to this objective. The six regional bureaus have identified deputy assistant secretaries to lead these bureaus engagement on economic, energy, environmental, oceans, health, and scientific affairs; they meet on a regular basis. Rotational positions are being established for officers to serve in functional bureaus (e.g., economic, energy, oceans/environment/scientific affairs) followed by an assignment in a regional bureau. New detail assignments were created to allow Foreign Service officers to serve temporarily in other government agencies, at the state and local level, and with private companies.
- Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change: The United States takes a leading role in confronting the threat of climate change through action both at home and abroad. In addition to efforts to achieve an ambitious, inclusive, and durable U.N. agreement, Under Secretary Catherine Novelli will chair a Department-wide Climate Capacity Building Working Group to better integrate and elevate climate change across our diplomacy and development work.

Since the QDDR's release the Department has made considerable strides in building a more dynamic organization. These reforms are already improving our ability to promote our objectives and respond to the complex threats and challenges we face. In particular, these efforts are leading to improved use of technology to better access, organize, and make use of data and information and promoting innovation while managing risk.

The QDDR emphasized the importance of harnessing knowledge, data, and technology. The Secretary has launched an initiative to transform the way we process information and manage knowledge at the Department. Recently we have begun to create two technology platforms to transform how our people produce, access, and use information to pursue our foreign policy objectives more effectively and efficiently. First, we are developing a user-friendly portal through which staff will be

able to search for a specific issue, region, or person across a wide variety of sources (e.g., emails, cables, memoranda). Second, we have set about to create a mobile-friendly contact management system to give our diplomats on-the-go access to relevant, up-to-date information about their foreign counterparts, such as topics discussed during last point of contact. Given the personnel transitions that occur every year in the Department with the rotational model of the Foreign Service, this tool will enable diplomats new to their assignments to quickly get up to speed.

In an effort to make the Department an intelligent and efficient consumer of big data, a recommendation also highlighted in the 2015 QDDR, we are establishing an office for advanced data analytics to improve our policy and operational effectiveness in this new era of "Big Data." This unit will equip the State Department's policymakers and subject matter experts with data-driven empirically based analyses by fusing quantitative and qualitative insight. It will enhance the Department's efforts to integrate data-driven analysis and diplomacy, and it will collaborate with our overseas missions and domestic offices to make data more accessible to employees and senior leaders. This effort will enable the Department to leverage data and information to uncover trends; anticipate political outcomes; estimate the impact of our policy; minimize costs and risks by reducing uncertainty; foster strategic thinking to connect policy to operations; and enhance and integrate big-data analytics into our problem-solving and decisionmaking.

The QDDR obligates the Department to foster a culture of innovation and creative problem-solving while managing and mitigating risk. Earlier this year a new risk management policy was drafted and implemented. A Department-wide survey on risk management practices was distributed this fall and responses are currently being evaluated in order to identify the key components of successful risk mitigation programs as well as gaps.

The implementation of a series of QDDR recommendations to invest in our workforce is underway. These initiatives seek to improve the day-to-day functioning of our workforce by improving skills and work-life balance. These efforts recognize that our single most important asset as a Department is our people and we have launched several efforts to improve training for, and the evaluation of, our workforce. The 2015 QDDR included specific recommendations to invest in our workforce by expanding the core training curriculum, increasing long-term training options as well as excursion tours to other agencies. Although enrollment at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) has increased 56 percent since 2010 while appropriated funding has declined 28 percent, we continue to drive innovation in several critical areas. This includes developing new content, improving methodology, and increasing accessibility of our training programs. The Department is also implementing a core curriculum for our personnel and emphasizing continued training throughout the course of an employee's career. These improvements are enhancing the daily effectiveness of our people in carrying out our foreign policy objectives.

Likewise, we have streamlined and improved the processes we use to evaluate staff performance. For example, we have revamped and shortened the Employee Evaluation Report used for Foreign Service personnel to focus on employee effectiveness in achieving goals, rather than focusing on competencies in performing tasks. We have also updated the mid-year professional development form to promote earlier and better performance related discussions, establish clear expectations and goals, and identify areas of excellence and areas for additional professional growth.

The Department has also taken steps to increase the flexibility, diversity, and overall work-life wellness of our workforce. These efforts, highlighted in the 2015 QDDR, are improving the Department's ability to efficiently and effectively promote our strategic priorities and deliver foreign assistance. We are working to increase the agility of our workforce so that we can get the right people with the right skills, in the right place at the right time. The requirement that we respond quickly and deploy expertise wherever it is needed is driving us to create expanded opportunities for Foreign Service, Civil Service, and local staff abroad to take on temporary rotational assignments to fill staffing gaps, more quickly align skills with positions and speed hiring.

The QDDR emphasized the need to create a diverse workforce—one that more closely reflects the diversity of our Nation. We are therefore making significant efforts to recruit and support women, minorities, LGBTI persons, and persons with disabilities. Our recruitment initiatives include the successful Pickering and Rangel fellowship programs, opportunities for military veterans and persons with disabilities, the 2012 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, as well as outreach activities across the Nation targeting underrepresented student populations.

Retaining the best personnel requires that we both invest in our employees, but also ensure that they can balance their work and personal lives. The Secretary established a Work-Life Wellness Task Force and launched a Voluntary Leave

Bank. The Department's Family Liaison Office continues to support careers for eligible family members both at our overseas posts as well as domestically. A number of flexible work schedule and telework options also exist. As a result of these and other efforts, in 2014 the Partnership for Public Service found the State Department ranked third among large agencies in their annual "Best Place to Work in the Federal Government" survey.

Question. You have spent a lot of your career involved in the Western Hemisphere. Democratic conditions in Venezuela have deteriorated significantly over the past decade. Recent opinion polls show that the ruling Socialist party will be defeated, but observers fear that the government will resort to fraud to maintain control of the legislature.

- Can you discuss your concerns for the upcoming legislative elections in Venezuela? If confirmed, what steps would you recommend taking to ensure the elections are free and fair? And how would you recommend reacting if they are not free and fair?

Answer. The upcoming legislative elections will be a barometer of the well-being of Venezuelan democracy. As the December 6 vote approaches, we remain deeply concerned by the Venezuelan Government's continuing efforts to prevent opponents from participating in the political process. Arresting and imprisoning leading political figures, declaring others ineligible to hold public office, and restricting the ability of candidates to campaign and communicate with voters are significant violations of democratic principles and practices. In such an environment, it is hard to see how an election could be fair. However, the upcoming elections could still be free, if Venezuelans are allowed to go to the polls and there is sufficient guarantee that their votes will count.

If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to convince the Venezuelan Government to invite and accredit international electoral observers with recognized experience and credibility. I will also continue our engagement with others in the region to support a credible electoral observation mission. We will also continue our support to domestic electoral observation groups.

It is our hope that these elections will accurately reflect the sentiments of Venezuelan voters. In the event that is not the case, we would respond in keeping with the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the other Inter-American mechanisms. We would do so in consultation with partners in the region, and with Congress.

Question. Earlier this year, the administration imposed sanctions against a number of Venezuelan officials found to be involved in human rights abuses, including the repression of freedom of expression. At the same time, the administration has engaged in bilateral talks, led by you, with Venezuelan officials, including President Maduro, reportedly in an effort to ease tensions.

- What can you tell us about those talks with the Venezuelan Government? What came out of those talks, and are they ongoing? To what extent are we engaging with other Latin American countries regarding the situation in Venezuela?

Answer. The purpose of my engagement was to create a channel of political dialogue through which both countries could express concerns about the bilateral relationship. From our point of view, the focus was several fold: (1) to express the importance of setting a date for legislative elections, to encourage the Government of Venezuela to invite credible international electoral observers to evaluate the vote, and to address the issue of political prisoners; (2) to stabilize our diplomatic relationship and to ensure that our mission in Caracas had the personnel and guarantees from the host government to represent our interests in accordance with international law and practice; and (3) to determine if we shared any common regional interests.

The talks are ongoing, currently being conducted through our diplomatic missions. In some areas, such as setting an electoral date and stabilizing and protecting our diplomatic mission, we achieved our goal. In other areas, such as the well-being of political prisoners, inviting electoral observation missions to participate in the legislative elections, and exploration of possible points of common regional interest, we continue to engage the Government of Venezuela.

Part of our broader strategy has been to create an incentive for partners in Latin America and beyond to engage with the Government of Venezuela, especially on issues related to elections and human rights. This has happened, and we will continue to work with our partners in the hemisphere to establish a common understanding of the democratic and human rights challenges facing Venezuela.

Question. After two trips to the region, I was pleased to see President Obama's announcement regarding the maintenance of U.S. military presence in Afghanistan

past 2016. What will be the civilian component of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan post-2016? What changes, if any, are contemplated in the U.S. civilian mission and the State Department's role in Afghanistan with respect to the President's decision on the military side of the U.S. effort? What do you see being the main challenges to success in Afghanistan? What are your thoughts on developing a coordinated plan to bring about a credible peace process between the Afghan Government and the Taliban, and how is the U.S. playing a role?

Answer. With the assistance and support of the United States and other international allies, Afghanistan has made significant progress over the last decade, including its first democratic transition of power, an extraordinary expansion in access to health and education services, and the strengthening of its armed forces as they have assumed full responsibility for security. The United States remains committed to working with the Afghan Government, the Afghan people, and international partners to promote stability and peace in Afghanistan. Our bilateral partnership continues to serve the national interests of both our nations, including our common interest in ensuring that Afghanistan is never again a safe haven for terrorists who threaten the region, our allies, and our homeland.

The civilian presence

Advancing our national interests in Afghanistan requires a capable civilian team in Kabul. The President's October 15 announcement to sustain our bilateral counterterrorism mission and our participation in the NATO train, advise, and assist mission in Afghanistan does not alter the Department of State's plans to consolidate Embassy operations in Kabul. DOS continues efforts both to streamline operations to ensure the Embassy can be self-sufficient and to coordinate planning with DOD to accommodate a Security Cooperation Office sometime in the future. A significant majority of our personnel are—and will continue to be—security and life support staff due to Afghanistan's unique operating environment.

Challenges

While significant progress has been made in Afghanistan, the country continues to face daunting security, political, and economic challenges. In 2015, Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) for the first time faced the insurgency largely without the direct support of international troops. They took heavy losses and experienced significant setbacks, but in many respects they have recovered and performed with courage and initiative—including in Kunduz. Certain elements, including the U.S.-trained Afghan Special Forces, performed exceptionally well. Maintaining Afghan force levels in the future and ensuring they have the necessary training and equipment will remain a challenge. We are committed to working closely with President Ghani, the Afghan Government, and our international partners to ensure that Afghan forces are trained and equipped to preserve the gains made over the last 13 years.

Addressing Afghanistan's stagnant economy and high unemployment rates will also be a challenge. The declining international presence in Afghanistan has been a significant drag on the economy, underscoring the importance of developing a more sustainable foundation for economic growth and employment generation. We are encouraging the government to take steps to increase GDP growth as Afghanistan's population increases; address chronic fiscal shortfalls while reducing donor dependency; and deliver on its ambitious reform agenda, which includes fighting corruption and improving the business climate.

President Ghani and chief executive officer (CEO) Abdullah have collaboratively appointed the majority of senior government officials, and we are encouraging them to continue working together on implementing the broader reform agenda to ensure political stability.

A credible peace process

The United States supports President Ghani and CEO Abdullah in their call for reconciliation talks with the Taliban. It has long been our position that an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned reconciliation process is the surest way to achieve stability and end the conflict. As part of the outcome of any process, the Taliban and other armed Afghan opposition groups must end violence, break any associations with international terrorism, and accept Afghanistan's constitution, including its protections for women and minorities.

Question. In your testimony you highlighted your work with partners in Africa to fight jihadist ideology. Now, U.S. security assistance to Africa has increased dramatically in recent years, most notably to support counterterrorism efforts. Several of our key counterterrorism partners in Africa, however, are among the world's most

fragile states, and some are led by regimes associated with significant human rights abuses and/or increasing restrictions on political space domestically.

- How is the State Department seeking to balance the significant investments in these countries' militaries against concerns about their political trajectories? How sustainable are efforts to counter terrorism if African governments do not improve local conditions for development and open, democratic space?

Answer. State fragility and the ability of terrorist organizations to operate within a country's territory are inextricably linked. A country that lacks stable military, political, and law enforcement institutions and that is unresponsive to the needs of its citizens cannot effectively counter and combat violent extremism, whether arising from within or without. When citizens feel free to express their opinions and are vested in their domestic political process, they come to share with the government the desire to keep violent extremists at bay so that their nation and their families can safely prosper. For this reason, we employ multipronged approaches to the situation in a given country to address all of these issues.

A large portion of our counterterrorism assistance focuses on building the capacities of partner governments' militaries and law enforcement agencies to combat insurgencies and reduce terrorist threats, as well as to investigate and prosecute suspected terrorists in a rule of law framework. Our support for host nation civil society organizations is a vital and growing part of the mission. To this end, we work with a variety of local nongovernmental organizations to advance peace, reconciliation, post-conflict trauma and psychosocial healing, and to build resilience of disaffected populations, including by providing positive alternatives to youth.

Our counterterrorism cooperation is not provided in a vacuum. Rather, at the same time we are seeking African governments' assistance in combating the spread of violent extremist ideologies, we are also having conversations with those governments about the need to open political space and ensure that their citizens feel invested in their common future. Only then can both the citizens' aspirations and the country's security both be achieved.

Question. Since President Obama announced the shift in U.S. policy last December, the administration has eased U.S. economic sanctions in order to increase travel and trade with Cuba. What additional measures, if any, is the administration considering to ease U.S. sanctions toward Cuba?

- How would you assess the human rights situation in Cuba in the aftermath of the U.S. policy shift? Have you seen a change for the better? To what extent has this shift in U.S. policy toward Cuba had any effect on U.S. relations with other Latin American countries within the region in general?

Answer. The President's December 17, 2014, announcement of the intent to reestablish diplomatic relations with the Government of Cuba was overwhelmingly welcomed by countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. For example, at the Summit of the Americas in April, the Presidents of Costa Rica and Uruguay joined President Obama in a meeting with leaders of Cuban civil society. The Pope also requested meetings with political dissidents during his September visit to Cuba, but the Cuban Government did not permit the meetings to occur.

The administration has stated it will continue to explore how to more effectively engage and empower the Cuban people. As counselor, I have not been involved in the planning of future regulatory changes, but any such changes would be in furtherance of the administration's policy of engagement with, and support for, the Cuban people. We believe that facilitating travel, the flow of information, and certain types of commerce allows the United States to better advance our interests and improve the lives of ordinary Cubans.

Human rights conditions in Cuba remain deeply concerning. Our new policy is based on the premise that we will be more effective in promoting human rights if we have diplomatic relations and an Embassy in Havana, and that the new policy will shift international attention to the Cuban Government's repressive policies. We have successfully advocated for the participation of independent civil society, including Cuban civil society at international conferences, such as the Summit of the Americas and the recent Community of Democracies ministerial meeting in San Salvador. And we will continue to encourage other countries committed to democratic values to champion them in Cuba.

Question. Do you think Russia will continue to comply with the cease-fire in eastern Ukraine? What are the prospects for the full implementation of the Minsk Agreement, including the return to Ukraine of portions of the country's border now controlled by Russia? Do you think the United Nations should refrain from suspending sanctions on Russia until Russia returns the border to Ukrainian control? Why or why not? How, if at all, should the U.S. respond?

Answer. We are pleased that the ceasefire is largely holding in eastern Ukraine and the withdrawal of heavy weapons is proceeding. However, we are concerned by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Special Monitoring Mission (OSCE SMM) reports of an uptick in small arms fire and shelling, in particular in and around Donetsk Airport. Since September 1, more than a dozen Ukrainian soldiers have been killed in action and more than 50 have been wounded. We have called upon Russia and the separatists to cease these attacks.

Russia is a party to the Minsk agreements, which it signed in February 2015 and in September 2014, but it has not yet lived up to its commitments. Under the Minsk Agreements, combined Russian-separatist forces must allow OSCE monitors full access to the conflict zone, including up to the international border, allow local elections in the Donbas under Ukrainian law and monitored by OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and return control of Ukraine's international border to the Government of Ukraine. Moscow has not fulfilled these commitments.

We have been consistent in our policy, and united with our European allies and partners, that sanctions will remain in place until Russia implements all of its Minsk commitments, including withdrawing its forces and returning the international border to Ukrainian control. As we have also consistently stated, our separate Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place as long as the Kremlin imposes its will on that piece of Ukrainian land.

Question. In her testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee earlier this month, Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland called for "legal, monitored elections" in areas controlled by separatist forces in eastern Ukraine.

- Does this formulation signal U.S. support for elections that would not meet the commonly used "free and fair" standard? If so, in what ways? Would the U.S.'s role in "legal, monitored elections" change at all? If so, please elaborate.

Answer. The United States supports local elections in eastern Ukraine, as prescribed in the Minsk Agreements, to be held under Ukrainian law, in accordance with Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) standards and monitored by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The terms "legal" and "monitored" are not alternatives to "free and fair." Rather, they address specific concerns that Russian-backed separatists would again try to run illegitimate elections of their own, ignoring Ukrainian law, OSCE standards, and their Minsk obligations, as they did in 2014. We continue to call on Russia and the separatists it supports to allow Ukrainians living in the Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts to exercise their democratic right to vote in a secure environment that is free from coercion in "free and fair" elections. It is important that citizens living in the conflict zone, IDPs, and refugees have the opportunity to exercise their right to choose their leaders under Ukrainian law, monitored by OSCE ODIHR, as asked for in the Minsk agreements.

Question. Haiti's parliamentary election on August 9, 2015, was plagued with violence. However, Haiti's Presidential election on October 25, 2015, was largely free of violent incidents.

- In your opinion, what changed between these two elections? What best practices do you feel were identified in the Presidential election that should be manipulated for the third round of elections coming up in December?

Answer. In advance of the October 25 round, we worked closely with the Provisional Electoral Council and its partners to review the recommendations made by the electoral observation missions of the first round. Improvements were observed in voter education, the distribution of the voter registry, and the training of poll workers. In the days leading up to the second round, the United States called on all actors to participate fully and peacefully in the electoral process, to abide by the rule of law, to pledge to maintain a high standard of transparency, and to respond to the election results peacefully.

Also of note is that additional security measures were put into place in advance of the October 25 round. The Haitian National Police (HNP) and the U.N. peacekeeping force MINUSTAH deployed an additional 2,974 security personnel throughout the country, increasing personnel in areas that were particularly problematic on August 9. Funds were also disbursed earlier to the HNP for the October round. This allowed them to purchase the needed vehicles, as well as covered per diem and travel costs for officers traveling to polling stations. Finally, U.N. peacekeeping forces increased their visibility on Election Day, and HNP officers took a more proactive role in dealing with disruptions and arresting individuals suspected of fraud or intimidation.

We continue to engage the Haitian Government and electoral officials on the importance of keeping proactive security measures in place throughout the tabulation period and after the results are announced, and through the third round in December.

Question. In Haiti, election results are counted at one central tabulation center in Port-au-Prince. This means that ballots must be physically transported across the country, often on poor, dilapidated roads and in unreliable vehicles. Some speculate that this transportation and certification of ballots might lead to inaccurate vote counts or worse, open a window for elections tampering.

- What, if any, role should the U.S. take in helping with elections oversight? Would you encourage Haiti to keep this centralized vote-counting system, or would you encourage them to use multiple tabulation centers placed with geographic strategy?

Answer. The United States Government has supported and will continue to support the work of the Provisional Electoral Council, which manages the logistics and tabulation of elections in Haiti, as guided by Haitian electoral law. Although we can provide recommendations on potential improvements, the process itself is planned and run by the Haitian Government. We contributed more than $31 million in support of Haiti's three rounds of elections. These funds have been key to providing support for the participation of women candidates; strengthening the Provisional Electoral Council operations and logistics, security, and transport; providing technical and logistical support to field an independent nongovernmental domestic observer group; providing equipment to the Haitian National Police; and contributing funding to the multidonor elections basket fund managed by the United Nations Development Program. Throughout the tabulation, the Organization of American States electoral observer mission, which we continue to support, has observers on hand to monitor the process.

THOMAS SHANNON'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR ISAKSON

Question. In our office meeting you discussed some of your areas of interest, particularly one that we have in common—Africa. Would you share for the committee a little bit more about your thoughts on how the United States can better engage with African countries—politically, economically, etc.?

Answer. The U.S. Government is engaged in Africa across a full spectrum of issues, including democracy and governance, economic development, security cooperation, and humanitarian assistance. As President Obama has made clear through his trips to the continent and the African Leaders' Summit, Africa is a clear priority for the 21st century—a land of opportunity and growth—and we will continue to deepen our engagement in each of these areas.

We are seizing upon Africa's rich economic potential through programs such as Millennium Challenge compacts, Trade Africa, regional Trade and Investment Hubs, the Doing Business in Africa campaign, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program. We are investing in Africa's youth through programs such as the Young African Leaders' Initiative (YALI). YALI participants—the Mandela Washington Fellows—come to study at colleges and universities in the United States and then bring their experience back to their communities across the continent. These are Africa's political, business, and scientific leaders of tomorrow, so our investment in them is critical.

The value of our engagement in promoting free and fair elections was evidenced recently in Cote d'Ivoire, where, with assistance delivered to local election monitors through USAID, the Ivoirian people turned out in large numbers to vote in a free and fair election. We will highlight these successes as we engage with the many African countries with elections in the coming years.

In addition, we continue to partner with African governments to counter violent extremism. We are bolstering local military capacity to counter the threats posed by Boko Haram and al-Shabaab, as well as assist in professionalizing and sensitizing African militaries to the need for civilian control and respect for human rights. We also partner with governments and nongovernmental organizations across the continent to develop sustainable strategies to counter trafficking, address labor issues and improve the rights of marginalized communities.

Question. Recently, we heard from Assistant Secretary Anne Patterson about how the State Department has been engaged in "crisis management" throughout the Middle East. Do you think this will be your greatest challenge if confirmed? How

will you address it? How will you be involved in developing the administration's foreign policy strategy, which I find to be unclear and undefined at this point in time?

Answer. Addressing the region's multiple conflicts will be one of the top challenges I will work to address, if confirmed. We will continue our efforts to reach a political transition in Syria, lead the 65-member counter ISIL coalition, encourage a resolution to conflicts in Libya and Yemen, continue the Secretary's efforts to advance a two-state solution between the Israelis and Palestinians, implement the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, and counter Iran's support for terrorism throughout the region and its threatening behavior toward Israel and our other partners in the region.

The United States will remain deeply engaged in efforts to address the multiple crises and conflicts in the Middle East. Our engagement today is grounded by our deep and enduring commitment to the Middle East and to its people. Our engagement will continue to use all the sources of American power—the might of our military but also the reach of our economy, the determination of our diplomacy, the universality of our values, and the powerful attraction of American education, science, technology, and innovation.

This region is home to some of our oldest and closest friends and allies. As President Obama has made clear repeatedly, defending them against aggression has been, is, and will remain a vital national interest of the United States.

If confirmed, I will provide my best advice and recommendations to the Secretary as we carry forward with our engagement in the region. My recommendations will be based on my regular consultations with our Ambassadors and Assistant Secretaries, as well as my own direct engagement on critical issues.

RESPONSES OF LAURA HOLGATE, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. REPRESENATIVE TO THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY AND TO BE U.S.REPRESENTATIVE TO THE VIENNA OFFICE OF THE U.N., TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

LAURA HOLGATE'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. How will the U.S. evaluate the PMD report to be issued by the IAEA in December?

Answer. On July 14, the IAEA and Iran concluded a roadmap for the clarification of past and present outstanding issues regarding Iran's nuclear program. The roadmap established a time-limited process to address the IAEA's concerns regarding past and present issues, including the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program. The roadmap is a matter of public record, and was posted online on July 14. On October 15, the IAEA reported that Iran's activities set out in the roadmap have been completed on schedule. Under the roadmap, by December 15, the IAEA Director General will provide, for action by the Board of Governors, the final assessment on the resolution of all past and present outstanding issues, as set out in the annex to the 2011 IAEA Director General's report GOV/2011/65.

We look forward to receiving the Director General's December report, and to considering, along with our fellow P5+1 partners and other members of the Board of Governors, appropriate next steps. Without prejudging the contents of the Director General's report before it has been finalized, we will evaluate it based on our own long-standing assessments of Iran's past nuclear activities, and taking into account Iran's past and present nuclear commitments and the totality of circumstances to date. U.S. evaluation of the December report will be conducted by U.S. experts throughout the executive branch, including the Departments of State and Energy and the Intelligence Community. We anticipate the report will address those issues regarding Iran's nuclear program outlined in the annex to the 2011 IAEA Director General's report (GOV/2011/65), update those areas where the IAEA has received new information or made any new assessments, and provide the Director General's final assessment on the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program.

Question. Is the IAEA presently capable of true safeguarding or merely monitoring and reporting on the nuclear activities of a nation with a safeguards agreement? What do you see as the key capabilities lacking at the IAEA to truly implement safeguarding globally?

Answer. Pursuant to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), each non-nuclear-weapon state party to the NPT undertakes to accept IAEA safeguards on nuclear material in that state. "Safeguards" is a term of art that describes IAEA activities to verify that commitments made by states under safeguards agreements with the IAEA are fulfilled with a view to preventing the diver-

sion of nuclear material from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons. Although the IAEA has the authority under a comprehensive safeguards agreement to verify the peaceful use of all nuclear material in a state (i.e., the correctness and completeness of the state's declarations), there are limitations on the types of information and access the IAEA receives as a routine matter under the safeguards agreement.

An Additional Protocol to the comprehensive safeguards agreement equips the IAEA with broader access to information on nuclear and nuclear-related activities, and to associated locations. For example, the Additional Protocol requires reporting on nuclear research and development activities not involving nuclear material, uranium mining and milling, waste processing, exports and imports of certain nuclear equipment, and the sites surrounding its nuclear facilities, with associated inspector access. By enabling the IAEA to obtain a fuller picture of nuclear fuel-cycle-related activities in the state, the Additional Protocol positions the IAEA to draw a "broader conclusion" about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in those States.

Question. Should the IAEA have near-real time surveillance authority for as many states as possible (including Iran)? Should the United States push for this authority? How will you work to expand this capability on behalf of the IAEA?

Answer. The IAEA currently has the authority to implement near-real time surveillance in states with comprehensive safeguards agreements in force, subject to the agreement of the state. The United States encourages the IAEA to implement such remote surveillance where it is feasible and appropriate. When such near-real time surveillance is not implemented, the IAEA makes use of other measures to ensure that it can appropriately safeguard nuclear material in a facility.

We work with the IAEA closely to ensure that the Agency's Department of Safeguards has the equipment and technology necessary to fulfill its mandate.

Question. What role can/should the IAEA play in responding to the smuggling of nuclear materials? How should this issue be addressed in the next Nuclear Security Summit? What other roles can/should the IAEA play in addressing nuclear security?

Answer. The IAEA has a number of resources available to assist member states in responding to a nuclear smuggling incident. The IAEA's Division of Nuclear Security manages the Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) program, which is a voluntary information exchange mechanism that allows participating States to share basic information about a smuggling incident with the international community. In addition, the Division of Nuclear Security, through its Nuclear Security Series publications, provides guidance to member states on topics such as measures for detecting nuclear and other radioactive materials out of regulatory control, nuclear forensics in support of investigations, and radiological crime scene management.

The IAEA does not have the mission or mandate to provide a hands-on response or support an active investigation following a smuggling incident. However, a member state may request the IAEA's Division of Nuclear Security to provide advisory services and/or technical expertise following a nuclear or radioactive materials smuggling incident. The United States encourages all countries to share relevant information on nuclear smuggling attempts while also ensuring information and evidence is properly handled to ensure the successful prosecution of criminals involved.

Countering nuclear smuggling is a multifaceted issue that requires the development of a variety of capabilities to detect and secure illicitly acquired materials, investigate and disrupt smuggling networks, and deny smugglers freedom of movement. This issue has been an important focus of the Nuclear Security Summit process, and has been addressed in Summit Communiques and in various "Gift Baskets." The 2014 Countering Nuclear Smuggling Gift Basket highlights cooperation with the IAEA on this issue, including cooperation on identifying the nature of threats and how to coordinate a regional response.

As the U.S. Sherpa for the Nuclear Security Summit, I have remained committed to prioritizing an effective approach to countering nuclear smuggling, including through close coordination with the IAEA, and the outcomes of the 2016 summit will reflect our progress on this issue. If confirmed, I will also continue to make counternuclear smuggling a U.S. priority at the IAEA.

Question. What is your interpretation of the U.S. position on the spread of nuclear energy? The spread of enrichment and reprocessing technologies?

Answer. The United States is fully committed to promoting access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes throughout the world in accordance with Article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. During his April 2009 Prague speech, President Obama stated that, "We must harness the power of nuclear energy on behalf of our efforts to combat climate change, and to advance

peace and opportunity for all people." Many states consider nuclear energy to be a viable option in meeting their energy needs and addressing climate change.

The Obama administration has maintained a long-standing U.S. policy opposing the spread of enrichment and reprocessing (ENR) technologies. We make use of the various tools at our disposal, including negotiation of bilateral agreements for peaceful nuclear cooperation with responsible partners, to seek to achieve the lowest number of sensitive nuclear fuel cycle facilities and technologies, specifically ENR, and achieve our nonproliferation goals.

LAURA HOLGATE'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. IAEA officials and outside experts have argued that the agency faces constraints on its ability to implement its nuclear safeguards mission. These include a limited budget; challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel; and monitoring new and different types of nuclear facilities.

- Beyond the nuclear deal with Iran, what are the greatest challenges the IAEA faces in its mission to ensure countries comply with their commitments, under the Non-Proliferation Treaty?

Answer. As President Obama stated during his 2009 speech in Prague, more resources and authorities are needed to strengthen international inspections. The United States attaches the highest priority to ensuring that the IAEA can fully perform its unique safeguards mission. This mission has been challenged by a growing workload in the context of worldwide growth in nuclear power as well as by the proliferation challenges posed by potential clandestine nuclear programs.

The IAEA relies on the support of member states for the financial resources, qualified personnel, and modern equipment, facilities, and analytical capabilities needed to carry out its critical work. Should member state support dwindle while the workload continues to increase, the IAEA will not be able to maintain the current level of effectiveness of the safeguards regime.

We must continue to work with other member states so that the IAEA is provided with sufficient financial resources to address these challenges. With respect to human resources, we maintain robust support by providing U.S. expertise at no cost to the IAEA. Additionally, U.S. support is also directed at efforts to ensure that the IAEA has access to up-to-date facilities, analytical techniques, and equipment. Without such support, the IAEA would be unable to fulfill its mandate.

LAURA HOLGATE'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MENENDEZ

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to ensure that members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee are not only notified—but also properly consulted—with respect to significant developments at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and with respect to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to consult closely with Congress as we work toward the successful implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), including the IAEA's critical role in verifying that Iran is upholding all of its nuclear-related commitments.

If confirmed, I look forward to a robust and ongoing dialogue with the Congress—and in particular, this committee and its staff—throughout the JCPOA implementation process. I believe full engagement with Congress is key to implementing this deal in the long term.

Question. Does the IAEA have the resources, access, and will to judiciously investigate, monitor, and verify compliance of Iran's activities with respect to its nuclear program and the JCPOA?

Answer. Yes, the IAEA has the access and the will it needs for this task, and we will work to see that it also receives the necessary resources. The IAEA has an established record of implementing safeguards agreements worldwide, and in verifying the compliance of states with their nuclear obligations. In addition, the IAEA has a proven track record of performing additional verification responsibilities based on its experience in verifying the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) among the P5+1 and Iran since November 2013.

We are working with the IAEA and other IAEA Member States to provide the IAEA with the reliable and predictable funding it needs to provide ongoing, long-term effective verification in Iran. As Director General Amano has reported, the

IAEA will require increased resources in order to fulfill its role in verifying Iran's commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). We expect other IAEA Member States will join us in providing the IAEA with the resources it needs for this special responsibility.

The JCPOA is based on verification, not trust. IAEA inspectors will have access to the entire nuclear supply chain in Iran—its uranium mines and mills, its conversion facility, its centrifuge manufacturing and storage facilities, and its other declared nuclear sites. Iran will also implement the Additional Protocol, which provides the IAEA with authority to seek access to any undeclared suspicious locations. Put simply, the IAEA has authority for the necessary access when and where it needs it.

We have full confidence in the IAEA's ability to carry out its role in monitoring and verifying Iran's nuclear-related commitments.

Question. What do you see as the major challenges ahead for the IAEA with respect to its obligations under the JCPOA?

Answer. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) puts in place vigorous, intrusive, and unprecedented transparency measures to enable the IAEA to verify whether Iran is fulfilling its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. The sanctions-related steps in the JCPOA will not be implemented until the IAEA is able to verify that Iran has completed key nuclear-related measures.

As Director General Amano has reported, the IAEA will require increased resources in order to fulfill its role in verifying Iran's commitments under the JCPOA. We are working with the IAEA and other IAEA Member States to provide the IAEA with the reliable and predictable funding it needs to provide ongoing, long-term effective verification in Iran.

Question. Based on the first meetings of the Joint Commission, do you believe it will be an effective forum for ensuring Iranian compliance with the JCPOA? Will the IAEA be an aggressive advocate in this setting?

Answer. The Joint Commission (JC) will play an important role in promoting the successful implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). All of the JCPOA participants—the P5+1, the European Union and Iran—attended the first meeting of the JC. Participants focused on establishing the JC's modalities and operations. We are committed to ensuring the JC functions effectively and serves as a useful forum for monitoring Iran's fulfillment of its nuclear-related commitments and facilitating the resolution of issues in a timely fashion.

The IAEA will play an essential role in verifying Iran's nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. The U.N. Security Council has requested (in Resolution 2231), and the IAEA Board of Governors has authorized, the IAEA and the Joint Commission to consult and exchange information, where appropriate, as specified in the JCPOA. We are confident in the IAEA and its technical capacity to implement its enhanced verification role under the JCPOA, as well as Iran's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol.

Question. The Iran Sanctions Act expires in 2016. If snapback provisions of these sanctions are to be an effective deterrent for Iran, as the administration has testified before the SFRC, do you support the reauthorization of these sanctions?

Answer. Because the Iran Sanctions Act does not expire until 2016, we believe that discussion of reauthorization at this time is premature. The United States has made it very clear that should Iran violate its commitments under the JCPOA after we have suspended sanctions, that we will be able to promptly snap back both U.S. and U.N. sanctions.

LAURA HOLGATE'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Since the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, have any officials of any foreign governments indicated to the United States Government that they are reassessing their national policies regarding enrichment and reprocessing?

- If so, which countries and what were the circumstances of these conversations? Please provide a classified response if necessary.

Answer. Please see the classified answer to this question provided through separate channels.

Question. Please provide a briefing for the oversight committees of any discussions that have been had with the United Arab Emirates regarding their nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States since the signing of the JCPOA.

Answer. Please see the classified answer to this question provided through separate channels.

Question. What steps has Iran taken as required by October 15 under the JCPOA to complete its obligations under the IAEA-Iranian "Roadmap?" Provide a classified response if necessary.

Answer. Pursuant to the IAEA-Iran "Roadmap for the Clarification of Past and Present Outstanding Issues Regarding Iran's Nuclear Program," concluded on July 14, 2015, Iran has taken several steps to fulfill its commitments.

On August 15, the IAEA Secretariat informed member states that Iran had provided to the Agency its explanations in writing and related documents as agreed in the roadmap. On September 8, the IAEA submitted questions regarding this information.

As committed to in the roadmap, technical-expert meetings, technical measures, and discussions were organized in Tehran to address these questions. In addition, for the first time, the IAEA has obtained access to a location at Parchin, which the IAEA regarded as essential for the clarification of outstanding issues concerning Iran's nuclear program.

On October 15, 2015, the Secretariat informed member states that, in the period to October 15, 2015, activities set out in the roadmap were completed.

By December 15, 2015, the Director General will provide, for action by the Board of Governors, the final assessment on the resolution of all past and present outstanding issues.

Question. Which specific scientists did Iran provide the IAEA with access to as part of the "Roadmap?" Please list names, titles, and affiliations. Provide a classified response if necessary.

Answer. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Iran agreed on a time-limited "Roadmap" for Iran to address the IAEA's concerns, including those specific issues set out in the IAEA Director General's November 2011 report on possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program. Under this roadmap, the IAEA submitted questions to Iran regarding information provided to the IAEA by Iran. Iran committed to technical-expert meetings, technical measures, and discussions to be organized in Tehran by October 15, 2015, to address these questions. The IAEA confirmed on October 15 that all activities required under the roadmap were completed.

The Director General will provide, for action by the Board of Governors, the final assessment on the resolution of all past and present outstanding issues. We cannot prejudge the substance and quality of Iran's cooperation with the IAEA before the Director General has issued his report.

Question. Which scientists has Iran continued to refuse access to that the United States believes were involved in Iran's past nuclear weaponization efforts? Provide a classified response if necessary.

Answer. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Iran agreed on a time-limited "Roadmap" for Iran to address the IAEA's concerns, including those specific issues set out in the IAEA Director General's November 2011 report on possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program. Under this roadmap, the IAEA submitted questions to Iran regarding information provided to the IAEA by Iran. Iran committed to technical-expert meetings, technical measures, and discussions to be organized in Tehran by October 15 to address these questions. The IAEA confirmed on October 15 that all activities required under the roadmap were completed.

The Director General will provide, for action by the Board of Governors, the final assessment on the resolution of all past and present outstanding issues. We cannot prejudge the substance and quality of Iran's cooperation with the IAEA before the Director General has issued his report.

Question. Has the IAEA been given access to all of the data generated as part of Iran's weaponization work and do any copies of this data remain under Iranian control? Provide a classified response if necessary.

Answer. The IAEA laid out the large breadth of information in its possession regarding possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program in a 2011 report to the Board of Governors, including information received from more than 10 member states. Under the roadmap concluded with Iran on July, 14, 2015, Iran has provided additional explanations in writing and related documents to the IAEA. The

IAEA then submitted to Iran questions regarding this information, and Iran has completed specified steps under the roadmap to address these questions.

The Director General will provide, for action by the Board of Governors, the final assessment on the resolution of all past and present outstanding issues. We cannot prejudge the substance and quality of Iran's cooperation with the IAEA before the Director General has issued his report.

I defer to the Intelligence Community on any questions on the disposition of specific Iranian documents or data.

LAURA HOLGATE'S RESPONSES TO
QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Does the IAEA have the funds to serve as an adequate verification mechanism for the Iran nuclear agreement?

Answer. We are working with the IAEA and other IAEA Member States to provide the IAEA with the reliable and predictable funding it needs to provide ongoing, long-term effective verification in Iran. As Director General Amano has reported, the IAEA will require increased resources in order to fulfill its role in verifying Iran's commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). He has estimated the total additional cost, post-Implementation Day, to be €9.2 million per year for JCPOA-specific costs beyond safeguards implementation, including the provisional application of the Additional Protocol. We expect other IAEA Member States will join us in providing the IAEA with the resources it needs for this special responsibility.

Question. Do you think that other monitoring regimes the IAEA is responsible for conducting will suffer due to the increased budget need for the Iran deal? If so, to what extent?

Answer. We are working with the IAEA and with other IAEA Member States to ensure that the IAEA's role in verifying the JCPOA does not negatively impact the effectiveness of its global safeguards mission. The IAEA applies safeguards worldwide to verify that non-nuclear-weapon states are not diverting nuclear material or pursuing clandestine nuclear programs.

Question. The July 2015 JCPOA states that the IAEA will pursue drawing a "broader conclusion that all nuclear material in Iran remains in peaceful activities." Please explain the process by which the agency draws this conclusion. And if Iran is not willing to share this information, how will the IAEA make a conclusion that says Iran is in compliance?

Answer. The "broader conclusion" means the IAEA has concluded that all nuclear material in a State remains in peaceful activities. The IAEA will only draw such a conclusion for States that are fully and effectively implementing both a comprehensive safeguards agreement (CSA) and the Additional Protocol (AP). A broader conclusion is drawn on the basis of IAEA inspector activities and a comprehensive evaluation of information available to the IAEA to ascertain that there are no indications of diversion of declared nuclear material from peaceful nuclear activities in a State, and no indications of undeclared nuclear material or activities in a State. When the IAEA reaches this point in its evaluation of a State, the Secretariat can draw the broader conclusion that all nuclear material in a State remains in peaceful activities. As of the end of 2014, the IAEA has drawn the broader conclusion for 65 of the 118 States with a CSA and AP in force.

Implementation of the AP provides the IAEA with broader access to information and locations relevant to nuclear activities in a State, which significantly increases the IAEA's ability to determine whether there are any undeclared nuclear materials or activities in a State. As the IAEA implements these measures in Iran, as in other States, it will need to work with Iran to resolve any discrepancies, anomalies, or questions and inconsistencies that may arise concerning Iran's declarations. Cooperation from Iran in addressing these issues will be important for the IAEA to be in a position to draw the broader conclusion that all nuclear material in Iran remains in peaceful activities.

Question. Are Additional Protocols strong enough to detect countries' (particularly Iran's) clandestine nuclear weapons programs?

Answer. Yes. Although the IAEA has the authority under a comprehensive safeguards agreement to verify the peaceful use of all nuclear material in a State (i.e. the correctness and completeness of the State's declarations), there are limitations on the types of information and access the IAEA receives as a routine matter under the safeguards agreement. The Additional Protocol equips the IAEA with broader

access to information on nuclear and nuclear-related activities, and to associated locations. For example, the Additional Protocol requires reporting on nuclear research and development activities not involving nuclear material, uranium mining and milling, waste processing, exports and imports of certain nuclear equipment, and sites surrounding nuclear facilities, with associated inspector access. By enabling the IAEA to obtain a fuller picture of nuclear fuel-cycle-related activities, the Additional Protocol positions the Agency to draw a "broader conclusion" about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in those States.

Under the JCPOA, Iran will provisionally apply the Additional Protocol pending its entry into force, ensuring the IAEA can seek access to any undeclared location. In addition, the JCPOA provides for additional transparency measures, including a special access provision regarding access to undeclared locations. Put simply, the IAEA will have access when and where it needs it, for verification of the JCPOA. We are not relying on trust in monitoring Iran's commitments. Rather, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action puts in place vigorous, intrusive, and unprecedented transparency measures, including the Additional Protocol, to verify that Iran does not pursue a nuclear weapon. Implementation of the Additional Protocol and JCPOA transparency measures are also intended to deter Iran from cheating by creating a high likelihood that such cheating would be caught early.

Question. As the U.S. Representative to the IAEA, how would you handle a country who asks to enter into secret side agreements with the IAEA?

Answer. The IAEA is required to maintain a regime to protect unauthorized disclosure of all confidential information that the IAEA acquires, including such information that comes to the IAEA's knowledge in the implementation of safeguards agreements and the Additional Protocol. For example, it is standard practice that IAEA safeguards agreements have "subsidiary arrangements" that provide additional detail on how the safeguards agreement will be implemented. These arrangements between the IAEA and individual states typically include proprietary and other sensitive information, and are therefore treated as confidential documents that the IAEA does not release to other member states. Neither we nor other member states have the authority to demand these documents from the IAEA, and the IAEA does not have the authority to release them.

The United States relies upon the integrity of the IAEA's confidentiality regime to protect information that it shares with the IAEA under its own safeguards agreements. Indeed, the United States Senate recognized the importance of confidentiality in its resolution of ratification for the U.S.-IAEA Additional Protocol.

Question. In your opinion, is the IAEA doing enough to improve nuclear security around the world? If not, what more would you suggest it do? What is your opinion of the expansion of nuclear energy to states where there is little infrastructure, funding or oversight culture, such as nondemocratic countries in Africa and Asia? Should the United States be encouraging those states to import nuclear power plants?

Answer. In a world of challenging and evolving threats, nuclear security requires constant and continuous attention. This is essentially a state responsibility, and the international community must always strive to improve nuclear security. The IAEA plays a critical role in coordinating nuclear security activities and providing support to member states in their efforts to improve nuclear security. We look forward to hosting the Nuclear Security summit next year, and further strengthening the central coordinating role of the IAEA is one of the summit's key goals. Some of the invaluable services the IAEA provides include developing a wide range of nuclear security guidance documents, providing training, performing nuclear security peer review missions around the world, helping states to assess and improve their national nuclear security systems, and convening specialized meetings at which member states can exchange information. The IAEA also serves as the depositary for key international conventions and agreements related to nuclear security, for example, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. It hosted a Minister-level nuclear security conference in 2013, and plans to host a second conference in December 2016 to maintain leader-level attention on this important topic. The IAEA's Division of Nuclear Security has undertaken this broad range of needed activities and continues to provide essential services, and as a newly established division of the IAEA (January 2014), the Division of Nuclear Security has room to grow and expand these activities.

The United States is fully committed to promoting access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes throughout the world in accordance with Article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. During his April 2009 speech in Prague, President Obama stated that, "We must harness the power of nuclear

energy on behalf of our efforts to combat climate change, and to advance peace and opportunity for all people." Many States consider nuclear energy to be a viable option in meeting their energy needs and addressing climate change.

However, for States pursuing nuclear energy, the development and implementation of an appropriate infrastructure to support the successful introduction of nuclear power and its safe, secure, safeguarded, and efficient use is an issue of great importance. The IAEA is uniquely positioned to provide the guidance and support states need to establish that infrastructure. The United States has been a consistent supporter of the IAEA's efforts, in particular through the Peaceful Uses Initiative. It has been an effective way of leveraging U.S. expertise and experience in safety, security and nonproliferation, and reaching a broad range of countries.

If confirmed, I would promote the IAEA's central role in strengthening nuclear security as well as promote further strengthening of the Division of Nuclear Security's many activities and services.

Question. In 2007 you authored an article entitled "Preventing Nuclear Terrorism," and in several speeches since then, you have argued that the path toward a secure nuclear future must involve engaging all relevant voices and aligning the objectives of nuclear commerce and nonproliferation. Is the IAEA involved in any in-country or cultural education regarding nuclear materials and the danger of such materials being used for terrorism? If not, do you think it should be? If so, what organizations do you think would serve as good partners?

Answer. Nuclear terrorism is one of the most challenging threats to international security. The most effective means to address the threat of nuclear terrorism is for countries around the world to establish strong nuclear security measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear or other radioactive materials needed for a nuclear or radiological explosive device. The IAEA plays a central role in the international nuclear security architecture, including by developing and disseminating nuclear security guidance to member states, advancing nuclear security education programs in academia, managing the nuclear and radiological "Incident and Trafficking Database" (ITDB), supporting the development of a collaborative network of nuclear security training and support centers, and providing training courses and workshops on implementing nuclear security culture.

Other international organizations and initiatives with nuclear security-related mandates, such as the International Criminal Police Organization, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, the United Nations, and the Nuclear Forensics International Technical Working Group, also play important roles in enhancing global nuclear security and countering the threat posed by nuclear terrorism. The World Institute for Nuclear Security provides a unique and critical ability to engage industry, public health, and commercial actors. The United States recognizes the importance of these complementary efforts and encourages the IAEA to continue its leading role in coordinating activities to enhance cooperation and avoid duplication.

Question. The President, in his budget request for fiscal year 2016, requested $2 million in funding for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty Organization (CTBTO Preparatory Commission), even though Congress rejected becoming a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT) in 1999. Do you think the United States should contribute funds to the CTBTO's International Monitoring System when we are not even a party to the treaty? Why or why not?

Answer. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty's (CTBT) International Monitoring System (IMS) has been fully supported by the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations, and the U.S. Congress has provided funds as requested by the administration to support the IMS. The IMS is over 85 percent complete, with 281 installed and certified monitoring facilities. Data from the IMS flows continuously to the U.S. National Data Center (USNDC) at the Air Force Technical Applications Center. The IMS data received are regularly used by the USNDC to supplement U.S. national means and methods used to monitor for nuclear explosions. The open nature of the high-quality monitoring data produced by the IMS and its analysis by the CTBTO Preparatory Commission's International Data Centre provides other nations with a trustworthy and transparent monitoring capability that they can use to make their own informed assessments. It also provides them with confirmation of U.S. verification judgements. Beyond this role, IMS data have made important contributions to monitoring hazardous natural phenomena such as tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and meteorite strikes. Perhaps even more significantly, IMS data also helped to track man-made hazards, such as the radioactive debris from the Fukushima reactor in Japan. The IMS has proven itself

to be a highly valuable resource, even in the absence of the CTBT's entry into force, and continued funding is necessary to both continue its operations and complete the remaining monitoring facilities.

Question. In 2006, 2009, and again in 2013, North Korea announced that it had conducted successful nuclear bomb tests. In September of this year, North Korea not only announced their plans to launch a rocket that could lead to an intercontinental ballistic missile, but also that their main nuclear complex at Yongbyon has been restarted and that they intend to bolster their nuclear arsenal. If North Korea tests another nuclear device, will the CTBTO's International Monitoring System be able to detect it?

Answer. With respect to the three declared North Korean nuclear explosions, the International Monitoring System (IMS) performed well, and the IMS has actually improved dramatically over the intervening years. In 2006, 20 seismic stations and one radionuclide station detected North Korea's test. In 2009, 61 seismic stations detected North Korea's second event and established its location with a certainty of +/− 10 kilometers. And in 2013, 94 seismic, two infrasound, and two radionuclide stations detected North Korea's test. The main reason for this greater detection ability is the progress that has been made in building out the IMS. There were 153 certified stations in 2006; today there are 281.

The ability of the IMS to detect a future North Korean nuclear explosion will depend on many factors, such as the explosive yield of the nuclear device, its depth of burial, efforts to decouple the explosive force of the detonation from the surrounding media, and containment of radionuclide particulates and gases.

It is important to note that, in addition to the IMS, once the CTBT enters into force, an onsite inspection can be conducted to resolve ambiguities regarding the nature of a detected event. Such an inspection would employ an impressive array of equipment and experts to determine whether or not a nuclear explosion has been carried out in violation of the treaty. The State Party subjected to such an inspection cannot refuse to allow it to take place. This "challenge inspection" is unique to the CTBT; it does not exist in any other nuclear testing limitation treaty or agreement.

Question. How do you plan, if confirmed, to work to promote U.N. reform efforts, such as reducing U.S. assessment levels, keeping U.N. agency or program budget growth under control, and increasing the efficiency and accountability of the Secretariat staff? What are your main priorities for this role? What challenges do you foresee?

Answer. The Obama administration is committed to achieving a reformed and renewed U.N. that fulfills its mandates while operating effectively and within its means. The administration has pushed aggressively for sound management, budgeting, and accountability at the U.N. and throughout the U.N. system and related/affiliated organizations, and has achieved notable successes on behalf of U.S. taxpayers. Many member states look to the United States, as a major contributor and leader on financial and administrative issues, to be at the forefront of pressing for these reforms. If confirmed, I will continue the effort to pursue a comprehensive reform agenda in Vienna, in coordination with the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. and the rest of the U.S. delegation to the U.N.

Since the 1990s, the general policy of the U.S. Government on international organization assessed budgets has been, and continues to be, zero nominal growth (ZNG). As national governments reduce expenditures abroad and domestically, there is a continuing need to restrain growth in international organization budgets. While there have been occasional exceptions under this policy to advance compelling U.S. interests, the Department of State has had good success limiting budget growth at many U.N. organizations, with negotiations during 2015 resulting in no-growth assessed budgets at organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, International Labor Organization, International Maritime Organization, International Telecommunication Union, U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, and the World Health Organization.

The Department of State is working with our allies across the U.N. system to urge the Secretary General to control the growth in staff costs—a major driver of U.N. budget growth over the last decade. Our efforts resulted in a multiyear pay freeze that is expected to bring U.N. compensation back to the desired level by 2016. If confirmed, I will do my part to press the international organizations in Vienna to contain budget growth to the greatest extent possible and to demonstrate a sustained effort to identify offsets and absorb proposed increases without reducing operational effectiveness, while also protecting those programs most important to U.S. interests.

At the same time the U.N. and other international organizations must continue to strengthen their mechanisms for ensuring transparency, effective oversight, and accountability. The Department of State successfully spearheaded an initiative to establish permanent public access to evaluation and audit reports by the U.N.'s Office of Internal Oversight Services and we will continue to be a vocal supporter for operational independence of the OIOS. The Department of State will continue to strengthen ethics offices and independent audit committees in each of the funds and programs and specialized agencies, and related/affiliated organizations. We will advocate for further improvements to whistleblower protection policies that demonstrate best practice in protecting whistleblowers from retaliation.

The United States is a strong proponent of ensuring that the staff of the U.N. and other international organizations are held accountable. If confirmed, I will support continued efforts to advocate for reforms that facilitate recruiting highly skilled staff in a timely manner, while promoting top performers, getting rid of underperformers, encouraging mobility, and providing professional development.

Question. In your view, what are the major areas of the UNODC's work that are of highest interest to the United States? What are the U.S. policy objectives for the upcoming U.N. General Assembly special session on the world drug problem in 2016? Do you expect that these objectives will be met?

Answer. The Department of State supports UNODC assistance programs that focus on strengthening criminal justice institutions, providing legislative assistance, and assisting with the establishment of drug demand reduction and treatment programs. UNODC is the primary international organization that supports implementation of the three international drug control conventions, the U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the U.N. Convention against Corruption. The United States served as the primary architect of all five of these conventions, which mirror and globalize U.S. counternarcotics and anticrime standards, and supporting UNODC work to promote the implementation of these instruments is among our highest priorities for the organization. The Department of State also strongly supports UNODC capacity building programs to strengthen legislative frameworks and strengthen global enforcement efforts targeting antimoney laundering and counterterrorist financing; illicit wildlife trafficking; migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons; and illegal drug threats, particularly the growing threat posed by new psychoactive substances.

Regarding the 2016 U.N. General Assembly Special Session, the Department of State views this meeting as a valuable opportunity to analyze the achievements, gaps, and challenges in countering the world drug problem. Our priorities for the UNGASS are: (1) to reaffirm the enduring value of the three U.N. drug conventions and the international community's commitment to them, (2) to promote a public-health approach, (3) to encourage justice sector innovations, and (4) to reinforce the need for international cooperation to fight organized crime. We believe that there is broad consensus among governments behind these priorities. Civil society has a crucial role to play in this process. Nongovernmental organizations fill a crucial role in ensuring that governments address the international drug problem justly and transparently, as well as treat people with dignity.

Question. In what ways does the U.S. Government benefit from the donor funds it provides to UNODC to combat crime, drug, and terrorism related issues? What capabilities does UNODC provide that the U.S. Government cannot achieve through other means? Has the United States found that any UNODC programs duplicate other U.N. system programs? Has the United States found inefficiencies in UNODC operations? What efforts have been made to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of UNODC activities?

Answer. UNODC is the primary mechanism through which the international community sets criminal justice and law enforcement standards, pools resources, shares best practices and other expertise, and works together to close off safe havens to crime, drugs, and terrorist groups. U.S. contributions to UNODC support anticrime and counterdrug treaty implementation activities that directly advance U.S. interests and globalize international norms based on U.S. standards, law, and practice. U.S. support for UNODC also effectively leverages political and financial contributions from other states, making U.S. support a critical force multiplier.

We believe UNODC programs provide valuable technical assistance to member states on the full range of issues that UNODC addresses, including counterterrorism, counterpiracy, trafficking in persons, and governance and the rule of law. UNODC endeavors to work with other U.N. agencies in a mutually reinforcing way that avoids unnecessary duplication of effort and costs. Nevertheless, promoting

greater coordination and coherence of U.N. entities on counterterrorism, and in general, is a priority for the United States on which we regularly engage the U.N.

The Department of State works closely with UNODC to ensure monitoring and evaluation are included in program planning supported by U.S. contributions. UNODC also has an Independent Evaluation Unit, which the United States helped create and which plays a vital role in the oversight and evaluation of UNODC programs by an independent source. Finally, the Department actively participates in the governing bodies of these organizations, thereby shaping their programmatic direction and priorities.

LAURA HOLGATE'S RESPONSES TO
QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR ISAKSON

Question. What will be the biggest challenges to verifying Iran's compliance with the JCPOA?

Answer. The IAEA has an established record of implementing safeguards agreements worldwide, and in verifying the compliance of states with their nuclear obligations. In addition, the IAEA has a proven track record of performing additional verification responsibilities based on its experience in verifying the Joint Plan of Action among the P5+1 and Iran since November 2013.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) puts in place vigorous, intrusive, and unprecedented transparency measures to enable the IAEA to verify whether Iran is fulfilling its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. The sanctions-related steps in the JCPOA will not be implemented until the IAEA is able to verify that Iran has completed key nuclear-related measures.

As Director General Amano has reported, the IAEA will require increased resources in order to fulfill its role in verifying Iran's commitments under the JCPOA. We are working with the IAEA and other IAEA Member States to provide the IAEA with the reliable and predictable funding, personnel, and technology it needs to provide ongoing, long-term effective verification in Iran.

Question. Do you think the IAEA will be able to handle the additional work required by the JCPOA? If confirmed, how will you use your position to inform Congress of the challenges and opportunities the IAEA faces?

Answer. Yes. The IAEA has the expertise and the capabilities needed to implement the verification regime specified in the JCPOA. The IAEA has an established record of implementing safeguards agreements worldwide, and in verifying the compliance of states with their nuclear obligations. In addition, the IAEA has a proven track record of performing additional verification responsibilities based on its experience in verifying the Joint Plan of Action among the P5+1 and Iran since November 2013. We have full confidence in the IAEA's ability to carry out its role in monitoring and verifying Iran's nuclear-related commitments.

We are working with the IAEA and with other IAEA Member States so that the IAEA's performance of its role in the JCPOA does not negatively impact the effectiveness of its global safeguards mission. The IAEA applies safeguards worldwide to verify that non-nuclear-weapon states are not diverting nuclear material or pursuing clandestine nuclear programs.

If confirmed, I look forward to closely engaging with Congress about the important role of the IAEA—not just in verifying Iran's nuclear commitments under the JCPOA, but in performing its unique safeguards and other missions worldwide. If confirmed, I also look forward to close consultation with Congress as the IAEA works to implement the JCPOA verification regime and to an ongoing dialogue about how the U.S. can continue to support the IAEA's other critical missions.

Question. What is your level of confidence in the current review of Iran's PMD and the dismantling of their nuclear facilities to come into compliance with the JCPOA?

Answer. On July 14, the IAEA and Iran concluded a roadmap for the clarification of past and present outstanding issues regarding Iran's nuclear program. This roadmap established a time-limited process to address the IAEA's concerns regarding past and present issues, including the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program.

The next step is for the IAEA Director General to provide, by December 15, the final assessment on the resolution of all past and present outstanding issues, as set out in the annex of the 2011 IAEA Director General's report GOV/2011/65, for action by the Board of Governors. We look forward to receiving this report and considering,

along with our fellow P5+1 partners and other members of the Board of Governors, appropriate next steps.

We have full confidence in the IAEA's ability to carry out its role in monitoring and verifying Iran's nuclear-related commitments, both within the roadmap and under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), including the steps Iran must take before reaching Implementation Day such as the removal of the calandria at Arak and filling it with concrete, removing two-thirds of its centrifuges, and reducing its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98 percent.

Question. Beyond Iran, what do you believe will be some of the key challenges facing the IAEA in the future?

Answer. As President Obama stated during his 2009 speech in Prague, more resources and authorities are needed to strengthen international inspections. The United States attaches the highest priority to the IAEA's ability to fully perform its unique safeguards mission. This mission has been challenged by an increasing workload in the context of worldwide growth in nuclear power as well as by the proliferation challenges posed by potential clandestine nuclear programs.

The IAEA must rely on the support of Member States for the financial resources, qualified personnel, and modern equipment, facilities, and analytical capabilities needed to carry out its critical work. Should Member State support dwindle while the workload continues to increase, the IAEA will not be able to maintain the current level of the safeguards regime.

We must continue to work with others to provide the IAEA with sufficient financial resources to address these challenges. With respect to human resources, we maintain robust support by providing U.S. expertise at no cost to the IAEA. Additionally, U.S. support is also directed at efforts to provide the IAEA with access to up-to-date facilities, analytical techniques, training, and equipment. Without such support, the IAEA would be unable to fulfill its mandate.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2015

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

The Hon. Deborah R. Malack of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Uganda
Lisa J. Peterson, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Swaziland
H. Dean Pittman, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:33 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jeff Flake presiding.
Present: Senators Flake, Gardner, Markey, and Coons.

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

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

Today, the committee will consider the nomination of three very experienced Foreign Service officers to be U.S. Ambassadors to Uganda, Swaziland, and Mozambique. I was happy to meet each of you in my office earlier, and I appreciated learning the positions you have and the service that you have already provided elsewhere in the world, and specifically on the continent of Africa.

In Uganda, our Ambassador to the re will be tasked to help ensure that the country enforces a tenuous peace agreement in South Sudan. Another challenge will be to help Uganda avoid complacency with regard to HIV/AIDS after the good progress the country has made largely due to PEPFAR program.

Swaziland has had its AGOA benefits rescinded at a time when the government is already struggling with revenue generation. While various international financial institutions have offered loans in exchange for reforms, thus far, Swaziland has not been able to deliver on those reforms. So it is a difficult situation there.

Mozambique has recently discovered vast natural gas resources. Our Ambassador to the re will have to help that country make the most of that discovery, which often, as we know, becomes more of a curse than a blessing.

I thank each of you for your time, for sharing your experience, and I appreciate family members who are here and also appreciate the sacrifices that they have made so that we all can benefit from the good work that you do.

With that, I will recognize Congressman Markey—Senator Markey—we were both in the House before this——

[Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE [continuing]. For any comments that he has.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your leadership on the subcommittee and for convening this hearing to consider the nominations of these three very distinguished public servants to serve as our Ambassadors to Uganda, Swaziland, and Mozambique.

To the nominees, thank you for dedicating yourselves to serving our country. We know what you do is hard and that it can also be hard on your families, so I want to give a warm welcome to the families of the nominees who are here today. I know from my own experience that the support of your family is critical to your own success, so thank you again to the nominees and to their families for being here today.

We are here to talk about your future posts, and generally about Africa. I am sure that you will agree that the continent presents much opportunity but also many challenges.

Mr. Chairman, when we traveled with the President to Africa this summer, we saw the possibility to spark Africa's existing entrepreneurial spirit to create unprecedented economic opportunity and growth. We can and should help spur this growth by supporting expanded access to sustainable sources of power, innovative telecommunications, and Internet interconnectivity. All of these are fundamental requirements for commercial and social success in our time.

At the same time, we also saw that Africa faces tremendous challenges. We must work to strengthen democratic institutions and legitimate electoral processes; ensure that economic growth lifts all boats, not just the elites; and that it happens in a way that does not degrade the environment, but safeguards it for future generations.

We also need to support efforts to protect and advance human rights, including the prevention of trafficking in persons, and the abuse of LGBT people and other minorities.

So I look very much forward to this hearing today and engaging with all of you on these important topics.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having this hearing, and I yield back.

Senator FLAKE.Thank you, Senator Markey.

We will now proceed with the nominees.

Deborah Malac, a career member in the Senior Foreign Service, currently serves as U.S. Ambassador to Liberia. Her previous assignments have included postings to Cameroon, Senegal, South Africa, and Ethiopia.

The second nominee is Lisa Peterson, who most recently served as the Director of the Office of Multilateral and Global Affairs in the Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, a position she has held since 2012. Prior assignments include postings in Cameroon, Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, DRC, CAR, and South Africa.

Last but not least, H. Dean Pittman is a career member of the Foreign Service. He spent time in Mozambique back in the early 1990s, a very different time then, and he will hopefully be heading back to the country here shortly, this time as U.S. Ambassador.

So with that, Ambassador Malac.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. DEBORAH R. MALAC, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Ambassador MALAC. Thank you. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Uganda. I thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me by sending my name to the Senate for consideration.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize my husband, Ron Olson, and our three children, Nicholas, Gregory, and Katharine, and our daughter-in-law, Shana. I am deeply grateful for their unstinting love and support. Without it, I would not be here today.

Mr. Chairman, I have been extraordinarily privileged to serve as a member of the Foreign Service for more than 34 years. As the daughter of an immigrant who arrived in the United States in the middle of the last century in pursuit of freedom and opportunity, my service is small repayment for all that the United States has afforded me and my family.

The majority of my career has been spent working in and on Africa, beginning with my first assignment in Cameroon in 1981. That first taste of Africa was followed by assignments in South Africa, Senegal, Ethiopia, and, now, Liberia, where I have had the great honor to serve as Ambassador since 2012. Interspersed among the Africa assignments, I have worked in Washington and Southeast Asia on issues of democracy, development, trade, and security.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has enjoyed a close bilateral partnership with Uganda for the past quarter century. Uganda and the United States have worked together to promote the peaceful resolution of a series of regional conflicts.

Having expelled the Lord's Resistance Army from Ugandan territory, the Ugandan military has continued to lead regional efforts to counter the LRA in central Africa.

As the second largest troop contributor to the African Union Mission in Somalia, Uganda has made tremendous sacrifices in its efforts to degrade and defeat terrorists al-Shabaab, and bring peace and stability to the Horn of Africa.

The United States is supporting Uganda to build capacity in law enforcement, crisis response, counterterrorism investigations, criminal justice sector reform, border security, and countering violent extremism and terrorist finance.

Uganda stands out not only for its contributions to regional peace and security, but also for its great strides in transitioning from a country beset by internal conflict to one that is at peace and growing economically.

When President Museveni came to power in 1986 after decades of violent internal strife in Uganda, he instituted macroeconomic policies that contributed to steady economic growth.

We look forward to continuing to work with Uganda to help expand economic activity for its citizens and support improved governance that will help foster broad-based economic development. We are working to help Uganda strengthen its multiparty democracy and reinforce respect for human rights.

Uganda will hold elections in 2016, during which President Museveni will seek a fifth term. If confirmed, I will urge the President to ensure the political space necessary for a spirited and robust campaign in which all parties participate freely.

It is important for the region and Uganda's future that the elections are free, fair, transparent, and peaceful.

We continue to urge the Ugandan Government to respect the fundamental human rights of all individuals.

On the development front, we continue to invest in Uganda with a robust set of programs. USAID has provided over $430 million over the past 6 years in development assistance to help Uganda's people, efforts that support vital activities, including education and economic growth, as well as reintegration and rehabilitation support for those affected by past conflicts in Uganda, including many former LRA abductees.

President Obama's Feed the Future Initiative focuses on improving productivity and incomes in the agriculture sector, on which 70 percent of Uganda's citizens rely for their livelihoods.

In the health sector, the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate has fallen from a high of 13.4 percent in 1992 to around 7 percent, where it has stagnated for the past decade. Malaria still causes an estimated 70,000 to 100,000 deaths per year, and progress in improving maternal and child health is slow.

Through the Global Health Security Agenda, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the President's Malaria Initiative, and the Saving Mothers, Giving Life partnership, we are working with the Ugandan Government to improve the quality and accessibility of health services and to address Uganda's most pressing needs.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will seek to strengthen our partnership with Uganda as a force for regional peace and security. I will also work with the government and people of Uganda in pursuit of a healthier, more productive, and more prosperous society where protection of citizens' political and personal freedoms is a priority for all.

Achieving these objectives will be critical to Uganda's future stability and economic growth, as well as its continued role as an important and constructive regional leader.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, or more precisely, first, if confirmed, the protection of U.S. citizens and U.S. business interests in Uganda will be the foremost concern for my team and me.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to represent and promote the interests of the American people in Uganda. I welcome any questions the committee may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Malac follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR DEBORAH MALAC

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Uganda. I thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me by sending my name to the Senate for consideration.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to take the opportunity to recognize my husband, Ron Olson, our three children, Nicholas, Gregory, and Katharine, and my daughter-in-law, Shana. I am deeply grateful for their unstinting love and support; without it, I would not be seated here today.

Mr. Chairman, I have been extraordinarily privileged to serve as a member of the Foreign Service for more than 34 years. As the daughter of an immigrant who arrived in the United States in the middle of the last century in pursuit of freedom and opportunity, my service is small repayment for all that the United States has afforded my family and me. The majority of my career has been spent working in and on Africa, beginning with my first assignment in Cameroon in 1981. That first taste of Africa was followed by assignments in South Africa, Senegal, Ethiopia, and now, Liberia, where I have had the great honor to serve as Ambassador since 2012. Interspersed among the Africa assignments, I have worked in Washington and Southeast Asia on issues of democracy, development, trade, and security.

Mr. Chairman, the United States has enjoyed a close bilateral partnership with Uganda for the past quarter century. Uganda and the United States have worked together to promote the peaceful resolution of a series of regional conflicts. Having expelled the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) from Ugandan territory, the Ugandan military has continued to lead regional efforts to counter the LRA in central Africa. As the second largest troop contributor to the African Union Mission in Somalia, Uganda has made tremendous sacrifices in its efforts to degrade and defeat the terrorist al-Shabaab and bring peace and stability to the Horn of Africa.

The United States is supporting Uganda to build capacity in law enforcement crisis response, counterterrorism investigations, criminal justice sector reform, border security, and countering violent extremism and terrorist finance.

Uganda stands out not only for its contributions to regional peace and security, but also for its great strides in transitioning from a country beset by internal conflict to one that is at peace and growing economically. When President Yoweri Museveni came to power in 1986 after decades of violent internal strife in Uganda, he instituted macroeconomic policies that contributed to steady economic growth. We look forward to continuing to work with Uganda to help expand economic activity for its citizens and support improved governance that will help foster broad-based economic development.

We are working to help Uganda strengthen its multiparty democracy and reinforce respect for human rights. Uganda will hold elections in 2016, during which President Museveni will seek a fifth term. If confirmed, I will urge the President to ensure the political space necessary for a spirited and robust campaign in which all parties participate freely. It is important for the region and Uganda's future that the elections are free, fair, transparent, and peaceful. We continue to urge the Ugandan Government to respect the fundamental human rights of all individuals.

On the development front, we continue to invest in Uganda with a robust set of programs. USAID has provided over $430 million over the past 6 years in development assistance to help Uganda's people, efforts that support vital activities including education and economic growth, as well as reintegration and rehabilitation support for those affected by past conflicts in Uganda, including many former LRA abductees. President Obama's Feed the Future Initiative focuses on improving productivity and incomes in the agriculture sector, on which 70 percent of Uganda's citizens rely for their livelihoods.

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Initiative, and the Saving Mothers, Giving Life partnership, we are working with the Ugandan Government to improve the quality and accessibility of health services and to address Uganda's most pressing health concerns.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will seek to strengthen our partnership with Uganda as a force for regional peace and security. I will also work with the government and people of Uganda in pursuit of a healthier, more productive, and more prosperous society where protection of citizens' political and personal freedoms is a priority for all. Achieving these objectives will be critical to Uganda's future stability and economic growth, as well as its continued role as an important and constructive regional leader. Finally, Mr. Chairman, or more precisely, first, if confirmed, the protection of U.S. citizens and U.S. business interests in Uganda will be the foremost concern for my team and for me.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to represent and promote the interests of the American people in Uganda. I welcome any questions the committee may have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Peterson.

STATEMENT OF LISA J. PETERSON, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND

Ms. PETERSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The full text of my remarks has been submitted for the record.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a great honor for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Swaziland.

I am happy to have with me today my husband, Siza Ntshakala, and my son, Thabo. They have made tremendous sacrifices for my Foreign Service career. I am grateful for their love and support, which have helped bring me to the threshold of this potential new, challenging, and exciting assignment.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the honorable members of this committee to advance the interests and values of the United States and the American people in Swaziland.

The United States maintains one of the few resident diplomatic missions in the Kingdom of Swaziland. Our relationship with the people of Swaziland is an important partnership.

The new Embassy building that will open next year in Mbabane is a powerful symbol of the value the U.S. places on that relationship and will be a great platform for outreach to the Swazi people.

If confirmed, I will continue to engage the Swazi Government as well. I would like to see the king and his advisers enter into an ongoing dialogue with civil society.

Swazi citizens still have limited ability to engage meaningfully in public policy decisions. And basic rights such as the freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, and expression are restricted. Dialogue with civil society will help open the way for citizen engagement in policy decisions, which will help ensure the best policy outcomes.

Swaziland is facing a declining economy. This is partially due to a broader regional economic downturn, but also due to the loss of African Growth and Opportunity Act, or AGOA, trade preferences. Swaziland was suspended from AGOA membership in January after the government failed to meet established benchmarks to strengthen its human rights record, despite several years of en-

gagement by the U.S. Government. These benchmarks involve the same basic rights for which Swazi civil society advocates.

Drawing on my experience with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, I will support those who strive to hold the Government accountable and uphold democratic values. I will support civil society, labor unions, and media, to create space for needed political dialogue amongst all the stakeholders of Swaziland.

The people of Swaziland want what the people of the United States want: peace, stability, economic prosperity, and an opportunity for their children to build better lives for themselves. They also hope that their children will be healthy enough to have that opportunity.

Swaziland's 26 percent HIV prevalence rate is the highest in the world, and the Nation is suffering a severe tuberculosis crisis. Thanks to the resources available through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, the United States has helped save tens of thousands of lives in Swaziland.

Embassy Mbabane has been actively coordinating with the Swazi Government and other donors to control the epidemic by strengthening health infrastructure, increasing the capacity of the Health Ministry and HIV/AIDS Council, and developing a whole-of-government approach to the crisis.

This year, Swaziland was selected for the new DREAMS initiative, which aims to enable adolescent girls and young women to become Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-Free, Mentored and Safe. These efforts have generated results.

In 2004, prior to PEPFAR, fewer than 500 people were on antiretroviral therapy. Now more than 130,000 people in Swaziland receive treatment.

If confirmed, I would look to build on the Embassy's ongoing work to continue engaging national, regional, and local community leaders about efforts to create sustainable programs for an AIDS-free generation.

A stable Swaziland is important to U.S. regional strategic interests, but long-term stability is not possible where citizens are unable to use their voices to hold government accountable for its actions.

If confirmed, I will draw on the strong bilateral relationship between the United States and Swaziland to continue encouraging the kingdom to improve its record on human rights and fundamental freedoms. This will also help Swaziland meet the benchmarks for AGOA eligibility, which will benefit the Swazi economy.

I will also ensure that our health programming builds on success and innovates for sustainability, saving the lives of Swazi citizens and helping preserve family units.

And I will continue to engage in cross-cutting areas, such as civil society's ability to advocate on issues from preventing gender-based violence to protection of marginalized groups to institutionalizing the rule of law.

Encouraged by the mutual respect between our two nations and energized by the challenges that lie ahead, I would be honored, if confirmed, to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Swaziland.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Peterson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LISA PETERSON

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is a great honor for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Swaziland. I am happy to have with me today my husband, Siza Ntshakala, and my son, Thabo. They have made tremendous sacrifices for my Foreign Service career. I am grateful for their love and support, which have helped bring me to the threshold of this potential new, challenging, and exciting assignment.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the honorable members of this committee to advance the interests and values of the United States and the American people in Swaziland.

Service in Swaziland would offer me the opportunity to utilize the experience I have developed over years of work throughout Africa. My decision to remain in Africa was, in many ways, shaped by my first tour in the Central African Republic. There, I had the opportunity to work with officials of the sole political party as they grappled with demands for change. I also had the chance to work with citizens who were coalescing around calls for multiparty democracy and with a trade union movement battling to advocate for workers' rights in the face of government harassment and restrictions. Since then, I have collaborated with human rights advocates, supported grassroots democracy education efforts, and advocated for democratic organizations and movements from South Africa to South Sudan and from Kenya to Nigeria. HIV/AIDS has been a constant focus throughout my assignments, culminating in my support for the development of Mission Cameroon's first country strategy for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). If confirmed, I am particularly looking forward to continuing Mission Swaziland's work to combine these two priorities—expanding Swazi ownership of the HIV/AIDS response while strengthening the ability of Swazi citizens to hold their government accountable for performance across all sectors, including but not limited to health.

The United States maintains one of the few resident diplomatic missions in the Kingdom of Swaziland. Our relationship with the people of Swaziland is an important partnership. The new Embassy building that will open next year in Mbabane is a powerful symbol of the value the U.S. places on that relationship and will be a great platform for outreach to the Swazi people.

If confirmed, I will continue to engage the Swazi Government as well. I would like to see the king and his advisors enter into an ongoing dialogue with civil society. Swazi citizens still have limited ability to engage meaningfully in public policy decisions, and basic rights such as the freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, and expression are restricted. Dialogue with civil society will help open the way for citizen engagement in policy decisions, which will help ensure the best policy outcomes.

Swaziland is facing a declining economy. This is partially due to a broader regional economic downturn, but also due to the loss of African Growth and Opportunity (AGOA) trade preferences. Swaziland was suspended from AGOA membership in January, after the government failed to meet established benchmarks to strengthen its human rights record, despite several years of engagement by the U.S. Government. These benchmarks involve the same basic rights for which Swazi civil society advocates: freedom of peaceful assembly, association, expression, and other essential freedoms. Drawing on my experience with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, I will support those who strive to hold the government accountable and uphold democratic values. I will support civil society, labor unions, and media, to create space for needed political dialogue amongst all the stakeholders in Swaziland.

The people of Swaziland want what the people of the United States want: peace, stability, economic prosperity, and an opportunity for their children to build better lives for themselves. They also hope that their children will be healthy enough to have that opportunity.

Swaziland's 26 percent HIV prevalence rate is the highest in the world, and the nation is suffering a severe tuberculosis crisis. Thanks to the resources available through PEPFAR, the United States has helped save tens of thousands of lives in Swaziland. Embassy Mbabane has been actively coordinating with the Swazi Government and other donors to control the epidemic by strengthening health infrastructure, increasing the capacity of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and

the National Emergency Response Council for HIV/AIDS, and developing a whole of government approach to the crisis.

These efforts have generated results. In 2004, prior to PEPFAR, fewer than 500 people were on antiretroviral therapy. Now, more than 130,000 people in Swaziland receive treatment. With the new guidance for starting treatment early in the disease progression, and the potential to implement a "test and start" program, those numbers should increase even further. In recent years, the Swazi Government has procured its own medicines and laboratory commodities, although the supply chain continues to face challenges and needs ongoing support. If confirmed, I would look to build on the Embassy's ongoing work to continue engaging national, regional, and local community leaders about efforts to create sustainable programs for an AIDS-Free generation.

The U.S. mission in Swaziland engages with both national leaders and at grass roots levels across Swaziland. In addition, Peace Corps Volunteers are actively engaged in community health and HIV prevention programs. These volunteers are tangible representatives of the interest and concern of the United States for the people of Swaziland.

If confirmed, I am also passionate about working with Swaziland's young women and girls to help them realize their full potential, because young women who feel empowered are less likely to be at risk for HIV. To that end, Swaziland is a partner in the new DREAMS initiative, which aims to enable adolescent girls and young women to become Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-Free, Mentored and Safe. If confirmed, I will continue efforts to work closely with the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland and civil society to enhance the status of women and girls, in order to help address the HIV/AIDS epidemic, support poverty alleviation efforts, and uphold universal human rights.

A stable Swaziland is important to U.S. regional strategic interests, but, long-term stability is not possible where citizens are unable to use their voices to hold government accountable for its actions. If confirmed, I will draw on the strong bilateral relationship between the United States and Swaziland to continue encouraging the Kingdom to improve its record on human rights and fundamental freedoms. This will also help Swaziland meet the benchmarks for AGOA eligibility, which will benefit the Swazi economy. I will also ensure that our health programming builds on success and innovates for sustainability, saving the lives of Swazi citizens and helping preserve family units. And I will continue to engage in cross-cutting areas, such as civil society's ability to advocate on issues from preventing gender-based violence to protection of marginalized groups to institutionalizing the rule of law. Encouraged by the mutual respect between our two nations and energized by the challenges that lie ahead, I would be honored, if confirmed, to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Swaziland.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Pittman.

STATEMENT OF H. DEAN PITTMAN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

Mr. PITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to say, first, my family is sort of scattered from Burma to Mississippi today, so it is just me up here, but thank you very much.

And just let me say to Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me.

Mr. Chairman, as you noted, I served in Mozambique 24 years ago at a time the country was just emerging from years of devastating civil war. Mozambique has come a long way since those days.

Over these last decades, the United States has aimed to build a strong, productive partnership with Mozambique and its people as

we advance our mutual interests in tackling a wide range of issues, including expanding investment opportunities; combating transnational crime and illegal trafficking; stopping the spread of HIV; and building more inclusive, democratic institutions that can meet the needs of all Mozambique's people. And we have seen significant, though uneven, progress.

On the economic front, Mozambique had registered impressive growth over the past decade. This economic growth will likely continue as the country develops its recently discovered natural gas fields, an area where opportunities for U.S. investment are already being realized.

Most notably, when the Texas-based company Anadarko concludes its negotiations with the Government to develop a large natural gas field, a multimillion dollar project, it will become one of the largest investors in sub-Saharan Africa.

With our opening of the Embassy's new Foreign Commercial Service Office in 2014, we have deepened U.S. Government advocacy support available to U.S. companies and businesses.

But it is clear these positive developments only tell part of the story. Despite such impressive economic growth, the majority of Mozambique's 25 million people continue to live below the poverty line. Mozambique has an HIV prevalence rate of around 11 percent nationwide. Educational opportunities, while improving, still are not equally available across the country. And illiteracy remains a challenge, particularly for women and girls.

Weak institutions and porous borders continue to make Mozambique a target of international trafficking and other criminal networks. And perhaps most troubling, recent violent skirmishes between the Government and opposition party underscore that peace remains fragile.

Mozambique's progress and ability to be a strong partner with the United States depends in large part on continued peace and stability; strong democratic institutions; a healthy, educated population; an engaged civil society; and economic growth that is inclusive and benefits all Mozambicans.

These are areas where the United States has long worked closely with Mozambique, and this is an area where we will continue to focus our attention. Let me offer a few examples.

As the largest bilateral donor to Mozambique, the United States provides the majority of our support to improve the health of Mozambicans. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the President's Malaria Initiative, the Global Health Initiative, and the Peace Corps are all working together toward this goal in partnership with both the Mozambican Government and the Mozambican people.

Thanks to these efforts, more than 675,000 people living with HIV are now on treatment, and 75 percent of them are supported by the generosity of the American people.

If confirmed, I will also encourage the Mozambican Government to commit more of its own resources, particularly as it is able to do so, to improve the health of its people and ensure the sustainability of its health care system.

In the agricultural sector, where there is significant room for expansion, the U.S. Government is helping Mozambicans improve

overall performance in order to reduce hunger, poverty, and malnutrition.

In light of Mozambique's geographical location on the Indian Ocean, we recognize its potential as a regional partner and leader. But to fulfill this role, Mozambique must be able to secure its long land borders and coastline. There needs to be sustained efforts to promote maritime security and curb illegal trade flows. So if confirmed, I will look for more opportunities to expand efforts in this area.

We are cooperating with Mozambique to conserve coastal wetlands and marine reserves, and to reestablish the country's unique wildlife parks and combat wildlife trafficking. The Government of Mozambique has already taken important steps enacting stronger conservation law and recently courageously destroying a stockpile of confiscated ivory and rhino horns.

If confirmed, I will advocate for continued demonstrations of political and national will to take on powerful criminal enterprises intent on profiteering at the expense of Mozambique's natural heritage and what is, indeed, a global treasure.

Underpinning all of this work, are people-to-people ties. More than 1,200 Mozambicans have come to the United States as part of a wide variety of exchange programs and returned home to contribute to their country the perspectives they gained here in our country.

These exchanges work both ways. We have a robust Peace Corps program in Mozambique. As a former Peace Corps Volunteer, I know what invaluable experiences our volunteers gain from work they are doing in many communities, large and small, throughout the entire country.

So, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I want to thank you for the privilege of appearing before you today. If confirmed, I welcome the challenge of protecting and advancing the interests of the United States in Mozambique. It is a duty and responsibility I would be honored to accept. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pittman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DEAN PITTMAN

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me. Mr. Chairman, I served in Mozambique 24 years ago at a time the country was just emerging from years of devastating civil war. Mozambique has come a long way since those days. Over these last decades the United States has aimed to build a strong, productive partnership with Mozambique and its people as we advance our mutual interests in tackling a wide range of issues, including expanding investment opportunities, combating transnational crime and illegal trafficking, stopping the spread of HIV, and building more inclusive, democratic institutions that can meet the needs of all Mozambique's people.

And we have seen significant—though uneven—progress.On the economic front Mozambique has registered impressive growth over the past decade—upward of 7 percent a year. This economic growth will likely continue as the country develops its recently discovered natural gas fields; an area where opportunities for U.S. investment are already being realized. Most notably, when the Texas-based company—Anadarko—concludes its negotiations with the government to develop a large section of the natural gas fields—a multibillion dollar project—it will become one of the largest investors in sub-Saharan Africa. Already other U.S. companies are taking advantage of what are expected to be increasing investment opportunities, not only in the energy field, but also in construction, tourism, and agriculture. With

our opening of the Embassy's new Foreign Commercial Service Office in 2014, we have deepened U.S. Government advocacy support available to U.S. companies and investors. As a new Trade Africa partner, the United States will work closely with Mozambique to expand economic ties and improve the environment for trade and investment.

But it is clear these positive developments only tell part of the story. Despite such impressive economic growth, the majority of Mozambique's 25 million people continue to live below the poverty line. Mozambique has an HIV prevalence rate of over 11 percent nationwide, a huge threat to the country's well-being. Educational opportunities, while improving, still are not equally available across the country and illiteracy remains a challenge, particularly among women and girls. Weak institutions and porous borders continue to make Mozambique a target of international trafficking and other criminal networks. And perhaps most troubling, recent violent skirmishes between the government and opposition party underscore that peace remains fragile.

Mozambique's progress and ability to be a strong partner with the U.S. depends in large part on continued peace and stability, strong democratic institutions, a healthy, educated population, an engaged civil society and economic growth that is inclusive and benefits all Mozambicans. These are areas where the United States has long worked closely with Mozambique and its people and where, if confirmed, I will continue to focus our attention. Let me offer a few examples of areas where we have worked successfully with Mozambique to advance our mutual interests.

As the largest bilateral donor to Mozambique, the United States provides the majority of our support to improve the health of Mozambicans. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the President's Malaria Initiative, the Global Health Initiative, and the Peace Corps are all working together toward this goal in partnership with both the Mozambican Government and civil society. Thanks to the partnership between the Mozambican Government and international donors including the United States (through PEPFAR), more than 675,000 people living with HIV are now on treatment, and 75 percent of them are supported by the generosity of the American people. If confirmed, I will continue to advance our ambitious vision of creating an AIDS-free generation by working to reduce the transmission of HIV/AIDS, boost the percentage of HIV-positive Mozambicans on treatment, and control the epidemic in the highest burden districts of Mozambique by the year 2018. At the same time, I will encourage the Mozambican Government to commit more of its own resources—particularly as its ability to do so increases—to improving the health of its people and ensuring the sustainability of its health care system.

In the agricultural sector, where there is significant room for expansion, the U.S. Government is helping Mozambicans improve overall performance in order to reduce hunger, poverty, and malnutrition. Our support is also designed to help create opportunities through entrepreneurship, access to markets, improved technology, and a healthy business climate that will aid in transforming subsistence farming into commercial agriculture.

We worked closely with Mozambique to carry out the recently concluded 5-year Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact that focused on investments in water supply, sanitation, drainage, roads, bridges, land tenure, and agriculture to increase productive capacity in areas where economic development has lagged.

In addition over the last couple of decades, the United States has been a major contributor to ridding Mozambique of landmines, a deadly reminder of the civil war and an obstacle to development and economic growth. Earlier this year, Mozambique officially declared itself "impact free" of landmines.

We also recognize Mozambique's potential as a regional partner and leader, particularly in light of its expectation of becoming a world-class energy exporter. To fulfill this role, Mozambique must be able to secure its long land borders and coastline. There needs also to be sustained efforts to promote maritime security and curb illegal trade flows. If confirmed, I will continue to build upon our partnership with the Mozambican authorities to promote regional maritime and border security as an integral part of efforts to advance regional stability and economic growth.

We are also cooperating with Mozambique to conserve coastal wetlands and marine reserves, and to reestablish the country's unique wildlife parks and combat wildlife trafficking, a very serious threat to Mozambique's sovereignty, border security, as well as the economic welfare of the population. The Government of Mozambique has already taken important steps: enacting a stronger conservation law and recently courageously destroying a stockpile of confiscated ivory and rhino horn. If confirmed, I will advocate for continued demonstrations of political and national will to take on powerful criminal enterprises intent on profiteering at the expense of Mozambique's natural heritage, and indeed a global heritage.

Underpinning all of this work are our people-to-people ties. Our American Cultural Center and American Corners provide spaces for the exchange of ideas on topics from the environment to entrepreneurship, from capacity building to culture.

More than 1,200 Mozambicans have come to the United States as part of a wide variety of exchange programs and returned home to contribute to their communities the perspectives and skills gained here. And, these exchanges work both ways. We have a robust Peace Corps program in Mozambique, and as a former Peace Corps Volunteer, I know what invaluable experiences our volunteers gain from work they are doing in many communities large and small throughout the entire country.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I want to thank you for the privilege of appearing before you today. If confirmed, I welcome the challenge of protecting and advancing the interests of the United States in Mozambique; it is a duty and responsibility I would be honored to accept. Thank you and I would welcome any questions you might have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Pittman.

Ms. Malac, with regard to Uganda, there has been, as we talked about before, an uptick in HIV/AIDS. What is the Government doing to help stem that? I am talking about the Ugandan Government. And how can we play a positive role there?

Ambassador MALAC. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, we are a bit concerned that the decline in HIV/AIDS rates has stagnated over the last several years. We continue to work through the PEPFAR program with the Government of Uganda, with the Ministry of Health, which understands the concerns, looking for other opportunities to improve prevention efforts.

They have been quite successful in terms of preventing mother-to-child transmission. But clearly, with numbers continuing to show increases in some parts of the population, there is more that needs to be done. We believe that it is possible to stop that from continuing to go up and push it back in the other direction. So PEPFAR is heavily engaged in a number of areas in the prevention arena.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. Uganda has played a positive role in the region, in terms of contributing troops and helping broker peace deals and enforce, hopefully, a cease-fire in South Sudan. Do you see it as an important role, your role as Ambassador, if you are confirmed, to forward that relationship? What can we do to make sure that that kind of positive cooperation continues?

Ambassador MALAC. Clearly, the relationship that we have had with Uganda over the last several years in the security arena is a very important one for our interests and the interests of the countries in East Africa and the Horn. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will continue, through the many different avenues that the U.S. has used to date, to ensure that our interests and Uganda's converge as regards the security sector.

We believe that Uganda has potential to continue to play a leadership role in the security sector and bringing some help to address the conflicts that surround the country. So I am quite confident that we will be able to continue that relationship.

The Ugandans have said that they are committed to participate in all of the activities. But clearly, we will need, going forward, to ensure that that conversation remains robust, and that we are able to identify opportunities that they are in a position to address.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you. And thank you for your willingness to take on this assignment after that nice, leisurely post you had

in Liberia over the last couple years. Thanks for the work that you did there as well.

Ms. Peterson, you mentioned that the HIV/AIDS rate in Swaziland is among if not the highest in the world. You also mentioned that there are a large number, 130,000, on retrovirals. Given the difficulty in terms of revenue for Government, how will they be able to continue to provide the retrovirals? Is that an issue we ought to be concerned about?

Ms. PETERSON. Thank you very much for that question.

The Government has taken a very forward-leaning position, in terms of taking responsibility for providing the medications for treatment in Swaziland. The financial burden on the Government is only going to grow as the objective for addressing prevention is actually through treatment, and the numbers of people who will need to go on treatment will increase.

The Government is in a difficult position, because they have the looming economic circumstance in the region at this moment in time.

We are considering options that may help them in the short term with ensuring that the supply chain of medication is not stopped. But longer term, there will clearly need to be conversations with the Government about how they are prioritizing their spending, so that they can continue to uphold their commitment, which is a point on which they are very proud.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

With regard to AGOA, is there any possibility that, in the short term, they might be able to hit the benchmarks they need to have these restrictions lifted?

Ms. PETERSON. So the Government has "done the needful" on two Labor Relations Act provisions. There is, apparently, work that has been developed around crowd control measures, public order, the way security forces respond to public demonstrations. That is still a work in progress and not something that has been really rolled out to the Swazi security forces.

The real sticking points are going to come around revisions to the Public Order Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The International Labor Organization has been working with the Swazi Government to amend the relevant provisions in the Terrorism Act. If confirmed, this is something that I would also like to try to draw on individuals and organizations that I came to know through my work in Democracy, Human Rights and Labor to try to find ways that we can help the Government address those final two provisions, so that overall space, not just for trade unions, but also for civil society writ large, will be more open.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Pittman, you mentioned wildlife trafficking as an issue the Government is dealing with there. There has been a huge uptick in rhino poaching in the Kruger National Park proximity right near the border of Mozambique. What role is yours, if you are confirmed, to help the Government respond to that problem?

Mr. PITTMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, you are right. First of all, this is a huge resource that the Mozambicans have, and they are aware of it. They have these beautiful, unique, natural national parks and reserves. They are

unique to the world. So preserving these and preventing trafficking in ivory and rhino horns is critical.

The United States has been very much involved, and I have to say our Ambassador to the re, Ambassador Griffiths, has been working very closely with the Government and with the private sector. I think that is key, that we have a partnership where we bring in private sector expertise to work with the Government to manage their resources and help manage the parks, help manage the reserves, but also look at how we can provide training and other advice and other tools to the Government to prevent the trafficking in wildlife.

It is a challenge. The borders are porous, and the capacity is a challenge. But we are working on a whole series of levels, and a lot of our assistance is going directly to support efforts in this area.

I have to commend the Government. They realize this is a challenge. They realize how important it is. And they have recently destroyed 2.5 tons of ivory and rhino horns that had been confiscated.

So I think we have a good partner with Mozambique in working toward a solution here. It is a challenge. It is a challenge for the region.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Markey.

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

Ambassador Malac, last April, Human Rights Watch said that the new bill to regulate nongovernmental groups would severely curb Ugandans' basic rights and would subject NGOs to such extensive governmental control and interference that it could negate the very essence of freedom of association and expression.

Alarmingly, one of its clauses would prohibit activity "contrary to the dignity of the people of the Uganda." Such a broad definition leaves the conclusion that they want to just be able to act arbitrarily.

So what is the State Department's view of Uganda's new NGO bill that they are looking at? And what would you do, as Ambassador, to help protect civil society groups?

Ambassador MALAC. Thank you, Senator.

Regulation of NGOs is a topic of much interest and discussion among many countries in East Africa, and so we are, understandably, having seen how it works elsewhere, concerned by the proposed legislation in Uganda.

The good news on this issue, however, is that the Ugandan Government has continued to appear open to dialogue and discussion, and to entertain suggestions for revisions to the language of the legislation that are put forward by civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and international partners.

If confirmed, I will continue to lead that kind of an effort to have a dialogue and discussion, and try to moderate where we can aspects of the legislation, understanding that the Government of Uganda does need to have a good understanding of what activities are ongoing inside its borders.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

The Somali-based extremist group al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the 2010 bombings in the Ugandan capital. Reports say that it has successfully recruited members in Uganda. Also, al-

Shabaab militants based in Kenya have threatened Uganda with further attacks in retaliation for its involvement in the African Union Mission in Somalia.

We work closely with Uganda, with assistance focused on improving border control and airport security, travel document control, forensics, and critical questions on Somali.

Could you talk a little bit about that and how you see that situation unfolding?

Ambassador MALAC. Certainly, Senator. Thank you.

Uganda has faced a lot of challenges and it, certainly, is under threat for the leading role that it has played in AMISOM since its inception in 2007. As a result, they have been a direct target of terrorist attacks.

It is clear to us that there is much more work that we all need to do to strengthen their ability to insulate themselves, to the extent that it is possible with terrorist groups, from these kinds of activities.

We have seen al-Shabaab and what it is capable of doing, not just within Somalia, but outside. It is ongoing effort in cooperation with the Government of Uganda to work together to try to build their capacity to do that in a variety of ways, as you have outlined.

If confirmed, I would continue those programs and that cooperation in any way possible.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Ms. Peterson, the 2005 Constitution, notably its Bill of Rights, was a key step toward Swazi compliance with global constitutional norms. But pro-democracy groups view it as falling short in many respects, and discontent continues over alleged corruption, nepotism, favoritism, and privilege for royals and the political elite; mismanagement of public funds; and state resistance to political reform.

What more can the United States do to help foster a climate where political parties can operate and civic freedoms can expand?

Ms. PETERSON. Thank you very much for that question.

I think the fundamental work on ensuring space for civil society—and this grows out of the engagement around AGOA—that if we can get the space opened for civil society, that will open broader opportunities for engagement by an array of actors.

I do think that Swaziland has taken a negative direction since 2005. It clearly is something that the current Ambassador at post has worked on. If confirmed, I would look to build on her engagements, provide as much support and as much convening power for civil society as I can.

On the fiscal transparency side, I think as a starting point, we, the U.S. Government, can hold a stronger line on asking for greater fiscal transparency from the Government. But, again, opening the space for Swazis to be able to speak to their own Government and hold their own Government accountable will also be key to getting the Government to respond on these points.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Mr. Pittman, according to the department's 2015 Trafficking in Persons report, Mozambique as a Tier 2 country is a transit and to a lesser extent destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Please describe the

Government's approach to halting human trafficking abuses. What must it do more effectively to counter such crimes? And what can you in the Embassy do to advance that goal?

Mr. PITTMAN. Thank you, Senator.

In some ways, this is a bit of a good news story. The Government of Mozambique was listed as a Tier 2 Watch country just a few years ago. But because of some of the good work and efforts they have made, they moved to the Tier 2. Obviously, it is still not enough, and we work very closely with the Government to sort of see how we can find ways to advance them and get them to fulfill the regulations here.

But they have taken some positive steps, and, certainly, ones that are encouraging. They set up reference groups in various provinces that are looking at some of these cases and investigating them and providing that kind of eyes on the ground for the Government. The Government is taking the opportunity with other NGOs and groups to provide training and information to Government workers so they are aware of what they should be looking for, and how they should be approached.

Broader issues, of course, are the issues that Mozambique has with maintaining its long borders that are porous.

These are all areas where we will continue to work. But the bottom line here, I think, is that we have some good progress so far on this issue.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for convening this hearing today.

First, to Ambassador Malac, I just cannot thank you enough for your service in Liberia. In my three visits to Liberia, I was struck by the capabilities of the country, the challenges it faced. And in the most recent visit, I had the opportunity to see your leadership in the midst of the Ebola crisis. It was nothing short of spectacular. You were just the sort of Foreign Service leader we hope for in this country under extremely demanding circumstances—highly motivated, capable, still retaining a sense of humor in the midst of one of the most difficult environments I have ever seen, and with a loyal and dedicated team.

So I just want to start by, in front of your family, thanking you for what I know was a very long and difficult period, and for your exceptional leadership in it.

I mean to take nothing away from our other nominees, but I have had the opportunity to see you lead under extremely demanding circumstances.

And you go from Monrovia to Kampala. When I first came into Kampala, in 1987, Museveni's troops had just taken control. He had just become President, and he is still President today.

So my first question would simply be, given what we have already heard in terms of concerns about the civil society, the NGO law, and the really grinding pressure on civil society, and given recent decisions about pursuing another term, how do you strike an appropriate balance between advocating for democracy and open

civil society and transparency while retaining a positive relationship with a key regional security ally?

Ambassador MALAC. Thank you for those kind words, Senator, and for the question. Yes, moving from one difficult situation to another.

Creating democracy, creating multiparty democracy that functions in an appropriate manner is a process, as you know. It is not something that happens overnight.

A few elections ago, there was not anything that even resembled multiparty democracy in Uganda. Now in the election we are headed toward in early next year, there is a greater semblance of that process.

But it is messy, and it is, certainly, not as far and as well-entrenched in Uganda as any of us would like to see it. So we are continuing to have the discussion; continuing to work as the U.S. Government has been doing with developing the capacity of political parties to provide legitimate opposition, some real opposition, to the current system; creating capacity within civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations, to understand the role that they play, the important role that they play in making demands on their government for appropriate democratic outlets and processes; continuing to work with the elections commission to ensure the capacity of the system to function, despite some of the concerns.

The issue of term limits is always a tricky one. Ultimately, this often resides in constitutions, and ultimately, those decisions are for the people to decide. We understand often those referendums or decisions may not always be the most transparent processes.

But that said, I think I, if confirmed as Ambassador, will continue to have this conversation that has been an ongoing one with President Museveni to show that change is good sometimes—it brings different ideas; it brings different opportunities—but, most importantly, to encourage him to keep the space open so that opposition parties and civil society organizations, Ugandans, can advocate for their own rights and civil protections.

Thank you.

Senator COONS. Let me also ask you, Ambassador, about the LGBT community in Uganda and the shrinking space in which they have had to operate in the last couple of years, and the real challenges we face in trying to respect their security, privacy, and liberty while still advocating for them.

I had a very memorable meeting a number of years ago in which I was asked not to be a more vocal advocate because of the consequences for those who were known to have met with a Senator or anyone else from our Government.

How do you fight for space when the political environment around it is not supportive?

Ambassador MALAC. Thank you.

That is a very difficult balance to strike, particularly as we are pushed on the part of the U.S. Government to ensure, as we do advocate all over the world, for the protection of the human rights of all individuals to be free from discrimination, to be free from the threat of violence. It is an issue and a value that we hold very

dear, and we must advocate in that arena, even in difficult environments like Uganda.

It is often the case that we are sometimes further out ahead of some of the local groups or individuals themselves. So continuing the dialogue that we have—we work very closely with organizations and individuals in Uganda who are advocating for LGBT rights to ensure that we are calibrated appropriately and to continue to work with the Government, to dialogue with the Government of Uganda, to ensure that the space is open.

It will be an ongoing process where we believe the legislation that was on the books previously is gone. But, of course, we will have to continue to watch vigilantly to ensure that we do not turn the clock back.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask a question of all three, being conscious of my colleagues' time.

Mr. Pittman, you served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Gabon many years ago. All three of you have had experience and exposure with the Peace Corps in the countries to which you will serve or where you previously served.

I am also interested in the Young African Leaders program. We had a terrific meeting with them in Monrovia. The University of Delaware is one of 20 institutions that hosts them. I think it has a lot of potential and is an area this administration has led in.

If you would please in turn talk about how we build a better relationship between the nations to which you will be posted, and what role exchange programs, service programs like the Peace Corps, like Young African Leaders, play in that process? Please, if you would, in order.

Ambassador MALAC. Thank you, Senator.

Watching what has been happening with Young African Leaders participants who have returned to Liberia has been very instructive in terms of what the possibilities are, watching how they come back with these connections, not just to young people in the United States but to the Africans that they have met from other countries that they might not have had the opportunity to. They themselves are watching the energy, creating networks among themselves, talking back and forth and coming up with ideas about how they can contribute.

If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity in Uganda to see what other possibilities we can find among the young people. It is a very young population, as many of the African countries are. So finding ways to constructively engage the young population is absolutely critical for the future of this country. I think that YALI, among others, is one tool that we can use.

Ms. PETERSON. Thank you, Senator.

The Peace Corps is a key part of our engagement on our HIV/AIDS programming in Swaziland. They provide access to rural communities and young populations in a way that traditional Embassy-based programming would never be able to accomplish. It really is a people-to-people connection that you cannot match in any way.

If confirmed, I would definitely continue supporting the work of the Peace Corps as they can go about raising awareness and encouraging voluntary testing.

In terms of other initiatives such as the Young African Leaders program, because Swaziland is not quite as young of a population as Uganda, but it still has its own youth bulge, engagement with young people and developing young leaders who are going to have that access to mentors that they meet through the course of the program, those sorts of resources available to them will be key to Swaziland's ability to consider how it moves forward and creates opportunities for young people, with young people advocating for their own particular needs.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Ms. Peterson.

Mr. Pittman.

Mr. PITTMAN. Thank you, Senator.

As you know, I was in the Peace Corps, and I am a huge fan. We have over about 180 Peace Corps Volunteers in Mozambique now. They are not only a value-add, they are a multiplier in the many areas where we are working. That is education; health; advancing the interests of young girls, particularly; and education, as I said. So that is a great resource for a mission to have, and I am pleased that we have a robust Peace Corps program there.

As I noted in my testimony, we have had 1,200 exchange persons from Mozambique come to the United States. I think this is an excellent program. We will continue to look at how we can engage with youth groups through our Embassy outreach to civil society.

And the YALI program is an excellent way to identify some of the next generation of young leaders. I believe we identified this last go-round about 15 or so Mozambicans.

So if confirmed, this will be a great area where I hope to do a lot of work as well.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Thank you to you and your families. And as you had to Mbabane, Maputo, and Kampala, I wish you all the best and look forward to staying in touch.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you as well to the nominees who are here today. I appreciate your sacrifice, your service, and your families as well. So thank you for your public service.

I, too, just want to follow up on what Senator Coons said about Museveni and the comments you had made in your opening statement. "Uganda will hold elections in 2016, during which President Museveni will seek a fifth term. If confirmed, I will urge the President to ensure the political space necessary for a spirited and robust campaign in which all parties participate freely."

Obviously, with the news on October 15, the arrest of the opposition leaders, we are far from a spirited and robust campaign, at this point, so perhaps we can go further into what the U.S. positions will be.

But I want to shift away from that. I do not think this has been brought up yet. I would just like to get an update perhaps on what

you see in Uganda and what the United States is doing in terms of the LRA and resistance to the LRA.

Ambassador MALAC. Thank you, Senator.

The counter-LRA activities continue. As you know, only one of the ICC indictees, Joseph Kony himself, remains on the battlefield. It is a slow process. It is a very remote area.

But as you all are aware, the operation has been extended for another year. We continue to be hopeful that the activities, working with the partners in the region, led primarily by the Ugandan forces, that they will be successful. That continues to be the hope, that we will find and remove Joseph Kony from the battlefield in the coming months.

The commitment on the part of the Ugandan Government remains strong to participate in these activities and to help free the populations of that part of Africa from the threat of LRA activity that had such a negative impact for so long.

Senator GARDNER. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Ambassador, thank you.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Any followup questions from my colleagues? I should not ask that to Senator Coons. [Laughter.]

I appreciate the time that you have taken to prepare for this hearing. I appreciate, again, the family members who are here and the sacrifices that they make.

We look forward to going forward with this process and thank you all. Thank you for your service.

The hearing record will be open until Thursday, so members can submit other questions for the record, as well. We would ask witnesses to respond as promptly as possible to these questions that might come your way.

With thanks to the committee, this hearing now stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:24 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF HON. DEBORAH MALAC, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MALAC'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. What steps has Uganda taken to address sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers in AMISOM?

Answer. In regard to the accusations in the Human Rights Watch report of systematic sexual abuse by AMISOM soldiers of Somali women, the Ugandans charged three soldiers for conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline under Section 178 of the Ugandan Peoples' Defense Force (UPDF) Act and have committed to undertaking courts martial against any other soldiers found over the course of the investigation to have violated military regulations. We understand that Uganda and AMISOM restructured the "gender office" for the primary AMISOM base in Mogadishu and moved it to a stadium outside the base so that anyone can access the office for assistance or to report incidents. The Ugandan Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI) was tasked with the investigation into the accusations made in the Human Rights Watch report. We continue to follow up with our interlocutors in the CMI on their progress in the investigation.

Separately, the UPDF convicted two soldiers in July and September 2015, respectively, of sexually abusing two fellow Ugandan soldiers while stationed in Somalia as part of the AMISOM contingent.

Question. In 2013, Ugandan forces deployed a court martial to Mogadishu, but it has since been recalled. Why was it recalled?

Answer. We understand that the Ugandans undertook this action in order to avoid paying additional per diem to soldiers undergoing the trials. The Ugandans see this as an additional disciplinary measure for those soldiers.

Question. What African Union guidelines and policies on sexual exploitation and abuse are AMISOM troops, including Uganda, subject to?

Answer. Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are expressly prohibited by AMISOM, and are also against the regulations of the individual and troop contributing countries (TCCs). This zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual exploitation and abuse was recently reaffirmed at the September 2015 meeting of the AU's Military Operations Coordination Committee, which was attended by the leaderships of the AU, AMISOM, and troop/police-contributing countries, including Uganda, as well as donor partners. AMISOM maintains a policy on prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as a board of inquiry to investigate breaches in discipline. AMISOM also established a disciplinary board, before which there are currently pending cases of sexual harassment by AMISOM forces. Nonetheless, an AU investigation into existing measures to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation revealed that AMISOM should make significant improvements to its reporting and accountability mechanisms, and Human Rights Watch has noted gaps and weaknesses within the original SEA policy language itself. We are committed to following up with our AU and TCC partners on how they are improving their systems.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to opening a dialogue with the Ugandan Government on military professionalism, specifically around the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse?

Answer. Respect for human rights and protection of civilians is a core component of all peacekeeping and military training conducted by the United States for the Ugandan Peoples' Defense Force (UPDF). We are already engaged in a discussion with the Government of Uganda regarding the allegations of abuse and misconduct by the UPDF forces serving in AMISOM, and continue to provide training to enhance the UPDF's professionalism. If confirmed, I will continue this ongoing dialogue with the Government of Uganda and the leadership of the UPDF to urge greater attention to protection of civilians and respect for human rights whenever or wherever UPDF forces are deployed. In addition, I will continue to advocate for investigations into and accountability for actions related to abuse or sexual exploitation.

Question. What commitments has Uganda made to countering wildlife trafficking and what programming and funding has the United States put toward counterwildlife trafficking in FY 2014 and FY 2015?

Answer. Uganda's location makes it a natural transit route for wildlife products, especially ivory, that originate in neighboring countries. The problem is underscored by weak antitrafficking laws and inadequate resources and training of wildlife officials. Because the penalties for trafficking are not strong enough to act as deterrents, the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities is working to strengthen the current wildlife law. We continue to raise this issue with the government to ensure government-wide leadership in enacting the amendments and greater government investment of resources in the law enforcement and intelligence aspects of combating wildlife trafficking.

Additionally, many of the administration's global and regional activities to combat wildlife trafficking, including training programs, strengthening regional cooperation, and reducing demand, can lead to benefits in Uganda. At this time, USAID/Uganda is focused on supporting several comprehensive analyses of wildlife crime and trafficking that look at Uganda, specifically, as well as its link to broader East African regional networks. These assessments will inform the design of future programs. USAID/Uganda plans to program $500,000 to combat wildlife trafficking in FY 2015.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MALAC'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. According to figures obtained by the Congressional Research Service, Uganda will receive over $90 million in security assistance in FY15 and a mere $3 million for Democracy and Governance activities, most of which will be used to assist with activities associated with the February 2016 elections.

- Is this an appropriate balance of funding in your estimation? What is the United States Government currently doing to support democracy and good governance/anticorruption in Uganda, and how much are we providing to fund those activities? Are these activities adequate to the challenges in the aforementioned areas? If confirmed as Ambassador, what will be your priorities for the duration of your tenure in the areas of democracy and governance and anticorruption? What role will you play in supporting efforts to see that next year's Presidential elections are free and fair?

Answer. Funding for Democracy and Governance (DG) programs is constrained globally, and we strive to make the broadest possible effect with whatever level of funding is available. Embassy Kampala is proactive in identifying DG funding opportunities and has dedicated a total of $3 million in FY 2015 and FY 2016 resources toward Governing Justly and Democratically activities. U.S. foreign assistance supports human rights and invests in organizations and individuals that defend human rights in Uganda; creates more effective links between officials and their constituents; improves local government capacity to deliver services; promotes greater judicial independence, media professionalism, and civil society participation for more accountable governance; and increases transparency and respect for democratic processes and the rule of law. In addition, through our military assistance, the United States prioritizes courses on human rights as part of its basic curriculum for all U.S.-provided training for Ugandan soldiers. Our assistance is helping to build the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) into a more professional force that can continue to help promote stability throughout the region.

If confirmed, I will continue to urge the President and Government of Uganda to open up political space for political parties and civil society to operate and to campaign freely. I will use all available resources and tools to strengthen existing programs to build capacity among civil society organizations, political parties, and the media. On anticorruption, I will continue existing programs to strengthen institutional capacity to combat corruption, and look for opportunities to broaden our partnerships in Uganda to address this massive challenge. I will continue to raise with Ugandan officials and nongovernmental partners the need to reduce corruption at all levels in order to ensure Uganda's long-term development and stability. If confirmed, I will be in a better positon to assess whether the resources for these programs are adequate, and will do so when I am in the country.

Question. The State Department Inspector General issued a report of Inspection of Embassy Kampala in 2014 with 27 recommendations. Among the findings was that post-specific procedures for Leahy vetting of Ugandan military and law enforcement personnel had not been codified.

- What is the status of the codification of procedures for Leahy vetting at the Embassy?

Answer. Embassy Kampala was encouraged in an "informal" recommendation to develop post-specific procedures for Leahy vetting as a best practice. There was no finding by the OIG that the Embassy was doing Leahy vetting incorrectly or insufficiently. Nonetheless, Embassy Kampala has codified its existing robust procedures for conducting Leahy vetting for all individuals and units requiring vetting by developing a written, post-specific standard operating procedure for Leahy vetting.

Question. In July, the East African Community has asked Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni to lead mediation talks on Burundi. Reports continue of politically motivated killings in the Burundian capital, Bujumbura.

- If confirmed, what role will you play in supporting and encouraging Uganda's continued engagement in efforts to bring an end to the crisis in Burundi?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to stress the importance of President Museveni's mediation efforts on behalf of the EAC to convene urgently a comprehensive Burundian political dialogue aimed at reaching consensus on a path to end the violence and restoring the Arusha Agreement as the foundation for peace, stability, and economic development in Burundi.

RESPONSES OF LISA PETERSON, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PETERSON'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. The Trafficking in Persons Report 2015 recommends that the Government of Swaziland "institutionalize training of officials, particularly police, prosecutors, and judges, on the 2010 antitrafficking act and case investigation techniques."

- Does the Government of Swaziland have the capacity to successfully undertake such actions? If not, what role should the United States play in assisting with such training?

Answer. Swaziland could do more to combat this crime. The Swazi Government has limited capacity to improve training on antitrafficking techniques, and the Department is already supporting multiple initiatives to increase official capacity and understanding among Swazi officials in addressing trafficking crimes. For example, we will look to use International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) training opportunities to improve overall policing techniques, which can be applicable to trafficking prevention and investigation methods.

The State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons has awarded a grant for the "Establishment of Data Collection Systems in SADC (South African Development Community) Member States." Swaziland will be one of the beneficiaries of this project, which will include setting up national and regional data hubs, as well as conducting training courses for users of the system.

Furthermore, if confirmed, I will encourage the Swazi Government to enact amendments to its 2010 antitrafficking law to allow permanent residency of foreign victims and increase its efforts at prosecution, improving the rights of victims of trafficking.

Although not specifically tied to antitrafficking efforts, the U.S. Government funded a pilot program for child-friendly courts for victims of sexual assault. Children feel more comfortable testifying with the assistance of social workers in such courts, and as a result, both reporting rates of sex crimes against children and prosecution rates have gone up. Thus, officials are working to improve such systems in country, and with continued assistance and support, we hope to see continued progress in the judicial sector.

Question. According to the State Department's 2015 Fiscal Transparency Report, Swaziland has made no significant progress in meeting minimum fiscal transparency standards.

- How pervasive is official corruption and what effect is it having on the economy? What actions would the government have to undertake to spur economic growth, and improve fiscal management? If confirmed as Ambassador, what will you do to encourage such actions?

Answer. While a lack of fiscal transparency can be an enabling factor for corruption, the Fiscal Transparency report does not assess corruption. Rather, it tracks practices regarding reporting of budget information to the public such as whether budgets are publicly available, reliable, and substantially complete as well as transparency in licensing and contracting for natural resource extraction. Our concerns in the review relate to government reporting on issues related to processes for awarding contracts and licenses for natural resource extraction as well as the degree of oversight on expenditures to support the royal family, military, police, and correctional services.

In terms of corruption, Swaziland's scores in perception of corruption indices are quite favorable. However, there are concerns that Swaziland's sovereign wealth fund is able to enter business deals, which are not transparent or open for public review. This issue is pervasive and has resulted in an investment climate that is less conducive to U.S. and other foreign investment, notwithstanding the country's official policy of encouraging such investment.

A return to AGOA eligibility could spur economic growth through trade, but businesses looking to invest or reinvest in Swaziland will be interested in seeing a more transparent business environment. Meeting these benchmarks would provide space to organizations, such as civil society and the media, to hold leaders accountable and shine a light on corruption. Additionally, Swaziland should implement the regulatory reforms identified in the country's Investor Roadmap (which dates to 2005 and was relaunched in 2012), most of which remain unaddressed. Swaziland should enhance ways for private sector entities of all sizes to get access to financing, and should look for ways to keep the country's deficit under control while protecting spending to help the poorest of the poor in Swaziland.

If confirmed, I would encourage the Government of Swaziland to meet the AGOA benchmarks—including basic rights such as the freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, and expression. Meeting these benchmarks would provide space to organizations, such as civil society and the media, to hold leaders accountable, shine a light on corruption, and provide opportunities to improve the country's trade and investment climate. I would also engage the government in discussions around Swaziland's need for economic growth and the ways in which greater transparency in the investment climate can contribute to more interest from foreign investors. The Department of State recently funded an Internal Audit Department Capacity Building Project to empower the government's auditors and bring greater oversight to the government's finances. While International Quality Assessment Scores have improved, I would urge the Swazi Government to pass the Public Finance Management bill and to establish an independent Internal Audit Committee. These steps are crucial to both meeting international standards and ensuring sustainability of the progress made through this project.

RESPONSES OF DEAN PITTMAN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PITTMAN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. Violence has flared recently between government and RENAMO forces. What role do you believe the U.S. Ambassador to Mozambique should play, if any, in this situation? What specific steps would you advocate the U.S. Government take to ameliorate the instability?

Answer. We are concerned about reports of confrontations between elements of Renamo and government forces, including incidents involving the opposition leader. However, Mozambicans have demonstrated that they can resolve differences through dialogue. As the largest donor to Mozambique and with growing U.S. investment there, the United States has an important role to play in encouraging peace and stability. As Ambassador, I would continue to build on Ambassador Griffiths' efforts work with all sides to support the peaceful resolution of outstanding differences. However, understanding that the situation between elements of Renamo and government forces remains very fluid, the Department would be happy to provide a briefing as more information becomes available.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PITTMAN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. Agence France Presse reported on November 3 that fighting between government forces and opposition party Renamo resulted in fatalities, though the number of deaths remains unclear. This is the latest in a series of deadly clashes between the two parties.

- What is your assessment of whether these clashes could evolve into a more generalized conflict?
- What are the main points of contention between the government and Renamo, and what role, if any, will you have in supporting a rapprochement between the ruling party and Renamo if confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. Currently, the skirmishes are entirely localized to rural areas in Mozambique's central provinces. Although worrisome, all indications from leadership on both sides are that there is no desire for a return to civil war. The Embassy has been monitoring these events closely. At this time, events are still very fluid.

The main points of contention between the government and Renamo were outlined in the 2014 cessation of hostilities agreement. They include the separation of party activities from state functions and the disarmament and reintegration of residual Renamo forces into the police and military. Additionally, Renamo has a bill before Parliament seeking a constitutional change to the mechanism by which provincial governors are established.

While these periodic skirmishes are concerning, Mozambicans have demonstrated in the past that they can resolve differences through dialogue. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will actively pursue a peaceful, transparent, and constitutional resolution to the political impasse. I will encourage all parties to use negotiation rather than violence to achieve their goals. I will do everything in my power to promote rapprochement between ruling party Frelimo and Renamo.

Question. Mozambique ranks near the bottom of Transparency International's corruption index, and according to the State Department's 2015 Fiscal Transparency Report, Mozambique has not made significant progress in meeting minimum requirements of fiscal transparency.

- What programs do we currently have in place to help Mozambicans combat corruption? What tools will you have if confirmed as Ambassador to use against corruption government officials, and under what circumstances will you use them? If confirmed, what actions do you plan to take during your tenure as Ambassador to help Mozambicans to combat corruption?

Answer. Promoting transparency, combatting corruption, and strengthening national institutions and civil society are important aspects of our work in Mozambique. We currently support the Mozambican Prosecutor General and Anti-Corruption Offices through training and mentoring for prosecutors and anticorruption officials to increase their capacity to prevent, investigate and prosecute corruption and to strengthen internal administrative capacity, with a specific focus on procurement and financial management. These programs not only increase the capacity of the government to apply the law and prosecute corruption cases, but they also reinforce efforts to improve overall public financial management and accountability within important state institutions. In addition, our work with the media seeks to increase the capacity of journalists to provide citizens with accurate and independent information. In the last fiscal year, the program mentored 13 leading journalists from major media outlets on investigative journalism and trained 33 emerging journalists to equip them to enter the market. The program also assisted select media outlets in improving their business management and revenues from advertising, thus contributing to their long-term sustainability and making them less prone to depending on a single advertiser and vulnerable to undue influence. A strong Fourth Estate helps hold government accountable to the citizens, and strong prosecutors help hold people, businesses, organizations and other government agencies accountable to the law.

If confirmed, I will regularly include anticorruption themes in our embassy public outreach efforts and continue our engagement with civil society. I will include fiscal transparency and respect for international norms as a regular theme in discussions with senior government officials. Improving public financial management—of which fiscal transparency is a key element—will be a recurring theme in my work, particularly in the context of projected falling commodity prices and state revenues. I will support and, where possible, expand embassy efforts to train organizations that hold governments accountable and serve as watchdogs against corruption, such as civil society organizations and the media.

I will also continue to work with other donors on such key initiatives as the promotion of full Mozambican membership in and adherence to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which offers a global standard to promote transparency in the extractive sector's revenue. Additionally, I will continue to encourage the government to pass legislation enabling a public comment period on draft legislation which would increase transparency in the discussion and passage of national laws. More work will also be necessary to see that Mozambique's supreme audit institution conducts audits of the government's annual budget and makes audit reports public.

I note that as a sign of progress in transparency, the government passed the Freedom of Information law last year, which should allow greater public scrutiny of government decisions and better oversight of how public funds are used. If confirmed, I would actively look for ways to help Mozambique as it implements this important law.

Question. Exports of liquefied natural gas could begin as early as 2018. Has the government put in place strong enough regulations and oversight mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in the sector? What role will you play, if confirmed, to help Mozambicans ensure that the population will benefit from resources from the sector?

Answer. The discovery of significant energy resources has the potential to push sustainable development in Mozambique forward in favor of expansive growth that provides employment and opportunities to Mozambican citizens. To realize this potential, the Mozambican Government faces a number of critical legislative, regulatory, fiscal, and social decisions that will influence the development of its natural resources.

If confirmed, I will advocate fiscal responsibility and transparency in the energy producing sector, including through the IMF representative in Maputo. The representative is actively working with the Government of Mozambique on transparency and the best use of resources. I will continue to support our programming

on media strengthening that has educated scores of journalists on the importance of independent reporting on the extractive industry sector of their country. If confirmed, I will also continue the Embassy's regular meetings with NGOs advocating for transparency and proper use of funds.

Mozambique has made significant progress through its official acceptance as a Compliant Country of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), and it has the opportunity to continue to strengthen its transparency and responsibility, given that the established contracts with the companies that work in extractive industries are open to the public. It will be important for Mozambique to use its resources for the benefit of its people.

Question. Mozambique has been classified as a Tier 2 country since 2011. The Trafficking in Persons Report 2015 states "the government did not finalize its national action place or the implementing regulations for the 2008 antitrafficking law," that "the government's funding for and provision of protective services remained inadequate," and that "the Ministry of Justice's draft 2013 action plan to guide the efforts for witness protection and outline implementation of the 2012 witness protection law . . . remained unfinished."

- What steps will you take, if confirmed, to encourage the government to developing regulations to implement the 2008 antitrafficking law, and complete the action plan related to witness protection? Does the government have the resources for protective services? If not, what assistance could be provided to help with such services?

Answer. Mozambique was upgraded from the Tier 2 Watch List in 2011 to Tier 2 after significant progress in combating trafficking in persons. I understand that the Government of Mozambique is making efforts to comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons. If confirmed, I will encourage the government to continue those efforts. The government established coordinating bodies known as "reference groups" in three additional provinces and reported its investigation in 2014 of 27 trafficking cases. The government prosecuted 44 suspected traffickers and convicted 32, a continued increase from previous years. In 2014, government officials, in partnership with Save the Children, conducted an awareness campaign for 150 members of a transportation association and hosted seven antitrafficking lectures for 600 government and civil sector personnel. U.S. assistance also helped journalists report on the issue.

Further, if confirmed, I will encourage the government to complete its national action plan, develop regulations to ensure full implementation of the protection provisions under the 2008 antitrafficking law, and, most importantly, encourage the government to expand the availability or protection services via allocation of increased funding to the Ministry of Gender and to NGOs. These recommendations complement programming the Department already had in place to support increased provision of adequate protection services, through a grant to IOM. In addition, I will advocate that Mozambican officials participate in training and other programs that combat these illegal activities. An example of such training is the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) the State Department sponsored for a Deputy Prosecutor General and a civil society human rights leader to visit the United States this month. They were in Washington, DC, this week and will go on to Nevada and California to witness firsthand and exchange viewpoints on how our federal, local, and state governments work together to combat trafficking in persons.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2015

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

Catherine Ebert-Gray, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Solomon Islands and Ambassador to the Republic of Vanuatu

Amos J. Hochstein, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Energy Resources)

Hon. Scot Alan Marciel, of California, to be Ambassador to the Union of Burma

John D. Feeley, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Panama

Linda Swartz Taglialatela, of New York, to be Ambassador to Barbados, and as Ambassador to the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Todd C. Chapman, of Texas, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Ecuador

Jean Elizabeth Manes, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Republic of El Salvador

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:32 p.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Corker, Gardner, Barrasso, Cardin, and Menendez.

Also Present: Senator Warner.

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

The CHAIRMAN. If my friends will quit talking about Senator Warner, we will start.

The meeting will come to order.

Today's committee will consider seven nominations.

We have our esteemed colleague, Senator Warner, with us to introduce the first nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Resources, Mr. Amos Hochstein.

Is it "stine" or "stein"?

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. Any way you like it.

The CHAIRMAN. No. [Laughter.]

Which way do you like it?

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. Hochstein.

The CHAIRMAN. Hochstein. We look forward to your introduction.

And with that, I know Senator Warner is very busy, so we might go ahead and let that occur, and then we will move on to the other nominees.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARK WARNER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA

Senator WARNER. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is great to see you and my dear friends, Senator Cardin and Senator Menendez. I know the comments have been made at the dais that hopefully my comments will not be held against Amos.

I know we have all great nominees, but I am here to introduce my friend and present to the committee Amos Hochstein. To show how strongly I believe in Amos, Amos is not even a Virginia resident. He lives in the District, but I am still here to support his nomination as Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Resources.

I have known Amos since well over a decade. He advised me when I was governor. He advised me as I was gearing up on national security issues. He served ably over the last few years as special envoy. This is a position, Assistant Secretary, at this moment in time with energy issues, national security issues being paramount, that needs to be confirmed and needs to be confirmed quickly.

As a matter of fact, Senator Murkowski and I recently chaired an Atlantic Council Task Force on Energy Center for United States Energy and National Security, and one of our recommendations was that this position be filled, and I cannot think of anyone that brings more qualifications, more recognition of both national security threats, particularly as they relate to energy and energy opportunities, than my good friend Amos Hochstein.

So, I am proud to represent him, and again I ask my colleagues, particularly Senators Cardin and Menendez, not to hold any of my comments against him in your consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thanks for being here. Thanks for your service.

I will introduce the other nominees who do not have the handicap of Senator Warner introducing them. [Laughter.]

But thank you so much.

Next on our panel we have the Honorable Scot Marciel, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be our Ambassador to the Union of Burma. He currently serves as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, a position he has held since 2013. Previously, Mr. Marciel served as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia. We thank you for being here.

Catherine Ebert-Gray, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister Counselor, is our nominee to be Ambassador to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the Republic of Vanuatu, a place I have not been. She currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary to the Bureau of Administration's Office of Lo-

gistics Management, a position she has held since 2011. Previously, Ms. Ebert-Gray served as the Director of the Department of Overseas Employment and as Management Counselor at U.S. Embassies in the Philippines and Morocco.

Thank you all for being here.

Now we will turn to the nominees. We would remind you that your full statement will be included in the record, without objection. If you all could keep it to about 5 minutes, we would appreciate it, and then you will have plenty of questions. We thank you all for your service and for being here and look forward to your comments.

If you will just begin in order, going across from Amos.

STATEMENT OF AMOS J. HOCHSTEIN, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY RESOURCES

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, I am honored to be here as the President's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Energy Resources, or ENR. I want to begin by thanking President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence and, with your support, for the opportunity to continue to serve our country.

I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary from ENR's inception until August of 2014, when I assumed the role of Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs. In my tenure leading the Bureau, ENR's efforts have served as a force multiplier, strengthening U.S. leadership in global energy security.

It is a profound honor to be considered to serve as the Bureau's first Assistant Secretary. I started my career as a professional staff member in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, so I know the value of close consultation and partnership with Congress. I am humbled to appear before Congress, back where I started, seeking your confidence to serve the American people in this capacity.

Most importantly, I am joined today by my wife, Rae Ringel, and my four children, as well as my parents and mother-in-law. My parents and their families found a home in this country after fleeing the Nazi advance in Europe. My great aunt Tony Sender, for whom my eldest daughter is named, was an elected member of Parliament through most of the Weimar Republic. She, too, was forced to flee to the United States, supporting the U.S. intelligence effort and ultimately named by Eleanor Roosevelt to represent the United States at the United Nations.

My family history has led me from a young age to appreciate what the United States has done for me, strengthening my resolve to give something back to my country and contribute what I can to ensure our leadership in the world endures. Today, as energy has become the foundation for economic growth, political stability and national security in every part of the world, I am grateful to have the opportunity to contribute in this area.

We are living through truly revolutionary times in energy, from oil to gas to renewable energy. Due to advances in technology and private investment, U.S. natural gas production has hit record highs. After years of decline, U.S. oil production also rose dramatically, and at the very same time new investment in renewable energy over the past two years is on track to exceed $80 billion.

But let us be clear. No matter how much energy we produce at home, the reality is we live in a global and interlinked economy, and energy is a global commodity. Supply disruptions anywhere are a threat everywhere, including here at home.

Mr. Chairman, if you will allow me to review a small but representative sample of the critical work ENR has been engaged in and priorities I will focus on should I be confirmed.

First, Iran. Within weeks of the Bureau's formation in 2011, Congress passed its first broad sanctions affecting Iran's oil exports. ENR was tasked with developing the strategy to strictly implement these sanctions, not an easy task. Our efforts shrank Iran's customers from 20 to 6, and reduced exports from 2.5 million barrels per day to just 1 million. We achieved this without disrupting global oil supplies or price. This unprecedented effort cut Iranian revenues by over $150 billion and played a key role in forcing them to the negotiating table.

Ukraine and Europe continue to be vulnerable to Russia as their dominant and, in some cases, only supplier. We saw this in 2005 and 2009 when Gazprom cut off gas supplies to Ukraine and parts of Europe and Turkey. Russia continues to use energy to gain and maintain political leverage over Ukraine, as well as East and Central Europe, recreating Cold War lines between East and West. This includes the so-called Nord Stream II project.

ENR's active engagement in the region, in close collaboration with the European Commission, has proven vital to counter Russia's dominance. Just this weekend, we grew concerned that gas could be used as a weapon against Turkey. While we hope this will not happen, it proves once again the urgent need to diversify resources and routes throughout the region.

Mr. Chairman, this can be achieved, but only with U.S. and EU leadership. From the beginning, the United States targeted DAESH's oil operations by damaging or destroying oil refineries and oil collection points. In a region with a long history of illicit oil trade, Daesh was able to adapt quickly, but so have we. U.S. strikes are now targeting specific and strategic critical energy infrastructure in Daesh territory. Beyond revenue, Daesh uses control of energy resources as a symbol of their authority and legitimacy, which is why ENR remains in lockstep with the rest of the U.S. national security team to degrade and defeat DAESH.

As we work to prevent the use of energy as a political tool or weapon, we are also advancing an alternate vision where cooperation in the energy sector can foster collaboration and prosperity. The potential is real. From Azerbaijan, the Caspian and Iraq, through Turkey to Europe, from Israel to Egypt, Cyprus and Lebanon to Turkey and Europe, energy will not lead the politics but can serve as an incentive for cooperation and collaboration.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, oil and gas markets are volatile. This produces both pain and gain, depending on where you stand on the producer and consumer scale. If confirmed, I will continue to make sure we are attentive to the political instability consequences of the "lower for longer" price scenario on countries that rely on hydrocarbon revenues for significant shares of their budgets.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I fervently believe in the critical role energy plays in our national security and that of our friends and allies. I look forward to your questions, and thank you for having me today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hochstein follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMOS J HOCHSTEIN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, I am honored to be here before you as the President's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Energy Resources or "ENR." I want to begin by thanking President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence and, with your support, for the opportunity to continue to serve our country.

Now, more than ever, we can see the vital links between energy security and national security; as such, the importance of our energy diplomacy is only growing. Supplies of energy represent a lifeline for ISIS that must be cut, a cudgel for Russia that must be countered, a vulnerability for our allies in Europe addressed, concerns rising in the South China Sea, as well as opportunities in Central America, the Caribbean, and the Eastern Mediterranean; and—for the most innovative, prolific producer in history, the United States of America—energy can and must be a tool for leadership in a complex world.

That is what the men and women of the Bureau of Energy Resources seek to do every day. I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary from the Bureau's inception in 2011 until August 2014, when I assumed the role of Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs. In my tenure leading the Bureau, ENR's efforts have served as a force multiplier, strengthening U.S. leadership in global energy security.

It is a profound honor to be considered to serve as the Bureau's first Assistant Secretary. I started my career serving as a professional staff member in the House Foreign Affairs Committee, so I know the value of close consultation and partnership with Congress. And I am humbled to appear before Congress, back where I started, seeking your confidence to serve the American people in this capacity.

Most importantly, I am joined today by my wife, Rae Ringel, and my four children, as well as my parents and mother-in-law. My parents and their families found a home in this country after fleeing the Nazi's advance in Europe. My great aunt, Tony Sender, whom my eldest daughter is named for, was elected a Member of Parliament through most of the Weimar Republic. She too fled to the United States, supporting the U.S. intelligence effort and ultimately named by Eleanor Roosevelt to represent the United States at the U.N. My family history has led me from a young age to appreciate what America has done for me, and strengthened my resolve to give something back to my country and contribute what I can, to ensure our leadership in the world endures. Today, as energy has become the foundation for economic growth, political stability and national security in every part of the world—I am grateful to have the opportunity to contribute in this area.

We are living through truly revolutionary times in energy—from oil to gas to renewable energy. Due to advances in technology and private investment, U.S. natural gas production has hit record highs, and after years of decline, U.S. oil production also rose dramatically. And at the very same time, new investment in U.S. renewables over the past 2 years is on track to exceed $80 billion.

But let us be clear, no matter how much energy we produce at home, the reality is that we live in a global and interlinked economy and energy is a global commodity.

The United States remains committed to its role as world leader. Energy shortages, price volatility, and supply disruptions anywhere threaten economic growth everywhere, including here at home. Our challenge, therefore, is to look ahead, foster innovation and investment, assess changing markets and politics, and create business opportunities.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to review a small but representative sample of the critical work ENR has been engaged in and priorities I will focus on, should I be confirmed.

First, Iran. Within weeks of the Bureau's formation in 2011, Congress passed its first broad sanctions affecting Iran's oil exports. ENR was tasked with developing the strategy to strictly implement these sanctions. This was not an easy task. Iran at the time had more than 20 customers and exported approximately 2.5 million barrels per day. Our efforts shrank Iran's customers from 20 to 6, and reduced exports from 2.5 million barrels per day to just 1 million. We achieved this without disrupting global oil supplies or price. This unprecedented effort cut Iranian reve-

nues by over $150 billion, and played a key role in forcing them to the negotiating table.

Ukraine and Europe continue to be vulnerable to Russia as their dominant, and in some cases only, supplier. We saw this in 2005 and 2009 when Gazprom cut off gas supplies to Ukraine and parts of Europe and Turkey. Russia continues to use energy to gain and maintain political leverage over Ukraine, as well as East and Central Europe, recreating cold war lines between East and West. This includes the so-called Nord Stream II project. ENR's active engagement in the region, in close collaboration with the European Commission, has proven vital to counter Russia's dominance. Just this weekend, we grew concerned gas could be used as a weapon against Turkey. While we hope this will not happen, it proves once again the urgent need to diversify resources and routes throughout the region.

Beyond Iran and Russia, ENR is working with the Department of Defense and our Counter-ISIL Coalition partners, strengthening our national security by taking the fight to Daesh in Syria and Iraq. From the beginning, the United States targeted Daesh's oil operations by damaging or destroying more than two dozen mobile refineries and about twice as many oil collection points. In a region with a long history of illicit oil trade, Daesh was able to adapt quickly. But so have we. Today, U.S. strikes are increasingly targeting specific and strategic critical energy infrastructure in Daesh territory. Beyond revenue, Daesh uses control of energy resources as a propaganda tool to assert its authority and legitimacy, and relies on this as a core tenet of its global expansion strategy. This is why ENR remains in lockstep with the rest of the U.S. national security community and our international coalition partners to degrade and defeat Daesh.

As we work to prevent the use of energy as a political tool or weapon, we are also advancing an alternate vision where cooperation in the energy sector fosters collaboration and prosperity. The potential is real—from Azerbaijan, the Caspian and Iraq through Turkey to Europe, from Israel to Egypt, Cyprus and Lebanon to Turkey and Europe—energy will not lead the politics but can serve as an incentive for cooperation and collaboration.

ENR has also focused its efforts closer to home, where most Caribbean island states and some countries in Central America are net energy importers. Many find themselves indebted to a dominant supplier through an unsustainable financial scheme that has left them no option for diversification and efficiency, thereby increasing their vulnerability. Through ENR's leadership of the interagency Caribbean Energy Security initiative and as the U.S. chair of the Caribbean and Central American Energy Task Force, we are working diligently with our friends and partners in the region to advance a secure energy future—cleaner, more diverse, and more secure. ENR is also implementing the Connecting the Americas 2022 program, which facilitates power interconnections throughout the hemisphere. These programs seek to create an effective, integrated power market, which will stimulate investment in a modern energy system, thereby spurring economic growth throughout the region.

Energy is a way for the United States to engage with partners and allies worldwide. In Asia, energy demand is increasing exponentially—but there is no infrastructure or trading markets connecting the region. Energy trade relationships continue to be rewritten, with Asia projected to be the final destination for 80 percent of regionally traded coal, 75 percent of oil, and 60 percent of natural gas by 2040. ENR's engagements in the Asia-Pacific promote market opportunities for U.S. companies, leaders in gas, nuclear, wind, solar, hydro, smart grids, and efficient generation, to help the region develop its energy potential. Two out of three people in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to electricity, which is why ENR is focused on new technologies. These countries have the opportunity to skip a generation of technology in energy, as they did so successfully in telecommunications. In the 1990s, these countries skipped directly to mobile. Today, we should focus on 21st century solutions utilizing ALL natural resources—from those requiring extraction to those requiring capturing; from oil and gas to wind and sun.

Mr. Chairman, all you need to do is drive by a gas station on a regular basis to know that oil and gas markets are volatile. This produces both pain and gain, depending on where you are on the producer and consumer scale. If confirmed, I will continue to make sure we are attentive to the political instability consequences of long-term major price disruptions on countries that rely on hydrocarbon revenues for a significant share of their budgets. These are the countries that will face increasing challenges, including political and social instability, as their projected budget revenues decline in a lower for longer price environment. We should focus on these countries as they are forced to cut expenditures and social benefits, and continue to promote diversification of their economies away from just energy revenues.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I fervently believe in the critical role energy plays in our national security and that of our friends and allies. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Ebert-Gray

STATEMENT OF CATHERINE EBERT–GRAY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AND THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, AND TO THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

Ms. EBERT-GRAY. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador of the United States to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

With the Chairman's permission, I would like to quickly introduce my family. My husband, Ian Gray, is also a State Department employee, as well as my son, Tommy, and my daughter, Claire, with me. My family has shared both the adventures and the sacrifices of my public service career, and for that I am profoundly grateful.

I recently completed service as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Administration. This role prepared me for effective interagency and multinational collaboration. For four years I provided oversight to the foreign affairs supply chain, I supported crises around the globe, and I assisted with operational transitions in Iraq and Afghanistan. I have also had the privilege to serve in eight countries since I joined the Foreign Service.

Half of my professional life since college, in fact, has been spent in the Pacific, including one adventurous and prior tour in Papua New Guinea. During this time I developed a great fondness for the people, history, and cultures of the region, a region of both promise and unique challenges.

I was introduced to these exotic nations as a student of World War II history. My father served on the USS *Chanticleer* in the Pacific theater. My father-in-law was an Australian Air Force tail gunner. To this day, the events of the Second World War have crystalized an enduring friendship between the United States and the people of Melanesia. As stated by Secretary Kerry, America's security and prosperity continue to be closely and increasingly linked to our neighbors in the Asian Pacific.

If confirmed, I will continue to advance the United States overarching goal in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu to help foster sustainable, transparent, and inclusive economic growth, and to support host nation efforts to strengthen education, health, and security.

Exxon-Mobil's 2014 launch of its liquefied natural gas pipeline can be a catalyst for economic growth in Papua New Guinea, and each of the three nations continues to be appropriately focused on improved management of their natural resources, including fishing, mining, and forestry. As are all Pacific island countries, they are also deeply concerned with the effects of climate change on their shores.

As you may be aware, Papua New Guinea successfully hosted the Pacific Island Games, the Pacific Island Forum, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Meeting of Ministers Responsible for

Forestry this year. These are very proud achievements for Papua New Guinea, which will also host the FIFA under 20 Women's World Cup Soccer next year, and in 2018 they will host the APEC Leaders' Summit.

Clearly, the future potential of these Southwest Pacific nations relies on their continued commitment to security, democracy, and responsible management of their mineral wealth. Each must tap the talents of all of its citizens, including women and girls. If confirmed, I will continue the work of our mission in gender-based programs to ensure that all of our assistance and public diplomacy programs in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu maintain their focus on advancing the status and rights of females.

As the Pacific country with the highest rate of HIV/AIDS infection, Papua New Guinea also remains a partner with the United States in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with other international donors on control and treatment of the disease in support of their national health care system.

The United States shares many interests and values with the people of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. If confirmed, I will be a caring leader of our mission, I will remain focused on the security and safety of Americans, and I will work closely with each nation to build on our strong existing relationships and to explore new areas of mutual interest and cooperation.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I welcome the opportunity to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Ebert-Gray follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CATHERINE EBERT-GRAY

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador of the United States to Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to introduce my family—my husband, Ian Gray, also a State Department employee, as well as my son, Tommy, and my daughter, Claire. My family has steadfastly shared both the adventures and the sacrifices of my public service career, and for this I am profoundly grateful.

I recently completed service as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Administration. This role prepared me for effective interagency and multinational collaboration. For 4 years I provided oversight to the foreign affairs supply chain, supported crises around the globe, and assisted with operational transitions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I have also had the privilege to serve in eight countries since I joined the Foreign Service. Half of my professional life since college, in fact, has been spent in the Pacific. During this time I developed a great fondness for the people, cultures, and history of the region—a region of both promise and unique challenges.

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You may be aware that Papua New Guinea successfully hosted the Pacific Island Games, the Pacific Island Forum, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) 3rd Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry this year. These are proud achievements in Papua New Guinea, which will also host the FIFA under 20 Women's World Cup Soccer Tournament in 2016 and APEC Leaders' Summit in 2018.

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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Marciel.

STATEMENT OF HON. SCOT ALAN MARCIEL, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE UNION OF BURMA

Mr. MARCIEL. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Burma. I thank the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me, and I am grateful to the members of the committee for the opportunity to speak to my qualifications and intentions.

I would also like to begin by thanking my family—unfortunately, they could not join me today—my wife, Mae, my daughters, Lauren and Natalie, and my parents for their love and support. The Foreign Service is a family effort, and I have been really fortunate to have such a wonderful family by my side for all these years.

I joined the Foreign Service in 1985 and have had the privilege of serving and representing the United States in six overseas assignments, as well as in Washington. I believe deeply in public service and have sought throughout my career to advance our country's interests and promote its values. If confirmed, serving as Ambassador to Burma would be an incredible opportunity to continue this work in a country whose people look to America to support their own efforts to build democracy after decades of military rule.

The past half-century has not been kind to the people of Burma. A country that in the early 1960s was considered one of the brightest prospects in Asia suffered through many years of conflict, bad economic policy, and repressive rule, resulting in intense conflict, poverty, weak institutions, and a deep and pervasive lack of trust between the people and their government.

I visited Burma several times between 2005 and 2010, and it was evident that the country had dug itself a very deep hole. In 2011, the current government began to open up. It released political prisoners, including democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, allowed sig-

nificantly greater freedom of press, association and expression, and began economic reforms.

After the years of cool relations, the United States responded to Burma's opening by stepping up engagement. Our effort has been dedicated to promoting and supporting Burma's democratic transformation, increasing respect for human rights, encouraging economic reform, and helping to advance peace and national reconciliation.

Most recently, we support the country's efforts to make the November 8 parliamentary elections as good as they could be. We were very aware of the numerous flaws in the elections, but we also saw that Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy, along with many other parties, viewed the elections as the best opportunity to move the country toward greater democracy and reform.

The elections themselves turned out to be reasonably well run. The people turned out in droves to vote for change, and the opposition NLD party won by a landslide.

The elections represent an important step forward, but there remains an enormous amount of work to do, starting with ensuring a smooth transition to the new government expected to take office in April.

Most of this is work the people of Burma have to do. They have to build their economy, overcome the decades of distrust to advance the peace process and national reconciliation, reform their security forces, strengthen respect for human rights, and mold their constitution into a document more fitting for a democracy.

But as they work on these challenges, the people of Burma want us there to support and, where possible, help them. We cannot fix their problems for them, but we do have a role to play, engaging diplomatically to encourage progress, calling out behavior that opposes reforms, and suggesting ways forward; and, where appropriate, offering assistance to promote economic development, help develop critically important civil society, build institutions, fight poverty and disease. This is what we have been doing, and this is what, in my view, we need to continue to do.

If confirmed, I will continue America's clear focus on supporting those people and organizations in Burma who are working to build peace and democracy and to increase freedom and prosperity. We will need to engage the new government of Burma right away to encourage progress, to tackle structural problems that have not been addressed, and to continue broad-based reforms while moving toward peace and national reconciliation. We will have to encourage the still-powerful Burmese military to support rather than impede progress, and we need to continue our focus on the troubling situation in Rakhine State. The treatment of ethnic and religious minorities, including the Rohingya, is critical for Burma's efforts to bring unity to a country that for too long has been divided.

If confirmed, I will work with the government, civil society, and international community to promote progress for all communities in Rakhine, including the Rohingya and the ethnic Rakhine.

We have long been and remain today a good friend of the people of Burma. With the recent reforms in elections, these people will now have the best opportunity in generations to move toward a

freer, more democratic, and more prosperous future. We should do all we can to support and assist them.

Thank you again for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Marciel follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SCOT MARCIEL

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Burma. I thank the President for the confidence he has placed in me by sending my name forward to the Senate for consideration, and also thank Secretary of State Kerry for his support. I am grateful to the members of the committee for this opportunity to speak to my qualifications and intentions. I also want to acknowledge and express appreciation for the very important role that Congress has played on Burma policy for many years.

I also want to thank my family—my wife, Mae, my daughters, Lauren and Natalie, and my parents for all of their love and support. The Foreign Service is a family effort, and I have been very fortunate to have such a wonderful family by my side.

I joined the Foreign Service in 1985, and have had the privilege of serving and representing the United States in six overseas assignments, as well as in Washington. I believe deeply in public service, and have sought throughout my career to advance our country's interests and promote its values. If confirmed, serving as Ambassador to Burma would be an incredible opportunity to continue this work in a country whose people very much look to America to support their efforts to build democracy after decades of military rule.

The past half-century has not been kind to the people of Burma. A country that in the early 1960s was considered one of the brightest prospects in Asia suffered through many years of internal conflict, bad economic policies, occasional isolation, and repressive authoritarian rule, resulting in extensive poverty, weak institutions, and—perhaps most importantly—a deep and pervasive lack of trust between the people and their government, and between different communities. I visited Burma several times between 2005 and 2010, and it was evident that the country had dug itself a very deep hole.

In 2011, the current government began to open up. It released political prisoners, including democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, allowed significantly greater freedom of press, association, and expression, began economic reforms, and opened itself to a much greater extent to the international community.

After many years of very cool relations, the United States responded to Burma's opening by significantly stepping up engagement. We sent out our first Ambassador in many years, ramped up assistance, and sent a steady stream of senior visitors out to work with the government, opposition, and civil society. Our effort has been dedicated to promoting and supporting Burma's democratic transformation, increasing respect for human rights, encouraging broad-based economic reform, and helping to advance national reconciliation by creating conditions to end the civil war that has plagued the country since its independence.

We focused significant energy on supporting Burma's efforts to make the November 8 parliamentary elections as good as they could be. We were aware of the numerous structural and constitutional flaws, but also saw that Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) party, along with many ethnic-based parties and others, viewed the elections as the best opportunity to move the country toward greater democracy and reform. In the end, as everyone here knows, after a period of competitive, open campaigning, the elections themselves were reasonably well run, and the people turned out in droves to vote for change. Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD party won in a landslide, and—importantly—many of the ruling party's candidates conceded defeat.

The elections represent an important step forward, but there remains an enormous amount of work to do, starting with ensuring a smooth and effective transition to the new government, with the next President expected to take office in April. Most of this is work the people of Burma have to do. They have to build their economy, overcome decades of distrust and prejudice to advance the national reconciliation process, build institutions, reform their security forces, strengthen respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, mold their constitution into a document more fitting for a democracy, and much more.

As they work on these enormous challenges, the people of Burma—at least the vast majority of them—want us there to support and, where possible, help them.

We cannot fix their problems for them, but we do have an important role to play: engaging diplomatically to encourage progress, call out behavior that opposes reforms, and suggest ways forward; offering assistance to help develop the critically important civil society, build institutions, and fight poverty and disease; and offering ideas and reaffirming key democratic values through our words and our deeds.

This is what we have been doing and, in my view, this is what we need to continue to do. If confirmed, I will continue America's very clear focus on supporting those people and organizations in Burma who are working so hard to build peace and democracy, increase respect for human rights, address the problems of human trafficking, promote broad-based economic development, and develop trust. It is also important that as the people of Burma take the courageous steps necessary to end the decades of ethnic fighting that the United States provides the support that will enable lasting reconciliation and peace.

We will need to engage the new Government of Burma right away to encourage progress on all these issues. We will urge the Government and Parliament to tackle structural problems that have not yet been addressed, and which marred the recent elections, and to continue broad-based reforms. We also need to continue to support Burma's critically important civil society, and also do all we can to encourage the still-powerful Burmese military to support rather than impede progress.

We also need to continue our focus on the situation in Rakhine State. The situation there is deeply troubling. We have already made clear to Burma's authorities that the treatment of ethnic and religious minorities, including the Rohingya, is critical for their efforts to bring true unity to a country that for too long has been divided along ethnic and religious lines. If confirmed, I will work with the government, civil society, and the international community to promote the joint stability and prosperity of all communities in Rakhine, including the Rohingya and the ethnic Rakhine populations, and that ensure all the people living in the country are able to enjoy dignity, justice, and their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We have long been, and remain today, a good friend to the people of Burma. With the recent reforms and elections, those people now have the best opportunity in generations to move toward a freer, more democratic, and more prosperous future. We can and should do all we can to support and assist them.

Thank you again for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you all for your testimony.

Mr. Hochstein, I want to first thank you for coming to our office several months ago to walk us through strategically what the State Department is doing to try to diversify energy supplies in Europe. It was very helpful to us. I do not even know at the time if you were even nominated for this position, but I thank you for doing that.

For the record, I would like for you to talk a little bit about that. I know that many of our European friends are heavily dependent on Russia for energy. Poland, for instance, imports 500,000 barrels a day, 96 percent of their oil. One-third of the natural gas supplied to Europe comes through Russia. Could you talk a little bit about how you see going forward what we would do to help our friends diversify their energy supplies?

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. Senator, thank you. I think that is one of the most critical areas of what we need to focus on today. The vulnerability that Europe has is split in two. The eastern and central part of Europe is where the real vulnerability lies, and the vulnerability is not only in oil, it is primarily in gas, where Russia has used that particular tool and dependency as political leverage.

Today, because of the tradition and history of the cold war, the infrastructure all leads from Russia through Ukraine into Eastern and Central Europe. So several countries there, if you look beyond Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, et cetera, are nearing between 70 and 90 percent of their dependency on gas comes from this one single supplier.

While we were in a weak position to respond to the aggressive action in 2009, we have done a lot of work since 2009, when the cutoff really affected large parts of Europe. In 2014, when they cut the gas in June to Ukraine, we were able to get reverse flows of gas into Ukraine against their expectations, but that is not enough.

What needs to happen is new infrastructure projects that will interlink this area of Europe, from the East Balkans to the West Balkans, south and north of that, to be able to make sure that any gas that comes in is able to flow. That does not exist today. It all goes in one direction, and it all comes from one source.

We are working closer today with the EU than ever before to be able to make that strategy a reality. We have helped them through thinking through some of this strategically. I have been traveling extensively throughout the region, and we have prioritized this throughout the administration to be able to see a conclusion to that.

Next week there will be a signing in Sofia in Bulgaria of the final investment decision on a new pipeline that will connect Greece to Bulgaria. That will allow flows from Azerbaijan through Turkey to go into Bulgaria. It will allow potentially Israeli or Egyptian gas to come in from the Eastern Mediterranean and Kurdish gas from Iraq in the future, a few years from now, to enter as well. In addition, if there will be an LNG terminal there, American gas can enter there as well. That will create real competition, lower prices, and a total and complete diversification of resources.

Russia does not need to be out of the game, they just have to stop messing with the game, and I think if we have these projects, that will happen.

The CHAIRMAN. Right now, we are the only country in the world, I guess, that does not export our petroleum, and I am just wondering if you think that it is in our national interest for us to be able to do so.

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. As you know, Mr. Chairman, we have begun—we have licensed the gas exports, and the first cargo will go out in January, and we will begin the historic transition to an exporter of natural gas. The discussion on the petroleum side, on crude, we do export products. So refined products of crude are exported, and lately or recently we have started exporting condensates as well.

I think I know that there is a debate, a very healthy debate here in Congress and in the administration, and I think that is still something that we are talking about. I look at it not from the domestic economic issues but from the foreign policy side, and I think that today in the American picture of where we are today, I am not sure if we lifted the ban there would actually be exports because of where we are. But there is no doubt that several of our allies have asked for it and are interested in it.

I do not know that it will have a material effect as much as a psychological one, but I know that there are several other considerations to consider when making this decision.

The CHAIRMAN. I note the good nonanswer. [Laughter.]

I would have expected you to give that answer, but I do appreciate the conversations we have had in private.

As it relates to Iran, when do you expect them to get back up to full capacity, and who is it most specifically they will be dealing with relative to their own exports?

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. So, today they are still under sanctions, but assuming that they fulfill their side of the agreement and sanctions are removed, they will be able to increase their exports by a significant amount in fairly quick order, both because of how much oil they have in storage and because of the capability of some of the fields to increase. But I do not think they can go—I do not expect them to be able to go back to their previous levels prior to 2012 all that quickly. They are entering the market, or they are reentering the market at a difficult time for the market, where crude is at $45. Their OPEC competitors are protecting their market share rather than protecting price, and they have a lot of work to do on their own fields.

They will have to deal with companies that will be interested in taking the considerable risk of going in, the high insurance rates, and they will have to have a new kind of contract mechanism that will be attractive to those companies.

So I think it is going to take a lot more time than people think. But in the short order, there will be a bump up of exports. On gas, I think that it will be a lot longer than that.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Marciel, you talked about a number of the problems that exist in Burma, and I appreciate you doing that in your presentation. And obviously, we are excited about the election process that just has occurred. But for all the promise of the political transformation of the country, serious challenges confront them, as you know. Ethnic strife, persecution of the country's Muslim minority, mass corruption, human rights abuses by the military, and the rise of Buddhist nationalism, among other challenges, threaten to undermine the transformation.

I just came from a country, Egypt, which has a different set of challenges that we are trying to figure out a way to balance our efforts there in an appropriate way. But how would you suggest that our nation balance our objectives there appropriately, ushering them along but also urging them to deal with some of the internal issues that they have to deal with?

Mr. MARCIEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You outlined some of the incredible number of challenges that the country faces. I think since we began increased engagement in 2011 when the current government began the reform, we have been very focused on, broadly defined, supporting the reform effort, and that includes obviously moving toward a more democratic system, improving respect for human rights, as well as rule of law, promoting broad-based economic development, dealing with the ethnic conflict and the peace process.

So I think going forward, the first step I would say is doing all we can to ensure a smooth transition. This is kind of uncharted territory for Burma. A transition to what we expect would be a government led by what has been the opposition, NLD, that would take place in April. So our focus is very much on, again, doing what we can to ensure that transition happens, and then we would expect the incoming government to focus on broad-based economic development, but also addressing many of these challenges. Aung San

Suu Kyi has spoken out for many years about the need to improve human rights, the peace process, all of these things.

So I think we want to be broadly supportive of the incoming government, and at the same time, where there are challenges and particularly difficult issues, I would highlight the treatment of the Rohingya for one, have very honest conversations with both the incoming government but also other players in the Burmese system who might be less enthusiastic about reforms.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Out of courtesy to my colleagues, I am going to move on to Senator Cardin. Thank you so much for the way you are the ranking member of this committee, and I look forward to your questions.

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

First, I thank you for accommodating these hearings, very important positions. And as the Chairman has always done, he has expedited the procedures of our committee, and I very much appreciate that.

I thank all of our nominees that are here for your willingness to serve in the United States and the public. We know it is not easy. It is challenging, in some cases dangerous, and you do this because of your commitment to our country and our principles. And we thank you, and we thank your families because we know you cannot do it without a supportive family, so we very much appreciate that very much.

To Secretary Marciel, I want to personally thank you for your help in the Subcommittee on Eastern Asian and Pacific. You have been a key advisor to us, and we very much appreciate you always being willing to help us understand the challenges in that region.

And now you are going to take on one of the most difficult challenges in Burma. You talked about Burma, and we all agree that they have made incredible progress. There is no question about that, from the military government to having elections. But as you pointed out, the Rohingyas were being discriminated against. They were not even included in the election, and there are serious issues with regard to migration, refugees, trafficking, et cetera.

I guess I would encourage you to be specific with the Burmese as to what they need to do in order to go to the next level. We find that many countries in transition make some immediate progress, but then they stall and in some cases go in the wrong direction.

So could you be a little more specific as to how we can advance the progress in Burma, whether it is going to require the United States to encourage, along with our allies, constitutional reform, so that we know that we have the framework for true transformation of that country into a more open and democratic society?

Mr. MARCIEL. Thank you, Senator Cardin, and thank you for your kind words. I would say that, again, as I used the term earlier, this is uncharted territory. It is uncharted territory for the Burmese as they move to this transition, to a government that, given NLD's landslide victory, we would expect to be led by the NLD.

I think, at the risk of speaking on behalf of the Burmese people, it was pretty clear from just the vote totals that they were voting for change. They were saying we want more when it comes to reform, more change, better lives, that sort of thing. So I think that

the new government comes in with a mandate for more change. Obviously, that change is not going to be only on the issues that we are most concerned about regarding human rights, but I would expect that would be part of it.

So some of the challenge is going to be the new government's ability to work with the other key players, certainly the military. The military will continue to have 25 percent of the seats in Parliament for the foreseeable future at least, and will continue to be able to name key ministers, including the Minister of Home Affairs, the Minister of Defense, that sort of thing.

So I think one of the specific things we will do, we already are doing, is encouraging a smooth transition toward that new government, including dialogue between the NLD, specifically Aung San Suu Kyi, the military, and others, so that they can find a way to work together that allows for further reform.

So I think the impetus for reform is quite strong within the country, but there are going to be some groups that might resist that, and part of what we should do is focus on trying to encourage all groups to support that reform and not get in the way of what the Burmese people have said.

I think there are some specific things, technical assistance in some areas where they need some help to get some things done, better rule of law training, these sorts of things. And on the situation in Rakhine State, which is one where there is not a lot of support for treating everybody in Rakhine State with equal protection of the law, I think that's a more long-term effort, that we have to have some frank conversations, but also perhaps offer some specific suggestions about here are some things that you might look at doing to help them overcome what may be one of their most difficult challenges.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for that answer.

Ms. Ebert-Gray, human rights is a critical issue in the Pacific Islands also. It is where America's presence can make a huge difference. It is one of the great contributions that we make through our missions in other countries. In the Pacific Islands, though, we hear not only about the democratic institutions that are challenged but also their focus on the climate change issues and how it is affecting the security of their people.

How do you see your role in advancing human rights in the Pacific Islands? And you can include in that how you would deal with their specific concerns on climate change, which are not necessarily the same as the non-Island world.

Ms. EBERT-GRAY. Thank you, Senator. The Pacific Island nation leaders are deeply concerned about climate change, understandably so, and I understand they met with President Obama this week in Paris to discuss their concerns. Since 2000, the United States has committed over $60 million in climate change adaptation programs, including mangrove preservation in Papua New Guinea and ecosystem adaptation in the Solomon Islands, and there certainly will be more programs to come.

As far as human rights, according to our human rights reports, all three nations actually have a legal foundation which respects individual liberties, freedom of the press, independent judiciaries, and many of the other foundations that are necessary. But all three

countries also suffer with many abuses. They have discrimination against women and girls. They have poor police across all three islands, a number of slowdowns in the judiciary and other ways that human rights are not getting the attention and the corrections that are necessary.

We have invested through the years in human rights improvements and, if confirmed, I hope to continue to focus on both areas and bring energy and attention to those two high global priorities.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Mr. Hochstein, I want to get one question in to you because, to me, good governance and transparency is critically important on energy resources, and you have a major responsibility here.

I listened to your statement, I read your statement, and I certainly agree with the points that you have made in every major area, but I want to concentrate on ISIL for one moment. According to the Financial Times, there is still $1.5 million from ISIL a day going into the black market. ISIL presents a unique challenge to the civilized world. And yes, it is right for us to try to take out their energy resources, as we do, as our military does, but we have got to figure out new ways to stop the flow of any of their resources that go into any market for financial support for their terrorist activities.

So can you just share with us your views on how we can take every conceivable step to destroy any financial ability that is going to ISIL through oil or gas resources?

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. Thank you, Senator. I could not agree more. What we have tried to do over the last few months, especially since—I will say what I can in an open hearing, and I am happy to do more in a different setting—since the Abu Sayyaf raid, my team has been able to look, together with the Pentagon, at a lot of the details of how it is managed.

I do not believe that the revenue they are generating is coming necessarily through the exports, or smuggling rather, across borders. Most of it is being consumed and generated inside the areas of Iraq that are under their control, as well as Syria, including trade with the regime. But it is not only about the revenues. It is also about using these resources as a means to entrench their control of the territory that they hold.

What we have therefore done is instead of trying to hit just a number of targets that, as you suggested, is less effective, is look at it from the full value chain, from the holding of the territory, the production of the oil and the gas, the processing, the refining, and putting it on the trucks which are the veins, and getting it out into the economy. The way they generate their revenues is largely at that early stage. After that, what happens is more about supporting the territory than revenue, and that is why you have seen over the last few weeks a stepped-up approach that is not only more bombings but a different kind of bombing. We are going after different assets that I believe are already having a significant impact, but we can do a lot more, and we are working with my colleagues at the Pentagon, at Centcom, to figure out what is the right mix of which targets to go after.

So I can expand a little bit more in——

Senator CARDIN. That is very helpful. I think in a different setting we should talk about the different avenues of where we can stop the flow of revenues coming in to ISIL, and you make a good point, that if it is at the early stages of the chain, hitting the later stages is not going to make much of a difference. But it does still stop the supply chain, which could affect their revenues. We really need to think outside the box to stop any possibility of them benefitting from these resources.

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. We have dedicated now a whole team that is working, embedded together with some folks at DOD and out in the field, to be able to help in giving that. We have been doing an analysis of the expansion of the oil and gas infrastructure gains for the last two years, and it did not start now. It is a very strategic taking of territory based on infrastructure and resources. So we are happy to expand on that.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good.

Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hochstein, I just want to ask you a question following up on what Senator Cardin had talked about.

First, thank you to all of you for being here, and to Mr. Marciel, thank you very much for joining me in my office as well. Thank you.

Mr. Hochstein, you mentioned the expansion of oil and gas gains by ISIS. Where are their gains today? How much do they have today compared to where they were when we first started our air strikes?

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. So the airstrikes that we started with many months ago targeting the energy sector really went after, as I said in my testimony, mobile refineries and some of the oil collection points. And that disrupted for a while, and it reduced the revenues and the profits, I would say, because what you can do with the oil when you have a refinery, it is a higher value per barrel that you produce. So we were able to reduce that value.

But they adapted. And what you see in a lot of countries, especially in post-conflict countries, they are able to do things that Halliburton and Exxon would love to be able to do but they cannot with using barbed wire and some Scotch tape, and they have been adaptive.

So what we have done is now, with the new information that we have, looking more strategically at that value chain, began a different bombing campaign that will target it differently. So taking out the trucks in the last couple of weeks, looking at some of the strategic hits that we have done, I believe that we have already seen—and I can show that to you in a different setting—that there has been a material change on the ground today. I cannot give you an answer as to what has that $1.5 million a day or $1 million a day figure changed to. If you give me a couple of weeks, I can.

Senator GARDNER. Do we believe they have more means of production today than they did in terms of energy——

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. No, no.

Senator GARDNER. Okay, thank you very much.

Further questions along the same lines of energy, discussions that we have been having. You talked a little bit about some of the negotiations in Iran in your testimony. You talked about the $150 billion that Iran faced in cuts to their oil revenues by the sanctions that were put in place. Do we know what an estimate would be of the increase of Iranian revenues will be through international sanctions relief when it comes to oil?

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. It is hard to put a dollar figure to that because I do not actually have access to their engineering in their fields. They have had a lot of cannibalization of their fields after years of sanctions, so they will have to do a lot of work to be able to do that effectively and efficiently. So I cannot tell you a dollar figure of how much that will be. I do not know how many barrels they are going to produce, and I do not know what that is going to do.

If they come online all of a sudden instead of tempered, what does that do to the price of oil based on the fact that we have a supply glut at the moment? So there are a lot of factors that would have to go into it. Clearly, they cannot get anywhere near to where they were in early 2012 before the sanctions went into effect.

Senator GARDNER. How many of our trade partners are actively pursuing energy deals with Iran right now?

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. There are a number, but there are——

Senator GARDNER. Who would that be, if you could?

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. I probably should not name companies specifically, but if you look at the press you will see some of the press reporting on companies, international oil companies that are entering—that are going there for consultations.

But I think it is important to separate between who is going there for a meeting or a handshake versus what will be signed. The terms that we have seen of the contracts so far are not good enough to be able to support deals, and without the threat of sanctions, they cannot conclude any deals at the moment. I spent a lot of time reminding my friends in the industry overseas that sanctions are still in place and any violation today will be treated in the same way. But I think there will be fewer.

What I hear from private conversations with the CEOs is that they are a lot more tentative in their approach than the media would suggest.

Senator GARDNER. Mr. Hochstein, do you think it is appropriate to include prohibitions of funding within aid programs for fossil fuel projects, or for coal?

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. I think that there is—my shop is not necessarily involved in the decision on the—I believe that you mean the coal financing in the international financial institutions. That is administered by the Department of the Treasury. But because there are exceptions there for countries that are below the poverty line, administered as IDA, or if there are other exceptions, I have been supportive of the industry where I can based on the new guidelines.

I met with Peabody and others when they were trying to work in Mongolia. We have supported, because of these special circumstances in Kosovo, the creation of a new facility, a new coal plant in Kosovo where it replaces an old, dirtier one.

So there are restrictions in place that I live with, and within those there are still 79 countries or so that are excepted from that policy that we are still able to work in.

Senator GARDNER. But in terms of our negotiations with other nations, you think it can be an appropriate tool to restrict funding for fossil fuel projects?

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. I think based on the agreement that was reached with DOECD, it is going to have a significant impact when it is not just the United States alone, when it is more countries doing it together as a policy. But I probably would have to let others in the Department of the Treasury decide what material affect that would have financially on coal projects.

Senator GARDNER. Mr. Marciel, turning to Burma, with the transition of the government completed in April, what are you most concerned about that could happen between April and January in terms of the transition? We talked a little bit about this in the office, but what do we need to see, what are you concerned that we could see and how that could affect the transition?

Mr. MARCIEL. Thank you, Senator. What we are hoping to see, and I think what we expect to see is a transition that proceeds as it is supposed to, with the sitting of a new Parliament in February, which will then elect a President who would sit with his or her Cabinet probably in April. So what we are hoping to see is that no individuals or institutions try to interfere in that process.

So far, as of today, the signs are good. The military leadership, the current president, et cetera, are all insisting that they will abide by the results of the voting and support the transition. We understand that Aung San Suu Kyi will be meeting with the Commander in Chief and the President this week, which is a very important and useful step, to have this dialogue to figure out how they make this transition work smoothly.

And then assuming that the transition does happen—I know there will be a thousand challenges at least, one of the big ones will be expectations, as we discussed earlier in your office. There will be tremendous expectations for this new government both inside the country with people looking for economic benefits and further reforms, and my guess is there will be a lot of expectations internationally, and it will be a real challenge for any government, but particularly one without any experience in government to manage.

Senator GARDNER. And if confirmed—we talked earlier about the carrot and stick approach and leverage the United States would have in terms of the transition for the new government. If confirmed, what would your position be on lifting any remaining U.S. sanctions against Burma during the transition process?

Mr. MARCIEL. Well, we, of course, had broad sanctions against Burma writ large up until 2011, when the reforms started. After those reforms began, we suspended some of those sanctions, kind of the broad sanctions against the overall economy, while maintaining targeted sanctions on individuals and entities who were either involved in human rights violations or were clearly blocking reforms or undermining reforms. So those very targeted sanctions continue today as the main sanctions against Burma, but the over-

all broad-based sanctions are not there because we want the economy actually to be healthy.

So at this point and certainly going forward with the transition, I would not anticipate nor recommend any dramatic change to that. I think we want to see how this transition works, and then I think we would want to consult with the new government, as well as Congress, closely on any changes.

I would note that we do—the sanctions, the targeted sanctions are somewhat dynamic in the sense that people can be taken off the designated list if they show that they have ended the behaviors that put them on the list. People can be added to the list, and we can always make adjustments when we see unintended consequences or problems. But what we will do is make sure that we are consulting closely with Congress given the great interest.

Senator GARDNER. But you believe that any de-listing on the SDN list, that any change of their listing would only occur if they specifically change their behavior as it relates to the reason they were placed on the list in the first place?

Mr. MARCIEL. Right. There is a process in place that is run by Treasury's OFAT office, particular requirements—I am not an expert on it—that entities or individuals on the specially designated nationals list would have to follow in order to be considered to be removed from the list.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

We have, as you know, another panel of four people. It is toward the end of the year and people are trying to move out and hopefully get confirmed.

Ms. Ebert-Gray, I want to thank you in particular for having your family here.

To the family, know that she has been through extensive questioning in private and answered all kinds of other questions.

So I hope that all three of you will answer any QFRs that come your way after this presentation today.

We thank all of you for your service to our country. With that, we hope you will go on to something constructive and will bring the other panel up. But thank you all for being here. Thank you.

Mr. HOCHSTEIN. Thank you.

Mr. MARCIEL. Thank you.

Ms. EBERT-GRAY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hochstein, for what it is worth, you missed your greatest asset by not introducing your family. [Laughter.]

I doubt you would have had the number of questions you had had you done so. [Laughter.]

Anyway, we welcome you all. We did not realize you were here. Thank you.

We will now move to the second panel. We thank you all for being here.

Mr. John D. Feeley, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, has been nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Panama. Mr. Feeley is currently the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. Previously Mr. Feeley served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in

Mexico City, Mexico; Assessor in the Office of Recruitment; and Director of the Office of Central American Affairs. He also has served in the United States Marine Corps, and we thank you for that service also.

Next we have Linda Taglialatela to be our Ambassador to Barbados, St. Kitts, Nevis, St. Lucia, Antigua, Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I do not know what you did to achieve that, but we know it was something special. She is a career member of the Senior Executive Service and currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Human Resources, a position she has held since 2002. She has also served as Director and Deputy Director of the Office of Resource Management and Organization Analysis at the State Department.

Todd Chapman, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister Counselor, is nominated to be Ambassador to Ecuador. He currently serves as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs, a position he has held since 2014. Mr. Chapman previously served as Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. embassies in Brazil and Mozambique.

Jean Elizabeth Manes. Did I pronounce that correctly?

Ms. MANES. That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. A career member of the Foreign Service, Class of Counselors, is our nominee to be Ambassador to El Salvador. She currently serves as Principal Deputy Coordinator in the Bureau of International Information Programs at the Department of State, a position she has held since 2013. Prior to this, she served as Deputy Director of the Department's Florida Regional Center and as Counselor for Public Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan.

I think I would remind you that your full statement will be entered into the record. Staying within 5 minutes is appreciated, and we look forward. If you would just go down, starting with you, ma'am, we would appreciate it. Go in order; and again, thank you all for your willingness to serve in these capacities.

STATEMENT OF LINDA SWARTZ TAGLIALATELA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO BARBADOS, THE FEDERATION OF ST. KITTS AND NEVIS, SAINT LUCIA, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA, GRENADA, AND SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Ms. TAGLIALATELA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman and Senator Cardin, it is a pleasure to be here today. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for their confidence and support, as well as to the members of this committee for their kind consideration.

Please allow me to introduce the members of my family present today, my brother, David Swartz, from Texas, and my sister, Susan Swartz, from New York. Throughout my life, my family, including my parents, have been an essential source of support. Without

their love, encouragement, and belief in me, I would not be here today.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that our Nation is most effective when we lead by example and in accordance with our values, and I will seek to continue in this tradition if confirmed as Ambassador. If confirmed, I will proudly represent the United States in the Eastern Caribbean, a region with which we share strong cultural, historical, and familial ties.

Since achieving independence in the 1960s and 1970s, the nations of the Eastern Caribbean have thrived as democracies and maintained friendly and productive relations with the United States. If confirmed, my top priority as Ambassador will be the safety and welfare of American citizens residing in and visiting the Caribbean, a region that hosts nearly 2 million tourists annually, the vast majority U.S. citizens. Thousand more of our citizens live, work, or study in the Caribbean.

I am also committed to strengthening the safety and security of our Caribbean partners. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to bolster citizen security through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, which seeks to reduce the threats to citizen security by reducing illicit trafficking of narcotics and firearms; improving public safety by strengthening law enforcement, the judicial sector, and security services; increasing respect for the rule of law and human rights; and promoting crime prevention activities.

As Ambassador, I would also work to promote fundamental freedoms and universal human rights, including the rights of the LGBTI communities, and I will pay particular attention to empowering and improving the status of women in the Eastern Caribbean.

If confirmed, I will work to implement the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, including the vigorous investigation of cases, the prosecution and conviction of perpetrators, and the proactive identification of and provisions of services to victims.

Several economic issues also have a deep impact on the Island Nations. The first is the high cost of energy. Caribbean nations have some of the highest electricity costs in the world due to their almost exclusive reliance on imported diesel fuel. The Caribbean Energy Security Initiative, launched by Vice President Biden in 2014, seeks to increase the region's access to energy sector financing and to improve the governance and diversification of Island energy sectors.

The Eastern Caribbean continues to experience stagnant economic growth and high debt levels. The region is also susceptible to hurricanes, which in a matter of hours can set these tourism- and agriculture-dependent nations back several years. If confirmed, I will work to encourage the nations of the Eastern Caribbean to seek out more sustainable sources of energy, to build resilience to the impacts of climate change, and to strengthen their economies through greater diversification and prudent debt management.

Next year will mark the 55th anniversary of the Peace Corps. Currently, 63 Volunteers work on literacy projects in some of the region's most vulnerable and marginalized communities. If confirmed, I will promote and support our Peace Corps Volunteers.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress and with the American people to advance our shared interests in this most important region.

Thank you for your gracious time. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Taglialatela follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LINDA TAGLIALATELA

Mister Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for their confidence and support, as well as to the members of this committee for their consideration. I look forward to speaking with you today about my qualifications; the myriad opportunities and challenges before us in Barbados and the nations of the Eastern Caribbean; and, if confirmed, how I can best work with the U.S. Congress to strengthen our already robust engagement in the region.

Throughout my life, my family, including my parents, Leon and Anne Swartz, has been an essential source of support. Without their love, encouragement, and belief in me, I would not be here today.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the privilege of serving our country for over 40 years, both as a career Civil Service employee and Foreign Service officer. It is a career that has afforded me the opportunity to see the inner workings of our government from my early days as a management analyst at the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) until most recently as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Human Resources and Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer. My proven track record in resource management; Embassy operations and auditing; and workforce planning has equipped me well for the responsibilities of a chief of mission. Over four decades of service, I have acquired a deep understanding of how to effectively match resources, people, and policies to best advance our national security interests, protect the safety of Americans abroad, and advance the broad set of policy objectives that characterize our relations with the countries of the Caribbean.

And, as importantly, this experience has given me a keen appreciation of two fundamental things: first, whatever our rank, position, or title, as public servants, our job is to protect and advance U.S. interests and values and to faithfully serve the American people. This means—and this is my second point—being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. If confirmed, these will be my guiding principles.

Our Nation is most effective when we lead by example and in accordance with our values. This is what I have sought to do throughout my career and what I will seek to do if confirmed as Ambassador.

If confirmed, I will proudly represent the United States in Barbados and the six nations of the Eastern Caribbean, a region with which we share strong cultural, historical, and familial ties. The Caribbean diaspora community in the United States, with its intellectual leadership, food, vibrant music, and sense of identity and community is a vital part of many of our cities, from Miami to New York and beyond. Since achieving independence in the 1960s and 1970s, the nations of the Eastern Caribbean have thrived as democracies and maintained friendly and productive relations with the United States. They also play an important role in supporting democracy and human rights across the hemisphere.

If confirmed, my top priority as Ambassador will be the safety of American citizens residing in and visiting the Caribbean. The Eastern Caribbean hosted nearly 2 million tourists last year, the vast majority of whom were U.S. citizens. Additionally, a large number of our citizens live in the Caribbean, whether in retirement, as students at one of the many universities in the islands, or as dual-nationals. I will also work to ensure the security of U.S. Government personnel at our Embassies in Barbados and Grenada as well as the Peace Corps Volunteers serving in St. Lucia, Grenada, Dominica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

I am also committed to strengthening the safety and security of our Caribbean partners. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to bolster citizen security through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. Threats to citizen security in the Caribbean are all too familiar: transnational criminal organizations involved in drug-related crimes; systemic violence; corruption; weak judicial systems and a lack of respect for the rule of law; and, an increase in youth involved in criminal activities.

Through Caribbean Basin Security Initiative programming and strong interagency cooperation, the United States will continue to support Caribbean nations in a whole-of-government, integrated approach that links citizen security, civil society development, and economic prosperity. If confirmed, I will work with the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines to implement the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, including: the vigorous investigation of incidents of forced labor and sex trafficking; the prosecution and conviction of perpetrators; and the proactive identification of and provision of services to victims.

Several economic issues are having a deep impact on the island nations of the Caribbean. The first is the high cost of energy. Caribbean nations have some of the highest electricity costs in the world due to their almost exclusive reliance on imported diesel fuel. The Caribbean Energy Security Initiative, launched by Vice President Biden, seeks to increase the region's access to energy sector financing and improve governance and diversification of the islands' energy sectors.

Additionally, the region continues to experience stagnant economic growth with youth unemployment and underemployment rates in the region averaging between 25–40 percent. These nations are also susceptible to environmental shocks, such as hurricanes, which, in a matter of hours, can set these tourism and agriculture dependent nations back several years.

These challenges combine to create a difficult economic environment that prevents Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean nations from reaching their full potential and competing in the broader regional and global economies. If confirmed, I will work diligently to encourage the nations of the Eastern Caribbean to seek out less expensive and more sustainable sources of energy and to invest in job training, including career and technical training for youth.

As Ambassador, I would also work to promote fundamental freedoms and universal human rights, including the rights of the LGBTI communities. I will pay particular attention to empowering and improving the status of women in the Eastern Caribbean. Women in these countries, who are well educated, play a strong role in politics and social issues. However, once their education is complete, many women are either unable to find jobs or can only find work in lower status or lower paying positions. Domestic and sexual violence against women remain grave concerns in the region, causing disproportionate, adverse impacts on families and youth, with victims frequently unable to rely upon the formal justice sector to seek redress. Yet despite these obstacles, the women leaders in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean are extraordinary, and if confirmed, I will work to increase and improve the opportunities available to women and girls and other members of vulnerable communities.

Next year will mark the 55th anniversary of the Peace Corps: I would like to acknowledge the long-standing Peace Corps presence in the Eastern Caribbean. St. Lucia was among the first countries to receive Volunteers in 1961 and continues to serve as the Peace Corps' headquarters in the region. Currently 63 Volunteers work on literacy projects in Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines in those nations' most vulnerable and marginalized communities. If confirmed, I will promote and support the efforts of our Peace Corp Volunteers.

If confirmed, I look forward to representing the United States in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean and to working with you and your colleagues in Congress on behalf of the administration and the American people to advance our shared interests in this important region.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Feeley.

STATEMENT OF JOHN D. FEELEY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

Mr. FEELEY. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. From the oath that I swore as an Eagle Scout, to the one I took upon commissioning as a Second Lieutenant of the Marines, and the oath by which I have lived and worked for the last 25 years as a Foreign Service officer advancing American interests in the Western Hemisphere, my life and career have been marked by public service.

This is an enormous privilege. I thank the President and the Secretary for the confidence they have shown in me by their nomina-

tion. And it is in that spirit of gratitude that I come before you today to seek your approval that I might continue to serve our great Nation as Ambassador in Panama.

I am joined today by my wife, a Senior Foreign Service officer herself from San Juan, Puerto Rico, Cherie Feeley. My two sons and my grandson could not be with us, but I am sure that the number of hits on C-Span have gone up as a result of them watching.

In my current position at the State Department, I oversee the daily operations of our 53 embassies and consulates, from Canada to the Caribbean, from Mexico to Argentina. I work on the operating budgets, the foreign assistance programs, and the personnel assignments that undergird American diplomacy throughout this hemisphere.

The food we eat, the energy we consume, and the goods and services we trade with our neighbors in the Americas have more of an impact, I would argue, on the daily lives of our country's citizens than any other region of the world. So it is vitally important that we know and understand these neighbors and partners to ensure our own security and prosperity. This is the essence of the President's Strategy for Engagement in Central America.

And Panama, whose destiny has been entwined with ours since its founding, is among the most critical of our partners in achieving the security, prosperity, and governance goals of the Strategy. Panama is a good news story in many aspects, and if confirmed, I will work with this committee to deepen and expand what is already an excellent bilateral relationship.

Panama shares our commitment to protecting democratic freedoms and human rights. In 2014, they defied polls and, with the help of robust international election monitoring, elected an underdog candidate as president who has made education and anticorruption pillars of his vision for Panama's future.

You will recall that Panama served as host of the Summit of the Americas earlier this year, where landmark encounters between civil society organizations and the region's leaders occurred.

Given its stability and relative prosperity, Panama, like the United States, is a destination, rather than a source, of immigration. And as such, Panama understands the evils of human trafficking and was recently upgraded on our annual Trafficking in Persons Report. If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I will continue the good work already begun with our Panamanian partners to eradicate this form of modern slavery.

Panama's geographic location makes it a bridge in both the physical and metaphysical sense of the word. With a robust economy, Panama has leveraged its bridging function to become a logistical center for the region. The Panama Canal is a vital commercial corridor for the United States. Two out of every three ships transiting the Canal will stop at a U.S. port.

And the global traffic across the bridge that is Panama will be accentuated by the Panama Canal expansion, due to be completed in 2016. This expansion will bring benefits to Panama and the United States, potentially doubling imports on the U.S. East and Gulf Coasts by 2029. Put simply, the expansion will lower shipping

costs between the United States and Asia, expand our markets, and create jobs for American workers.

Another good news story: Panama is among our best partners working on education and innovation. The literacy rate for 15-year-olds is high for the region, around 94 percent. "Bilingual Panama" is the Panamanian Government's ambitious plan to bring thousands of Panamanian English teachers to study in U.S. universities over the next five years, and we support that effort fully.

Now, Mr. Chairman, Panama is not without challenges. Its bridging location renders it vulnerable to organized crime. Narcotics trafficking and money laundering, and the corruption that is attendant to those illicit activities, are also threats to Panama's security and prosperity.

If confirmed, I will work with Panama to address those ills, as well as the challenges, and in doing so I will support U.S. priorities such as our significant retiree and expatriate population that lives in Panama. I will look to support greater foreign investment opportunities for American businesses. And most of all, I will seek to work with our Panamanian partners to shore up the integrity of our interconnected financial and banking systems.

I thank you for this opportunity, and I welcome any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Feeley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN D. FEELEY

Mister Chairman, members of the committee, from the oath I swore as an Eagle Scout, to the one I took upon commissioning as a Second Lieutenant of Marines, and the oath by which I have lived and worked for 25 years as a Foreign Service officer advancing American interests in the Western Hemisphere, my life and career have been marked by public service.

This is an enormous privilege. I thank the President and the Secretary for the confidence they have shown in me by their nomination. I realize just how fortunate I am. And it is in that spirit of gratitude that I come before you today to seek your approval that I might continue serving our Nation as Ambassador to Panama.

I am joined today by my wife of 31 years, 2 sons, one grandson, and 17 Permanent Change of Station pack outs and moves, a Senior Foreign Service officer herself from San Juan, Puerto Rico, Cherie Feeley.

In my current position at the State Department, I oversee the daily operations of our 53 embassies and consulates, from Canada to the Caribbean, from Mexico to Argentina.

I work on the operating budgets, the foreign assistance programs, and the personnel assignments that undergird American diplomacy throughout this hemisphere.

The food we eat, the energy we consume, and the goods and services we trade with our neighbors in the Americas have more of an impact on the daily lives of our country's citizens than any other region of the world.

So it is vitally important that we know and understand these neighbors and partners to ensure our own security and prosperity. This is the essence of the President's Strategy for Engagement in Central America.

And Panama, whose destiny has been entwined with ours since its founding, is among the most critical of our partners in achieving the security, prosperity, and governance goals of the Strategy.

Panama is a good news story in many aspects, and if confirmed, I will work with this committee to deepen and expand what is already an excellent bilateral relationship.

Panama shares our commitment to protecting democratic freedoms and human rights. Since 1989, Panamanians have consistently deepened their own democratic culture.

In 2014, they defied polls and, with the help of robust international election monitoring, elected an underdog candidate as President who has made education and anticorruption pillars of his vision for Panama's future.

You will recall that Panama served as host of the Summit of the Americas earlier this year, where landmark encounters between civil society organizations and the region's leaders occurred.

Panama is also a partner on the global stage. Under President Juan Carlos Varela's leadership, Panama is to date, the only Latin American member of the coalition against ISIL.

Given its stability and relative prosperity, Panama—like the United States—is a destination, rather than a source, of immigration in the region. As such, Panama understands the evils of human trafficking and was recently upgraded on our annual Trafficking in Persons Report.

If confirmed, I will continue the good work already begun with our Panamanian partners to eradicate this form of modern slavery.

Panama's geographic location makes it a bridge in both the physical and metaphysical sense of the word. With a robust economy, Panama has leveraged its bridging function to become a logistical center for the region.

The Canal is a vital commercial corridor for the United States: two of every three ships transiting the Canal will stop at a U.S. port.

And the global traffic across the bridge that is Panama will be accentuated by the Panama Canal expansion, due to be completed in 2016. This expansion will bring benefits to Panama and the United States, potentially doubling imports on the U.S. East and Gulf Coasts by 2029.

Put simply: The expansion will lower shipping costs between the United States and Asia, expand our markets, and create jobs for American workers.

Another good news story: Panama is among our best partners working on education and innovation. The literacy rate for 15-year-olds is around 94 percent.

"Bilingual Panama" is the Panamanian Government's ambitious plan to bring thousands of Panamanian English teachers to study in U.S. universities over the next 5 years, and we support that effort.

As the son of an English professor and the husband of a native Spanish speaker, no issue could be closer to my personal interest than that of contributing to a bilingual, bicultural, more integrated future in the Americas. With your consent, I will do so in Panama.

Now, Mister Chairman, Panama is not without challenges.

Its bridging location renders it vulnerable to organized crime. I mentioned trafficking in persons. Narcotics trafficking and money laundering—and the corruption that is attendant to those illicit activities—are also threats to Panama's security and prosperity.

Economic challenges include stubborn income inequality and poverty despite a decade of growth, inadequate public infrastructure, and limited economic development outside of Panama City.

If confirmed, I will work with Panama as it addresses these challenges, doing so in support of U.S. priorities such as:

—Our significant retiree and expatriate population;
—Greater foreign direct investment opportunities for American business; and
—The integrity of our interconnected financial and banking systems.

I thank you for this opportunity and welcome your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ms. Manes.

STATEMENT OF JEAN ELIZABETH MANES, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR

Ms. MANES. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of El Salvador. I am humbled by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry have shown by sending my name to the Senate for consideration at this pivotal moment in the bilateral relationship.

I am also grateful for the support of my family, including members here today, my husband, Hector Cerpa, and one of our two daughters, Candela. Our other daughter, Connie, definitely wishes

she could be here but she is preparing for end-of-year exams in college.

I also want to thank my parents, Roger and Betty Manes, who instilled in me the values of hard work, dedication and integrity, as I watched them build our family business. They are tuning in remotely from Florida, as is my 90-year-young grandmother, Alice Masters.

Today is even more special because it was 25 years ago that I started my foreign policy career in this very place, as an intern with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee just down the hall in room 452.

I also want to recognize the current U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Mari Carmen Aponte. Under her leadership of the Embassy, the people of the United States have been well represented over the last 5 years.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and others in Congress to enhance the bilateral relationship between the United States and El Salvador, as well as to increase regional integration with other Central American countries. This will include significant focus on three areas: stabilizing the security environment; improving the business investment climate; and strengthening government institutions.

El Salvador is one of our closest partners in the Western Hemisphere. The people of El Salvador have demonstrated their commitment to democracy through peaceful transfer of power since the 1992 Peace Accords that ended the Civil War. While El Salvador continues to face tremendous security challenges, as well as a range of political, economic, and social issues, a stable and economically viable future is possible.

The commitment of President Sanchez Ceren and those of other leaders across the Northern Triangle in developing and leading the comprehensive plan "Alliance for Prosperity" represents an unprecedented opportunity to solidify the gains of the past and build for the future. The plan reflects a multidisciplinary and collective approach to addressing fundamental issues preventing long-term growth and stability in the region.

The United States is and must continue to be a central player in advancing these efforts. The U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America, combined with initiatives under the Partnership for Growth and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, serves as the foundation for U.S. engagement in Central America, and El Salvador in particular.

We are at a crossroads in Central America. We have committed partners, including the host government, leaders in the business community, civil society, international organizations, and the people of El Salvador. Now is the moment for American leadership and investments to help guide the region to a better future.

Fundamentally, the biggest asset for both the United States and El Salvador is the people who support this effort. While there are over 6 million people in El Salvador, there are over 2 million people of Salvadoran descent who live in the United States. These include many community leaders across Maryland, California, Texas, New York, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen these bonds between our two countries as

we work in partnership to support the implementation of the Strategy.

As outlined in the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America, one country cannot succeed alone. Regional integration is a core component of the strategy. If confirmed, my team and I will enhance the collaboration at all levels in the region, with specific focus on Honduras and Guatemala. You have my guarantee that I will use the important role of the U.S. Ambassador to bring all parties together; to serve as the convener and facilitator of ideas; and to make the best investments for a stable and growing El Salvador that remains a strong partner with the United States.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is an honor to be here, and I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Manes follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JEAN E. MANES

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

I am humbled by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry have shown by sending my name to the Senate for consideration at this pivotal moment in the bilateral relationship. I am also grateful for the support of my family, including members here today, my husband, Hector Cerpa, and one of our two daughters, Candela. Our other daughter, Connie, wishes she could be here but is in the midst of preparing for end of year exams at college. I also want to thank my parents, Roger and Betty Manes, who instilled in me the values of hard work, dedication and integrity, as I watched them build our family business.

Today is even more special because it was 25 years ago that I started my foreign policy career in this very place as an intern with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chaired by Claiborne Pell.

I also want to recognize the current U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Mari Carmen Aponte. Under her leadership of the Embassy, the people of the United States have been well represented over the last 5 years.

Throughout my career at the State Department, I have led complex organizations and negotiated large-scale initiatives. This includes my present position serving as Principal Deputy Coordinator for the 400-person International Information Programs Bureau, which provides the State Department's worldwide outreach platform for public diplomacy. It also includes my previous position as the Director of Resources, overseeing $1.2 billion for public diplomacy domestic and worldwide operations. I have taken the business lessons I learned from my parents to ensure we are making the right investments on behalf of the American people and accounting for results. These have been hallmarks of my career.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and others in Congress as I use these skills to continue to enhance the bilateral relationship between the United States and El Salvador, as well as to increase regional integration with other Central American countries. This will include significant focus on three areas: stabilizing the security environment, improving the business investment climate and promoting inclusive economic growth; and strengthening government institutions.

El Salvador is one of our closest partners in the Western Hemisphere. The people of El Salvador have demonstrated their commitment to democracy through peaceful transfer of power since the 1992 Peace Accords ended the Civil War, however today El Salvador is facing the highest homicide rates since the war, and projections are that the daily rate will reach more than 100 homicides per 100,000 people by the end of this year. While El Salvador continues to face political, economic, and social challenges as well, a stable and economically viable future is possible, and the United States is committed to supporting the people and Government of El Salvador toward realizing this goal.

The commitment of President Śanchez Cerén and those of other leaders across the Northern Triangle in developing and leading the comprehensive "Alliance for Prosperity" plan represents an unprecedented opportunity to solidify the gains of the past and build for the future. The plan reflects a multidisciplinary and collective approach to addressing fundamental issues preventing long-term growth and stability in the region.

The United States is and must continue to be a central player in advancing these efforts. The U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America, combined with initiatives under the Partnership for Growth and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, serves as the foundation for U.S. engagement with El Salvador. We are at a crossroads in Central America. Down one road lies the prospect of a prosperous Central America that provides a home and future for its citizens. Down the other lies disorder and increased migration. We have committed partners including the host government, leaders in the business community, civil society, international organizations, and the people of El Salvador. Now is the moment for American leadership and investments to help lead the region to a better future.

Fundamentally, the biggest asset for both the United States and El Salvador is the people who support this effort. While there are 6 million people in El Salvador, there are over 2 million people of Salvadoran descent who live in the United States. These include many community leaders across California, Texas, New York, Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen these bonds between our two countries as we work in partnership to support implementation of the Strategy.

As outlined in the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America, one country cannot succeed alone. Regional integration is a core component of the strategy. If confirmed, my team and I will enhance the collaboration at all levels in the region, with specific focus on Honduras and Guatemala. You have my guarantee that I will use the important role of the U.S. Ambassador to bring all parties together; to serve as the convener and facilitator of ideas; and to make the best investments for a stable and growing El Salvador that remains a strong partner with the United States.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor to be here and I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Chapman.

STATEMENT OF TODD C. CHAPMAN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR

Mr. CHAPMAN. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, thank you for this privilege this afternoon to appear before you today. I am indeed grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have shown in me through this nomination to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Ecuador.

I would like first to publicly honor and express deep gratitude for my wife, Janetta, who is here with me today, and my two sons, Joshua and Jason, who have faithfully supported me in this 25-year journey in the Foreign Service. They have shared in the joys, in the excitement, and sometimes in the hardships which this life sometimes brings. I also am so grateful for my parents, Bob and Marilyn Chapman, who were always my greatest champions and my greatest cheerleaders. Indeed, I am a blessed man.

During my career, I have represented this great Nation in a diverse group of countries, including Bolivia, Costa Rica, Nigeria, Mozambique, and Afghanistan. As an Economic Officer I promoted progrowth economic policies, implemented development agendas, and advanced commercial partnerships. As Charge d'Affaires in Mozambique, I led our implementation of over $500 million in economic, health, and democracy programs. As Deputy Chief of Mission in Brasilia, Brazil, I helped provide direction to one of our most dynamic bilateral relationships. And I now serve as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, enhancing security partnerships around the world through peacekeeping training, de-mining activities, defense trade, and security assistance.

The United States has long recognized the value and importance of fostering a strong and productive relationship with Ecuador. The United States sent its first representative to Ecuador in 1825 when the U.S. Senate confirmed William Wheelwright to serve as U.S. Consul in Guayaquil, Ecuador. In 1839 the United States and Ecuador signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Navigation, and Commerce. Interestingly, whereas the commercial and navigation clauses were written to expire after 12 years, the treaty stated, "in all other parts which relate to peace and friendship, it shall be perpetually and permanently binding on both parties."

If confirmed, I look forward to advancing in concrete ways the long diplomatic tradition of peace and friendship that has helped define relations between our two countries. I am confident that working in this spirit we can expand our relations and develop and more fully realize a constructive agenda, one which advances the real interests of our countries. There is much for our countries to do together.

The United States has long been Ecuador's largest trading partner, with two-way trade approaching $20 billion in 2014, more than double 2008 totals. I will work diligently, if confirmed, with the government and private sector to expand our economic partnership, eliminate trade barriers to promote increased trade, and encourage investor-friendly practices.

U.S. and Ecuadorian law enforcement and security personnel work cooperatively to counter regional threats posed by transnational crime, illicit narcotics, and trafficking in persons. Further cooperation and information sharing on these issues can result in greater security for citizens of both our countries.

Additionally, our people-to-people exchanges are growing rapidly, with education partnerships leading more Americans and Ecuadorians to study in each other's country, thus supporting President Obama's 100,000 Strong Education Exchange Initiative. We are also responding to the Government of Ecuador's request for expanded cooperation in English-teaching with a variety of creative programs.

This is a time of great dynamism in the Ecuadorian body politic. Ecuadorians of all backgrounds and beliefs are actively debating and expressing a range of views about the country's direction and future, demonstrable signs of that dynamism. Encouraging such expression, not limiting it, is consistent with the collective commitment to democratic values and human rights which the United States and Ecuador have both pledged to uphold.

If confirmed, I will be a strong advocate for these democratic values as I engage with a broad range of Ecuadorians—within national and subnational governments, civil society, religious institutions, the media and the private sector—to promote social justice and greater prosperity for all Ecuadorians.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, committee members, if confirmed, I commit to doing my very best to represent the very best of the United States of America to the people and Government of Ecuador. I thank you for giving me the honor of appearing before you today. I look forward to your questions and the beginning of what I sincerely hope will be a continuing partnership and dialogue with this committee in the coming years. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Chapman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TODD CHAPMAN

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, thank you for this privilege of appearing before you today.I am indeed grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have shown in me through this nomination to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Ecuador.

I would like first to publicly honor and express deep gratitude for my wife, Janetta, and my two sons, Joshua and Jason, who have faithfully supported me in this 25-year journey in the Foreign Service. They have shared in the joys, excitement, and sometimes the hardships, associated with this service and lifestyle. I also am so grateful for my parents, Marilyn and Bob Chapman, who were always my greatest champions and cheerleaders—I am blessed.

During my career, I have represented our great Nation in a diverse group of countries, including Bolivia, Costa Rica, Nigeria, Mozambique, and Afghanistan. As an Economic Officer I promoted pro-growth economic policies, implemented development agendas, and advanced commercial partnerships. As Chargé d'Affaires in Mozambique, I led our implementation of over $500 million in economic, health, and democracy programs. As Deputy Chief of Mission in Brasilia, Brazil, from 2011–2014, I helped provide direction to one of our most dynamic bilateral relationships. And I now serve as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, enhancing security partnerships around the world through peacekeeping training, de-mining activities, defense trade, and security assistance.

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Additionally, our people-to-people exchanges are growing rapidly, with education partnerships leading more Americans and Ecuadorians to study in each other's country, thus supporting President Obama's 100,000 Strong Education Exchange Initiative. We are also responding to the Government of Ecuador's request for expanded cooperation in English-teaching with a variety of creative programs.

Tourism both ways is also rising quickly; over 200,000 Americans visited Ecuador last year while 335,000 Ecuadorians traveled to the United States.And the number of Americans residing in Ecuador is approaching 100,000, thanks in part to a growing number of retirees.

This is a time of great dynamism in the Ecuadorian body politic. Ecuadorians of all backgrounds and beliefs are actively debating and expressing a range of views about the country's direction and future—demonstrable signs of this dynamism. Encouraging such expression, not limiting it, is consistent with the collective commitment to democratic values and human rights which the United States and Ecuador have both pledged to uphold. If confirmed, I will be a strong advocate for these democratic values as I engage with a broad range of Ecuadorians—within national and subnational governments, civil society, religious institutions, the media and the private sector—to promote social justice and greater prosperity for all Ecuadorians.

Mr. Chairman, committee members, if confirmed I commit to doing my very best to represent the very best of the United States of America to the people and Government of Ecuador. I thank you for giving me the honor of appearing before you today,

and I look forward to your questions and the beginning of what I sincerely hope will be a continuing partnership and dialogue with this committee for several years to come. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you all.

Our ranking member I know is in line to speak in the Finance Committee, so I am going to defer to him. If no other members come in, I will then defer to Senator Menendez, who appropriately has placed a lot of emphasis on the geography that all of you represent.

So, with that, we will start with our ranking member.

Senator CARDIN. And if I am correct, I think Senator Menendez should also go to the Senate Finance Committee sometime today on our international task force, but maybe not. I do not mean to speak for my colleague on the Finance Committee.

First, thank you all very much for your service. As I said to the last panel, including this panel, we very much appreciate your public service, and thank your families because we know it is a family event.

In our hemisphere, the countries that are represented here are all democratic countries in that they all have the institutions of democracy, and every one is challenged on human rights and freedom and all the things that we value. So there are issues. Just because it is a democratic country does not mean it does not have significant problems.

So, Ms. Manes, let me start with El Salvador. You are correct that we have lots of Salvadorans in Maryland. They have contributed greatly to our State and to our Nation, a strong ethnic community and strongly engaged in the growth of America.

There is an issue. I was in El Salvador not too long ago and experienced firsthand the way that gangs control the communities. I was in Honduras, saw the same thing there. The government is incapable of rooting out the gang activities which is corrupting their entire economy. To make matters worse, they are exporting that to my State of Maryland. We have Salvadoran gangs in Prince Georges County and in Montgomery County and other places in our state, not very far from here.

So give me an idea about the priority you are going to place on dealing with the safety of the people of El Salvador. Their murder rates, of course, are the highest in the world. What are we going to do? What can the United States do to help in this regard?

Ms. MANES. Well, I appreciate your question, and clearly security is the number-one issue. It cannot be divorced from economic development and governance, but it is clearly the top priority.

I am pleased to say that the current government is committed to addressing the challenge. They have developed, in fact, a comprehensive Safe El Salvador, which really focuses on 50 municipalities that are the most troubled. They are committed to establishing rule of law, police intervention at an early stage in 10 of those this first year.

There are challenges. There are definitely challenges on whether they can take that to scale, and that is a real area for them to collaborate with the United States. We already have strong collaboration with El Salvador on rule of law, governance, police issues. We have over 15 agencies represented at the U.S. mission——

Senator CARDIN. And I have visited them——

Ms. MANES. Yes.

Senator CARDIN [continuing]. And I am very impressed with their dedication. They are making great progress. I am impressed by the commitment of their government to the issues. It is just incredible, though, how that network is as strong as it is.

Ms. MANES. It is incredible, but what they are doing in terms of doing a place-based strategy focusing on 10 priority municipalities in a comprehensive way, not just with adding more police officers but focusing on prevention, focusing on reintegration of gang members into society, those are really fundamental steps, and those are definite areas where we can work closely with El Salvador.

Senator CARDIN. And I just really want to underscore this point. We want to save the children there. We have had the immigration issues on our border, et cetera, but I met with a lot of really neat young people——

Ms. MANES. Yes.

Senator CARDIN [continuing]. Who want to do well for their lives, and I am worried some, if not many of those, will get caught up in the violence of their neighborhood and never have a chance. So we are really talking about young people who are trapped in this web, and the United States offers an opportunity here, and your position in that country can make a huge difference. So I urge you to give this your highest priority.

Ms. MANES. Absolutely. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. If I could switch, I guess, to Panama, that's a little bit easier. Panama really needs to be a country where our presence is used to help the entire region. It has a lot of things going for it from the point of view of its economy and the canal, but it is in the neighborhood where they can exercise a lot of influence, and the question is will they exercise the influence and how will the United States play a role in that.

Mr. FEELEY. Thank you very much, Senator Cardin, for that question. You hit it right on the head. I agree with you completely. Panama is a country in Central America that, because of its geography, because of its history, and because of its current government, does not suffer from the same types of problems of citizen insecurity, shaken governance, and the gang problem that is so pervasive in the Northern Triangle.

The United States has a very strong and capable partner in this current government. We do seek to use our collaboration with Panama to hopefully export it, so to speak, very much in the way we have with Colombia over many years. President Varela understands very well the threats that are to his geographic north and has expressed already through his leadership at the Summit of the Americas earlier this year and in a number of domestic programs his intention to continue collaborating with the United States and with all of the governments of the region to make sure that Panama becomes value added to the many problems that afflict the isthmus.

Senator CARDIN. Ecuador, we talked a little bit before we sat down, a great country, but has been characterized by Freedom House as having a press that is not free. We cannot accept that.

What is your strategy to use the tools of our embassy to get a more open society and protecting journalists?

Mr. CHAPMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Cardin. I share your concern about freedom of the press in Ecuador. Freedom House report and many others have highlighted the challenges that a free and independent media have been facing in Ecuador in recent years.

I think it is very important that we as a government and we as an embassy speak very forthrightly about the challenges that this presents, the creation of kind of open civil societies and governments that we seek to see in this hemisphere. We share a commitment through treaties and charters. The Inter American Democratic Charter is very clear on the importance of freedom of expression, and I think that if confirmed, I will, just like the gentleman who just left as Ambassador, Adam Nim, be an advocate and, quite frankly, a forthright advocate for these issues, demonstrating how free press is good for free societies.

So I think it is incumbent on us as a government and as an embassy, as a mission, to be very, very outspoken on these issues and to support in any way that we can those who are seeking to express themselves freely within Ecuador.

Senator CARDIN. This committee is taking a particular interest in the trafficking issue. Several of the countries—Antigua, Barbuda—Tier 2 watch. You mentioned that in your testimony. We have St. Vincent, a Tier 2 country. Trafficking is a serious problem, and I must tell you, we very much want our mission in the Caribbean Islands to give us a strong report on how we can hold these countries to making progress against modern-day slavery.

We know at times you want to be diplomatic, but when you are dealing on this issue you have got to give us a clear indication of how this country is performing on its trafficking, anti-trafficking activities. Are you prepared to do that?

Ms. TAGLIALATELA. Thank you for that question, Senator. As a strong proponent of human rights and rule of law, I am concerned about trafficking of persons in the Caribbean. If confirmed, I will continue the robust engagement with the nations to encourage them to strengthen their antitrafficking laws and to improve their law enforcement efforts. I think it is important that we increase measures to protect and care for the victims and to try through a systemic approach to prevent people from becoming victims of trafficking.

I understand and realize that two of our countries within the Caribbean are at Tier 2 Watch List. Those countries we will focus on, along with the other countries in the Caribbean, to make sure that they pay attention to the things that need to be done within their countries to stop trafficking in persons.

Senator CARDIN. I just want to make this point. I appreciate that answer. I just want to make this point. There are objective tests as to how we rate countries in our TIP report, and we expect our representatives from America in these countries to use those standards and their recommendations to the State Department through the ways that you go about doing that. This is not a matter to trade off for diplomacy. This is a matter in which we demand objective reporting as to a country's rating.

Ms. TAGLIALATELA. I assure you, Mr. Senator, that we will follow the standards of the report to evaluate and assess the actions of the countries within the Caribbean.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations to all of you on your nominations.

I thought I read this from your resumes, but I just want to make sure.

Mr. Feeley, Ms. Manes, and Mr. Chapman, do you all speak Spanish? I know you do, right?

Ms. MANES. Yes.

Mr. FEELEY. Yes, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay, great. I am not going to conduct a Cervantes test now. I just wanted to get a sense of it. It helps in the country that you are in, particularly these Latin American countries.

Let me say that in reading your testimony, as well as listening to it, in typical State Department form, you have the most positive view of our bilateral relationships with these countries, and I get that. But in some of these countries we have some real concerns and issues, and I do not think we can gloss over them because, from my perspective, they need to be an essential part of your mission as the head of our embassy in these respective countries. So let me go over a few of them.

Mr. Chapman, I certainly want to join Senator Cardin in his concern about press freedom in Ecuador. I have spoken about this for years, and it continues to be one of the most oppressed elements of freedom of the press in the hemisphere.

But beyond that, President Carrera is a fierce critic of the United States. He has ejected State Department representatives. He has imposed such restrictions on USAID that it had to close its mission. He shut down U.S. counterdrug operations. He has accused the United States of threatening Ecuador's sovereignty. He has aligned Ecuador with allies like China and Russia, and he even provided asylum to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange at the Embassy of Ecuador in London.

So, while I heard the positive side of this bilateral relationship, I think that there is a very pressing series of things, and so I would like to get a sense from you, notwithstanding that President Carrera has supposedly announced that he will not stand for election in 2017—we will see—as his political party pushes for constitutional changes that allow indefinite reelection to take place, so we will see about that.

How do you see this playing out? How do you see all of those elements of our relationship playing out? What do you intend to do as the ambassador in pursuing a better direction as it relates to those issues?

Mr. CHAPMAN. Thank you very much, Senator. It is a very good observation and listing of the real challenges that we also have in our relationship with Ecuador. We have many areas of substantive engagement where there has been positive movement, whether it

is working in education areas or counter-drug and some of the areas where we have seen some real progress at the working level.

But you are right, there are many challenges in the relationship, and I certainly do not mean to gloss over them. I think what I would seek to do, if confirmed, is to seek to engage the Government of Ecuador on these issues in a substantive way to get beyond rhetoric and get to talking about the real issues that are of concern to both of our countries. We have signaled these on many occasions. We have had high-level exchanges with the government at various times. I think this is an appropriate time for us to attempt to reengage on some of these issues that are so important to us.

If confirmed, I would seek to find a willing and open interlocutor in Ecuador with whom we can discuss these issues and see if we can chart out a path together to address some of them together. But where we cannot, we will continue to not abandon our values and principles and speak out on the issues that are important to U.S. foreign policy and to us as a nation.

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate that. You know, as you go to—in 2017, if President Carrera is not going to run, for argument's sake, whether he runs or not, 2016 is a vital year leading up to 2017.

Mr. CHAPMAN. Yes, right.

Senator MENENDEZ. And so I would assume that it will be your mission to, beyond interlocutors at an intergovernmental level, to robustly pursue civil society elements in Ecuador in preparation for an election that we hope is free and fair.

Mr. CHAPMAN. Yes. Absolutely, Senator, I could not agree more. As I mentioned in my statement, I will be looking to meet with and hold dialogues with and learn from a very broad range of society. That includes opposition, that includes religious organizations, labor groups, indigenous movements. There are so many groups in Ecuador that are actively expressing themselves about what they wish to see as a nation, I think it is incumbent on us as diplomats to meet with each and every one to hear their concerns.

And so, yes, I commit to you that I will be active, getting around the country, meeting with a broad, broad range of Ecuadorians so that we can see how we can work to support this democracy and this civil society as they seek to express themselves.

Senator MENENDEZ. Ms. Manes, I visited El Salvador a couple of years ago when I met with President Funes and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Justice, and in a very interesting luncheon that Ambassador Aponte arranged with me with members of the Constitutional Court of the Supreme Court, in essence the Supreme Court of Justice of their country, and the focus of a lot of my visit was, yes, our bilateral relationship, but particularly the question of extraditions. We had a series of fugitives and/or others wanted for high crimes in the United States, from drug trafficking to murders and others, and we had not succeeded in gaining extraditions.

We had a long conversation with members of the Supreme Court about something that the ambassador had been working on to try to lay the foundation to get, and I had a long conversation with members of the Supreme Court, including the Chief Justice, who comes from a political point of view that did not necessarily warm

to the idea of extraditions. And among the things that we discussed, I said what if a Salvadoran had committed murder against a member of your family and went to the United States? Would you not want them to be extradited back to El Salvador?

Well, the result of that conversation and the continuing work of our ambassador led to a series of extraditions, extraditions we had never achieved before. Now, that still, however, is a contentious issue in El Salvador, and there are still those who are wanted by law enforcement authorities here in the United States.

So I appreciate what you said about Ambassador Aponte. I want to get a pledge from you, if confirmed, that you will continue to aggressively pursue those who have committed crimes in the United States and pursue extradition when the appropriate State and Justice Department efforts go forth, that you will make that a priority of your time as Ambassador in El Salvador.

Ms. MANES. Senator, you have my pledge, and I can assure you that while I am a glass-half-full person, I have no difficulty tackling the complicated issues and will do so.

Senator MENENDEZ. Okay. Well, I actually thought that your statement was among the most sobering of the countries that you were visiting.

Let me ask you, the other thing with El Salvador which is, of course, part of our whole Central American challenge, Senator Cardin talked about it and it is a huge challenge, and I think we underestimate in the United States what that challenge is, and this is not about helping the people of El Salvador alone, it is about our own national interests and security. But also from that stems what we saw with refugee children, migrant children coming to the United States because their parents decide that either they will die here or I will risk them coming to the United States and hopefully they will live there.

Now, that flow stemmed as a result of concerted effort between the United States and the governments of Central America, but I see the number spiking again. And before we get to a crisis situation where we will revert to what we did before—the whole region is not your bailiwick but your country is one of those—will you make it one of your priorities when you are at post to continue to work with the Salvadoran government on finding ways in which we stem the tide of young children taking a risk to come to the United States and pursue the more active in-country asylum process that we have tried to establish?

Ms. MANES. Well, Senator, thank you for that question. You make the exact point. The fundamental issues that have led to the migration crisis have not changed. In fact, the number is going back up. Fundamentally, probably the number went down a little bit because of our collaboration in the region, in particular with Mexico, so less were actually reaching the United States. But the number of people who were actually departing El Salvador probably did not go down.

So the fundamental underlying issues, predominantly security, and the research does show that the number-one reason people are willing to take that risk with their most precious assets, their kids, the fundamental reason is, in fact, the security issues. Economics is a distant second.

So it is critical that we get a handle on the security situation in El Salvador not only for the security of El Salvador, as you rightly point out, but for the security of the United States, and that will be my number-one top priority if confirmed.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, thank you very much.

Mr. Feeley, while Panama is virtuous in many ways, it does have a few issues. Money laundering. Panama made some moves in order to get itself removed from the international list of nations that are not doing enough to fight money laundering, but these efforts are falling short, in my view. The gray list is maintained by the Financial Action Task Force, an intergovernmental body that promotes anti-money-laundering policies. Panama has been on the list since June of 2014, alongside other countries like Afghanistan, Sudan, Syria. That is not great company.

Panama developed an action plan with the task force in order to remove this designation, which included a legislative proposal meant to strengthen government supervision over the financial sector. However, talks between the task force and Panama have run into trouble lately. Problems include the ease with which corporations are formed, confidentiality regulations that make it easy for corporations to conceal details, minimum reporting requirements, tax exemptions, lax regulations over the shipping industry, which is another concern of mine, and an insufficient legal framework for dealing with money laundering.

Do you plan to make this a significant issue of your ambassadorship?

Mr. FEELEY. Absolutely, Senator Menendez. You accurately described the situation in Panama right now. You mentioned the gray list, the engagement with Panama. In my current position as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, without necessarily portfolio review for Panama, I have engaged with the Ambassador here, with the President and Foreign Minister, Vice President and Foreign Minister in Panama. I believe that they recognize just how important it is that they work with the international community, with the U.N., with the United States to clean up their banking sector so that their banking sector becomes a proponent for legitimate business and it is not subject to the bridging function I spoke about earlier, that many times, unfortunately, invites organized crime.

So if I am confirmed, Senator, you have my pledge that this will be one of my highest priorities.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, I have one other question, if I may?

The CHAIRMAN. Go ahead.

Senator MENENDEZ. With reference to—because of its location, Panama remains a center for shipping narcotics to the United States and other countries. What is your assessment of the progress with Panama, and is the drug interdiction committee working? What do we need to do?

Mr. FEELEY. Absolutely. Thank you for that question, Senator Menendez. Panama is a good partner for the United States. Panama last year seized over 35,000 tons of cocaine, more than all of the other countries of Central America and Mexico combined. As an interdictor, it does quite a good job, and one of the reasons for that

job is its consistent partnership with the United States under the Central American Regional Security Initiative.

Where it has not worked and where we have seen deficits in Panama's performance is precisely where we discussed earlier, in the financial transactions. If confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to work with the Sinan and Sena Front. As you know, there is no military in Panama, but the police and the security agencies, they guard the borders, and their air naval service to ensure that that interdiction level is kept up, that their vetted units are trained professionally by our DEA and our folks. But also we will turn increasing attention to the financial sector, sir.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, thank you very much.

Just one last comment to the three of you. Other than Senator Cardin's remarks about trafficking—that is why I did not spend a lot of time with you, Ms. Taglialatela, but I am sure that you will do a fine job there—I sometimes worry that in these countries, while we say that we promote our values, we muff it. I think that the purpose of our interests—yes, sometimes they are clearly commercial, but what makes America a beacon of light unto the world is what it stands for in human rights and democracy. And when we do not show that beacon in these countries that you are going to all represent, because the country that you are going to represent is the United States of America, the country you are going to be assigned to, then I think we do ourselves an enormous disservice.

Now, that sometimes creates problems. Maybe, Mr. Chapman, you might get thrown out of Ecuador for doing it, but I would applaud you. Maybe Ms. Manes would find challenges—I do not think so—in raising some of the questions, justice questions in that country, or the questions of money laundering in that country. But that is the very essence of why we have missions abroad, to promote those values.

So I just want to urge you—it is a refrain that I intend to make to each one of our nominees as you move abroad, because I often feel that we muff our concern about human rights and democracy. We say they are principles for us, but then we give them second or third billing as it relates to our missions abroad. So when I go to visit you, I will be looking forward to seeing what you have done in that regard.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I appreciate the fact that we have four qualified nominees nominated to positions that are very important to us here in the Western Hemisphere. I sometimes think there is not near the emphasis on the Western Hemisphere that should exist. There are tremendous challenges that we have there, but also significant opportunities.

Members of the committee will ask questions in writing through Thursday close of business. I am going to ask my questions through QFRs in that manner because of the time, but I want to thank you for your testimony here today, for bringing family members and for their service to our country in support of you and in other ways.

And with that, the meeting is adjourned.

Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4:12 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF AMOS HOCHSTEIN, NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY RESOURCES, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

ASSISTANT-SECRETARY-DESIGNATE HOCHSTEIN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR BARRASSO

Question. How are the roles and responsibilities of the State Department's Bureau of Energy Resources different from the Department of Energy's Office of Policy and International Affairs?

Answer. The State Department's Bureau of Energy Resources (ENR) and the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Policy and International Affairs have different but very complementary mandates. The Department of Energy Organization Act, which established the Energy Department in 1977, expressly gives the Secretary of State primary authority and the central role in conducting international energy policy, stating that "the Secretary of State shall continue to exercise primary authority for the conduct of foreign policy relating to energy and nuclear nonproliferation, pursuant to policy guidelines established by the President" (42 U.S. C § 7112 (10)). ENR works closely and collaboratively with DOE's Office of Policy and International Affairs, but leads the effort where energy intersects with our foreign policy, national security, and counterterrorism objectives. The vital link between energy security and every nation's national security has never been more clear than it is today. Access to reliable, affordable and sustainable energy affects every country's economic growth, political stability and ability to meet its climate goals. With rapidly changing natural gas markets, shifts in global supply, the transformative impact of renewable energy technologies, and the explosion of energy consumption in the developing world in an era of climate change, energy diplomacy is fundamental to U.S. diplomatic engagement everywhere.

As we work to address global energy challenges, ENR engages closely with DOE's Office of Policy and International Affairs to coordinate U.S. bilateral and multilateral foreign policy engagement on energy issues. ENR's diplomacy efforts amplify DOE's technical expertise with the geopolitical and diplomatic tools that leverage our bilateral and international strengths to achieve lasting solutions.

ENR, in coordination with the interagency, develops U.S. international energy policy, ensures that analyses of the national security implications of global energy and environmental developments are reflected in the interagency decision making process within the executive branch, and coordinates energy activities of the Department of State with relevant Federal agencies in line with the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007.

Question. Please describe how you have delineated the roles, lines of authorities, and decisionmaking among the Department of State, Department of Treasury, the Department of Energy, and the White House on international energy policies?

Answer. As determined by Congress, the Department of State has the lead on all areas of international energy diplomacy. As such, the State Department's Bureau of Energy Resources leads the effort where energy intersects with our foreign policy, national security, and counterterrorism objectives.

For example, the Department of State leads on Iran and Russia sanctions, counter-ISIL efforts, Ukraine and European energy security, and cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean, among other issues.

We work closely and collaboratively with the White House, Department of Defense, the Department of the Treasury, and the Department of Energy to ensure collaboration, cooperation, and avoid duplication of efforts. The Department of Energy's technical and scientific expertise is an important asset to energy diplomacy and the Department of State utilizes that expertise in its international engagements.

We maintain regular meetings, weekly calls through the White House, and bilateral meetings with relevant government agencies, which helps us to delineate our individual roles and lines of authority.

Question. In examining energy markets, how will the Bureau of Energy Resources avoid duplicating the efforts of other parts of the government?

Answer. In examining markets, ENR utilizes the great expertise developed by the Department of Energy, the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the intelligence community, the Department of Commerce and others to support our own analysis

and information derived from the Bureau's unique exposure to U.S. Government resources, as well as active engagement with international counterparts. These include governments, think tanks, multilateral institutions, and the private sector.

Question. What is the current number of staff positions at the Bureau of Energy Resources? What was the fiscal year 2015 budget for the Bureau of Energy Resources?

Answer. The Bureau of Energy Resources currently has 68 permanent Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff and 9 temporary positions.

The Bureau in FY 2015 managed a budget of $4.394 million, approximately 10 percent lower than the Bureau's FY 2012 managed levels of $4.820 million.

Question. In your testimony, you wrote: "Today, we should focus on 21st century solutions utilizing ALL natural resources—from those requiring extraction to those requiring capturing; from oil and gas to wind and sun."

- Are you committed to promoting all forms of energy projects across the globe including oil, gas, and coal?

Answer. Yes, I support promoting all forms of energy globally, consistent with the Department and administration's efforts to promote energy security and economic development. Recognizing that countries will pursue their own mix of energy options according to their unique circumstances, our approach is to support a menu of available energy options, from hydrocarbon to renewable technologies.

The Bureau of Energy Resources (ENR) supports the responsible development of hydrocarbon resources globally through several different channels. We are prioritizing the increase of gas supply diversification to Western Europe and are working to better integrate gas markets and supplies across geographic regions. Globally, through the Energy Governance and Capacity Initiative (EGCI), ENR assists countries with emerging or rapidly expanding oil and gas sectors on sustainable and transparent sector management to benefit national economic development. Through the Unconventional Gas Technical Engagement Program (UGTEP), ENR assists countries seeking to develop their unconventional natural gas resources safely and responsibly.

At the same time, ENR has coordinated with other U.S. Government agencies to advance the construction of new coal plants by U.S. companies in Kosovo, and the export of U.S. equipment for coal mining in Mongolia. ENR also works closely with Ukraine to ensure it has access to adequate coal supplies.

When leading U.S. Government energy diplomacy to address geopolitical energy crises, ENR works to advance diversification of energy supply sources, transmission routes, and fuel types. In addition, ENR facilitates regional energy resource cooperation by encouraging regional partners to utilize shared hydrocarbon and renewable resources as a vehicle for resolving long-standing disagreements and bolstering regional cooperation and interconnection.

We routinely meet with representatives of industry from the entire spectrum of energy sources, to better understand their views on opportunities and challenges and to inform our diplomatic outreach.

Question. What percentage of the Bureau's time, resources, and budget went toward traditional energy resources of oil, gas, and coal during fiscal year 2015? What percentage of the Bureau's time, resources, and budget went toward wind and solar energy in fiscal year 2015?

Answer. ENR allocates its staff time and resources to advance our interests in having access to secure and reliable sources of energy. These sources of energy include traditional hydrocarbon resources as the majority of generation and alternative and renewable energy sources to help develop a sustainable 21st century modern energy matrix. The percentages vary given the issue, the country, and environment. In FY 2015, a significant portion of the Bureau's time went to promoting energy security globally, which included promoting traditional and renewable energy sources, increasing regional integration, and increasing access to energy.

This resource allocation is also true of the program funds that operationalize our energy diplomacy. Approximately 57 percent of foreign assistance funds obligated in FY 2015 worked to bring transparency and good governance to the oil and gas sectors to strengthen energy security and economic growth. Initiatives included helping to increase Ukrainian domestic gas production and assisting countries like Jordan in responsibly developing its unconventional shale gas resource potential. Approximately 43 percent of foreign assistance funds obligated in FY 2015 went toward power sector and other activities, including natural gas and renewable sources such as wind, solar, and geothermal, that are generation-neutral, to bring solvency to power sectors and interconnect countries across borders to strengthen energy secu-

rity and regional cooperation. These programs help increase Southern African power sector investment and accelerate the extension of energy access to those currently without it. They also help develop regulations and technical capacity in Central America to support regional power integration and facilitate the introduction of electricity and gas from Mexico into Central America.

Question. What action has the Bureau of Energy Resources taken on coal in bilateral relationships, in multilateral institutions, and by U.S. export financing agencies in fiscal year 2015?

Answer. The Bureau of Energy Resources (ENR) meets with U.S. energy firms representing the entire spectrum of energy resources, including U.S. coal companies seeking to assist developing countries to utilize modern coal technologies and practices. These discussions inform our diplomatic engagement.

Within the State Department, the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB) has primary responsibility for economic negotiations with multilateral financial and development institutions, including on the issue of financing coal-fired power projects. On these issues ENR has served as a technical resource to EB, providing information on the carbon content, emissions rates, and technical maturity of various types of energy resources and power generating technologies.

ENR has had no active role in development of U.S. export financing agencies' policies on coal.

Question. Do you believe that lifting the restrictions on exports of liquefied natural gas and crude oil from the United States would promote U.S. national interests and energy security of our allies? Please explain.

Answer. Oil is a global commodity. Natural gas is increasingly becoming a global commodity. Any supply disruption will increase global prices and the price we pay for energy at home. Disruptions would also undermine the economies and well-being of countries around the world, and thereby have a direct impact on the prosperity of Americans as well. As you know, current law prohibits most crude oil exports and any change would require congressional action. Domestic oil production has grown significantly in recent years, and that is a good thing. Since 2008, U.S. net crude oil imports have fallen by 3 million barrels per day as a result of growing domestic production and improving energy efficiency. This, in turn, has diverted previously imported barrels back into the global market which enhances global energy security and strengthens the global economy. We want to work together with Congress to focus on meeting America's energy needs and ensuring that American energy remains a key player in the global energy markets.

I support LNG exports and the Department of Energy (DOE) has regulatory authority over permits for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports and has approved LNG export permits for nearly 10 billion cubic feet per day (or more than 100 billion cubic meters a year) that can be exported both to countries with which we have Free Trade Agreements (FTA) and to those where we do not, such as European countries and Japan. The United States is poised to become a significant exporter of LNG. U.S. exports have the potential to bolster global gas supplies and add liquidity and flexibility to markets, thereby enhancing global energy security. U.S. LNG exports will benefit priority foreign policy interests including European energy security and fostering economic growth in the Asia-Pacific to help meet the region's rapidly growing energy demands.

Question. Do you support the Bureau of Energy Resources promoting export opportunities for U.S. natural gas, oil, and coal? What is your strategy to help U.S. energy companies create export opportunities for coal, oil, and natural gas? How would the Bureau of Energy Resources work with the Department of Commerce, Energy, and the Environmental Protection Agencies to support these opportunities?

Answer. Yes. One of ENR's primary objectives is to support U.S. exports in the energy sector, including hydrocarbons, nuclear, and renewables.

ENR has supported and will continue to support American companies seeking opportunities across the globe. ENR has successfully advocated on behalf of U.S. companies and opportunities in every segment of the energy sector.

The Bureau coordinates across the entirety of the interagency to ensure maximum effect for our advocacy and support on behalf of U.S. companies, as well as to ensure it is done properly and transparently.

Question. Do you support multilateral institutions blocking financing for coal powered energy projects? If you do, why is it good U.S. policy to block financing for affordable, accessible, and reliable energy projects?

Answer. The Bureau of Energy Resources (ENR) has supported efforts to promote energy security globally by helping other nations modernize power production, distribution and use according to each country's unique circumstances.

ENR has coordinated with other U.S. Government agencies to advance the construction of new coal plants by U.S. companies in Kosovo, and the export of U.S. equipment for coal mining in Mongolia and Ukraine. These actions are in line with the administration's Climate Action Plan, which allows public financing of coal plants in the world's poorest countries in cases where no other economically feasible alternative exists.

Question. What specific steps has the Bureau of Energy Resources taken to advocate that multilateral financial institutions and other multilateral development institutions change their energy sector financing to block coal-fired power projects?

Answer. The Bureau of Energy Resources (ENR) supports promoting all forms of energy projects globally consistent with the Department and administration's efforts to promote energy security and economic development. Our approach, in bilateral engagements and through multilateral financial and development institutions, is to maximize the technical and financial analysis of available energy options as each country pursues its own resource and technology mix according to its unique circumstances.

Within the State Department, the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs has primary responsibility for economic negotiations with multilateral financial and development institutions, including on the issue of financing coal-fired power projects. On these issues the Bureau of Energy Resources has served as a technical resource to the Economics Bureau, providing information on the carbon content, emissions rates, and technical maturity of various types of energy resources and power generating technologies. Recently, the Department was able to reach an agreement on export financing for coal-fired power plant technologies at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that will help level the playing field for U.S. manufacturing companies in the energy sector.

At the same time, ENR has coordinated with other U.S. Government agencies to advance the construction of new coal plants by U.S. companies in Kosovo, and the export of U.S. equipment for coal mining in Mongolia. ENR also continues to assist Ukraine to ensure it has access to sufficient supply of coal.

Question. Please outline the roles and lines of authority among the Department of State, Department of Treasury, the White House, the Department of Energy, the U.S. Executive Director's Office at the World Bank, and other financial institutions regarding multilateral energy investments.

Answer. The President has delegated to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Treasury (Treasury) principal responsibility for instructing the U.S. Executive Directors to the International Financial Institutions (IFI) on the positions and votes of the United States with respect to IFI decisions. Treasury solicits views on proposed Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) investments from the U.S. Department of State (State) and other U.S. agencies, including the U.S. Department of Energy, through its Working Group on Multilateral Assistance (WGMA). The Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs serves as alternate U.S. Governor at each MDB. State's Economic and Business Affairs Bureau coordinates the Department's input on MDB issues and energy investments in cooperation with other State Department bureaus.

Question. If sanctions are lifted, how quickly could Iran manage to ramp up its production of oil? What is the estimated revenue per year to Iran from lifting of sanctions on Iran's energy sector? Have you done any economic modeling or analysis on the total economic benefits to the Iranian economy due to the lifting of the sanctions?

Answer. Should sanctions be lifted, it is possible to estimate increases in exports would come in stages over time. I am available to brief in more detail in a classified setting.

Iran's economy has been isolated from the world since more robust sanctions were imposed on Iran's energy sector in 2012. It will take significant time for Iranian production to reach sustained, higher levels once the sanctions relief described in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action goes into effect. The Treasury Department estimates that today, the Iranian economy is at most only 80 percent the size that it would have been, had it continued on its pre-2012 growth path. Consequently, it will take until at least until 2022 based on Iran's anemic economic performance—even with sanctions relief—for Iran to get back to where it would have been absent our sanctions. Iran has foregone approximately $160 billion in oil revenue alone since

2012, after our sanctions reduced Iran's oil exports by 60 percent. This money is lost and cannot be recovered.

In order to increase production and exports, Iran will need access to foreign technology and capital. In order to attract such investment, Iran will have to make significant improvements to its investment climate. Even so, it will be difficult if not impossible for Iran to return to pre-1979 production levels of 6 million barrels per day.

On the question of economic analysis and modeling, I refer you to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, and the intelligence community for further analysis and information on Iran's economy.

Question. What advice would you give international energy companies that are considering new investments in the Iranian energy sector now and after the current energy sanctions on Iran are lifted?

Answer. We have and will continue to urge international energy companies to seek expert guidance before signing any contract or beginning a formal business relationship involving Iran. In addition, we urge such companies to bear in mind that all U.S. sanctions related to Iran for nonnuclear reasons remain in place and will continue to remain in place even after "Implementation Day," which will occur only after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verifies that Iran has taken key nuclear-related steps, after which the United States and the EU will provide relief from certain nuclear-related sanctions under the terms specified in the JCPOA.

We strongly urge any country, company, or individual interested in doing future business with Iran to consult published guidance and expert counsel; companies requiring further clarification may bring questions to the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Asset Control to obtain further guidance.

Question. If Iran violates the JCPOA and sanctions are reimposed, is it your understanding that foreign energy companies would be required to cease performance of any contracts with Iran?

Answer. There is no provision in the JCPOA that grandfathers contracts signed prior to snapback. We are committed to ensuring that Iran complies with all of its commitments, and we have a wide range of options to respond to any Iranian noncompliance, from significant nonperformance to more minor instances of noncompliance.

If given instruction for the snapback of oil-related sanctions, I am confident we will be able to implement those sanctions without delay.

Question. If you become aware of an energy company that is violating U.S. sanctions, including a company with significant ties to the U.S., would you have any hesitation to recommend sanctions on that company?

Answer. Prior to sanctions implementation in 2012, Iran had more than 20 customers and exported approximately 2.5 million barrels per day. ENR's efforts shrank Iran's customers from 20 to 6, and reduced exports from 2.5 million barrels per day to just 1 million. We achieved this without disrupting global oil supplies or price. This unprecedented effort cut Iranian revenues by over $150 billion, and played a key role in forcing them to the negotiating table.

Our sanctions against Iran have been, and will continue to be, a powerful tool. We know that sanctions are only effective when they are strictly enforced. The entire State Department is, and will continue to be, committed to vigorous enforcement of any violations.

Question. If you become aware of a sanctions violation, to which the administration is failing to respond, will you promptly notify this committee?

Answer. Our sanctions against Iran have been, and will continue to be, a powerful tool. We know that sanctions are only effective when they are strictly enforced. The entire State Department is, and will continue to be, committed to vigorous enforcement of any violations. We will use all the tools at our disposal to ensure Iran fulfills its obligations under the JCPOA.

Should I become aware of sanctions violations, I will report them diligently and appropriately.

Question. How long would it take to effectively reimpose snapback sanctions against Iran in the energy sector?

Answer. The United States has the ability to act very quickly to reimpose both unilateral and multilateral nuclear-related sanctions in the event of nonperformance by Iran. This includes the U.S. measures that impose sanctions on the purchasers of Iranian oil as well as the banks that finance those purchases. In the case of

United Nations (U.N.) sanctions, U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231 establishes an unprecedented "snapback" mechanism under which any JCPOA participant has the unilateral ability to reimpose U.N. sanctions without the worry of a veto by any of the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. Instead, there would be a vote in the Security Council to continue the sanctions relief, which we could veto, thereby resulting in the reimposition of all U.N. sanctions.

In addition, the EU also has the ability to reimpose all of its sanctions in the event of noncompliance, including its embargo on Iranian oil, which has been one of the most powerful sanctions on Iran. Just as was the case in the past, we anticipate that should Iran be in noncompliance with this deal, we would have strong support from the EU and other countries to reimpose and vigorously enforce these sanctions.

Question. Do you believe the United States should allow Iran to increase exports of oil while prohibiting U.S. companies and producers from accessing those same markets?

Answer. When the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verifies that Iran has taken key nuclear-related steps, the United States and the EU have committed to provide relief from certain nuclear-related sanctions under the terms specified in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreement reached in July by the P5+1—the United States, China, France, Russia, and the U.K., plus Germany, coordinated by the EU—and Iran. The JCPOA is designed to expand the scope of permissible business activity through sanctions relief in exchange for Iran's full compliance with the requirements of the JCPOA.

We look forward to and hope for full compliance and the lifting of these sanctions as specified in the JCPOA when the IAEA verifies Iran's compliance on "Implementation Day." However, U.S. sanctions targeting Iran's support for terrorism, human rights abuses, and destabilizing activities in the region, as well as its ballistic missiles program, will remain in place even under the JCPOA and will be enforced vigorously.

Current law prohibits most crude oil exports and any change would require congressional action. We want to work together with Congress to focus on meeting America's energy needs and ensuring that American energy remains a key player in the global energy markets.

Question. Do you believe it is in U.S. national security interest to allow U.S. allies and partners to purchase American oil to diversify away from Iran?

Answer. Oil is a global commodity. Additional oil supplies from any nation coming on to global markets enhance the ability of any consuming nation, including our allies and partners, to increase its diversity of sources of oil supply. The United States maintains a long-standing policy to promote diversification of energy sources, types, and delivery routes as an essential component of energy security.

Current law prohibits most crude oil exports and any change would require congressional action. We want to work together with Congress to focus on meeting America's energy needs and ensuring that American energy remains a key player in the global energy markets.

Question. How could U.S. exports of crude oil help counter any benefits Iran receives from lifting of U.S. sanctions on Iran's energy sector?

Answer. Current law prohibits most crude oil exports and any change would require congressional action. While we look forward to and hope for Iran's full JCPOA compliance as verified by the IAEA, the subsequent lifting of the nuclear proliferation related sanctions specified in the JCPOA and additional oil supplies coming onto global markets will face market forces, such as the balance between supply and demand, which will determine its price.

We want to work together with Congress to focus on meeting America's energy needs and ensuring that American energy remains a key player in the global energy markets. U.S. sanctions targeting Iran's support for terrorism, human rights abuses, and destabilizing activities in the region, as well as its ballistic missiles program, will remain in place even under the JCPOA and will be enforced vigorously.

Question. The State Department plays a role in analyzing and issuing Presidential permits for cross-border oil pipelines. The Secretary of State recently made the determination that the national interests of the United States would be best served by denying TransCanada a Presidential permit for the Keystone XL Pipeline.

- ♦ Did you participate in the Keystone XL pipeline application review? If so, what was your recommendation on the pipeline application?

Answer. ENR is one of multiple bureaus responsible for implementing E.O. 13337 in the Department. ENR's market analysis findings were incorporated into the

broader National Interest Determination/Record of Decision and found the proposed project would have had a limited benefit for U.S. energy security by providing additional infrastructure for the dependable supply of crude oil. However, the absence of the proposed Project will not prevent Canada from continuing to serve as a secure source of energy supply.

Question. What role, if any, did the Bureau of Energy Resources have with respect to the State Department's review of the Keystone XL pipeline application? What was the Bureau's recommendation?

Answer. ENR is one of multiple Bureaus responsible for implementing E.O. 13337 in the Department of State. ENR solicited public comment and helped amalgamate the analysis from across the Department and the interagency for the National Interest Determination/Record of Decision for the Secretary's consideration in making his decision.

ENR focused its role and analysis on the market affects as well as transportation alternatives.

Question. In your opinion, how does the construction of oil sands pipelines impact U.S. national security and energy security?

Answer. Canada serves as a secure source of oil which enhances U.S. energy and national security. Oil trade is driven by commercial considerations and occurs in the context of a globally traded market in which crude oil and products are relatively fungible. Ultimately Canada and global market forces will determine the development of the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin.

Question. What percentage of the Bureau's time, resources, and budget goes toward this effort?

Answer. ENR allocates its staff time and resources to respond to the world as it is, with traditional hydrocarbon resources as the majority of generation, and to help transform the global energy picture—including cleaner burning natural gas, alternative and renewable sources, and achieving efficiencies in energy and power sectors.

The Bureau's work in driving private demand and finance for transforming the ways all nations use and produce energy, including low-emission technologies and fuels, is a part of this effort, and one that has myriad benefits for U.S. citizens and companies, many of which are global leaders in clean energy technologies. The market rationale for renewable energy generation and energy efficiency initiatives as part of a reliable and sustainable energy supply is growing, and will be an essential component of 21st century energy security and independence; in many ways the net climate effects are simply cobenefits that augment those market realities. In FY 2015, a significant portion of the Bureau's time went to promoting both traditional and renewable energy sources, increasing access to energy, and stimulating private demand and finance for technologies and fuels that will transform the ways nations use and produce energy and stop or mitigate the devastating effects of climate change.

Question. What actions is the Bureau taking to stop or mitigate climate change?

Answer. At the core of ENR's mission is increasing the security of energy supply around the world. For electricity, the most economic options are increasingly also the least carbon emitting. Through ENR's diplomatic engagements, we promote options to improve energy security and reliability in the most economically and technologically viable way, while encouraging greater trade opportunities. We advance policies that support stable, affordable access to energy resources ranging from fossil fuels to renewables, depending on the local conditions and available energy resources. ENR does not apply a climate change litmus test for its engagements with partner countries. Rather, ENR promotes energy security, trade, and proper governance around the world through encouraging the most economically and technologically viable resources.

The Special Envoy for Climate Change manages the State Department's diplomatic engagements related to climate negotiations.

Question. Will international climate change be a top priority of the Bureau of Energy Resources under your leadership?

Answer. The Special Envoy for Climate Change has primary responsibility for climate negotiations.

The Bureau of Energy Resources' (ENR) top priority is the advancement of U.S. energy security and U.S. economic interests through increasing global access to secure, reliable, and diverse sources of energy. ENR works to ensure energy security by leveraging and promoting 21st century energy solutions that employ all forms of

natural resources—from utilizing fossil fuel resources in an effective manner to enhancing nuclear power opportunities to supporting renewable power generation. Through this lens, ENR continues to analyze rapidly changing energy markets and politics, encourages stable investment environments, and promotes innovation and trade.

Question. How can U.S. energy exports, such as liquefied natural gas and crude oil, help promote regional energy security and economic development in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. The United States is already a significant energy supplier to the Western Hemisphere. Reflecting a steady trend, in September 2015, 58 percent of total U.S. exports of refined products went to Western Hemisphere destinations, and nearly one quarter went to Canada and Mexico.

As Mexico establishes the policies and regulations that shape its flagship energy reform, it is counting on significant increases in U.S. natural gas to accommodate new electricity generation and switch inefficient and costly heavy fuel oil plants to natural gas. We have engaged the Mexican Government extensively on this topic, and have provided technical and diplomatic support on a regional proposal to export North American gas from Mexico into Central America.

The domestic shale gas boom has put the United States in a position to be a net natural gas exporter by 2017. Low natural gas prices and the capacity to export that surplus to markets provide a great opportunity to strengthen energy security and promote economic development in the Western Hemisphere. But while having strong and reliable energy suppliers can help, the primary challenge of energy security in most countries in the Western Hemisphere is not a lack of supply. For example, a number of countries in the Caribbean and Central America suffer from poor investment climates due to their small economies of scale, poor investment grades, and outmoded infrastructure. This results in an inability to attract the investment necessary to build energy infrastructure and supply power for their citizens that is reliable and affordable.

The Bureau of Energy Resources, in collaboration with the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, is working to change this paradigm. In the Caribbean, under the Caribbean Energy Security Initiative (CESI), we are in collaboration with the many donors active in the region (the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, the European Union, and other national donors) to stimulate the kind of sectoral reform that creates lasting change. This includes work with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Department of Energy to explore options that could make liquefied natural gas—especially from the United States—a viable option for the larger Caribbean islands. This work makes it clear that the Caribbean has the opportunity to create a robust natural gas market if it establishes strong and transparent regulatory frameworks and works together as a region. For the Caribbean, regional economic integration is a significant geopolitical challenge and requires sustained engagement by regional governments and the international community.

Question. What activities is the Bureau of Energy Resources taking to help promote energy security and diversification in Latin America and the Caribbean region?

Answer. Energy security through greater diversification is the core of our energy diplomacy strategy in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Western Hemisphere has extensive energy resources. For example, Colombia is the 5th-largest coal producer in the world, Trinidad and Tobago is the 6th-largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG), and Argentina is estimated to have some of the largest recoverable shale gas reserves in the world. And in recent years, more opportunities are appearing: the Caribbean and Central America have significant geothermal potential, Brazil has seen wind energy outcompete coal development without subsidies, and energy efficiency could drive savings throughout the hemisphere. But much more remains to be done, especially in countries were insufficient energy governance and poor investment environments stymie the progress of energy reform.

The Department's Energy Resources Bureau (ENR), in collaboration with the Western Hemisphere Affairs Bureau, seeks to improve energy governance, access to finance, international cooperation and collaboration, and support visionary solutions to maximize the energy security of our friends and partners. We engage bilaterally and multilaterally throughout the hemisphere. Some example activities include:

- Ensuring that conventional and unconventional gas and oil development is done with the highest standards for safety and transparent governance in Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico under the Unconventional Gas Technical Engagement Program and Energy Governance and Capacity Initiative;

- Supporting the development of integrated, robust, and transparent power sectors in Central America and the Andean region under the Power Sector Program, a primary objective of the "Connecting the Americas 2022" Initiative from the 2012 Summit of the Americas; and,
- Exploring the reforms and regional coordination necessary to enable natural gas trade in the Caribbean region in cooperation with the Department of Energy and Inter-America Development Bank, a key element of the Caribbean Energy Security Initiative. Recently, with significant engagement and technical assistance from ENR, Nevis island of Saint Kitts and Nevis signed a power purchase agreement (PPA) to develop geothermal resources. This project has the potential to provide sustainable renewable power to the entire country, and may also lead to the first-inter-island electrical interconnection in the Caribbean. Nevis' experience can provide a model for other very small countries in the Caribbean that want to diversify their energy sectors, but lack access to natural gas markets.

Question. The International Energy Agency coordinates the release of emergency petroleum reserves. In 2011, there was a release of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

- What is the U.S. policy and criteria for advocating a coordinated release of Strategic Petroleum Reserves through the International Energy Agency? Under what circumstances would you advise the President to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve?

Answer. Decisions to withdraw crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) are made by the President in cases of "a severe energy supply interruption or by obligations of the United States under the International Energy Program" as defined by and under the authorities of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975. The SPR enhances the Nation's energy security by storing over 700 million barrels of crude oil. If a petroleum supply interruption occurs, this oil can be released at a sustained rate of 4.4 million barrels per day for 90 days. The SPR helps meet the Nation's obligations under the International Energy Agency's (IEA) International Energy Program to hold emergency petroleum stocks equivalent to 90 days of net imports. While the SPR currently holds the equivalent of 137 days of import protection, the United States also has the obligation, based on its share of IEA members' oil consumption, to provide 43.5 percent of an IEA collective stocks release. By maintaining an adequate and ready supply of oil in the SPR that can be delivered quickly and efficiently to global markets, the United States is less vulnerable to short term oil supply disruptions and resultant economic dislocations.

Energy security was the primary reason the IEA was created in response to the 1973 oil embargo and continues to be its guiding principle. Officers of the Bureau of Energy Resources, along with their DOE colleagues, participate in representing the United States at the IEA and engaging in its energy security work. The United States actively participates in IEA emergency response preparedness exercises and reviews to ensure that the IEA and its 29 member countries are prepared to respond to an oil supply disruption. As a result, the IEA is always ready to immediately activate its existing collective response mechanism among the 29 member countries as necessary. Any decision to initiate a collective action to release oil stocks requires consensus among the 29 members of the IEA. The United States remains in constant contact with the IEA Secretariat and with other IEA members on the situation in petroleum markets to ensure all are prepared to react appropriately in a crisis. As in the IEA's three previous collective actions in 1991, 2005, and 2011, U.S. participation in an IEA coordinated release would enhance energy security and lessen economic dislocations for all countries that participate in the oil market, including the United States.

We will continue to advise the President based on these parameters, as we did most recently in 2011.

Question. What is Bureau of Energy Resources' role in the United Nations Sustainable Energy for All initiative?

Answer. The United States has supported the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) initiative since its inception in 2011. The State Department's Bureau of Energy Resources (ENR), alongside the Department of Energy, coordinates U.S. Government action toward achieving, by 2030, the SE4All objectives of ensuring universal access to modern energy services, doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency, and doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

Question. Under current law, Congress created a Coordinator for International Energy Affairs that reports directly to the Secretary of State. If confirmed, will you also serve in that role? How many people currently work at the Office of the Coordinator for International Energy Affairs?

Answer. If confirmed, I would serve concurrently as Assistant Secretary for Energy Resources and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs.

I am the only employee of the Office of the Coordinator for International Energy Affairs. There are 68 permanent full time equivalent (FTE) employees and 9 temporary positions in the Bureau of Energy Resources.

Question. What are your views of Nord Stream II and the implications for the region?

Answer. We are concerned that the Nord Stream II pipeline expansion, if constructed, would be a significant energy security threat to Ukraine as well as to Central and Eastern Europe. Russian President Putin and Russia's energy company's (Gazprom) CEO Alexey Miller are leading the efforts to build Nord Stream II from Russia to Germany. Gazprom's CEO Miller has publicly stated his interest in cutting off gas transit through Ukraine by 2019. Nord Stream II, by increasing the amount of Russian gas shipments to European customers via the Baltic Sea, would contribute to this possibility by allowing Gazprom to cut shipments to and through Ukraine and potentially other Eastern European countries while maintaining supplies to only a few European customers. Ending Ukraine gas transit would eliminate approximately $2 billion in annual transit revenue for Ukraine and $1 billion for Slovakia.

We also are concerned that the Nord Stream II pipeline, by maintaining or increasing the amount of Russian gas to Central and Eastern Europe, would undermine the European Union's energy security strategy of diversifying its energy supplies to reduce vulnerability to supply disruptions. We actively support EU policies to ensure competition and transparency in a strong EU internal energy market that benefits all European consumers.

The Bureau of Energy Resources has led U.S. Government efforts to engage the European Commission and member states on the potential risks of the Nordstream II pipeline for Ukraine and Europe's long-term energy security.

Question. To what extent, if at all, has Germany's reliance on Russian energy resources prevented the European Union from developing a unified policy toward Russia or a cohesive European Union energy policy?

Answer. German involvement is essential to ensuring a cohesive European Union energy policy. Reducing Russia's use of the energy sector to gain influence and sow divisions in Europe is critical to Europe's energy security. Russian gas is a significant, but not overwhelming, source of energy in Germany: gas accounted for 20 percent of Germany's energy mix and 10 percent of its electricity production in 2014; 33 percent of that gas came from Russia. There is a strong view in Germany that Russia does not pose an energy security threat to Germany, because even in the roughest days of the cold war, Russia continued to supply it with gas.

Germany, like all EU member states, endorsed the EU's reinvigorated Energy Union strategy in a European Council decision on March 19, 2015. We continue to work with our German partners to improve the energy security of all of Europe, including by noting our concerns about the proposed Nord Stream II pipeline expansion, which is being promoted by a consortium of Russian and European companies (including two German companies). We see Nord Stream II as a political project based on Gazprom CEO Miller's public statement to cut off gas transit through Ukraine by 2019, and question its economic value.

Question. How can the United States help Germany and the European Union meet its energy demands and help support a strong European Union energy diversification and security policy?

Answer. The United States is strongly committed to helping advance European energy security, and the Bureau of Energy Resources is leading U.S. Government efforts on this top foreign policy priority. ENR and the State Department are actively engaging to promote true energy diversification in Europe—diversification of energy sources, routes, and suppliers. We also believe that cooperation in the energy sector can help foster cooperation in other areas, leading to more political cohesion and stability among countries in the region.

Tangible evidence of the U.S. commitment can be seen in our support of key infrastructure projects to improve the energy security of the most vulnerable regions in Europe. These efforts include U.S. support for the development of the Southern Gas Corridor project, which will bring gas from Azerbaijan to Turkey and Europe. We are also working closely with Greece and Bulgaria on an interconnection pipeline that would bring Southern Corridor gas from Greece to Bulgaria, which is close to 100 percent dependent on Russian gas. A new floating LNG facility in Lithuania is now in place—aptly named the Independence—which can be traced back to a U.S.-funded feasibility study in 2008. A year ago, the Baltics were virtually an en-

ergy island entirely dependent on a single source for all their natural gas needs. As a result of this new facility, they are now on track to be one of the most integrated energy regions by the end of this decade.

The United States also provides strong and consistent political and technical support for regional energy security under the U.S.-EU Energy Council, which is cochaired by Secretary of State Kerry and Secretary of Energy Moniz, EU High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini, and European Commission Vice President Maros fcovic. The U.S.-EU Energy Council has convened six times since 2009.

We will continue to work to ensure that gas that arrives anywhere in Europe can be delivered to any customer in Europe. We are also working to promote U.S. technology and companies as Europeans look to integrate more renewable energy and adopt more energy efficiency measures. Energy security demands the attention and cooperation of all European countries, and we are working closely with member states, including Germany, and the European Commission as we advocate for true energy diversification for all of Europe.

RESPONSES OF CATHERINE EBERT-GRAY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AND TO THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, AND TO THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE EBERT-GRAY'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. Although the United States has a rich history of engagement and some important interests in the Southwest Pacific Islands, including energy production and fisheries, the distance and relatively small percentage of overall U.S. foreign assistance to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu translates into scant attention from senior-level policymakers.

- ♦ Should the United States play a greater role in the Southwest Pacific, particularly as Chinese economic influence continues to grow in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu?

Answer. The United States plays a vital role in the Southwest Pacific. President Obama met with Papua New Guinea (PNG) Prime Minister Peter O'Neill on December 1, 2015, Secretary of State Kerry stopped in the Solomon Islands in 2014, and Secretary Clinton visited PNG in 2010. The United States Government will engage at a high level with Papua New Guinea over the coming years in the run up to its hosting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in 2018.

We have close and warm relationships with the governments and peoples of Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands. All three countries face many challenges, including economic development, good governance, gender equality, climate change, conservation and environmental protection, and transnational crime. With PNG we are negotiating a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement; support programs for the prevention, care, and treatment of HIV/AIDS; and work to combat violence against women. In 2011, the Millennium Challenge Corporation completed a successful road construction project in Vanuatu designed to promote commerce and boost economic growth. Vanuatu also hosts a robust Peace Corps program. We are partnering with the Solomon Islands government to strengthen its capacity to curtail trafficking in persons.

China is increasing its economic engagement in PNG, particularly in the construction, telecom, and service sectors. We welcome China's investments in infrastructure in Asia, provided these investments are made in accordance with international standards of sustainability, transparency, and economic efficiency.

If confirmed, I will pay close attention to Chinese investment while working to promote transparency and good governance, including by trying to strengthen PNG's participation in the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative. If confirmed, across the Southwest Pacific, I will advance the strong progress our Embassy has been making on health issues and women's empowerment; maintain our mission's focus on building climate resilience to help mitigate potential impacts to these island nations; and promote economic development and fisheries protection by working with the U.S. Coast Guard to increase Shiprider agreements.

RESPONSES OF SCOT MARCIEL, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE UNION OF BURMA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MARCIEL'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. The Burmese Constitution shields the military from civilian oversight, provides the military control of key security ministries, and guarantees the military 25 percent of the seats in the Parliament.

- What level of engagement with the Burmese military, if any, is appropriate for the United States?

Answer. The United States has limited and calibrated engagement with Burma's military to encourage and demonstrate the importance of human rights, accountability, transparency, civilian control, and the proper role of a professional military in a modern, democratic society. We do not provide any weapons, technologies, or operational support of any kind to the Burmese military.

We believe in the value of speaking "soldier to soldier" with Burma. Dialogue between our two countries' armed forces provides a mechanism to share lessons, identify challenges, and illustrate U.S. military traditions and doctrine—specifically, the respect and defense of human rights and a civilian-led government. To that end, our interactions have consisted primarily of diplomatic interactions and academic exchanges designed to promote the ideals and values of a professional military in a democracy. These interactions and exchanges have focused on accountability, civilian control, rule of law, and respect for international humanitarian and human rights law.

We continue to calibrate our policy in response to events on the ground, and we are looking for progress on a wide range of issues, including the peace process, the protection of broad political and civil liberties, the situation facing the Rohingya population, and constitutional reforms. The Burmese military's ability to demonstrate concrete progress on these issues will be important in furthering our bilateral relationship.

Over the longer term, the Burmese Government will need to address provisions in Burma's Constitution, such as the lack of civilian control of the military and the military's veto power over constitutional amendments that contradict fundamental democratic principles. It will be important to the success of Burma's democratic transformation that the constitution be amended to make it appropriate for a democratic state.

Question. Burma's treatment of the Muslim minority Rohingya has been widely condemned by the international community. Many Rohingya live in deplorable conditions and are the victims of human trafficking. Burma is currently a Tier 2 Watch List country.

- What is your assessment of the willingness of a new NLD-led government to undertake steps to address the plight of the Rohingya, including citizenship status?
- What would you do as Ambassador to persuade the Burmese Government to improve their poor record on trafficking?

Answer. When Assistant Secretary Daniel Russel traveled to Burma in November he met with leaders in the current government and the National League for Democracy (NLD), including President Thein Sein and Aung San Suu Kyi. He underscored in his meetings with them the importance of tackling the situation in Rakhine State and strengthening the protection for human rights and freedoms for all people in Burma.

The NLD agreed that addressing the challenging situation in Rakhine State was a top priority for the incoming government, and noted the importance of promoting tolerance and respect for diversity as well as development for both Rohingya and Rakhine communities. The situation in Rakhine State has been a long-standing challenge and will be an important issue for the next government to address. It will be one of my top priorities as well.

The U.S. Government remains committed to encouraging progress in Rakhine State, including by urging the government to put in place a dignified and transparent pathway to citizenship that does not force individuals to self-identify against their will. We will continue to review all of our engagements in light of the extent to which the government follows through on its commitments to protect human rights, improve the situation in Rakhine State, and address the plight of the Rohingya population—as well as the success of the next government in continuing broad reforms. We will also continue consulting closely with Aung San Suu Kyi and

other democratic leaders in Burma on this issue. We remain committed to supporting Burma's ongoing transition toward a more democratic, open society.

Since the release of the 2015 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, which ranked Burma Tier 2 Watch List, the government has made sustained efforts to combat trafficking, but many challenges remain. To continue to foster high-level government support for improving Burma's trafficking record, we must continue to encourage them to address all forms of TIP—including cases within the country and cases involving the military—and address outstanding challenges, including limited resources and capacity, and intergovernmental coordination. If confirmed, this will be an important priority for me.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MARCIEL'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. In 2008, the Treasury Department imposed sanctions on Steven Law, as well as his father, for supporting the ruling Burmese junta and for profiting corruptly because of that support. Steven Law and his father have a history of involvement in illicit activities. Lo Hsing Han, Steven Law's father, now deceased, is known as the "Godfather of Heroin," and has been one of the world's key heroin traffickers dating back to the early 1970s. Yet Steven Law's company continues to thrive having most recently been awarded one of the country's most coveted contracts to upgrade Yangon's international airport.

- If confirmed can you assure us that you will raise this case at the highest levels of Burmese Government?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed I will raise this issue at the highest levels of the Burmese Government.

Question. There are concerns that the SDN list could amount to a de facto trade embargo undermining economic development in Burma because half of all Myanmar's trade flows through the Asia World terminal.

- How should we balance our priorities of promoting Myanmar's democratic transition through economic development while also ensuring that illicit actors do not benefit?
- If a General License is issued for Asia World Port, wouldn't we be, in effect, allowing a SDN designated individual continue to profit, thus undermining our broader efforts to help Burma reform and clean up its economy?
- As we issue this License, are there additional demands that we are making on the Government of Burma to assure we maintain our leverage?

Answer. Balancing our priorities of supporting Burma's economic development and democratic transition, while maintaining the integrity of our sanctions policy, requires a carefully calibrated approach. The current sanctions are having an outsized effect on trade between the United States and Burma simply because many goods may pass through infrastructure with links to a Specially Designated National (SDN), which is unfortunately hard to avoid in Burma. By issuing a General License authorizing certain transactions ordinarily incident to the use of critical trade infrastructure for exports to or from Burma that are not to, from, or on behalf of an SDN for a limited period while continuing to prohibit investment in entities on the SDN list, we facilitate trade without reducing incentives for reform. Without a General License, we run the risk of damaging the economy during the critical transition period to a new government when expectations for economic development are running high.

With this General License, our sanctions regime remains in place and the leverage that it provides is fundamentally unchanged. Not only is the General License limited to a 6-month duration, but what SDNs want the most—new investment by and exports to, from, or on their behalf with U.S. companies—remains prohibited. Calibrated sanctions remain in place, including a ban on investment with the military, and a ban on importing Burmese-origin rubies, jadeite, and jewelry that contains them. In our ongoing discussions with the Government of Burma and private sector, we will continue to underscore that the level and type of engagement is contingent upon further reforms, including constitutional reform and improvement in the human rights situation.

Question. How can we best leverage the SDN list diplomatically to ensure we can put pressure on corrupt and crony-owned businesses enterprises in Burma?

Answer. We use many tools to encourage progress in Burma's political and economic transition, including diplomatic engagement and targeted financial sanctions aimed at those who undermine reform or the peace process in Burma, engage in

human rights abuses, or participate in military trade with North Korea. Our Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list is a dynamic document—we can add or subtract individuals or entities on the list as circumstances warrant and supporting information is available. The United States has always made clear that SDNs can seek delisting if they cease sanctionable activities. Removal from the SDN list is an administrative process overseen by the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). SDNs seeking delisting may submit a petition to OFAC by submitting verifiable information demonstrating remedial steps, changed behavior, and a commitment to supporting the ongoing political and economic reforms, cutting military ties, and avoiding complicity in human rights abuses and participation in military trade with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The extent to which the Government of Burma follows through on its commitments to respect the results of the election, peacefully transfer power, and protect the human rights of members of all its diverse populations—as well as the success of the next government in continuing broad reforms, including constitutional reform and improving the situation facing the Rohingya population—will determine to a large extent the level and type of engagement and support Burma will receive from the United States. We will also discuss the role of sanctions going forward with Congress, Aung San Suu Kyi, and other key stakeholders in Burma.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MARCIEL'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. What role do you think the United States and the Embassy in particular should play in the ongoing peace process in Burma? What is your plan to build trust with the ethnic nationalities?

Answer. The United States remains committed to supporting the full implementation of a durable cease-fire agreement, the conduct of a national political dialogue, and the overall national reconciliation process in the months and years to come. Our Embassy regularly engages with Government of Burma officials and ethnic organizations to assist in moving the dialogue forward. We have provided material and technical support to enable political reforms, foster ethnic and religious reconciliation, and strengthen the capacity of reform-minded individuals and institutions. U.S. assistance has supported the formal peace process, increased participation of civil society and women, preparations for a national political dialogue, and ongoing civilian cease-fire monitoring. We will continue to work with all key stakeholders—including ethnic leaders and organizations—to further peace prospects.

We recognize that some groups were not able to sign the agreement, and we understand and respect their concerns. We welcome their commitment to continue discussions within their communities and with the government about the necessary conditions for signing at a future date, and we urge the government to engage constructively in a dialogue with these groups to pursue a more inclusive peace. We also strongly urge all parties to honor their commitment to ensure unfettered access for humanitarian assistance to all those in need, without exception or delay.

Question. The U.S. is not presently an official observer of the peace process. Do you believe the U.S. should be an official observer? Why or why not?

Answer. While the United States was not an official observer, we did have a formal presence at the cease-fire agreement signing and Ambassador Mitchell signed a parallel "in the presence of" document marking the formal attendance of the United States.

We have long stated the United States would seriously consider any requests from the Government of Burma and ethnic organizations that would advance the cause of peace in Burma. We are committed to remaining actively engaged in a national reconciliation process, including supporting the full implementation of the NCA and the political dialogue to follow.

Question. Do you support a continued role for the Myanmar Peace Center in the peace process given its association with the outgoing regime?

Answer. We would defer to the incoming government on the uture role of the Myanmar Peace Center, but the United States is prepared to work with key stakeholders in the peace process—as it has in the past—to advance the historic process of peace-building and national reconciliation in Burma in the months and years to come.

Question. The SDN list remains a valuable tool to not only encourage reform but to address systemic wrongdoing by successive Burmese military regimes and their enablers, including but not limited to involvement in drug trafficking, human traf-

ficking, and gross human rights abuses. Likewise, limits on U.S. assistance to, and cooperation with, the military also serve to withhold legitimacy that the Tatmadaw is eager to obtain through such cooperation.

- ♦ Do you believe that entities that were placed on the SDN list due to their involvement in drug trafficking, human trafficking, or serious human rights abuses should be delisted in response to political reforms that, while significant in restoring civilian rule, fail to provide a mechanism to address the crimes or abuses for which the entities were initially listed?

Answer. No. The United States currently has no plans to change our approach to the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list. Our SDN list is a dynamic document—we can add or subtract individuals or entities on the list as circumstances warrant. Removal from the SDN list is an administrative process overseen by the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). SDNs seeking delisting may petition OFAC by submitting verifiable information demonstrating remedial steps, changed behavior, and a commitment to supporting the ongoing political and economic reforms, promoting transparency, cutting military ties, and avoiding complicity in human rights abuses.

The extent to which the Government of Burma follows through on its commitments to respect the results of the election, peacefully transfer power, and protect the human rights of all its diverse peoples—as well as the success of the next government in continuing broad reforms—will determine to a large extent the level and type of engagement and support Burma will receive from the United States. We will also discuss the role of sanctions going forward with Aung San Suu Kyi and other key democratic stakeholders in Burma.

Question. What is your view on U.S. assistance to, or engagement with, the Burmese military, ministries that remain under its control and other entities that allow the military to continue to exercise undue influence and subvert civilian governance? How should this engagement be calibrated? What benchmarks for progress by the military should be used to calibrate engagement with the military?

Answer. The United States has limited and calibrated engagement with Burma's military to encourage and demonstrate the importance of human rights, civilian control of the military, and the proper role of professional armed forces in a modern, democratic society. We are not providing any weapons, technologies, or operational support of any kind to the Burmese military. The values listed above will be some of the benchmarks we use when calibrating our engagement with the Burmese military. When evaluating our engagement, we would also continue to consult broadly with civil society organizations, ethnic organizations, political party leaders, and other stakeholders.

Continued reform of Burma's military is necessary to deepen the democratic transition. Facilitating greater cooperation between civilian and military organizations in Burma, and securing the military's support for ongoing reforms, will be essential to the success of the new government. Any programs would be contingent upon continued reforms, and only after continued consultation with Congress, civil society organizations, ethnic organizations, and political parties, including the NLD.

Question. The outgoing government has backslid on key issues in the past year. The situation in Rakhine state remains deplorable, and the passage of the four "race and religion laws" by the Thein Sein government threatens to further institutionalize racism and discrimination against the Rohingya and other Muslim minorities. Military attacks in Shan and Kachin states have led to massive displacement of civilians and casualties. And dozens of political prisoners have been newly detained in just the past year.

- ♦ What is the current U.S. position on humanitarian access in Rakhine State? Has the U.S. endorsed the government's Rakhine Action Plan? What is the current status of the RAP?

Answer. We have consistently urged the government, both publicly and privately, to ensure that humanitarian assistance flows freely to all vulnerable populations in Rakhine State, including Rohingya. We will continue to urge the government to lift restrictions on freedom of movement, allow for the safe and voluntary return of internally displaced persons, including Rohingya, to their places of origin, provide a pathway to or restore citizenship for stateless persons in Rakhine State and elsewhere that does not force individuals to adopt ethnic designations they do not accept, and reinforce the rule of law by protecting members of vulnerable populations.

The government will also need to address the long-standing core challenges in Rakhine State and improve the lot of all communities there, including the Rohingya and ethnic Rakhine populations. This will require creating economic opportunity

and development, improving basic infrastructure, developing and expanding access to education, health and livelihoods that benefit all communities fairly and equitably, and facilitating trust-building and interactions between both communities. The United States has not endorsed the draft Rakhine Action Plan but has, together with other members of the international community, provided feedback to the Government of Burma on it. Within the past year, the government has taken incremental steps to improve conditions in Rakhine State, including returning some internally displaced persons to their places of origin.

Question. Has the U.S. called for the lame-duck Burmese Government to repeal the discriminatory race and religion laws before they leave office?

Answer. We have consistently raised our concerns at the highest levels about the package of legislation on population control, interfaith marriage, religious conversion, and monogamy. These laws could be enforced in a manner that would undermine respect for religious freedom, women's rights, and the Burmese Government's own efforts to promote tolerance, diversity, and national unity. We have stressed to the government and a full range of Burmese stakeholders that protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including religious freedom, for all persons in Burma—regardless of race or religion—are critical components of national security, stability, unity, and the country's reform process. We continue to urge the Burmese Government to revise the legislation in line with its international human rights commitments.

Question. Has the U.S. called for the Tatmadaw to cease all offensive operations against ethnic nationalities?

Answer. The United States has consistently called for all parties to refrain from violence and allow urgent humanitarian assistance to flow to all those in need without exception or delay. We have made clear to the Burmese Government that military action undertaken by or against any signatory or nonsignatory to the nationwide cease-fire agreement undermines the trust-building necessary for lasting peace, stability, and security for all.

Question. Has the U.S. called on the Thein Sein administration to release all political prisoners, including those who are still awaiting sentencing, prior to leaving office?

Answer. The United States continues to urge the Government of Burma to resume working with civil society to release all remaining political prisoners unconditionally, to remove conditions placed on those already released, and to continue comprehensive legal reforms to ensure there are no new arrests for political reasons.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MARCIEL'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR GARDNER

U.S. sanctions on Burma

According to press reports, the administration is moving to modify the existing sanctions regime regarding Myanmar (Burma), including issuing "a general license that would in effect provide permission for U.S. businesses and banks to pay fees for the use of the Asia World port in Yangon, even though the money flows into the coffers of Asia World and the Burmese regime." (Bloomberg News, December 4, 2015).

However, at your confirmation hearing before the committee on Wednesday, December 1, 2015, you stated that you "would not anticipate, nor recommend" changes to U.S. sanctions toward Burma.

On November 19, 2015, during his testimony before the Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Scott Busby stated: "I think in the case of Burma, for instance, the fact that there were sanctions there, a significant sanctions regime, did play a significant role in helping to spark change there."

Question. Does the planned announcement by the Treasury Department represent a change in U.S. sanctions policy toward Burma? Do you believe the planned decision runs contrary to your statements before the committee? What is the U.S. policy toward the remaining U.S. sanctions on Burma?

Answer. The planned General License is a technical solution designed to solve a specific problem we just recently realized was having a negative impact on international trade with Burma. Such trade is vital to avoid harm to Burma's economy. The National League for Democracy has made clear that economic development—delivering jobs and opportunity for the people of Burma amidst high expectations—

is a key priority and critical for their success as a government and for Burma as a country.

The planned change does not represent a change in U.S. sanctions policy toward Burma. That said, there might be a need on occasion to make adjustments to those sanctions within the overall framework of the policy to address unintended consequences, in consultation with Congress. That is what we seek to do in this particular case. Without a General License we would constrain exports by ordinary businesses in Burma that are not subject to sanctions, simply because they pass through a transit point that is controlled by a Specially Designated National. Our current sanctions are not intended to have this effect, and the point of the General License is to eliminate this effect while still preventing the flow of investment to Specially Designated Nationals and the Burmese military.

Our existing policy broadly eases financial investment and trade sanctions on Burma in response to significant positive reforms in the country, while maintaining targeted sanctions against specific individuals and entities that undermine reform, obstruct the peace process, engage in human rights abuses, or participate in military trade with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The administration has no intention of proposing a change to the sanctions regime at this point and the planned decision would not run contrary to my statements before the committee. In those statements, I said the administration would not recommend any dramatic change to our sanctions policy, and while targeted sanctions would continue, we would not pursue overall broad-based sanctions to avoid damage to Burma's economy. I also noted that targeted sanctions are dynamic—we can add and remove individuals from the list—and make adjustments when we see unintended consequences or problems.

Question. To what extent was the State Department consulted by the Treasury Department in making the decision to issue this proposed license? Which bureaus were consulted and approved of the decision to issue this proposed license?

Answer. This issue first came to our attention in July. Since then, the Department of State and the Department of Treasury have worked closely together to gather additional information, study the problem, and consider potential solutions. The State Department's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, the Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor, and the Coordinator for Sanctions Policy worked closely with the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control throughout this process. Our Embassy in Rangoon has also been part of the process, in part because they have seen firsthand the negative, constricting effect that the existing language has had on imports and exports to and from Burma, and the impact this is having on the economy and the ability of U.S. business to support the growth of the economy and democratic transition. Embassy Rangoon consequently has had an important role in gathering the information and data that have helped find a solution to this problem.

Question. In your role as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, were you aware of this issue prior to your testimony before the committee?

Answer. Yes, I have been aware of this issue since the issue came to our attention in July.

Question. Can you provide to the committee, in an appropriate setting, all written formal communication between the State Department, the Treasury Department, and other U.S. stakeholders regarding this proposed action?

Answer. The State Department and the Treasury Department have proactively consulted Congress on this proposal, and I welcome the opportunity to continue discussions on this issue. As a matter of policy, the Department does not release communications or documents related to internal deliberations. That being said, the Department values consultations with Congress, and if confirmed, I commit to engaging and consulting with you, your staff and the committee on this and other issues of concern related to Burma.

Question. Has the State Department consulted with stakeholders in Burma, including the National League of Democracy, regarding this proposed action? If so, what was their response?

Answer. Yes. The Embassy has consulted with stakeholders in Burma, including Aung San Suu Kyi's chief of staff and members of the National League for Democracy (NLD). We also have sought an opportunity to discuss further with top NLD leadership the details of the proposed license, the NLD's economic goals, and how our policy can continue to support the democratic transition.

Question. Do you believe that this proposed action weakens U.S. leverage in Burma before the completion of the political transition next April?

Answer. No, I do not believe that the proposed action weakens U.S. leverage in Burma before the completion of the political transition. With the General License, our sanctions regime stays in place and the leverage that it provides is unchanged. The key reason the administration is issuing the General License is to address concerns that the U.S. Government's sanction regime is inadvertently constricting imports and exports to Burma, which could have a negative impact on the Burmese economy, complicating the transition and making more difficult the ability of the National League for Democracy to govern.

Question. Do you believe that entities that were placed on the Special Designated Nationals (SDN) list due to their involvement in drug trafficking, human trafficking, or serious human rights abuses should be delisted in response to political reforms, even if there is no evidence that the crimes or abuses for which the entities were initially listed have been addressed?

Answer. No. The United States currently has no plans to change our approach to the Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list. Our SDN list is a dynamic document—we can add or subtract individuals or entities on the list as circumstances warrant. Removal from the SDN list is an administrative process overseen by the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). SDNs seeking delisting may petition OFAC by submitting verifiable information demonstrating remedial steps, changed behavior, and a commitment to supporting the ongoing political and economic reforms, promoting transparency, cutting military ties, and avoiding complicity in human rights abuses.

The extent to which the Government of Burma follows through on its commitments to respect the results of the election, peacefully transfer power, and protect the human rights of all its diverse populations—as well as the success of the next government in continuing broad reforms, including constitutional reform and improving the situation facing the Rohingya—will determine to a large extent the level and type of engagement and support Burma will receive from the United States. We will also discuss the role of sanctions going forward with Aung San Suu Kyi and other key democratic stakeholders in Burma.

Burma elections

Question. Have the November 8, 2015, parliamentary elections in Burma met the State Department's criteria of "credible, transparent, and inclusive"?

Answer. We congratulate the people of Burma on the November 8 election and commend all of the people and institutions in the country who worked together to hold a peaceful and historic poll. Millions of people voted for the first time in a competitive election with more than 90 political parties campaigning. The elections were peaceful and generally proceeded smoothly with only minor irregularities and no systemic security, electoral administration, or access issues reported by observers on election day. This election was an important step in the country's democratic transition. The people of Burma struggled for decades, and made tremendous sacrifices, for this moment to happen.

The elections, however, were far from perfect. Important structural and systematic impediments to the realization of full democratic and civilian government remain, including the reservation of 25 percent of parliamentary seats for the military, the disenfranchisement of groups of people who voted in previous elections (including Rohingya and other former white card holders), and the disqualifications of candidates based on arbitrary application of citizenship and residency requirements.

It will now be important for all political leaders to work together to form a new government and to engage in meaningful dialogue. We have seen some evidence this is happening already, with Aung San Suu Kyi's meetings with President Thein Sein, Commander in Chief Min Aung Hlaing, and former Commander in Chief Than Shwe. The next government must address the huge challenges that remain in the country, including completing the national reconciliation process with various ethnic groups, strengthening respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and improving the situation in Rakhine State.

Question. In your view, should the more traditional definition of "free and fair" have been used for elections? Would Burma have been able to meet that standard?

Answer. We used the terms credible, inclusive, and transparent because those terms were more precise in describing the key indicators of a successful election. We want free and fair elections, but we recognize the inherent limitations in Burma's current constitutional framework, including the 25 percent of parliamentary seats

reserved for military officials, the disenfranchisement of white card holders who voted in previous elections, and the disqualifications of candidates based on arbitrary application of citizenship and residency requirements. We continue to be clear-eyed in identifying limitations to any assessment of Burma's overall democratic progress.

Human rights in Burma

Question. Do you think U.S. policy has effectively addressed the human rights challenges in Burma, such as the Rohingya refugee issue? What leverage does the United States have to turn around this situation?

Answer. We remain deeply concerned about the situation in Rakhine State and other human rights challenges in Burma. We are committed to encouraging progress on human rights issues, and we continue to engage the Government of Burma, at the highest levels, to push for further reforms. We will continue to review all of our engagements in light of the extent to which the Government of Burma follows through on its commitments to protect human rights, improve the situation in Rakhine State, and address the plight of the Rohingya population—recognizing that the success of the next government is dependent on continuing broad reforms. We also will continue consulting closely with the National League for Democracy and Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as other democratic leaders in Burma on this issue.

Question. What will be your plan as Ambassador to move forward on the Rohingya refugee crisis and ethnic tensions?

Answer. We have consistently told the Government of Burma that, while we welcome the important progress the country has made on its reform path, we remain deeply concerned about the situation in Rakhine State, particularly the discriminatory conditions facing the Rohingya population.

If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Government of Burma to allow unrestricted humanitarian access for all those in need in Rakhine State; allow the voluntary return of internally displaced Rohingya to their places of origins; create a path to provide or restore citizenship for stateless persons in Rakhine State and elsewhere that does not force them to identify as a members of an ethnic group or nationality they do not accept; and reinforce the rule of law by protecting vulnerable populations and holding to account those who commit violence against any person in Burma. The resolution of these issues in Rakhine State is a critical component of Burma's transition to a stable, peaceful, and inclusive democracy.

In addition to our advocacy, the United States has also taken a leadership role in providing humanitarian and development assistance in Burma. Since FY 2014, we have provided nearly $124 million in support of humanitarian assistance for vulnerable Burmese in Burma and the region. Furthermore, USAID will, contingent on availability of funding, provide up to $5 million of Complex Crisis Funds to provide livelihoods, early recovery, and trust-building support to approximately 5,000 Rohingya and Rakhine households, or approximately 25,000 internally displaced persons. During the irregular migrant crisis earlier this year, we provided $3 million in humanitarian assistance for vulnerable migrants, and also helped in locating and identifying migrant vessels through U.S. maritime surveillance. Finally, we have resettled in the United States more than 140, 000 refugees from Southeast Asia in the past decade, including more than 1,000 Rohingya in the last 10 months.

Question. How would the new NLD government deal with these issues?

Answer. We cannot speak for what the National League for Democracy (NLD) intends to do to address these issues. We can say, however, that the U.S. Government has discussed this issue with the NLD many times and has stressed the need to find a solution.

The situation in Rakhine State has been a long-standing challenge and will be an important issue for the next government to address. As evidenced above, it would be one of my top priorities as well, if confirmed.

Question. What role do you think the United States and the Embassy in particular should play in the ongoing peace process?

Answer. The United States remains committed to supporting the full implementation of a durable cease-fire agreement, the conduct of a national political dialogue, and the overall national reconciliation process in the months and years to come. Our Embassy regularly engages with Government of Burma officials and ethnic organizations to assist in moving the dialogue forward. We recognize some groups were not able to sign the agreement, and we understand and respect their decisions. We welcome their commitment to continue discussions within their communities and with the Government of Burma about the necessary conditions for signing at a future date, and we urge the Government of Burma to engage constructively in a

dialogue with these groups to pursue a more inclusive peace. We have provided material and technical support to enable political reforms, foster ethnic and religious reconciliation, and strengthen the capacity of reform-minded individuals and institutions. U.S. assistance has supported the formal peace process, an increased participation of civil society and women, preparations for a national political dialogue, and ongoing civilian cease-fire monitoring. We will continue to work with key stakeholders—including ethnic leaders and organizations—to further peace prospects.

Question. Has the U.S. called for the lame-duck Burmese Government to repeal the discriminatory race and religion laws before they leave office?

Answer. We have consistently raised our concerns at the highest levels about the package of legislation on population control, interfaith marriage, religious conversion, and monogamy. These laws could be enforced in a manner that would undermine respect for religious freedom, women's rights, and the Burmese Government's own efforts to promote tolerance, diversity, and national unity. We have stressed to the government and a full range of Burmese stakeholders that protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including religious freedom, for all persons in Burma—regardless of race or religion—are critical components of national security, stability, unity, and the country's reform process. We continue to urge the Burmese Government to revise the legislation in line with its international human rights obligations and commitments.

Question. Has the U.S. called on the Thein Sein administration to release all political prisoners, including those who are still awaiting sentencing, prior to leaving office?

Answer. Yes, the United States continues to urge the Government of Burma to resume working with civil society to release all remaining political prisoners unconditionally, to remove conditions placed on those already released, and to continue comprehensive legal reforms to ensure there are no new arrests for political reasons.

RESPONSES OF LINDA TAGLIALATELA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERATION OF SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS, AND TO SAINT LUCIA, ANTIGUA, BARBUDA, THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA, GRENADA, AND SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TAGLIALATELA'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. What are the main U.S. interests in Barbados and the other six countries of the Eastern Caribbean and where would you place U.S. economic engagement with region on a list of priorities?

Answer. The United States maintains a broad set of interests in Barbados and across the Eastern Caribbean. Our primary interest lies in the protection and safety of American citizens who reside in, and travel to, the region. Regional engagement in the Eastern Caribbean and broader Caribbean generally focuses on: enhanced citizen security, including efforts to combat illicit trafficking; the diversification of energy sources and adoption of renewable energy to promote energy security and price stability; increased tourism and trade, including the promotion of U.S. exports and support to U.S. businesses; the strengthening of democratic institutions, the rule of law, and the promotion of human rights; and increased people-to-people travel, education, and exchanges of ideas and culture that deepen the strong ties between of our citizens.

Economic engagement with the Eastern Caribbean represents a top priority for the U.S. Government. The United States has enjoyed a long-standing trade relationship with Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean islands. We have a trade surplus with the region and U.S. products represent one-third of the region's total imports. Our continued commercial and economic diplomacy provides a vital support structure for U.S. companies to operate successfully, but also to positively contribute to the region's economic development and competitiveness.

U.S. presence in the region is particularly important given that most economies have lost economic competitiveness as they have increased their dependence on imports, including food commodities, and tourism revenues. These countries suffer from the vulnerabilities common to small island economies: a lack of energy resources, large trade deficits, limited foreign direct investment, expensive regional and global transportation costs, vulnerability to natural disasters and the effects of climate change. While Caribbean economies may export duty-free to the United States through the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), CBI exports have dropped over

the past several years as the region's manufactured goods have become less competitive against cheaper goods from other markets.

The United States will continue to work with Eastern Caribbean nations as they seek to diversify their economies beyond tourism and commodities, equip their citizens to compete in global markets, reduce their crushing external debts, and adopt new forms of energy that will reduce manufacturing costs and vulnerability to oil price shocks. Additionally, if confirmed, I will work to ensure that Eastern Caribbean countries continue to seek opportunities to exploit their duty-free access to the United States under CBI, and to further reduce regulatory and technical barriers in their countries that reduce their attractiveness for inward foreign investment.

Question. Last year, the Obama administration launched a strategy aimed at supporting energy security in the Caribbean. Given current low world oil prices, has interest in the region in pursuing that strategy waned? What specifically will you do as Ambassador to increase "Access to Finance, Good Governance, and Diversification" as foreseen by the energy security strategy?

Answer. Since Vice President Joe Biden launched the Caribbean Energy Security Initiative in June 2014, the United States has played a leadership role in promoting energy reform to make the region more attractive to foreign direct investment, as well as quickening the diversification of energy sources and the pace at which new, renewable forms of energy can be adopted.

While lower oil and gas prices have provided Caribbean nations with some reduction in energy costs, they have come to recognize that their long-term prosperity is tied to a mix of energy sources that can provide price and supply stability, with the goal of reducing energy costs for businesses and consumers. This recognition was evident at the White House Caribbean Energy Security Summit hosted in January by the Vice President, as well as in the President's meeting with Caribbean leaders in Jamaica last April, where leaders committed to take concrete steps to promote their energy security.

The recent inauguration of the Caribbean Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in Bridgetown, Barbados, where the Center will serve to support Caribbean countries in fostering sustainable energy investments and markets, is evidence of how U.S. leadership can galvanize action to tackle regional challenges in the Caribbean. If confirmed, I will work actively with Caribbean leaders to help them prioritize their legislative and regulatory efforts to adopt new forms of renewable energy, diversify their energy sources, develop the regulatory structures that will attract companies and technologies and strengthen their energy infrastructure, reduce prices, and provide long-term energy security and stability.

I would also seek to leverage the U.S. Government assistance that is being provided through the Caribbean Energy Security Initiative (CESI). For instance, under CESI, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) has sought to assist with private sector funding for clean energy projects, the U.S. Trade Development Agency is working to identify and study the feasibility of energy related initiatives for investors across the region, and the Department of State's Bureau of Energy Resources is providing technical assistance on regulatory, engineering, procurement, and commercial matters.

Question. What is the current extent of drug trafficking through the Eastern Caribbean region? To what extent is limited U.S. assistance under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative actually able to help the Eastern Caribbean to cope with the drug problem?

Answer. The Eastern Caribbean and broader Caribbean serve as a transshipment region for drugs destined for U.S., African, and European markets. Its strategic location with hundreds of islands and cays, combined with a large volume of commercial and noncommercial air/maritime movement, makes the Caribbean an attractive region for drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) seeking to conceal their illicit activities.

Approximately 10 percent of cocaine trafficked to the United States from South America transited the Caribbean corridor in the first half of 2015, up from 4 percent in 2011, the majority of which was moved by maritime conveyance. Several factors may account for the increase in drug trafficking through the Caribbean, from the impact of enhanced enforcement efforts along the Central America/Mexico corridor and on the U.S. Southwest border to high rates of go-fast boat transport success from Colombia and Venezuela through the Dominican Republic to Puerto Rico.

To counter the increase in drug trafficking, the United States targets DTOs operating in the Caribbean to stem the flow of illegal drugs, while expanding the level of cooperation with partner nations through security cooperation initiatives. The goal is to strengthen law enforcement and judicial institutions, combat money laun-

dering and corruption, reduce the production and consumption of drugs, and generally reduce violence.

Through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), we seek to reduce narcotics trafficking through programming focused on law enforcement capacity-building, border and port security, justice sector reform, and drug demand reduction. Key CBSI activities include efforts to equip, train, and provide technical assistance to counternarcotics authorities; promote regional coordination on maritime interdiction through multilateral exercises; empower countries to dismantle DTOs through tools such as civil asset forfeiture; and support for partner nation maintenance and sustainment capabilities of host-nation purchased and U.S.-provided maritime and aviation interdiction assets.

Question. Many Caribbean nations have seen increases in violent crime and murder in recent years. What approaches have countries been taking to curb the violence, and has there been any diminishment in murder rates? To what extent does the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) help these countries improve citizen security?

Answer. Crime rates have generally risen over the last several years across the Caribbean, including homicides. Caribbean nations, including those in the Eastern Caribbean, have recognized the need to do more to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of their police forces and judicial systems to both prevent crime and investigate criminals who do their citizens harm. They are concurrently working to address the underlying, root causes of crime and insecurity, particularly among youth and those residing in marginalized communities.

Throughout the region, leaders are working to prevent the trafficking of firearms, which are used in the commission of all forms of crimes. They are trying to reduce the unacceptable backlog of accused awaiting trial, which dramatically reduces the deterrent effect that speedy trials and the certainty of accountability has on criminals. Related to the strengthening of prosecutorial and judicial capacity, countries are revisiting bail for violent criminal offenders, many of whom are released and subsequently commit additional crimes while awaiting trial. Eastern Caribbean leaders also recognize that incarceration of juvenile, nonviolent offenders makes little sense, and are pursuing alternate and diversionary sentencing programs to help youth reintegrate into society as lawful, productive citizens. While these nascent efforts ultimately should reduce the prevalence of violent crimes, citizens continue to push their governments to take further action to bring about security and justice.

Through CBSI, the U.S. Government is supporting the efforts of Caribbean governments as they seek to bolster the security of their citizens and build more inclusive and resilient communities. CBSI represents an integrated approach that links citizen security, social development, and economic prosperity. CBSI assistance is combating the drug trade and other transnational crimes that threaten regional security with the goal of substantially reducing illicit trafficking, increasing public safety, strengthening the rule of law, and addressing the underlying social and economic root causes of crime.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TAGLIALATELA'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Antigua & Barbuda and St. Vincent & the Grenadines are destination and transit countries for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. Legal and undocumented immigrants from the Caribbean region as well as from Southeast Asia comprise the population most vulnerable to trafficking. None of the countries have taken explicit and concrete steps to stop trafficking in persons.

- If confirmed, what is your plan in pressuring these countries to reform their justice system to stop sex trafficking and forced labor? Are you willing to publicly identify and rebuke countries under you purview that fail to make real strides in eliminating human trafficking?

Answer. If confirmed, furthering efforts to combat trafficking in persons (TIP) will represent one of my top priorities in the Eastern Caribbean. We are engaged with the Governments of Antigua & Barbuda and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, both of which are on the Tier Two Watch List, to encourage them to redouble their efforts to meet the standards and recommendations in the 2015 TIP Report. These countries should vigorously prosecute human trafficking, identify trafficking victims, and provide assistance to victims.

Both nations are working to address the issues that were identified in the 2015 TIP Report. For example, Antigua & Barbuda amended its anti-TIP law. St. Vincent

and the Grenadines recently made its first human trafficking arrest and indictment, identified additional trafficking victims and provided services, and finalized its national antitrafficking action plan for 2016. Both countries are subject to the automatic downgrade provision of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), and recognize the serious nature and impact of a downgrade to Tier 3.

These nations, as do many of their neighbors in the Eastern Caribbean, are constrained in their respective capacities to address this critical issue, including limited law enforcement and investigative capacity, overburdened prosecutors and courts, and a scarcity of professional capacity to provide victims' services. Through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative and related Department of State-funded TIP initiatives, the U.S. is working across the Eastern Caribbean to boost TIP prevention, identification, prosecution, and victim protection capabilities.

In addition to targeted programming for police forces and judicial systems to allow them to investigate and prosecute traffickers, we are working with NGOs to build their capacity to report instances of trafficking and provide appropriate services to victims. Department of State projects have proven effective in the past, particularly in developing training manuals for law enforcement and victim's services projects.

If confirmed, I will seek additional resources that can be offered to further the progress we have made. Additionally, if confirmed, I will make TIP engagement a top area of discussion in my interaction with regional leaders, civil society, and the media to make sure everything possible is being done to address the TIP issue with the ultimate goal of eliminating human trafficking in the region.

Question. The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) is part of the U.S. security strategy focused on citizen safety throughout the region. How do you see the U.S. engagement with the CBSI countries in your region? Are there any ways the U.S. can improve security cooperation with countries in your region? Do you feel that any of the countries in your region are not adequately engaging in counternarcotics/firearms trafficking interdiction?

Answer. Ensuring citizen security in the Caribbean is vital to U.S. national security, as well as to the stability and economic development of our regional partners. Through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), the U.S. Government is empowering Caribbean governments to better safeguard the security of their citizens and build more inclusive and resilient communities through an integrated effort that links citizen security, social development, and economic prosperity. U.S. assistance through CBSI targets transnational criminal organizations involved in the trafficking of drugs, people, and firearms through the region by strengthening the capacity and effectiveness of the region's police forces and judicial systems, to both prevent crime and investigate criminals who do their citizens harm.

Eastern Caribbean nations are neither source countries for cocaine nor firearms, yet they are disproportionately bearing the brunt of the international trafficking of firearms and narcotics. Despite their limited law enforcement and interdiction capabilities, Eastern Caribbean nations are working effectively with the United States to prevent the use of their national territories and littoral waters by drug trafficking organizations (DTO) and transnational criminal organizations.

Through both CBSI training and effective working relationships with the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) and Immigration and Custom Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Eastern Caribbean nations are investigating and prosecuting to conviction firearms traffickers. Both ATF and HSI have successfully prosecuted U.S. traffickers, who, in many cases, are the source of illicit firearms in the Caribbean.

Eastern Caribbean countries also work closely with the Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard on the interdiction of cocaine across the region. They are also willingly partnering with the United States as we work to promote regional coordination on strengthened border security; maritime interdiction through multilateral exercises; empower countries to dismantle DTOs through tools such as civil asset forfeiture; and take steps to support partner nation maintenance and sustainment capabilities of host nation-purchased, and U.S.-provided, maritime and aviation interdiction assets.

RESPONSES OF JOHN D. FEELEY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE FEELEY'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. In your opening statement you make reference to addressing human trafficking in Panama. You also highlight the importance of the U.S. expatriate community in Panama; expanding foreign direct investment; and, the integrity of our interconnected banking and financial systems.

- Can you please tell us more regarding your concerns and priorities in these areas?

Answer. Human Trafficking: The Panamanian Government is making significant efforts to comply fully with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons. Panamanian authorities identified more trafficking victims in 2014 (25 vice 16 the previous year), convicted five sex traffickers, and continued public awareness efforts. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Panamanian Government to enhance anti-TIP efforts, including through increased specialized victim services and intensified law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking crimes and convict traffickers.

FDI and American Investment: The Panamanian Government has promoted economic growth over the last decade through open market policies and by actively encouraging trade and foreign direct investment (FDI). The United States—Panama Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) requires that U.S. investors receive fair, equitable, and nondiscriminatory treatment, and that both parties abide by international law standards, such as for expropriation, compensation, and free transfers.

If confirmed, I will seek to ensure these transparent guidelines are adhered to. I will also use every applicable provision of the Bilateral Investment Treaty and Trade Promotion Agreement to work for fair treatment of U.S. businesses and citizens in Panama. I will work as Panama's partner to help strengthen their democratic institutions, especially in the justice sector, to provide opportunities for Americans who want to work, trade, travel, and live in Panama.

My concern for U.S. investment in Panama is that Panama's economic openness and weak financial oversight make it an attractive transit point for money laundering. The international financial community shares this view. Panama is currently under "targeted review" by the Financial Action Task Force because of its antimoney laundering deficiencies. The good news is that the Varela administration has expressed and demonstrated the political will to do something about it. In the past year, Panama has passed and implemented a number of laws to strengthen its antimoney laundering capabilities and compliance with U.N. Sanctions Regimes. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. efforts to help Panama build a more effective antimoney laundering regime.

Question. What has been the effect of the U.S. bilateral free trade agreement with Panama? What effect might the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) have on U.S. trade and investment relations with Panama?

Answer. The effect has been to transform a strong trade relationship into an even stronger one. Since the U.S.-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) entered into force in October 2012, American exports have increased every year, totaling $10.3 billion in goods in 2014. Panama was the United States 30th largest goods export market in 2014.

The TPA supports American jobs, expands markets, and enhances U.S. competitiveness, by guaranteeing access to Panama's nearly $30 billion services market (70 percent of GDP), including in priority areas such as financial services, the telecommunications sector, computer sales, and distribution networks. U.S. companies also have a strong presence in the express delivery, energy, environmental, and professional services area of Panama's economy.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Government of Panama and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, to further strengthen market access for U.S. companies, and to ensure U.S. products continue to be the preferred choice for Panamanian consumers.

Although Panama is not a member of the TPP, it already enjoys excellent access to the U.S. market through the TPA and has free trade agreements and strong trade relationships with many TPP members. In addition, the Pacific alliance, a growing economic grouping in Latin America, has offered Panama a path to accession. Though Panama has not yet formally entered the alliance, we would support their entry.

Question. Panama's ex-president, Ricardo Martinelli, faces prosecution for corruption as do other former officials including eight former Cabinet Ministers who have been investigated or charged for acts of corruption. A Panamanian Supreme Court justice was convicted of corruption.

♦ How deep is such corruption in Panama? What role does transnational crime play in exploiting such corruption?

Answer. The United States is aware of allegations against 12 current and former Panamanian administration officials on charges of corruption. The United States supports Panama's efforts to improve governmental transparency and accountability by taking judicial action to prevent, investigate, and punish corruption.

Panama ranks 94th out of the 175 countries on Transparency International's perceptions of corruption ranking. Links to transnational crime, especially money laundering, help enable criminal activity in Panama. Fortunately, Panamanian officials have made addressing corruption a priority. The 17th International Anti-Corruption Conference will take place in Panama City in December 2016, and will be an important opportunity for Panama to demonstrate its commitment to lowering corruption levels in both the public and private sectors.

If confirmed, I will work to support the strengthening of democratic institutions in Panama that are focused on serving its citizens while also being vigilant for any cases of corruption having a direct impact upon American citizens. We share Panama's goal of fortifying institutions to detect, investigate, prevent, and punish corrupt acts. We will continue to partner on transnational criminal cases, and I will continue to encourage Panama to fully implement the accusatory justice system throughout the country.

Question. How capable are Panama's law enforcement agencies and its judiciary in addressing transnational crime and corruption?

Answer. The United States shares the concerns that President Varela and ordinary Panamanian citizens express about the levels of crime, violence, and drug trafficking through Panama's territory. As demonstrated by the current investigations and prosecutions of former officials on corruption charges, Panama's security and judicial institutions are increasingly capable of tackling such cases.

Corruption is one of the biggest problems facing Central America. The United States supports Panama's efforts to investigate and prosecute officials accused of corruption. We will also encourage Panama to finalize the implementation of the accusatory justice system in the important provinces of Colon and Panama in 2016.

Through a variety of vetted units, training, and technical assistance, the United States is working closely with the government and people of Panama to build stronger, more transparent public institutions and foster good governance. In 2015, CARSI partnered with Panamanian police to launch a nationwide, data-driven, crime mapping and analysis tool based on the NYPD's COMPSTAT (comparative statistics) model.

If confirmed, I will continue to support anticorruption programs throughout the security and justice sectors, including a robust program to aid Panama in its transition to the accusatory justice system. The U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America commits to deepening this focus on governance and rule of law throughout the region and Panama in years to come.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE FEELEY'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. According to the 2015 TIP Report, Panama is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. Most Panamanian trafficking victims are exploited in sex trafficking in the country.

♦ If confirmed, how do you plan to engage with the Government of Panama and push them to develop a more robust antitrafficking program in the country?

Answer. The Panamanian Government is making significant efforts to comply fully with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons. The 2015 Trafficking in Persons report upgraded Panama to Tier 2 from Tier 2 Watchlist in recognition of its efforts to combat trafficking in persons. Panamanian authorities identified more trafficking victims in 2014 (25 vice 16 the previous year), convicted five sex traffickers, and continued public awareness efforts. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Panamanian Government to enhance anti-TIP efforts, including through increased specialized victim services and intensified law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking crimes and convict traffickers.

Panamanian authorities acknowledge this weakness, and are committed to working to address it. Vice President Isabel de St. Malo, who serves concurrently as Panama's Foreign Minister, has made a public pledge to coordinate better Panama's ability to combat TIP.

If confirmed, I will continue efforts to help Panama increase specialized victim services. I will also encourage Panama to intensify law enforcement efforts to investigate and prosecute both labor and sex trafficking crimes and to convict and sentence traffickers, including any allegedly complicit government officials. I will also continue to develop and institutionalize government-provided antitrafficking training for relevant officials.

Question. Panama's strategic geographic location, dollarized economy, and status as a regional financial, trade, and logistics center make it a target for money launderers. Organized crime, including narco traffickers, uses the Panamanian legal system to their benefit to launder their illicit proceeds.

- What will your message be to the Government of Panama on reforming their laws in regards to money laundering?

Answer. Panama is widely regarded by international authorities as vulnerable to money laundering and is currently on "targeted review" by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as a country that has antimoney laundering/counter financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) deficiencies. However, under an effort coordinated by Embassy Panama and the Department of State, the Departments of Justice and Treasury are helping Panama build a more effective antimoney laundering regime. Panama significantly strengthened its autonomous Financial Intelligence Unit in December 2014 after the FATF placed the country on "the Grey List" in January 2014, following its assessment that Panama's AML procedures were weak. In the past year, Panama passed and implemented a number of laws to strengthen its antimoney laundering capabilities and compliance with U.N. Sanctions Regimes.

If confirmed, I will continue working with Panama to strengthen its ability to detect, investigate, and prosecute money-laundering and terrorist-financing cases.

Question. Panama has become an important connection for shipping narcotics to the U.S. and other countries. The International Narcotics Control Strategy has reported that traffickers have smuggled narcotics through the country's uncontrolled transportation system, such as airfields, coastlines, containerized seaports and highways.

- What steps will you take to help expand cooperation between U.S. and Panamanian law enforcement on interdicting narcotics bound for the U.S.?

Answer. The United States shares the concerns that President Varela and ordinary Panamanian citizens express about the levels of crime, violence, and drug trafficking through Panama's territory. As demonstrated by the investigations and prosecutions of former officials on corruption charges, Panama's security and judicial institutions are increasingly capable of tackling such cases. As drug interdiction partners, Panama is one of the best in the region, seizing an impressive 35 metric tons of cocaine in its coastal waters and territory.

Through a variety of vetted units, training, and technical assistance, the United States is working closely with the government and people of Panama to build stronger, more transparent public institutions and foster good governance. In 2015, the Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement partnered with Panamanian police to launch a nationwide, data-driven, crime mapping and analysis tool based on the New York Police Department's COMPSTAT (comparative statistics) model. We will also encourage Panama to finalize the implementation of its accusatory justice system in the important provinces of Colon and Panama in 2016.

The U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America commits to deepening this focus on governance and rule of law throughout the region and Panama in years to come. If confirmed, I will continue to support all these programs throughout the security and justice sectors, including an intensive effort to aid Panama in its transition to the accusatory justice system.

Question. We have seen that individual sanctions against human rights violators in Venezuela have been effective tools. These claims have been echoed by many Venezuelan civil society groups and former government officials because they fear losing the privilege to travel and visit the U.S.

- Do you agree?
- Why hasn't the U.S. Government sanctioned more human rights violators in Venezuela?

Answer. Sanctions represent one instrument among many to implement U.S. foreign policy. Each determination on whether and when to impose targeted measures, including visa restrictions or asset blocking, takes into account the specific factual information we have on the individuals at issue in light of the requirements under U.S. law for imposing sanctions. Our implementation of sanctions is also carried out in the context of U.S. foreign policy interests, in consultation with all relevant agencies, including respect for human rights, democratic governance and pluralism, and regional security and stability.

Separately, since July 2014, the Department has restricted visa eligibility for certain Venezuelans believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, human rights abuses and undermining democratic governance, including public corruption. The Secretary of State took these steps pursuant to Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

We will continue to monitor the situation in Venezuela, and stand ready to take action against other individuals as additional information becomes available and is assessed to meet the criteria for sanctions.

RESPONSES OF JEAN ELIZABETH MANES, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MANES'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. El Salvador is a pilot country for the U.S. Partnership for Growth initiative. The Partnership for Growth is supposed to focus on priorities identified with the Salvadoran Government and private sector to strengthen the country's competitiveness and increase investment in the country.

♦ How has this pilot effort fared? What has it accomplished to date?

Answer. The Partnership for Growth (PFG) has laid an important foundation for the new U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America, paving the way for continued investments through institutional capacity-building, passage of key legislation, creation of guiding policies, and establishment of new lines of effort in prosperity programming. Thanks to this close bilateral coordination, the Salvadoran Government has advanced its strategic planning capacity and coordination with civil society, international donors, and the private sector.

The Salvadoran Government has taken concrete steps to strengthen competitiveness and increase investment in the country. For example, it established a public-private Growth Council under PFG to create permanent dialogue between the government and private sectors. Since 2012, the government also passed a package of five pro-investment laws, as well as the Access to Public Information Law and the Asset Forfeiture Law.

In addition, the government created guiding policies, such as the Establishment of the National Council for Citizen Security and crafted the Plan El Salvador Seguro security strategy, the National Violence Prevention Plan of 2014, and formed two police task forces: the Business Crimes Task Force (Anti-extortion Task Force) and the Crimes on Public Transportation Task Force, both of which address issues that hinder investment and competitiveness.

Under PFG, the Salvadoran Government has taken responsibility for sustainable, continued implementation of efforts initiated through USAID and INL investments, for example the Salvadoran Institute for Professional Training. If confirmed, I will strongly encourage the Salvadoran Government to sustain and continue implementation of PFG efforts in support of the new U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America.

Question. El Salvador is experiencing severe gang-related violence and murders. Impoverished people are under constant threat must pay money extorted by gangs. People who receive remittances from the U.S. are targeted by gangs. Current U.S.-supported antigang efforts create small islands of safety. On a limited basis, we help law enforcement and judicial authorities protect citizens and prosecute criminals.

♦ But, is it really possible for the Salvadoran Government to take these approaches to scale? If so, how?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure continued integration of USAID and INL programs under our Place-Based Strategy to focus our assistance efforts in the same high-crime communities identified by the Salvadoran Government in its Plan El Salvador Seguro in order to maximize the impact of our joint efforts.

If confirmed, I will also urge the Salvadoran Government to collaborate more strategically with the private sector to fund important security initiatives under their plan, with the aim of amplifying their efforts.

The Salvadoran private sector has already shown strong interest in investing resources and partnering with the Salvadoran Government, alongside USAID and INL, to tackle security concerns that have a direct effect on the investment climate. For example, some private associations have donated land and architectural and engineering services for police stations and youth centers.

Question. Like other countries in the region, El Salvador faces challenges from corruption. Is it possible for El Salvador to work with the U.N. with U.S. support as has happened in Guatemala to investigate and prosecute corruption? Wouldn't this also help address concerns regarding politically motivated anticorruption prosecutions in El Salvador?

Answer. Through our diplomatic engagement and assistance programs, the United States continues to support both government and civil society efforts to ensure the application of the rule of law and effective governance in El Salvador, emphasizing the need for greater transparency and accountability.

The International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) played a unique, significant, and transformative role in Guatemala. Support from a similar independent anticorruption structure in El Salvador could advance efforts to ensure accountability.

That said, there are many ways of achieving these goals. It is up to the Salvadoran people to determine the best way forward.

President Sánchez Cerén and the Attorney General have publicly rejected an independent external entity like CICIG, stating existing Salvadoran institutions are combating corruption and impunity.

If confirmed, I will give priority to promoting concrete actions by the Salvadoran Government that produce real results in fighting corruption.

I also look forward to working with the Embassy team, including USAID and INL staff, to press forward with U.S. efforts that strengthen institutions, share best practices, and develop new initiatives to combat corruption and end impunity.

Question. The Inter-American Development Bank is supporting efforts by the Government of El Salvador to identify and budget significant on-budget resources to implement the regional Alliance for Prosperity Initiative. In the end, each country needs to direct its own resources to arrive at long-term solutions.

- How has the IDB's effort been received by the Government of El Salvador and how will you encourage this effort as ambassador?

Answer. The Government of El Salvador is fully supportive of the involvement of the IDB as it seeks to implement the ambitious plan outlined in the Alliance for Prosperity roadmap.

The IDB serves as the Executive Secretariat for the Alliance for Prosperity and lends its expertise to help Northern Triangle governments, including El Salvador, tackle the long-standing and systemic issues driving outward migration.

At the working level, Embassy San Salvador remains in close contact with local IDB representatives. If confirmed, I will continue the efforts to advance coordination between all stakeholders, especially the IDB, supporting successful outcomes of both the Alliance for Prosperity and the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America.

Question. Has El Salvador embraced genuine trade capacity building, such as removing non-tariff barriers to trade, to fully take advantage of the Central America Free Trade Agreement? What priorities will you pursue in this regard as ambassador?

Answer. El Salvador was the first country to ratify CAFTA–DR and its trade volume has increased as a result of CAFTA–DR. However, more can be done and the United States continues to work with the Salvadoran Government to make improvements in technical areas, such as onerous labeling requirements, and improving the efficiency of customs procedures. Increasing and facilitating regional trade will be key to improving El Salvador's economic situation. Accordingly, if confirmed, I will continue the work of USAID, INL, MCC, Department of Labor, the USTR, and others to help the Government of El Salvador harmonize and synchronize regulations, improve border infrastructure, and implement best practices for customs inspections in order to better integrate the region economically.

El Salvador is working on reducing cross-border costs as well. Through a targeted initiative to improve interagency coordination among Customs, Police/Anti-narcotics Division, and Immigration, El Salvador reduced border crossing times by 14 percent

in the last 6 months at its two main border crossings to Guatemala (La Hechadura) and Honduras (El Amatillo). For precleared exports from Free Trade Zones, border-crossing times for goods at El Salvador's principal land border to Guatemala (Anguiatu) fell from over 10 hours to less than 1 hour. We also have productive cooperation with the Salvadorans on our Small Business Network of the Americas initiative which, on a practical scale, assists small businesses in both of our countries to improve operations and access markets. If confirmed, I will give high priority to getting results from these in policy measures to attract investment and build trade capacity.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MANES'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Organized crime in El Salvador is a serious problem. There are an estimated 25,000 gang members at large in El Salvador, with many in Mara Salvatrucha (MS 13) and their rival Calle 18 (18th Street). El Salvador is set to eclipse Honduras as the country with the highest homicide rate in the world. There have already been over 5,700 murders this year and the murder rate is now the highest it has been since the country's civil war.

- How is the El Salvador Government working to reduce the violent crime rate and what do you plan to do to help support these efforts? What is your assessment of the threat that trans-national gangs in El Salvador pose to the United States?

Answer. Security is a critical concern for El Salvador, and if confirmed, I will make it my highest priority. The Government of El Salvador launched its new security strategy, Plan El Salvador Seguro, in 2015. This plan focuses most of its efforts on community-based violence prevention coordinated with law enforcement measures, victims' assistance, reinsertion and rehabilitation programs, and efforts to strengthen rule of law institutions. At the outset, the plan focuses on 10 of the most critical municipalities, but the Salvadoran Government plans to extend it to the top 50 most violent municipalities. As a complement to the plan, the National Civil Police launched a 5-year strategy focused on community policing and intelligence-led policing to improve investigation techniques and ensure better coordination among law enforcement institutions and other government agencies. If confirmed, I will urge the Salvadoran Government to implement its security plans as rapidly and effectively as possible.

To date and with USAID support, the Salvadoran Government has created municipal violence prevention committees and USAID is working in more than 33 high-crime municipalities, supporting crime prevention councils and prevention plans, including a network of more than 118 outreach centers for at-risk youth. USAID also provided basic training in community policing to nearly 100 percent of the police force. According to official police data, there has been a 66-percent drop in homicides in 2015 compared to 2014 in 76 communities where USAID is working most comprehensively in violence prevention. USAID is realigning its programs to support the government's Plan El Salvador Seguro's 10 priority municipalities, fully integrating activities focused on violence prevention, criminal justice reform, and economic growth. If confirmed, I will also support and leverage USAID and Department of State programs under a place-based approach that integrates law enforcement and prevention in El Salvador's most violent neighborhoods.

The U.S. Government is also helping the Government of El Salvador expand its efforts to reduce crime and violence through support for specialized units. The State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) provided technical support to help the Government of El Salvador establish an antiextortion task force that has achieved a 96-percent conviction rate. This conviction rate stands in stark contrast to the national criminal conviction rate which is estimated at 10 percent. The government replicated the task force model in Santa Ana and San Miguel, gaining national coverage to combat extortion. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts and also urge the government to collaborate more strategically with the private sector to fund security initiatives under the Salvadoran Government's national strategy.

Transnational gangs in El Salvador pose a threat to the United States. The MS–13 gang has members throughout the United States and often colludes with gang leaders imprisoned in El Salvador. Salvadoan collaboration among INL-supported prison intelligence units, the FBI, ATF, DHS, and U.S. police, have led to MS–13 gang members being charged with homicide and numerous other crimes, including gang recruitment and human and narcotics trafficking. In October and November,

the FBI arrested 12 gang members for homicide in Newark and Boston. In September, an MS–13 gang member was extradited to the United States for two murders committed in 2010 in Nevada. If confirmed, I will ensure this close collaboration among law enforcement agencies continues.

Question. The "Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle" outlines working guidelines and commitments by regional leaders to promote Security, improve the work and business climate, ensure more effective government, create jobs, reduce poverty, improve the quality of services, and expand economic opportunities.

- What improvements have been made with reforming the economic system to open the country to foreign investment and reducing burdensome regulations?
- The pledge that President Obama made for $1 billion is unlikely to be fully funded by Congress for FY16. Based on the reduced funding that will be available, what would your recommendation be for where to concentrate U.S. funding in El Salvador?

Answer. Since the announcement in 2014 by the Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Honduran governments to launch the Alliance for Prosperity—a key component of which is to improve the business and investment environment in the region—the Salvadoran Government has taken concrete steps to attract investment. The Inter-American Development Bank reports El Salvador has proposed its own investment of more than $1 billion in 2016 in Alliance for Prosperity projects.

With USAID support, the Salvadoran Ministry of Finance has drafted tax reforms to reduce tax evasion and avoidance. El Salvador increased tax revenues by 30 percent from 2010 to 2014 through improved enforcement of tax policies and more transparent budgeting. The Salvadoran Government also launched an online public expenditure tracking system and a Fiscal Transparency Web site, accessible to the public, to provide budget information. Finally, the Salvadoran Government signed a Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters in June to improve its ability to coordinate internationally to prevent offshore tax evasion.

El Salvador is taking other steps such as working toward establishing a "single window" for investors, as recommended by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. It has also developed a Web site to register businesses online and the National Investment Office (ONI) is helping investors register with the appropriate Salvadoran Government institution.

Key to facilitating trade, El Salvador reduced border crossing times at its two main crossings with Honduras and Guatemala by 14 percent. In the World Bank's Doing Business Report, El Salvador rose from 97th of 189 countries evaluated in 2015, to 86th in 2016.

If confirmed, I will work with the Government of El Salvador to ensure it fulfills its commitments under the Alliance for Prosperity that coincide with the overarching goals of our U.S. Strategy for Engagement with Central America: improving citizen security, building economic prosperity, and strengthening democratic institutions.

The administration is convinced the FY 2016 request of $1B for the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America is the best way to support the efforts of our Central American partners. The U.S. Strategy is a whole-of-government approach to address violence and crime challenges, lack of economic opportunity, and weak government institutions contribute to the underlying conditions driving undocumented migration. U.S. programs under the Strategy are integrated across multiple lines of effort. We will continue to prioritize El Salvador in the implementation of the Strategy, to support the needed reforms in governance, prosperity, and security. Given the ongoing security situation in El Salvador, programs to address violence, isolate gangs, and ignoring policing remain critical. However, we recognize economic and governance programs also play an important role in creating improved conditions in El Salvador.

Question. According to the 2015 TIP report, El Salvador is a source, transit, and destination country for women, men, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor. The Government of El Salvador does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.

- If confirmed, how do you plan to engage with the Government of El Salvador and work with them to aggressively enforce their antitrafficking program in the country?

Answer. El Salvador remained a Tier 2 country in the 2015 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. A 2014 amendment to El Salvador's TIP law established the legal and budgetary framework for several interagency working groups and mandated better

funding to expand victims' assistance. The amendment also significantly increased prison penalties for convicted traffickers.

If confirmed, I will urge the government to implement its new law and to prosecute more aggresively and convict trafficking offenders.

There have been eight convictions for trafficking crimes this year from prosecutions that began before the amendment was passed. If confirmed, I will urge the Salvadoran Government to investigate and prosecute cases through its U.S. assistance and vetted Anti-Human Trafficking Unit within the police (PNC).

Question. 4,973 unaccompanied children were caught at the border in October trying to enter the United States, with the majority of them coming from El Salvador. What will your message be to the people of El Salvador in regards to attempting to migrate to the United States illegally? What steps do you feel that the Government of El Salvador can take to help reduce the flow of migrants?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy in San Salvador and our colleagues in Public Affairs are working with the Salvadoran Government and its Embassy in Washington, DC, on information campaigns to discourage parents from sending their children on the dangerous journey to our border. However, many still take the journey, out of fear of violence, a lack of opportunities for education poverty, or economic survival. If confirmed, my message to the Salvadorans will be that they must all work together, with the United States as a committed partner, to help their government improve citizen security, build economic prosperity, and strengthen its democratic institutions so that parents and children can find opportunities for better lives in their home communities.

To prevent undocumented migration, beginning in March 2015, the Salvadoran Government began requiring that all children, regardless of nationality, be accompanied by both parents when departing El Salvador or that one parent have the notarized permission of the other. If confirmed, I will urge the Government of El Salvador to enforce these requirements more consistently.

I will also urge the Salvadoran Government to meet its commitments under the Alliance for Prosperity plan, which addresses the underlying factors driving migration.

RESPONSES OF TODD C. CHAPMAN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE CHAPMAN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. What do you see as the most important aspects of the bilateral relationship with Ecuador and what steps would you take as Ambassador to put the relationship on a stronger footing?

Answer. There are four key areas to our bilateral relationship with Ecuador: economic links, regional security, democracy and human rights, and people-to-people ties. If confirmed, I would work with Ecuadorian counterparts to build and move forward a positive bilateral agenda that reinforces our country's goals in all four categories. This includes identifying common areas of interest with the Ecuadorians, addressing the difficult bilateral issues in a clear and direct way, and building a relationship based on mutual respect that will facilitate discussions on more sensitive issues.

We are already on a strong footing in many ways. Our people-to-people ties continue to provide long-term strength to our relationship, with two-way educational exchanges thriving, and growing numbers of travelers to each country. Two-way trade has more than doubled since 2008, to nearly $20 billion in 2014. While American investors have in some cases encountered serious difficulties in Ecuador, we remain Ecuador's largest trading partner and our economic relationship continues to grow. U.S. and Ecuadorian law enforcement and security officials are working cooperatively to counter regional threats posed by transnational crime, illicit narcotics, and trafficking in persons.

We have had disagreements with the Ecuadorian Government in recent years, and some of these issues will not be resolved easily. If confirmed, I will raise the issues that are holding back greater bilateral partnership with both Government of Ecuador officials and with the public, including democratic and human rights concerns and a level playing field for investors. While we have areas of disagreement, our common interests can drive the broader U.S.-Ecuador relationship in a constructive direction.

Question. What are the State Department's recommendations to Ecuador to address human trafficking? Is addressing human trafficking potentially an area for increased bilateral cooperation?

Answer. Ecuador fully recognizes that international cooperation is vital in addressing human trafficking, and this is an area where we hope to have increased bilateral cooperation. As you know, the Department's Trafficking in Persons Report documents government efforts to prosecute traffickers, protect victims, and prevent further trafficking and the Department uses a variety of programs to support such government efforts. In the past, we have provided training to Ecuadorian judges, prosecutors, police officials, and officials charged with providing assistance to trafficking victims. We will look for additional opportunities to continue and grow this cooperation with the Government of Ecuador in the future.

In the 2015 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, the State Department ranked Ecuador Tier 2 and made the following recommendations for specific goals and objectives to further the Government of Ecuador's antitrafficking efforts over the next year:

(1) Strengthen the provision of specialized care services for trafficking victims—including for adults—in partnership with civil society organizations through increased funding.

(2) Amend antitrafficking statutes so they do not penalize nontrafficking crimes in order to bring them in compliance with the 2000 U.N. TIP Protocol.

(3) Increase efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses and convict and punish traffickers, particularly for cases involving adult trafficking victims.

(4) Hold criminally accountable public officials complicit in trafficking.

(5) Develop and implement procedures for identifying trafficking victims among vulnerable populations, such as children and adults in prostitution or child and migrant workers.

(6) Implement procedures to ensure identified victims are referred to care services.

(7) Increase antitrafficking training for police officers, judges, labor inspectors, immigration officials, social workers, and other government officials, particularly to enhance victim identification.

(8) Issue and implement guidelines to ensure officials consistently offer foreign victims legal alternatives to removal.

(9) Enhance data collection and interagency coordination.

I have worked on TIP issues in previous assignments—in Costa Rica, Bolivia, Mozambique, and Brazil—and if confirmed, commit to engage personally on this issue to advance our cooperation. Reducing trafficking in persons in Ecuador through enhanced partnerships will be a top priority.

Question. What has been the impact on press freedom of frequent government fines, sanctions including forced corrections, and hostile rhetoric toward news coverage that is critical of the President Correa's government? What steps, if any, would you take to encourage freedom of the press in Ecuador if appointed Ambassador?

Answer. We are concerned about increasing restrictions on freedom of expression in Ecuador because a vibrant civil society capable of free expression and association is a necessary component of any democracy. We share international concern over the Government of Ecuador's efforts to silence critical voices and restrict its citizens' access to certain information and ideas. The U.N., Organization of American States (OAS) rapporteurs, and many international human rights organizations have expressed similar concerns.

We will continue speaking out, as we do all around the world, in support of essential democratic rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I look forward to meeting with representatives of the press, civil society, and the government regarding this critical issue. With all interlocutors, I will highlight the importance of preserving space for dissenting voices, so vital to the continued development of democratic societies. If confirmed, I will also promote public diplomacy activities that demonstrate the power of free expression and association, including exchanges, visits, Internet outreach, and cultural events.

Question. Is President Correa's decision not to run for reelection a significant development?

Answer. President Correa has announced that he will not be a candidate for President in the 2017 elections, which is indeed a significant development. President Correa has held this office since 2007, therefore the transition to another President as prescribed by the Ecuadorian Constitution, through an open and fair electoral process consistent with the terms and spirit of the Inter-American Democratic Char-

ter, will be a significant development demonstrating the strength and resilience of Ecuadorian democracy. We will continue to work with the democratically elected leaders of Ecuador to strengthen the bilateral relationship and advance a positive agenda for increased cooperation.

Question. To what degree are U.S. companies welcome to invest and operate in Ecuador? How would you describe the current investment climate in Ecuador and how might it be improved?

Answer. While Ecuador is a growing trading partner, the regulatory environment for U.S. investors in Ecuador continues to be challenging. We have a Bilateral Investment Treaty with Ecuador that provides for national treatment; unrestricted remittances and transfers; prompt, adequate, and effective compensation for expropriation; and binding international arbitration of disputes. However, a number of U.S. companies operating in Ecuador, notably in regulated sectors such as petroleum and electricity, have filed for international arbitration resulting from investment disputes.

U.S. foreign direct investment in Ecuador (stock) was $851 million in 2012 (latest official data available). I would like to expand economic links further, and if confirmed, will prioritize support for U.S. companies doing business and seeking to do business in Ecuador. I would note that with nearly $20 billion in two-way trade in 2014, the United States is Ecuador's largest trading partner.

President Correa during his visit to New York City for the U.N. General Assembly in September gave two interviews, one to CNBC and one to Forbes, in which he invited more U.S. companies to invest in Ecuador. In response to this public invitation, I hope to have the opportunity to meet with Ecuadorian Government officials to explore facilitating this goal and discuss the reasons that have led several U.S. companies to withdraw from Ecuador and/or to choose not to make investments in Ecuador.

One of the issues of concern for American businesses is the protection of intellectual property rights—Ecuador is on USTR's 301 Watch List. Another issue of concern is the impression that Ecuador's investment policies are not consistently applied for all investors. If confirmed, I would strive to receive greater assurance that commercial disputes involving U.S. businesses will be resolved in a fair manner, consistent with due process.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE CHAPMAN'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. While the U.S. and Ecuador have traditionally had close ties, relations with Ecuador have been strained in recent years. In 2014 Ecuador ordered all 20 Defense Department employees in the U.S. Embassy's military group to leave the country.

President Correa has provided asylum in 2012 to WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, whose organization published troves of leaked U.S. military documents and diplomatic cables highly embarrassing to Washington.

Correa had previously expelled at least three U.S. diplomats including Ambassador Heather Hodges in 2011. And Correa's government asked the U.S. Agency for International Development to end operations in the country, accusing it of backing the opposition.

Based on past actions and statements, President Correa is hostile toward the United States Government. As you mentioned in your testimony, you have previously worked in a diverse group of countries representing our nation.

- If confirmed, how would you apply your past working experiences to promote policies that will strengthen the bilateral relations between Ecuador and the U.S.?

Answer. During my 25-year Foreign Service career, I have had the opportunity to serve in a wide range of countries, including Brazil, Mozambique, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Afghanistan, and Nigeria. In several of these countries we faced numerous challenges and major policy differences on key bilateral issues. In Mozambique, for example, threats to freedom of expression were a constant theme. Working in Bolivia at the beginning of the Evo Morales era, we were confronted with strong opposition by our host government to a broad range of U.S. policies.

Two points from my past experience are especially relevant to my future role, if confirmed, as Ambassador to Ecuador. First, if actions by governments are being taken or considered that would damage our overall bilateral relationship, I would ensure we address those actions in direct conversations with the host government, at multiple levels, to make sure the message gets through. For this to occur, chan-

nels of communication and the building of personal relationships with senior government leaders is essential, and something I have done effectively in several countries, including Bolivia, Brazil, Mozambique, and Costa Rica. We also must speak out publicly on issues of concern to engage the broader civil society and leaders across the political spectrum, as I have done in many of these countries on television, radio, and through an active personal public diplomacy effort. Projecting clearly the values and democratic principles which are so important to U.S. foreign policy is in my view essential, and something I have consistently done over the course of my Foreign Service career. If confirmed, I intend to continue such practice as Ambassador to Ecuador.

Second, we need to work with Ecuador to develop a broad bilateral agenda based on common areas of interest, and in this process establish a relationship based on mutual respect and clear communication about our objectives. If confirmed, I will work to build such an agenda with Ecuador based on our many areas of shared interest. This includes building on our strong people-to-people ties, and especially our thriving two-way educational exchange. This also means continuing to expand our growing two-way trade and to increase cooperation with Ecuador to counter regional threats posed by transnational crime, illicit narcotics, and trafficking in persons.

We will continue to have disagreements with the Government of Ecuador, and we have to be firm in our views, but I believe we can make progress by building a broad agenda that addresses common interests and facilitates frank discussion.

If confirmed, I will most certainly address the issues that are holding back greater bilateral partnership, which include democratic and human rights concerns and the need for a level playing field for investors. With increased partnership and dialogue, our common interests can drive the broader U.S.-Ecuador relationship in a constructive direction.

Question. The 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution acknowledges freedom of speech and expression, Correa has consistently attacked journalists and news outlets since his election in 2007.

- ♦ What is you assessment of the current state of the independent press in Ecuador?
- ♦ What steps do you plan to take, if any, to show support for a free and open press if confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. We are concerned about increasing restrictions on freedom of expression in Ecuador because a vibrant civil society capable of free expression and association is a necessary component of any democracy. We share international concern over the Government of Ecuador's efforts to silence critical voices and restrict its citizens' access to certain information and ideas, and many senior U.S. Government officials have expressed such concern both privately and publicly. The U.N., Organization of American States (OAS) rapporteurs, and many international human rights organizations have expressed similar concerns.

We will continue speaking out, as we do all around the world, in support of essential democratic rights and fundamental freedoms. If confirmed, I look forward to meeting with representatives of the press, civil society, and the government regarding this critical issue. With all interlocutors, both privately and publicly, I will highlight the importance of preserving space for dissenting voices, so vital to the continued development of democratic societies. If confirmed, I will also promote public diplomacy activities that demonstrate the power of free expression and association.

Question. Ecuador's President, Raphael Correa, says he will not seek a fourth consecutive term in office. A group of congressmen from the ruling party has backed a proposed constitutional reform that would abolish all term limits, allowing Correa, to consider another Presidential bid in the future.

- ♦ Do you believe that the proposed constitutional reform will be passed allowing for unlimited terms in office?

Answer. The Government of Ecuador enacted the proposed constitutional reform to allow for unlimited terms in office by a National Assembly vote on December 3. With approval by the National Assembly, the constitutional change is final and will soon appear in Ecuador's federal registry. The amendment, which removes term limits for all Ecuadorian elected officials, will take effect only after the February 2017 presidential and legislative elections. This will make President Correa and roughly one-third of the National Assembly ineligible for reelection in 2017. Correa had stated prior to the vote on the amendment that he would not run for the Presidency in 2017. Under the newly enacted amendment, he will be eligible to run for President of Ecuador in 2021.

We support the democratic transition of power in all countries through free, fair, and credible elections and the strengthening of democratic institutions. To this end, we will stand up for constitutionally mandated term limits, and speak out against manipulation of laws that undermine democracy.

Question. Ecuador's lax immigration policies have made it a hub for Cubans either looking for temporary work or trying to flee the island permanently. Some Cubans have paid smugglers thousands of dollars to help them illegally travel through South and Central America to the U.S. border.

According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, some 43,159 Cubans have arrived in the United States during fiscal year 2015. This is a 78-percent increase over those who had arrived the previous fiscal year. Meanwhile, there are at least 3,000 Cubans stuck at the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, another 1,000 in the border between Panama and Colombia, and the number is growing daily, as there are another 17,000 Cubans in the pipeline already in Ecuador willing to start the land journey north.

- What is the State Department doing, through our respective Embassies in Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, to deal with this current exodus?
- What are the current safety and security considerations regarding this latest Cuban migration crisis?
- Why do you think the Cuban people are responding to the Obama administration's new policy by fleeing the island in greater numbers?
- Why do you think the Cuban people prefer to spend thousands of dollars—by selling all their belongings or borrowing from their relatives abroad—to flee the island rather than to become a "self-employed" licensee?

Answer. The United States is committed to supporting safe, orderly, and legal migration from Cuba through the effective implementation of the 1994–95 U.S.-Cuba Migration Accords. According to the terms of these accords, the United States ensures that total legal migration to the United States from Cuba is at least 20,000 Cubans each year, not including immediate relatives of United States citizens.

Our dialogue on migration with the Cuban Government predates the reestablishment of diplomatic relations. We view it as a critical mechanism for addressing shared challenges in migration policy and its implementation. At the November 30 Migration Talks, the U.S. delegation expressed its concern for the safety of the thousands of Cuban migrants transiting through Central America. This journey illustrates the inherent risks and uncertainties of involvement with smugglers and organized crime in attempts to reach the United States. The U.S. and Cuban delegations agreed to expert-level meetings on how both governments will contribute to combating the smuggling organizations that take advantage of Cuban migrants.

At the Migration Talks, we also discussed three main drivers for Cuban emigration with the Cuban Government: the "pull" of U.S migration policy; the "push" of Cuba's lack of political and economic opportunity; and the perception that the rapprochement between our two governments would eventually lead to an end to Cubans' unique migration benefits under the Cuban Adjustment Act. The Cuban Government has stated that it is pursuing economic reform, but the pace has been slow. It is incumbent on the Cuban Government to provide economic opportunities for its people. Our policies continue to work toward a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Cuba.

We encourage all countries to respect the human rights of migrants and to ensure the humane treatment of individuals seeking asylum or other forms of protection under domestic laws in accordance with international law. We also encourage their efforts to combat human smuggling. Additionally, we are encouraging regional governments to find solutions to this challenge, including coordinated and comprehensive solutions that focus on preventing loss of life, ensuring the human rights of all migrants are respected, and promoting orderly and humane migration policies.

Question. According to the 2015 TIP report, Ecuador is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor.

- If confirmed, how do you plan to engage with the Government of Ecuador and push them to develop a more robust antitrafficking program in the country?

Answer. Ecuador recognizes that international cooperation is vital in addressing human trafficking, which is a serious problem they are trying to confront and is an area where we hope to have increased bilateral cooperation. The Department's 2015 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report classified Ecuador as a Tier 2 country. While noting progress made in several areas, the report made nine key recommendations

to the Government of Ecuador, focused on improving efforts to prosecute traffickers, protect victims, and prevent further trafficking.

The Department of State uses a variety of programs to support efforts by countries to improve their performance in these areas. In the past, we have provided training to Ecuadorian judges, prosecutors, police officials, and officials charged with providing assistance to trafficking victims. Mission Ecuador works closely with Ecuadorian security agencies on trafficking issues, providing leads and information which have resulted in arrests and prosecutions both in Ecuador and the United States. We will look for additional opportunities to continue to grow this cooperation with the Government of Ecuador in the future.

I have worked on human trafficking issues in previous assignments—in Costa Rica, Bolivia, Mozambique, and Brazil—and, if confirmed, commit to engage personally on this issue to advance our cooperation, whether by highlighting the importance of combating human trafficking associated with a growing tourism industry or encouraging greater funding for the protection of victims. Reducing trafficking in persons in Ecuador through enhanced partnerships will be a top priority.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2015

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

G. Kathleen Hill, of Colorado, to be Ambassador the Republic of Malta
Eric Seth Rubin, of New York, to be Ambassador the Republic of Bulgaria
Kyle R. Scott, of Arizona, to be Ambassador the Republic of Serbia
David McKean, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to Luxembourg
Carlos J. Torres, of Virginia, to be Deputy Director of the Peace Corps

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:20 p.m. in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Johnson, presiding.

Present: Senators Johnson, Risch, Gardner, Shaheen, Murphy, and Markey.

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

Senator JOHNSON. This hearing will come to order.

I want to welcome our witnesses, our nominees. First of all, I want to thank you for your past service, and I certainly want to thank you for your willingness to serve your Nation again.

These nomination hearings are always pretty interesting. We have a wide range of different organizations and sometimes countries that we are talking about. So we learn an awful lot here. I hope you will have a good and enjoyable experience here.

The position of Ambassador I think is just extremely important. I know Senator Gardner was talking ahead of time how important it is and how valued it is when we travel overseas. I am sure Senators Risch and Shaheen will agree with this. First of all, the professional Foreign Service people are just extraordinary individuals, I mean almost without exception. And the ambassadors are just so important at setting those trips up for us and making them so valuable.

But, obviously, from my standpoint, it is just like a salesperson in a business. You, obviously, are representing the company to the customer but also the customer back to the company. Same thing here. You will be representing the United States of America, a

country I think is the greatest in the history of mankind, a phenomenal force for good in the world, and it is your responsibility to represent us well, at the same time represent the country that you are ambassador to back to Congress, back to the people of the United States. It is a serious responsibility, and again I really do appreciate the fact you are willing to take that on.

So without further ado, because I do not have a whole lot of voice left, I will turn it over to our ranking member, Senator Shaheen.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JEANNE SHAHEEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have a statement but I would just like to echo the thanks to each of you for your willingness to take on these very important positions and to point out that several of you are really at the center of what has focused the world's attention right now in terms of what is happening in Europe with refugees, what is happening in Europe with Putin's aggression into eastern Europe. And so you will be on the front lines of some very challenging issues for your tenure as ambassador. And so thank you very much for your willingness to be in these very important positions at this very difficult time.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

We do have Senator Markey who would like to introduce Mr. David McKean. I would like to ask Senator Markey if you are prepared.

STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

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

And it is my honor to introduce again to this committee David McKean. David was the staff director. David has dedicated his life to this committee and the issues that are central to the well-being of our Nation going forward.

And I know he is here with his wife, Kathleen, and their three children, Shaw and Christian and Kay. And I know that everybody who knows him is proud to say that they believe that somebody is as qualified as a human being can be to have a position like this.

He is a Massachusetts native. He proves once again that Massachusetts is not just the Bay State, that we are the "Brain State," and if you googled it, David's picture would come up. He has done this kind of work for his entire life.

He is currently Director of Policy and Planning at the State Department. He joined the State Department in April 2012 as a Senior Advisor to Secretary of State Clinton, and he directed the Policy Planning staff to lay the foundation for expanding global development cooperation with China in the areas of food security and nutrition and humanitarian assistance and disaster preparedness. He played an instrumental role in shaping the U.S. policy in support of a lasting and just peace in Colombia. He was central in focusing Secretary Kerry's focus on nationwide elections in Nigeria, which were held in March 2015 and were followed by Nigeria's first-ever peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another. He worked to maintain focus on international support for Ukraine as it moves along its path of reform, on support for transatlantic sanc-

tions against Russia, and an end of military intervention there, and to ensure that we remain steadfast in our commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and independence. He held the policy planning talks with more than 15 other countries, and most notably, he held the first-ever U.S.-India policy planning talks with the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. His work in the State Department brings him full circle from the beginning of his career in 1981 when he taught in Swaziland.

It is just an amazing career. He began his career up here working for John Kerry, and it has moved through all of these years in an unbroken path of service to our Nation. He served on just about every issue discussion that we have had from A to Z, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe on this committee. He was in the room. He was helping to shape the way in which those issues would be shaped. And I can tell you that no one will ever a higher endorsement from John Kerry to serve in our Foreign Service, to serve the United States in such an important position as David will receive from the Secretary.

So I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity to be able to tout this great American's history. But rest assured that we are well served no matter where he is in the world. And I thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. So you are supporting the nomination. [Laughter.]

By the way—and I think Senator Risch would probably agree with me on this, being a former Wisconsinite. We just refer to Wisconsin as God's country. But we appreciate the fact that you like your State as well.

Senator MARKEY. We think of cheese when we think of Wisconsin.

Senator JOHNSON. Well, that is a good thing. [Laughter.]

Well, based on that excellent introduction, we might as well go a little out of order here, and we will start with Mr. David McKean, who is being nominated to be the U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg, with my colleague also pointing out that is a pretty nice post. But, Mr. McKean, why do you not start your testimony?

STATEMENT OF DAVID McKEAN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO LUXEMBOURG

Mr. MCKEAN. Thanks very much.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, good afternoon.

I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to Luxembourg. I am deeply grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me with this nomination.

I would also like to thank Senator Markey for his generous introduction.

As Senator Markey has noted, I spent many years working as a staff member and chief of staff for Senator Kerry, and I am particularly honored to be testifying in front of a committee for which I served as staff director.

My journey to this point would not have been possible without the support and guidance of my family, my children, Shaw, Chris-

tian, and Kay, who are not here, and most especially my wife of 27 years, Kathleen, who is here today.

During my lifetime, I have traveled to over 65 countries, having visited more than 30 in my current capacity as Director of Policy Planning at the Department of State. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was the very first country I ever visited in 1972.

Luxembourg is at the heart of Europe, both geographically and politically. If confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to devote my time and efforts to enhancing the already strong relationship between our two countries, one that is based on both historically ties and Luxembourgers' positive views of America.

Luxembourg citizens are deeply appreciative of the sacrifices American troops made during World War II to defeat the Nazis and liberate their country. The over 5,000 graves in the Luxembourg American Military Cemetery serve as a reminder of the sacrifice borne by so many for the liberties that Luxembourgers enjoy today. One of those graves is that of Gen. George Patton, whose wife was from my hometown of Hamilton, MA. The General and Mrs. Patton had planned to retire there, but it was not to be. His simple grave in Luxembourg is a reflection of his desire to be laid to rest alongside the men of the 3rd Army and perhaps serves as his final lesson in leadership.

Leadership is important to me, and over the last 3 years at the State Department, I visited many of our embassies around the world. I have developed an admiration for the Foreign Service officers and locally employed staff who serve with dedication and determination to advance United States foreign policy goals worldwide. It will be an honor for me to lead them at our mission in Luxembourg during a critical time in Europe.

Luxembourg is concluding its 6-month presidency of the Council of the European Union during which the agenda has been dominated by the refugee crisis affecting Europe. The unprecedented levels of new arrivals have posed considerable challenges to the Union, and Luxembourg has used the council presidency to help foster dialogue and forge consensus.

Luxembourg has also stepped up recently in other areas, especially in the area of humanitarian assistance. Overall, Luxembourg commits over 1 percent of its GNP to assistance.

Commercial ties between Luxembourg and the United States have been historically strong. The United States exports over $1.5 billion worth of goods to Luxembourg, and if confirmed, I will make trade promotion and Luxembourg direct investment into the United States a priority so that we can increase the market for U.S. goods and services and help create jobs and value here at home. A major component of that effort will be to advance discussions on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

Another issue that we will be addressing in 2016 is Russia's involvement in Ukraine and the sanctions that are in place against Russia. Russia's violations of Ukrainian sovereignty cannot stand, and if confirmed, I will work with the Luxembourg Government to ensure their continued support of EU sanctions until the Minsk accords are fully implemented.

The recent events in Paris have shown that no nation in Europe can take its liberties and freedoms for granted. If confirmed, I will

do all I can, working with the Government of Luxembourg, to advance our shared vision of a Europe that is whole, free, safe, and at peace.

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

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKean follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID MCKEAN

Mister Chairman and distinguished dembers of the committee: Good afternoon.

I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. I am deeply grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence and trust they have placed in me with this nomination.

As Senator Markey has noted, I spent many years working as a staff member and Chief of Staff for Senator Kerry and I am particularly honored to be testifying in front of a committee for which I was staff director in 2009.

My journey to this point would not have been possible without the support and guidance of my family, most especially my wife, Kathleen, who is here today.

During my lifetime I have travelled to over 65 countries, having visited more than 30 in my current capacity as Director of Policy Planning at the Department of State. The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was the very first country I ever visited in 1972.

Luxembourg is at the heart of Europe, both geographically and politically. If confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to devote my time and efforts to enhancing the already strong relationship between our two countries that is based on both historical ties and Luxembourgers' positive views of America.

Luxembourg citizens are deeply appreciative of the sacrifices American troops made during World War II to defeat the Nazi occupation and liberate their country. The over 5,000 graves in the Luxembourg American Military Cemetery serve as reminders of the sacrifice borne by so many for the liberties that Luxembourgers enjoy today. One of those graves is that of Gen. George Patton, whose wife was from my hometown of Hamilton, MA. The General and Mrs. Patton had planned to retire there, but it was not to be. His simple grave in Luxembourg is a reflection of his desire to be laid to rest alongside his men and perhaps serves as his final lesson in leadership.

Leadership is important to me. Great work is done when people are motivated, inspired, and empowered. That is the spirit in which I intend to approach the job of Chief of Mission, if confirmed.

Over the last 3 years at the State Department, I have developed an admiration for the Foreign Service officers and specialists, and Locally Employed Staff, who serve with dedication and determination to advance U.S. foreign policy worldwide. It would be an honor for me to lead them at our mission in Luxembourg during a critical time in Europe.

Luxembourg is concluding its 6-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union, during which the agenda was dominated by the refugee crisis affecting Europe. The unprecedented levels of new arrivals have posed considerable challenges to the Union, and Luxembourg has used the council presidency to help foster dialogue and forge consensus. Luxembourg was among the first EU countries to receive refugees as part of the EU plan to distribute 160,000 refugees among member states.

Luxembourg has also stepped up recently in other areas of humanitarian assistance, and overall commits over 1 percent of GNP to assistance. In 2014 alone, Luxembourg made contributions of over $24 million to support refugees, internally displaced persons, and other victims of conflict in Syria, Mali, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic.

United States and Luxembourg commercial ties have been historically strong. The United States exports over $1.5 billion worth of goods to Luxembourg. If confirmed I will make trade promotion and direct investment from Luxembourg into the United States a priority, so that we can increase the market for U.S. goods and services and help create jobs and value here at home. A major component of that effort will be to advance discussions on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. If confirmed, I will do everything I can to build public support for a comprehensive TTIP agreement that boosts economic growth and creates jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

Another issue that we will be addressing in 2016 is Russia's aggression in Ukraine, and the sanctions that are in place against Russia. Russia's violations of Ukraine's sovereignty cannot stand, and if confirmed I will work with the Luxem-

bourg Government to ensure their continued support of EU sanctions, until Minsk is fully implemented.

Recent events have shown that no nation in Europe can take its liberties and freedoms for granted. If confirmed, I will do all I can, working with Luxembourg, to advance our shared vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

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

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. McKean.

Now we will go back to our previously scheduled order. Our next witness will be Ms. Kathleen Hill. Ms. Hill is nominated to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malta.

Ms. Hill is a career member of the Foreign Service and currently serves as Senior Advisor in the Office of the Executive Secretary at the Department of State. Previously Ms. Hill has held positions within the State Department's Bureau of European Affairs and the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs. Ms. Hill also has served at multiple overseas posts, including Canada, Italy, and Serbia.

Ms. Hill.

STATEMENT OF G. KATHLEEN HILL, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA

Ms. HILL. Thank you, Chairman Johnson, Senator Shaheen, and distinguished members of the committee.

It is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Malta. I look forward to working with Congress and this committee to advance U.S. interests in Malta.

I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position, especially at a time when we face some of the most daunting security challenges. Our hearts are with all those who have lost loved ones in recent weeks in France, Turkey, Lebanon, and over the Sinai en route home to Russia. Such events make me even more thankful for the support of my family, my mother, Mary Ann, who is here today, along with my brother-in-law, Neil, and my niece, Maura, as well as my sister, Renea, and other nieces, Grace and Colleen, who could not be with us today. As with all Foreign Service families, it is their encouragement that helps sustain us as we serve our country in the farthest reaches of the world.

For two and a half years, I managed Secretary Kerry's travel, visiting more than 60 countries and witnessing the incredible value of diplomacy and how every country can be a partner to reach our common goals, such as security, prosperity, and promoting democratic values. I hope to incorporate what I have learned in strengthening our partnership with Malta in these areas. I have served three tours in southern and southeastern Europe, and more recently, I led the Arab Spring evacuations of Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt, which gave me extensive experience working two of the key issues of the Mediterranean countries, regional security, and refugees. In every position I have held, I have encouraged teamwork, empowerment, and staff development to achieve success. If confirmed, I plan to implement that same formula for success at our mission in Malta.

Ties between the United States and Malta date back to the early 19th century when Valletta, one of the finest natural harbors in the Mediterranean, was the base for the U.S. Navy's actions against the Barbary pirates. Malta's location continues to position the country as a significant actor in maintaining security in the Mediterranean. As a member of the European Union and the Schengen Treaty, Malta is responsible for enforcing the Schengen zone's common border and EU customs control. It also sits in the middle of the world's busiest shipping lanes, with over a third of the world's shipping transiting the waters between Malta and Italy.

Malta is a close ally to the United States and supports us on regional issues. During the period of unrest in Libya that began in February 2011, I witnessed firsthand the important role Malta played supporting the evacuation of more than 20,000 foreign nationals, including 200 American citizens; coordinating humanitarian aid to the people of Libya; and providing assistance to international forces. Shortly thereafter, Embassy Valletta hosted the Department's Libya External Office before it moved to Tunisia, and the Government of Malta supported the External Office's presence by accrediting our increased staffing.

A participant in the NATO Partnership for Peace since 2008, Malta remains a steadfast partner in defense. U.S. Navy ships visit on a semiregular basis while the Maltese military actively participate in regional exercises on search and rescue, regional maritime awareness, and security.

We also work closely with Malta to address irregular migration. The U.S. Coast Guard has trained the Armed Forces of Malta to operate and navigate fast response boats and patrol vessels in order to provide assistance to refugees and support to law enforcement operations.

On our bilateral defense cooperation, the United States and Malta do not have a status of forces agreement, which limits the parameters of further engagement. If confirmed, I will continue to highlight the strategic defense and economic benefits of a SOFA with senior Maltese political leaders and influential business and commercial leaders. A SOFA would facilitate more regular ship visits and further enhance security cooperation between our two countries.

If confirmed, I will continue the work of my predecessor in supporting and encouraging increased bilateral trade currently valued at more than $1 billion. It is estimated that one of every 30 jobs in Malta is linked to a U.S. business. Our mission will continue to support the SelectUSA initiative to encourage Maltese investment in the United States and work to advance and expand the ability of U.S. businesses to invest in Malta, a conduit for markets in Europe and North Africa.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to representing the best of the United States in Malta and working with this valued and historic partner to advance U.S. foreign policy. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hill follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KATHLEEN HILL

Chairman Johnson, Senator Shaheen, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Malta. I look forward to working with Congress and this committee to advance U.S. interests in Malta.

I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the trust they have placed in me by nominating me for this position. As a career Foreign Service officer, I am truly humbled by the opportunity to serve my country as Ambassador. I also am very thankful for the support of my family, my mother, Mary Ann, my sister, Renea and her family, including her husband, Neil, and daughters, Maura and Colleen, who are all here today and my other niece, Grace, in California. As with all Foreign Service families, both immediate and extended, it is their encouragement that helps sustain us as we serve our country in the farthest reaches of the world.

For two and half years, I managed Secretary Kerry's travel, visiting more than 60 countries and witnessed the incredible value of diplomacy and how every country can be a partner to reach our common goals, such as security, prosperity, and promoting democratic values. I hope to incorporate what I have learned in strengthening our partnership with Malta in these areas. During my 20-year career I have served three tours in southern and southeastern Europe. More recently, I led the Arab Spring evacuations of Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt, which gave me extensive experience working on the key issues of Mediterranean countries—regional security and refugees. In every position I have held, I have encouraged teamwork, empowerment, and staff development to achieve success. If confirmed, I plan to implement that same formula for success at our mission in Malta.

Ties between the United States and Malta date back to the early 19th century when Valletta, one of the finest natural harbors in the Mediterranean, was the base for the U.S. Navy's action against the Barbary pirates. Malta's location continues to position the country as a significant actor in maintaining security in the Mediterranean. As a member of the European Union and the Schengen Treaty, Malta is responsible for enforcing the Schengen zone's common border and EU customs control. It also sits in the middle of the world's busiest shipping lanes, with over a third of the world's shipping transiting the waters between Malta and Italy.

Malta is a close ally to the United States and supports us on regional issues in North Africa and Europe. During the period of unrest in Libya that began in February 2011, I witnessed firsthand the important role Malta played in supporting the evacuation of more than 20,000 foreign nationals, including 200 American citizens; coordinating humanitarian aid to the people of Libya; and providing assistance to international forces. Shortly thereafter, Embassy Valletta hosted the State Department's Libya External Office before it moved to Tunisia; the Government of Malta supported the External Office's presence by accrediting our increased staffing.

A participant in the NATO Partnership for Peace since 2008, Malta remains a steadfast partner in defense. U.S. Navy ships visit on a semiregular basis while the Maltese military actively participate in regional exercises on search and rescue, regional maritime awareness, and security.

We also work closely with Malta to address irregular migration. The U.S. Coast Guard has trained the Armed Forces of Malta to operate and navigate fast response boats and patrol vessels, in order to provide assistance to refugees and support to law enforcement operations.

On our bilateral defense cooperation, the United States and Malta do not have a status of forces agreement (SOFA), which limits the parameters of further engagement. If confirmed, I will continue to highlight the strategic defense and economic benefits of a SOFA with senior Maltese political leaders, and influential business and commercial leaders. A SOFA would facilitate more regular ship visits and further enhance security cooperation between our two countries.

If confirmed, I will continue the work of my predecessor in supporting and encouraging further bilateral trade, currently valued at more than $1 billion. It is estimated that one out of every 30 jobs in Malta is linked to a U.S. business. Our mission will continue to support the SelectUSA initiative and work to advance and expand the ability of U.S. businesses to invest in Malta, a conduit for markets in Europe and North Africa. I believe U.S. foreign direct investment should be encouraged in Malta's thriving service-based industries, as well as its manufacturing and transshipment sectors. I also intend to continue raising awareness on the mutual benefits of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T–TIP).

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to representing the best of the United States in Malta and working with a valued and

historic partner to advance U.S. foreign policy. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Ms. Hill.

Our next witness is Mr. Eric Rubin. Mr. Rubin is nominated to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Bulgaria.

Mr. Rubin is a career member of the Foreign Service and most recently served as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs from 2011 until August of 2015. Mr. Rubin previously served at the U.S. Embassies in Moscow and Ukraine and U.S. consulate in Thailand.

Mr. Rubin.

STATEMENT OF ERIC SETH RUBIN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

Mr. RUBIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished members of the committee.

It is a privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be United States Ambassador to Bulgaria. I am humbled and honored by the trust that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me, and I thank you for your time and your willingness to consider my nomination.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, for over 30 years, I have cherished my association with the United States Foreign Service. On four continents, I have done my utmost to advance the national interests of our country and the values and priorities that we share as Americans. For me, appearing before you to ask you to consider my nomination is also a chance to express my gratitude for the opportunity I have had to serve our country and to advocate for our shared vision of a world based on peace, prosperity, and liberty.

Before I go further, please allow me to acknowledge some of my family members, both those who are here with me today and those who are not. I am forever grateful to my parents, who introduced me to the wider world and taught me not to accept things as they are, but to try to change them for the better. I am deeply grateful to my wife, Nicole Simmons, who is here with me today, for her love and support over these past 32 years. She has been my constant advisor, best friend, and advocate. Together with our two beautiful daughters, Rachel, who is here with me today, and Liana, she has also been my constant partner in the work we have done to represent the United States and the American people.

I first visited Bulgaria in 1991 when I went to organize the first security dialogue and military-to-military exchanges between our two countries at the end of the cold war. Those were heady but difficult days. Bulgarians set a course for the future toward European integration and the Atlantic alliance.

Bulgarians have achieved much in the years since. Bulgaria today is a staunch NATO ally that lies in a strategic location at the southeastern edge of the European Union. But there is much more that we can and should do together. When Secretary Kerry visited Bulgaria in January, he recognized the important collaboration between our countries and announced jointly with Bulgaria the formation of bilateral working groups on national security and defense, energy security, education and people-to-people ties, and

the rule of law. These working groups have been so well received that we recently added a counterterrorism working group which first met last week.

Bulgaria is among the newer NATO members and has the second lowest GDP per capita in the alliance. Nonetheless, it has been a stalwart ally since becoming a member of the alliance. It sent troops to and took casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan. It has been a tireless participant in training exercises and hosts one of NATO's force integration units on the eastern flank. It is prudently setting aside more resources toward modernizing its military and preparing for tomorrow's missions.

Our newest bilateral working group, as I mentioned, focuses on counterterrorism. Bulgaria takes counterterrorism seriously, and the recent attacks in Paris underscore the importance of this work. Bulgaria is part of the Counter-ISIL Coalition and plays an important role in helping to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters due to its critical location at the crossroads between the Near East and western Europe.

Of course, national security is not limited to defense. Bulgaria relies almost entirely on Russia for natural gas and nuclear fuel. We are supporting Bulgaria's efforts to diversify its sources of energy in line with European Union goals. Gas from the Caspian Sea could be an important part of the solution.

The rule of law affects almost every line of effort we share with Bulgaria. The corruption is still common in Bulgaria. We are encouraged to see positive technical and legislative steps, and if confirmed, I commit myself to working to help Bulgaria tackle these difficult challenges and make further progress.

On a very positive note, our trade relationship has just about doubled over the past 6 years. Hewlett-Packard, which already employs more than 6,000 Bulgarians, in April opened Europe's only HP Technology Lab, which will simulate technology and business processes and train the company's experts in Bulgaria. If confirmed, I will continue our embassy's advocacy for our commercial interests and American business.

Finally, my highest priority, if I am confirmed, will be to ensure the safety and security of the men and women working at our Embassy and their family members, as well as the safety and well-being of all American citizens in Bulgaria.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, if given the opportunity, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on these and other important issues. I hope to be able to welcome you back to Sofia to witness the work of our dedicated embassy staff on behalf of American taxpayers, cultivating this important bilateral relationship and advancing our national interests.

I thank you again for your willingness to consider my nomination. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rubin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ERIC RUBIN

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

It is a privilege to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to Bulgaria. I am humbled and honored by the trust that

President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me, and I thank you for your time and your willingness to consider my nomination.

Mr. Chairman, for over 30 years I have cherished my association with the U.S. Foreign Service. On four continents, I have done my utmost to advance the national interests of our country, and the values and priorities that we share as Americans. For me, appearing before you to ask you to consider my nomination is also a chance to express my gratitude for the opportunity I have had to serve our country and to advocate for our shared vision of a world based on peace, prosperity, and liberty.

Before I go further, allow me to acknowledge some of my family members, both those who are here with me today and those unable to attend. I am forever thankful to my parents, who introduced me to the wider world and taught me not to accept things as they are, but to try to change them for the better. I am deeply grateful to my wife, Nicole Simmons, for her love and support over these many decades. She has been my constant adviser, best friend and advocate. Together with our two beautiful daughters, Rachel and Liana, she has also been my constant partner in the work we have done to represent the United States and the American people.

I first visited Bulgaria in 1991, when I helped to organize the first security dialogue and military-to-military exchanges between our two countries at the end of the cold war. Those were heady yet difficult days, but Bulgarians set a course for the future, toward European integration and the Atlantic Alliance. Bulgarians have achieved much in the years since—Bulgaria today is a staunch NATO ally that lies in a strategic location at the southeastern edge of the European Union. But there is much more that we can and should do together. When Secretary Kerry visited Bulgaria in January, he recognized the important collaboration between our countries, and announced jointly with Bulgaria the formation of bilateral working groups on National Security and Defense, Energy Security, Education and People-to-People Ties, and the Rule of Law. These working groups have been so well received that we recently added a Counterterrorism working group, which first met last week.

Bulgaria is among the newer NATO members and has the second-lowest GDP per capita in the alliance. Nonetheless, it has been a stalwart ally. It sent troops to—and took casualties in—Iraq and Afghanistan. It is a tireless participant in training exercises and hosts one of the NATO Force Integration Units on NATO's eastern flank. It is prudently setting aside more resources toward modernizing its military and preparing for tomorrow's missions.

Our newest bilateral working group, as I mentioned, focuses on counterterrorism. Bulgaria takes counterterrorism seriously, and the recent attacks in Paris underscore the importance of this work. Bulgaria is a part of the Counter-ISIL Coalition and plays an important role in helping stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters due to its location at the crossroads between the Near East and western Europe.

Of course, national security is not limited to defense. Bulgaria relies almost entirely on Russia for natural gas and nuclear fuel. We are supporting Bulgaria's efforts to diversify its sources and routes of energy, in line with EU goals. Gas from the Caspian Sea could be an important part of the solution.

Bulgaria's potential lies in its ability to overcome a past associated with corruption and crime. The state of rule of law affects almost every line of effort we share with Bulgaria. Though corruption is still common in Bulgaria, we are encouraged to see some positive technical and legislative steps, and, if confirmed, I commit myself to working to help Bulgarians tackle these difficult challenges.

Our trade relationship has just about doubled over the last 6 years. Hewlett-Packard, which already employs more than 6,000 Bulgarians, in April opened Europe's only HP Technology Lab, which will simulate technology and business processes and train the company's experts in Bulgaria. If confirmed, I would continue the Embassy's advocacy for our commercial interests, leading to similar success stories.

Person-to-person exchanges are sometimes the most effective form of diplomacy, particularly in light of efforts by some in the region to undermine the strong U.S.-Bulgarian relationship. Bulgarians participate in public and private sector exchanges, and the Embassy is expanding its engagement with alumni of these programs.

We have many agencies represented at Embassy Sofia. Beside the Department of State, there are the Departments of Defense, Energy, Commerce, and Agriculture. We have law enforcement colleagues from the FBI, Secret Service, and DEA. If confirmed, I would do everything in my power to ensure the Embassy's efficient operation.

If given the opportunity, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on these and other important issues. I would welcome you to Sofia to witness the good work of our dedicated Embassy staff on behalf of the American taxpayers, cultivating this important bilateral relationship. I thank you again for your willingness to consider my nomination. Thank you.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Rubin.

Our next nominee is Mr. Kyle Scott. He is the nominee to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia. Mr. Scott is a career member of the Foreign Service and currently serves as the Department of State's senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund.

Previously Mr. Scott served as counsel general at the U.S. consulate in Milan and as Director of the Office of Russian Affairs at the State Department. Additionally, Mr. Scott has held positions representing the United States to the OSCE and the European Union and at embassies in Hungary and Russia.

Mr. Scott.

STATEMENT OF KYLE R. SCOTT, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Mr. SCOTT. Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shaheen, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia. I hope the committee and the Senate will share the confidence entrusted in me by the President and Secretary Kerry.

I am accompanied today by my two sons, Mark and Kristian, and by my wife, Nena. They have stood by me through more than three decades in the Foreign Service, including 16 moves and eight overseas postings. The family members of the Foreign Service often bear the brunt of personal sacrifice and hardship. My family are a living testimony to public service on behalf of the American people, and I could not be prouder of them than I am today.

In 35 years as a member of the Foreign Service, I have dedicated my career to improving America's security and our position in the world. Much of that time has been focused on transatlantic relations, including multiple assignments in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. During this period, we have made great strides in forging a Europe whole, free, prosperous, and at peace. But that vision is not yet complete.

Allow me to focus a few key points regarding Serbia's role in this broader vision.

Serbia is a linchpin for stability and progress in the Western Balkans. In recent years, it has made considerable progress on its path toward Euro-Atlantic integration, and now it stands at a critical inflection point, facing difficult decisions that will forge Serbia's future and shape relations with its neighbors in ways that can contribute to broader peace and stability. It is in the interest of the United States that Serbia develops as a modern, prosperous European nation at peace with itself and its neighbors, demonstrating full respect for the rule of law and the rights of all its citizens.

Over the past several years, with our strong support, Serbia has taken a strategic decision toward a Euro-Atlantic future rooted in EU membership. If confirmed, I would strive to continue this progress. This includes enacting legislative, fiscal, and regulatory reforms. It means strengthening ties among the countries of the western Balkans. And in this regard, sustained progress toward a comprehensive normalization of the Serbia-Kosovo relationship is a fundamental requirement for the long-term regional stability of the western Balkans.

Progress also requires reinforcing and defending shared democratic values, supporting human rights and protecting fundamental freedoms.

A key to continued progress is more dynamic economic growth and reform, streamlining bureaucracy, improving competitiveness and innovation, and combating the corrosive consequences of corruption will all help Serbia become a more attractive destination for investment from American companies and a more dynamic market for U.S. exports.

More recently Serbia is also bearing a major brunt of the recent migration crisis afflicting Europe. Serbia's leaders and its people deserve to be commended for their humanitarian approach but can also use everyone's help in managing the added burdens associated with this challenge.

And finally, if confirmed, I am committed to continue to seek resolution of two important challenges to our bilateral relationship. Those responsible for the 1999 murder of three American citizens, the Bytyqi brothers, have never been brought to justice. The same holds true for those who allowed the mob attacks on the U.S. Embassy in 2008. I pledge unwavering efforts, if confirmed, to press the Serbian Government to ensure that all who were involved in these crimes are brought to justice regardless of their rank or position. This is a challenging agenda.

I look forward to building on the leadership and dedication shown by the current U.S. Ambassador, Michael Kirby, and know I can count on the experience of a talented team of Americans and locally employed staff at Embassy Belgrade, as well as the support from multiple agencies in Washington and the legislative branch. If confirmed, I am committed to doing my utmost to promote our shared goal, a democratic Serbia providing growth and security for its citizens at peace with all its neighbors and firmly set on a path of European integration.

Thank you for granting me this opportunity to appear before the committee today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Scott follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KYLE SCOTT

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members of the committee, it is an honor and privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia. I deeply appreciate the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me through this nomination. I hope the committee and the Senate will share that confidence and confirm me.

I am accompanied today by my two sons, Mark and Kristian, and by my wife, Nena, who have been my rock and inspiration throughout my career as a U.S. diplomat. They have stood by me through more than three decades in the Foreign Service, including 16 moves and eight overseas postings. The family members of the Foreign Service often bear the brunt of personal sacrifice and hardship. They are living testimony to public service on behalf of the American people, and I could not be prouder of them than I am today.

In 35 years as a member of the Foreign Service, I have dedicated my career to improving America's security and our position in the world. Much of that time has been focused on transatlantic relations, including seven overseas assignments spanning Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. During this period, we have made great strides in forging a Europe whole, free, prosperous, and at peace, but that vision is not yet complete. As Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Mission to the OSCE, I witnessed firsthand the struggles of countries seeking to transform their societies and the role that outside actors and multilateral organizations can play in helping

them better adhere to the values and principles that underpin the transatlantic relationship. As Principal Officer in the U.S. consulate in Milan, I have seen the invaluable role of our allies in addressing shared challenges in the region. I have also seen the immense benefit that investment by American firms contributes to reaching our goal in forging a prosperous Europe. My recent position as a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the U.S. has offered me an invaluable opportunity to participate in debates on U.S foreign policy in Europe, the crisis in Ukraine, the EU's financial difficulties, and the latest challenges posed by the unprecedented migration crisis. As a former Director of the Office of Russian Affairs, I am fully aware of the regional challenges posed by Russian attempts to influence its European neighbors and by Russian aggression in Europe, including Russia's recent actions that have violated Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity and sought to destabilize Ukraine. I believe the confluence of these experiences has prepared me well to serve as Chief of Mission in Serbia.

Euro-Atlantic integration

Serbia is a linchpin for stability and progress in the Western Balkans. In recent years, it has made considerable progress on its path toward Euro-Atlantic integration. Now it stands at a critical inflection point. Political leaders in Belgrade face difficult decisions that will indelibly forge Serbia's domestic development, will help shape relations with its neighbors for generations to come, and can contribute to broader peace and stability in the region. It is in the interest of the United States that Serbia develops as a modern, prosperous European nation at peace with itself and its neighbors, demonstrating full respect for the rule of law and the rights of all of its citizens.

Over the past several years, with our strong support, Serbia has made concrete steps toward defining its Euro-Atlantic future. Serbian leaders are pursuing a broad agenda aimed at acceding to the European Union. This includes enacting legislative, fiscal, and regulatory reforms that can stimulate the transformation that we strongly support. Reforms such as cutting public wages and pensions and privatizing state-owned businesses are difficult. With U.S. technical assistance, the Government of Serbia is pursuing business-enabling environment reforms that should help better align Serbia's fiscal practices with EU and international standards. More important, making the right choices, tough as they may be, will place the country on a path toward more sustainable growth and development.

Regional relations

Mr. Chairman, the challenge of strengthening ties among the countries of the Western Balkans remains a significant hurdle in pursuit of our Euro-Atlantic vision. Normalization of the Kosovo-Serbia relationship is a fundamental requirement for long-term regional stability and progress. In line with its EU accession process, Serbia has made significant progress in the EU-facilitated Dialogue with Kosovo over the past year. We have strongly supported the Dialogue and encouraged both parties to fully implement all elements of the April 2013 "Brussels Agreement" on normalization of relations, a landmark diplomatic achievement in the Balkans. This August, we saw significant progress on implementing remaining elements of the Brussels Agreement—a major step toward opening Serbia's first chapters of the EU acquis. Credit for these successes goes to the political leaders of Serbia and Kosovo, who have reaffirmed their commitment to the process, and to the principled mediators of the EU. The U.S. Embassies in Serbia and Kosovo also played an important role as behind-the-scenes mediators and impartial advisors on the process. I would also like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work Ambassador Michael Kirby has shown to facilitating relations between the two countries. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing this work in support of the Dialogue. Together with our European partners, I will work to help ensure that the parties remain at the table in good faith, implement all Dialogue agreements through timely and concrete results, and sustain progress toward a comprehensive normalization of relations.

Serbia's relations with its other neighbors generally have improved over the past 3 years, but they, too, require continued focus. This will remain an important aspect of our diplomacy in the region. If confirmed, I will work to build strong channels of communication between Serbia and its neighbors—including Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia—so that outstanding issues can be resolved and the region as a whole can move toward Euro-Atlantic integration.

Finally, Serbia is bearing a major brunt of the recent migration crisis afflicting much of Europe. Serbia deserves to be commended for its humanitarian approach, but can also use everyone's help in managing the added burdens associated with this wave of migrants.

Democracy and Rule of Law

An important element in Serbia's European integration will be strengthening its ability to promote and defend shared democratic values, support human rights, and protect fundamental freedoms. If I am confirmed for this position, I am committed to continuing America's support for strengthening institutions and procedures that support the rights of individuals from minority communities, help combat corruption, and foster a democratic society. A vibrant civil society, free media environment, and empowered independent institutions are critical to achieving these goals. Strengthening our long-standing support for these components of democracy will be a crucial part of my mission. Only by creating an environment underpinned by rule of law—one that allows each individual the opportunity to develop to his or her full potential—will Serbia succeed in attracting more investment, combat the debilitating outflow of its youngest and brightest, and strengthen the public's faith in government institutions. The lead in these efforts must come from Serbian political leaders and the Serbian people, but our programs to strengthen the administration of criminal justice, advance judicial reform, improve investigation and prosecution of crimes, and train judges, prosecutors, and police can be an important part of this effort. Working closely with U.S. technical experts, civil society, and international organizations, the Serbian Government is taking measures to implement serious reforms—such as putting the recently passed whistleblower law to the test and bringing due process to those accused of corruption through transparent, thorough court trials.

Economic development

Alongside rule of law measures, more dynamic economic development and reform will be vital to Serbia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Although there are initial signs that Serbia is finally emerging from a decade of anemic economic performance that has eroded national confidence, more needs to be done. I am committed to supporting American businesses as part of an effort to help Serbia embark on the road toward greater prosperity. Our economic ties continue to grow, with U.S. investment since 2002 exceeding $3.6 billion dollars. American companies employ more than 15,500 people in Serbia. Serbia has enormous economic potential, including an educated and talented workforce and a geography that positions the country in an important trading crossroads for Europe. All this makes Serbia an attractive destination for investment from U.S. companies. To make the most of its potential, however, much work remains to be done to streamline the process of doing business, reduce bureaucratic impediments, improve small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) competitiveness and innovation, and combat the corrosive consequences of corruption.

Peacekeeping and military relations

Last November, Serbia signed an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO reflecting the country's increasing aspiration to be a source for stability and security not only in the Western Balkans, but in the broader region as well.

Over the last 5 years, Serbia has become an increasingly important contributor to regional and international stability through peacekeeping operations. Serbian soldiers today are deployed as peacekeepers on six U.N. missions on three continents and as observers on two EU missions. The once confrontational military-to-military relationship between Serbia and the United States has evolved into a full and comprehensive partnership, and, as mentioned before, Serbia has committed to a pragmatic partnership with NATO. Through our Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), the United States is supporting the development of South Base, a Serbian military facility that offers state-of-the-art training opportunities for units preparing to deploy overseas in support of U.N. and EU peacekeeping missions. The Serbian military's partnership program with the Ohio National Guard is among the most successful in Europe. Both the civilian leadership and senior ranks of the uniformed military have embraced these and other programs as part of a comprehensive program for building skills and promoting interoperability.

Bilateral concerns

If confirmed, I will continue to seek resolution of two important challenges to our bilateral relationship. Those responsible for the murder of the three American citizen Bytyqi brothers, New York residents executed by Serbian security forces in 1999, have never been prosecuted. The American people cannot allow the murderers of three of our citizens to escape justice. Likewise, those who allowed the mob attacks on the U.S. and other Western embassies in February 2008 to take place have never been brought to justice. While we welcome the fact that six current and former police officials are under investigation for ordering the police to stand aside

while our Embassy was under attack, we are dismayed that the rioters who were convicted were only given light, suspended sentences. For these cases—the murder of the Bytyqi brothers and the attack on our Embassy—I am committed to unwavering efforts to press the Serbian Government to complete thorough investigations and ensure that all who were involved in these crimes are brought to justice, regardless of their rank or position.

Closing

This is a challenging agenda, but it is also achievable. From my experience in the Foreign Service, I know I will not have to pursue it alone. Drawing on the experience of the talented team of Americans and locally employed staff at Embassy Belgrade, our partners from multiple agencies in Washington, and continued support from the legislative branch, I am committed to doing my utmost to promote our shared goal—a democratic Serbia providing growth and security for its citizens, at peace with all of its neighbors, and firmly set on a path of European integration.

Thank you once again for granting me the opportunity to appear before this committee today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Scott.

Our final nominee is Mr. Carlos Torres. Mr. Torres is nominated to be the Deputy Director of the Peace Corps. Mr. Torres is currently the Associate Director for Global Operations at the Peace Corps, a position he has held since 2013.

Previously Mr. Torres served as Regional Director for the Inter-America and Pacific Region at the Peace Corps and has served as an independent consultant on international projects from 2000 until 2010. Mr. Torres also founded—is it CARANA?

Mr. TORRES. CARANA.

Senator JOHNSON. Corporation in 1984 and served as its president and CEO until the year 2000.

Mr. Torres.

STATEMENT OF CARLOS J. TORRES, NOMINATED TO BE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS

Mr. TORRES. Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shaheen, other members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today to testify before you. It is a privilege to be here as you consider my nomination to serve as the next Deputy Director of the Peace Corps.

I would like to thank President Obama for nominating me. I am honored by this opportunity to serve my country in this role.

I want to thank my family. I am accompanied today by my wife of 33 years, Anita Capizzi, and my mother, Anne Roper. Our three sons could not be with us today. They are spread out throughout the country.

I would also like to thank Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet for her leadership trust and counsel over the past years.

I am also very proud to have with me today three recently returned Peace Corps Volunteers: Clara Reyes, Daniel Hinkle, and Soletia Christie. I have asked them to join us today because they are examples of how Volunteers are at the center of my decision-making process every day as we work toward a more important goal, ensuring that every Volunteer has a safe and productive volunteer experience.

From the beginning of my career in the private sector, I have spent my life's work in the field of economic development. This is the reason why I created CARANA Corporation in 1984, which provides private sector-led solutions to problems in economic develop-

ment. I believe my real-world business experience has positively informed my decision-making process in my current role at Peace Corps, and if confirmed as the Deputy Director, I plan to continue to draw from this time as an entrepreneur and businessman.

In December of 2009, several years after having stepped down as the chairman and CEO of CARANA Corporation, I was honored when Peace Corps asked me to put my management and international economic development skills to work by leading a comprehensive agency assessment team, which took a critical look at a wide range of Peace Corps operations and procedures. I am extremely proud of that assessment which focused on how Peace Corps could improve its operations, better utilize its resources, and increase its impact. The comprehensive agency assessment has served as a blueprint for the agency over the past 5 years and has guided many of our reforms, leading to vast improvements in the way we train and support our Volunteers, how we allocate resources, and overall management and operations within the agency. These reforms, among others, have positioned the Peace Corps to make an even greater impact into the future.

I was sworn in as the regional director for the Inter-America and Pacific region in June 2010 and served in that capacity for 3 years. In November 2013, I was sworn in as the associate director for the Office of Global Operations. In both of these positions, I have been able to combine my private sector experience with the knowledge gained in carrying out the comprehensive agency assessment. The result has always been a sharp focus on improving our operations, particularly on how the agency supports its Volunteers in the field.

I believe that it is moral obligation to provide all of our Volunteers with the best possible experience, one that is both safe and productive. I want to ensure the members of this subcommittee that these are not just words. Every decision I have made during my time at the agency is based on the foundation that as a manager at the Peace Corps, I have an obligation to do everything I can so that every Volunteer has that safe and productive experience.

It has been an honor to shape both the direction and the agency's significant reforms over the past 5 years, and I am committed both personally and professionally to seeing them through and continuing to provide world-class support to our Peace Corps Volunteers who are changing the world every day.

Thank you again for having me here today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Torres follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CARLOS J. TORRES

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Shaheen, and members of the committee, I thank you for inviting me to testify before you today, as you consider my nomination to be the next Deputy Director of the Peace Corps.

I would like to thank President Obama for nominating me; I am humbled by the opportunity to serve my country in this role. I also want to thank my family. I am accompanied today by my wife of 33 years—Anita Capizzi; and my mother—Anne Roper. I would also like to recognize my sons; Cristian, who is studying at the University of Maryland; Miguel, who is working in Costa Mesa, CA; and Andres, who just finished his MBA at Kellogg University in Chicago and is now working in Austin, TX. I would also like to thank Peace Corps Director, Carrie Hessler-Radelet, for her leadership, trust, and counsel over the past several years.

I am also very proud to have with me today three recently returned Volunteers: Clara Reyes, Daniel Hinkle, and Soletia Christie. Clara comes from New Mexico and served in El Salvador from 2009 to 2012; Daniel hails from Montana and also served in El Salvador from 2010 to 2012; and Soletia comes from California and served in Mali from 2010 to 2012. I have asked them to join us today to witness my testimony because they are examples of how Volunteers are at the center of Peace Corps' and my decisionmaking process every day.

Background

I would like to take a brief moment to talk about my background and experience, and how it has prepared me for this opportunity. From the beginning of my professional career as a consultant in the financial industries group at the Arthur D. Little Company in Cambridge, MA, through today, I believe I have developed a strong reputation as a manager and as a problem solver. It would be my great honor to be able to continue to apply my skills as the Deputy Director of the Peace Corps, if confirmed.

It was during my time at the Arthur D. Little Company that I first began to work in the field of economic development, focusing my efforts since then on reducing global poverty and income inequality.

In 1983, I was a personal services contractor in Costa Rica with the United States Agency for International Development, which was my first job with the United States Government. A year later, I started CARANA Corporation, a consulting company providing private sector-led solutions to problems in economic development. Over the next 16 years, I built CARANA Corporation into the company that it is today—a Virginia-based company that has a strong presence throughout the developing world with dedicated staff working on a variety of innovative development projects.

It was a natural progression that in early 2009—several years after having stepped down as president of CARANA Corporation, and with a strong interest in working overseas again—I applied to be a Country Director with the Peace Corps. However, as fate would have it, in December 2009, the agency's leadership asked me, instead, to lead a Comprehensive Agency Assessment team that was tasked to take a critical look at a wide range of issues concerning Peace Corps' operations and procedures.

I am extremely proud of the Assessment, which focused on how Peace Corps could improve its operations, better utilize its resources, and increase its impact. The Comprehensive Agency Assessment has served as a blueprint for the agency over the past 4 years, and has guided many of our reforms, leading to marked improvements in the way we train and support our Volunteers, how we allocate resources, and overall management and operations within the agency. These reforms, among others, have positioned the Peace Corps to make an even greater impact in the future.

The Comprehensive Agency Assessment was delivered to Congress on June 15, 2010. The next day, I was sworn in as the Regional Director of the Inter-America and Pacific region of the Peace Corps, where I served until March 2013. I then served as the Acting Associate Director for Global Operations until November 2013, when I was sworn into the job. I have been serving as the Associate Director for the Office of Global Operations since then.

As the Regional Director of the Inter-America and Pacific region, I oversaw Peace Corps' operations in 23 countries, which in turn supported approximately 2,800 Volunteers. In this position, I was able to combine my private sector experience with the knowledge gained in carrying out the Comprehensive Agency Assessment. The result was a sharp focus on improving Volunteer operations, and particularly, on how the agency supports Volunteers in the field.

When I say we are committed to "a safe and productive Volunteer experience," I want to assure the members of this committee that these are not just words. I believe very strongly that as an agency, it is Peace Corps' moral obligation to provide Volunteers with the best possible experience: a safe and productive experience. Every decision I have made during my time with the agency is based on the foundation that, as a manager at the Peace Corps, I have an obligation to do everything I can so that every Volunteer has a safe and productive experience.

It was this focus on the Volunteer that in 2010 led me to take a hard look at Peace Corps' operations in the Northern Triangle of Central American and in other parts of the region where crime rates against Volunteers were high. We asked ourselves some hard questions regarding our Volunteer operations in these countries and focused on how we looked at risk, with a fresh eye on how we could improve our overall risk mitigation strategies. The result was a comprehensive package of reforms that were implemented in early 2011. The reforms we made resulted in a

dramatic decrease in serious crimes against our Volunteers. While these difficult decisions were not always popular, I am proud of the results that we have delivered.

As the Associate Director of the Office of Global Operations, I continued to focus my attention on further strengthening Volunteer operations. I work every day to implement the vision of our Director, born out of the Comprehensive Agency Assessment, and predicated on our goal that every Volunteer have a safe and productive experience.

During my time at Peace Corps, I have worked with Peace Corps staff to better define our core operations and develop a framework that we can use to make better decisions. I have worked to ensure that our overseas staff has a greater say in the decisionmaking process at the agency, which in turn keeps the agency's focus on the core operations in the field. I have also worked to introduce new budgeting and planning methodologies that have resulted in improved funding and staffing for our overseas posts, so they can better support our Volunteers.

In her testimony before this committee in November, 2013, Director Hessler-Radelet described her vision for the agency as a dynamic, forward-leaning champion for international service. I embrace this vision where the Peace Corps is defined by its energy, innovation, and impact, and as the place where Americans who are drawn to service abroad can make a real difference in the lives of the world's poor.

To implement our Director's vision, the agency is concentrating its resources in three key areas: a bold communications and outreach strategy, a competitive recruitment strategy, and continued enhancements to Volunteer support to deliver results. At the center of these three elements is the work that we do to recruit and support the best staff possible, and to ensure that we are providing the right level of resources where they are needed. I am happy to say that we continue to make excellent progress in each of these areas.

Conclusion

If confirmed as Deputy Director, I hope to be able to continue to implement the vision that our Director has articulated so well by focusing on our core operations with the Volunteer at the center.

In my professional career, I have been fortunate to come across many Peace Corps Volunteers in the many countries where I have worked. I developed an admiration for these dedicated Americans who live in tough conditions, working every day to bring new skills, knowledge, and hope to the communities they serve. In many cases, these Volunteers are the first Americans that the residents in these communities have ever interacted with, and as a result, today there are millions of people around the world with a positive opinion of America and its people, and a greater understanding of what we as a country stand for.

At the beginning of my testimony I introduced three recently returned Volunteers: Clara, Soletia, and Daniel. I am blessed to work with them, and all of the other returned Peace Corps Volunteers at the agency, every day. These returned Volunteers, as well as all of our currently serving Volunteers, inspire me every day to work my hardest so that each and every one of them has a safe and productive Volunteer experience. I welcome the opportunity to serve President Obama, Director Hessler-Radelet, my country and our Volunteers in this capacity.

Thank you again for having me here today, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Torres. Again, I want to welcome all your family and friends that have come here to the hearing.

A number of you mentioned the refugee crisis, and I guess I would kind of like to go right down the line. Either through your current experience, previous experience, or your new position, give me your latest insight. I would like to be brought up to speed with your knowledge of how the refugee crisis—what you are aware of. I will start with you, Ms. Hill.

Ms. HILL. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

From the perspective that I have been tracking the refugee crisis from Malta's perspective, it has been a bit different this year than years past. In years past, the refugee flow has gone straight through Malta. It has been a south to north flow coming up from North Africa. This year the refugee crisis has changed. It has gone to an east to west flow. So this year, Malta has not seen as many

refugees entering the country as they have last year. As a matter of fact, this year they have had maybe a little bit over 100 refugees and that is it. In years past, they have been in the thousands, and for a small country, that has been a heavy burden.

Senator JOHNSON. They just stop in Malta and transit down through?

Ms. HILL. What is going on right now is some have made it to the shores, but the Europeans now have Operation Trident going on in the Mediterranean, which is intercepting the boats and taking them to larger intake facilities in Italy. So the refugees are being shuttled around Malta to the larger intake facilities in Italy. But Malta has still been at the forefront of the burden-sharing plan the European Union has just put in place. In years past, Malta has been a country that has tried to get rid of its refugees. This year, they have agreed to take refugees from Turkey and Greece in small numbers, but according to the formula that the European Union has based on burden-sharing for all the states. So they are taking about 180 refugees this year from Turkey and Greece.

Senator JOHNSON. So with Operation Trident, how quickly are refugees picked up? How soon are they intercepted and taken on board? Within how many miles approximately?

Ms. HILL. You know, Senator, I do not have the answers to that question specifically. I can get those for you. I think it is fairly quickly when they enter international waters if they are discovered. Sometimes the ships make it directly to Italy without even going through any interception.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Rubin.

Mr. RUBIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

At the end of the cold war, Bulgaria had a fully militarized border with Turkey, which was the border between the Warsaw Pact and NATO. And at the time of the end of the cold war, those fortifications and fencing and walls and other physical barriers were torn down. At the beginning of this refugee crisis, Bulgaria faced a situation in which much of its physical border was unprotected, undefended, unfenced. And at the beginning of the crisis, Bulgaria was faced with a very large inflow of migrants from Turkey crossing areas that were not patrolled, and in the initial phases, about 90,000 illegal entry attempts and about 30,000 arrests were made.

Since the beginning of the crisis, Bulgaria, with help from the European Union and other partners, including the United States, has done much to erect physical controls on the border, which is the external border of the European Union now, as well as control the areas that are not fenced. And there has been a dramatic improvement in the number of refugees/migrants trying to cross illegally. Bulgaria faces less of a challenge than some of the other EU members because it is not yet a member of Schengen, and therefore, entering Bulgaria does not give migrants automatic entry to the rest of the EU. So for that reason, it has not been as popular a destination.

That said, these numbers are very significant and we have generally assessed that the Bulgarian Government and the Bulgarian border police and other agencies have done a good job both in handling this tremendous influx, but also treating the migrants with

full respect for their rights and ensuring that all procedures are followed.

Senator JOHNSON. So you used the figure 90,000; 30,000 were apprehended. Can you just tell me what is the disposition of the 60,000 that were not apprehended versus the 30,000 who were?

Mr. RUBIN. Yes. The ones who were apprehended but not taken into custody essentially were turned away, and I would not be able to tell you what happened after they returned to Turkey, but that is obviously a subject that is an important question.

On the question of those in Bulgaria, there are temporary detention centers. The Bulgarians have complied with all procedures in terms of registering the migrants who they detained, ensuring that they have full biometrics on them, sharing that with European Union agencies and international agencies tracking the flow. And we have been very, very pleased with the cooperation we have had in following this influx.

Senator JOHNSON. So you are saying that about 60,000 are being detained now within Bulgaria?

Mr. RUBIN. I do not have exact numbers, Mr. Chairman. It is under 30,000 and falling, and I think the peak of the crisis, it would appear, for Bulgaria has passed.

Senator JOHNSON. Now, they are moving around Bulgaria then.

Mr. RUBIN. Correct.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Chairman.

I think as we have all seen from the news, Serbia is a key transit point for many of the flows of the refugees coming out of Turkey through Greece, Macedonia, through Serbia on their way toward northern Europe.

To put that in some bit of perspective, in 2014, Serbia had about 17,000 registered refugees. This year, especially this fall, they are registering numbers like that on a weekly basis, some days as many as 3,000 and as high as 10,000 per day have been crossing their border.

Serbia's approach has been very much based upon meeting their humanitarian needs. These people are not seeking to stay in Serbia. They are moving onward, and Serbia is taking the approach of trying to make sure that their humanitarian needs are met, but also frankly to help them on their way northward. So what that means in Serbia's case is ensuring that they have adequate protections at their southern border so that they can process these people through in a humanitarian way. That means providing shelter for them, medical treatment for those who need it, food, and transit aid as well to move further north.

They have also been very cognizant of the security concerns and security needs by trying to channel these refugees into reception centers. They are then able to process those who present themselves to the Serbian Government. That means ensuring proper documentation, taking biometrics, and then moving them on.

Senator JOHNSON. My time has expired.

Senator Shaheen.

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

I would like to begin with Mr. Torres. I am a big supporter of the Peace Corps. I think it does amazing work around the world. But I am very troubled by the recent report from the Office of the Inspector General that found that nearly 1 in 5 American Peace Corps Volunteers serving around the world is sexually assaulted at some point during their service. And equally troubling was the finding in the report that about half of these victims did not report their attacks because they felt that it would negatively impact their standing as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Now, given that you have served for the last couple of years as assistant director for Global Operations and that you were a consultant for 10 years before that, can you talk about what is going on in the culture of the Peace Corps that allows this to continue to happen and that makes Volunteers feel like they cannot report or get help for the situation that they have been in when they have been sexually assaulted?

Mr. TORRES. Yes, Senator, I can address that.

The Peace Corps's primary concern is the safety and security of our Volunteers. We work tirelessly to create that safe and productive Volunteer experience.

In 2011, after the passage of the Kate Puzey Act, we created what we refer to as our sexual assault risk reduction and response program. This is a comprehensive program with over 30 components that are designed not only to better train our Volunteers to avoid the risks but also to respond in a better way to our Volunteers. It has been advised by an independent council of individuals that are both from the public sector, Justice, Defense, as well as in the private sector, that are experts in the field of sexual assault.

I believe that the agency has made tremendous strides in this area. We have created, among other things, and specifically to address the issue of nonreporting, a system of restricted reporting. The system of restricted reporting is one that allows a Volunteer to come forward, receive the services that they require with a limited number of people knowing about it. We know that a lot of victims of sexual assault do not come forward because they do not want it to be known or they do not want to file charges or have it turn into a criminal case. The system of restricted reporting does that.

We have seen an increase in the reporting. We believe that this is not an increase in the number of sexual assaults but rather that it is achieving our goal of increased reporting in sexual assaults. And as I stated earlier, I do believe that our agency has made significant progress. There is always more that we can do and we continue to work for them.

Senator SHAHEEN. Can you talk a little bit more about the kind of preparation that is provided to Peace Corps Volunteers and the training that they get that would help them both in terms of addressing potential dangerous situations as well as how they are instructed if they are sexually assaulted?

Mr. TORRES. Yes.

So on the risk reduction side, we carry out trainings on culture, hidden messages that translate through culture. We talk to them about bystander intervention. We inform them about confidentiality and reporting confidentiality options that they have avail-

able to them. A lot of work goes into their site development and the site where they are placed. We know that Volunteers are safest in their sites. So that would be another area.

Senator SHAHEEN. Can you explain that a little bit more? When you say "safest in their sites," what do you mean?

Mr. TORRES. So as you know, Peace Corps places their Volunteers in sites in a community. The whole Peace Corps rationale behind safety and security is that by placing them in a community and having them be accepted by that community, they are safest. It is the community that protects them. So our work that we do in site development really is critical to ensuring the safety of the Volunteer over their 2 years of service, and that is what we focus on.

In addition, on the training, we also provide them training on how they can report, whether it be restricted or a standard report. We also inform them as to the role of the Office of the Inspector General. They always have the option to go directly to the Inspector General. We supply them with a hotline number, as well as an email address. So they are receiving information from a lot of different angles.

On the response side, they know what their options are. We remind them constantly. Our staff has undergone training in all of our posts on how to respond to a standard report or how to respond to a restricted report.

Senator SHAHEEN. And yet, according to the Inspector General, the hope for outcome from all of those measures has not improved significantly, as I read it. Do you feel like those measures have improved the situation, and if not, what other kinds of efforts do you think can be undertaken to address this issue? Because clearly when that is on the nightly news, it discourages people who we want to come and join the Peace Corps.

Mr. TORRES. Yes, Senator.

Right now, the Office of the Inspector General is beginning a study, which would be the 5-year study on the implementation of the Kate Puzey Act. This study was called for under the legislation, and I look forward to that study. I believe that they will be a tough critic but I also believe that they will be fair. I believe that this report, when it is submitted to Congress, will show that the agency has made these significant improvements.

I mentioned that we have an independent advisory board. This is also created under the Kate Puzey Act. They have advised us every step of the way. They have just finished their fourth annual report, and with your permission, I would just like to read two sentences from it——

Senator SHAHEEN. Sure, please.

Mr. TORRES [continuing]. Which I believe does tell a different story.

The council continues to be impressed with the Peace Corps for its dedication to fulfill the mandates of the Kate Puzey Act and for the development of a wide range of programs and services for its Volunteers. Whether implementing new policies, introducing new staff in Volunteer training, or working to monitor and evaluate programs and services, the Peace Corps has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to its Volunteers. This is dated October 28.

Our commitment to sexual assault and the risk reduction and response aspects of it really start with our director. You may be aware that our director herself was assaulted when she was a Peace Corps Volunteer. She is driven to change the culture of Peace Corps. We follow her drive. I believe that she has done an excellent job, and we continue to improve the Peace Corps every day.

Senator SHAHEEN. My time is up but, Mr. Chairman, if you do not mind, let me ask a final question because as the Deputy Director, will this issue be part of your portfolio at the Peace Corps.

Mr. TORRES. This issue is part of everybody's portfolio at the Peace Corps. We have all received training. We are all a part of it. When I travel overseas and I visit a post, I attend the trainings that are related to our SARP program. It is everybody's job at the Peace Corps. As the Deputy Director, it will be my job and it is my job to make sure that we continue to make the progress that we need to make.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I very much appreciate that and that response. And I look forward to getting reports as part of this committee on the progress that is being made on this issue because it is obviously a critical challenge that needs to be overcome for the Peace Corps to continue to do the kind of work that has made it such an icon for America.

Mr. TORRES. Thank you, Senator. And I would be happy to offer a visit from our experts at the Peace Corps that could meet with you or other members of the subcommittee. Then I could brief you on everything we are doing and all of the changes that we have made.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. We will take you up on that.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Let me go back to refugees with Mr. Scott. So they transit through Serbia through where? Hungary has pretty well closed their border I believe. So it is through Croatia then?

Mr. SCOTT. Yes, sir. At the beginning, they were going mainly through Hungary, but after Hungary built up its wall, they began to transit mainly through Croatia. There was a brief period when that border was shut down as well, but now the cooperation between the Croatian Government and the Government of Serbia has managed to regularize the flow.

Senator JOHNSON. I see that Senator Murphy has just arrived. So Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome to all of you. Congratulations on your nominations. Hopefully we will move you quickly through the process.

Mr. Rubin, I wanted to ask you a broad question that would also apply to the other members of the panel that are going to go to visa waiver countries, but we are having a debate here about the security of this country and the extent to which we can work with the administration to tighten up the visa waiver program to make sure we know who is coming into the United States. I know that the administration just announced some reforms to that program. But I want to draw on your experience at the Europe and Eurasia desk over the course of the last several years, and if there are comments from others, I welcome them.

It strikes me that the backstop to the visa waiver program is the no-fly list, is our ability to determine who should and who should not be on these flights. Our no-fly list is only as good as the information that we have about people that pose a risk to the United States. And our information about how poses a risk to the United States is only so good as we have agile and robust lines of communication with European governments that are doing a lot of the law enforcement actions. Now, our intelligence services communicate regularly, but sometimes, as we know, there are silos between intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies in the United States and in European capitals.

Talk to me just a little bit about, to the extent that this is in your portfolio, ways in which we should be thinking about strengthening the visa waiver program. And then what role does an ambassador play in a visa waiver country in trying to force the host country to get serious about populating these shared databases with all of the information necessary to have a complete list of prohibited individuals?

Mr. RUBIN. Thank you very much, Senator Murphy.

During my time in the European Bureau over the past 4 years, this subject was one of our absolute top priorities, and I will say I think enormous progress was made directly with the European Union and its agencies with all the member states with a few other countries that are not European Union members but are in the visa waiver program. The issues you cite, Senator, are the absolute critical issues, having good information early enough and having ample enough information to ensure that we are protecting our borders and ensuring that we are not admitting anyone who should not be admitted. We are ongoing.

Next, if this committee and the whole Senate confirms me, Bulgaria is not yet a member of the visa waiver program. The Bulgarians would very much like to join, but I can say that in the case of Bulgaria, the cooperation has been absolutely superb on all the various forms of data sharing and information sharing that we need to ensure that travelers to the United States are screened adequately. We do not have any direct flights from Bulgaria, so we do not have to deal with any direct entry problems. But we do have the information on travelers coming from Bulgaria and the cooperation between our agencies on the ground, DHS, the State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau, the Drug Enforcement Agency, all of our other agencies, the FBI, has been superb. It is obviously a regional issue. It is obviously an issue that affects all of these countries. I can tell you that if I am confirmed, as Bulgaria seeks to join the visa waiver program, this will be an absolute top priority ensuring that that is the most important question addressed.

Senator MURPHY. But given your—and this is more going backward rather than forward in your career. Has State been satisfied with the level of input into the databases that we have access to that come from our European partners regarding law enforcement or national security investigations of suspected terrorists or extremists?

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Senator.

During my time in the European Bureau, I did not actually oversee any relations with countries that were in the visa waiver program. So I will confess to not having the fullest picture. I can tell you, though, as part of my time as Deputy Assistant Secretary, as part of the team, it was a very high priority effort from the beginning and I do know in all of our biannual discussions with the EU, with the agencies of the member states, a lot was accomplished. I would defer to colleagues who were more directly involved in that and would also be glad to get you more information on that trajectory as well during that time.

Senator MURPHY. Mr. Scott, about a year ago, I was in Serbia, spent some time with Prime Minister Vucic. I was there at a fascinating moment. I happened to be there the day before Putin arrived with a military parade overflown by MIG jets. And it was pretty remarkable that on a day when he was showing off the sort of robust potential military and economic commitment that Russia was prepared to make to Serbia, our Ambassador was at the time begging me to come back to the United States to ask for $20,000 or $30,000 more to keep open an exchange program that was really, really important.

And it just struck me as an example of the extreme imbalance between the amount of attention that we pay to the Balkans and the amount of attention that the Russians pay. A country like Serbia desperately wants—I think Vucic generally wants an alliance with Europe and an alliance with the West. But they are getting a lot more love and a lot more attention from Moscow than they are from Washington today.

Now, we cannot expect that a country like Serbia is going to make a choice. We should not. They have to have good relations with Russia. It is deeply engrained in their history. But we have got to find some ways, potentially in the absence of major new appropriations for programs like that from the Congress, to create some tighter connections.

This is a long way of asking about what you know about Serbia's orientation between the EU and Russia. What are some things that we can do to show them that we are serious about tightening that connection between us and them? Because they are going to continue to get offers as they do almost every month from Moscow to create security partnerships, to create economic partnerships to draw them away. And they are not the only ones. The Montenegrins are getting those offers. Certainly the offers are always out there for the Bosnians, and we do not often have satisfactory counters to those offers.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much for your question, and I share the basic thrust of your concerns about a more assertive Russian presence in the western Balkans and in Serbia in particular.

I agree with you very much that it should not be American policy to try to drive a wedge between the Serbian people and the Russian people. There are centuries' long historical, cultural, linguistic, religious ties between the peoples.

But the real concern is whether Russian Government policy today is influencing Serbia or other countries of the western Balkans in ways that would be detrimental to our interests. And in this regard—and I know that you met with Prime Minister Vucic,

and I also had the opportunity to hear you speaking of your general impressions at the German Marshall Fund after that trip. You know that he and his government have made a commitment, a strategic commitment, toward the direction that he would like to see his country go, towards the West, toward European Union membership. And I think that we should be doing everything possible that we can to encourage them and to help them along that path, to strengthen their institutional interweaving with Euro-Atlantic institutions. And that means first and foremost for them at this point the European Union. They are not interested in joining NATO at this moment. But also in relationships with the United States. I think that our embassy can play a big role in that process.

Part of it is in order to have a counternarrative to the narrative which the Russians are trying to put forward, and that means the Ambassador and other members of the mission need to be out there in the public speaking to the press, speaking to the Serbian population, traveling around the country. We need to use the American centers that we have in Serbia as platforms to allow the Serbian people to get to better know what Western and in particular American policies are all about because there is a lot of false messages that are being presented by the Russians. And we need to help support the basic institutions which can get out alternate messages to the one which the Russians are trying to send out. That means strengthening an independent press. It means working with civil society organizations. It means basic programs that embassies run such as English language teaching so that Serbian youth have greater access to other sources of information as Russia itself is seeking to penetrate through the use of Serbian language radio programs providing the Russian message. And it means using our exchange programs. It means using our student visa programs to make sure that Serbian youth are aware of where America is, the values that we stand for, and the policies that we are putting forward.

Senator MURPHY. Well said.

One just last piece of commentary, Mr. Chairman. Spending time in the Balkans is just an advertisement for how poorly resourced we are when it comes to our foreign aid budget. USAID I think has already pulled out or in the process of pulling out of Serbia, and so we have less tools than ever before to try to counter all of these resources and all of this money that Russia is flowing into these regions. And as we talk about a strategy to try to rebut their growing influence, it has got to involve giving more tools to our ambassadors in the region to try to do all of the things that you are saying because you are going to get there and you are going to realize that for as spot-on as you were about the things you need to do, you are just not going to have the resources that you need or that you want, and we have got to give it to you.

Thank you for allowing me a little extra time, Mr. Chairman.

Senator JOHNSON. We have got to prioritize spending.

Let us go back to refugees. Mr. McKean, can you add anything to what you have already heard from the other nominees?

Mr. MCKEAN. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

In Luxembourg, the refugee problem is not as acute as it is with its neighbors. It is a small country. It is actually relatively difficult

to get there. But I think importantly that Luxembourg recognizes what an important issue this is, which is why it has actually contributed $24 million to Iraq and Syria and refugees in the Middle East at the source. As you know, we have contributed $4.5 billion, but again this is a significant contribution by Luxembourg.

They have also recently for the least several months been, as I mentioned in my opening statement, President of the EU, and they have managed to forge a consensus on the resettlement of 160,000 refugees. I do not have the details on that, but it is a significant number. Obviously, it is going to require a lot more.

Luxembourg itself has committed to taking 550 refugees over the next 2 years and, in fact, took the first 30 Syrians or those who had landed in Greece and were settled in Luxembourg.

Senator JOHNSON. What is your sense of the current rate of flow of refugees? Increased? Has it tapered off? Is it steady?

Mr. MCKEAN. Well, I think it clearly increased about a month ago and is now steady, but it is significant. It is very significant. And of course, it is significant in a number of the countries that border Iraq and Syria as well. Turkey has a million, a million and a half in Lebanon, a million in Jordan.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Torres, to what extent is the Peace Corps involved with this crisis?

Mr. TORRES. Senator, the Peace Corps does not get involved in refugee issues. So we do not do any work in the area of Syrian refugees.

Senator JOHNSON. Senator Murphy mentioned the visa waiver program. We had a hearing in my committee, the Homeland Security and Government Affairs, talking about the Syrian refugee issue and the vetting process there. And I think the witnesses—you know, determined terrorists—the refugee program is probably not the most efficient way to get here, probably a relatively high risk of getting caught. But they expressed a fair amount of concern about the visa waiver program.

Can you describe your concern? Does it present vulnerabilities? I will start with you, Ms. Hill.

Ms. HILL. Thank you, Senator.

As it relates to Malta, Malta is a visa waiver country. They are a member of the program. As far as refugees in Malta, because of the lengthy time in which it takes to even get declared as an official refugee in Malta, it can take up to a year for the Maltese to even declare an irregular migrant a refugee. Even then you only get refugee travel documents. That does not convey citizenship. Only citizens of visa waiver countries can travel on the visa waiver program. So from Malta, I see the threat as not very high at this point because it is so hard to get the citizenship, to get the actual citizenship passport. But if I am confirmed, I will certainly work with the Maltese Government to ensure that we maintain the security of the program and any enhancements that might be decided on back here in Washington.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Rubin.

Mr. RUBIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Bulgaria is trying to join the visa waiver program. At the moment the numbers for visa refusal rates are sufficiently high that that is not an immediate prospect. But if confirmed, I would make

it a very high priority to ensure that in our discussions with the Bulgarians we made clear that we can only consider going forward under any circumstances if all of the security criteria were met.

Bulgaria has done a very good job in information sharing with us on biometrics. It is difficult to get Bulgarian citizenship. They have done well on passport security and reporting stolen passports and false passports to international agencies, including Interpol. So I think the track record is good if that were to happen and that was something, obviously, I would take very seriously if I am confirmed and we continue to talk to them about this.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Scott, are you aware of any vulnerabilities that concern you?

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Serbia is not a member of the visa waiver program, nor do they have any direct flights to the United States, although they are hopeful to begin direct flights to the United States around the summer of next year. In that sense, all Serbian citizens must receive visas. They must go through the standard name checking process that the visa process requires, and they also must have their biometrics taken during that process.

But I think one of the things, should I be confirmed, that I would certainly be focusing on is ensuring that Serbia is as active as possible in information-sharing with our services on those people who might come to their attention who would be of concern.

Senator JOHNSON. Again, I am asking based on past experience as well. Mr. McKean, are you aware of any vulnerabilities that concern you?

Mr. MCKEAN. Luxembourg is a member of the visa waiver program. There are no direct passenger flights between Luxembourg and the United States, so they must go through a connection hub. As Ms. Hill indicated, only citizens of Luxembourg would be appropriate for the visa waiver program, and there is a 7-year residency requirement in order to become a citizen of Luxembourg. So it is fairly stringent.

Moreover, the Government of Luxembourg has been a very good partner in terms of sharing information. So I again would consider the vulnerability to be quite low. But I know that both Congress and the White House is looking at the program, and if there are any enhancement or changes, I would do everything possible, if confirmed, to make sure that the Government of Luxembourg complies with those changes.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Scott, I want to pursue some of the line of questioning that Senator Murphy was raising with respect to Serbia. And I share his belief that we need to try and be more focused on what is happening in the Balkans. I think we have seen some tremendous progress there since Yugoslavia split up into all of the countries in the Balkans. And I think we need to do more and think about how better we can support them as they continue to look toward the West and certainly with Serbia as it is pursuing its entry into the EU. And I wonder if you could update me briefly on where they are

with that and what concerns they might have before finishing their final process for membership in the EU.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much for the question, and I share very much your approach to the importance of the Balkans. The people of the Balkans have a saying that their own region is a barrel of gunpowder, and they recognize its potential for tensions.

In the case of Serbia's ambitions to join the EU, I think that they are moving ahead. They are making significant progress, in fact, across the board. However, the current European Commission, which was brought in, has announced that no countries will be getting in over the next 5 years of this commission. So really, we are talking about serious preparatory work, making sure that they open chapters and close chapters in the—I believe it is 35 chapters that are necessary for admission into the European Union. We are very hopeful and, in fact, expect that in less than 2 weeks' time, they will open their first two chapters formally. They need to continue to make progress in opening and closing chapters over the period of the next coming years so that in fact when the European Union has reached a point where they are ready for new membership, that Serbia will be as ready as possible for that.

As to the difficulties involved, clearly there are rule of law issues that still need to be addressed, but I think most experts would say the most difficult issues are those dealing with their neighbors, regional relations, and in particular their relationship with Kosovo. And one of the first two chapters in fact that will be opened on December 14 is chapter 35, which deals with this very issue of relations with our neighbors and how to move forward. And here we are committed. I think it is unreasonable to expect that there is going to be massive, significant progress in the short term on this issue. What we are really talking about is a slow negotiation toward a comprehensive normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo over time.

Senator SHAHEEN. Right. And I was very excited when I saw that Serbia and Kosovo had reached an initial agreement on how to move forward several years ago. How concerned do you think we should be about the unrest in Kosovo right now with respect to trying to begin implementation of that agreement?

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you very much for the question.

Of course, I will have to defer to Ambassador Delawie in Kosovo on the details of that.

But I think what we have seen over time is the domestic politics in all of the countries of the region can have an impact on the pace of progress, and we have had other periods in which there have been holds as, after elections, countries have tried to put together governments and everything. So it is clear I think that having an authoritative government ready to move forward is a clear necessity for making significant progress. In that regard, all I can say is that in Serbia the Prime Minister and his government seem committed to moving forward on this process, and I look forward, should I be confirmed, to working with them to encourage progress in that direction.

Senator SHAHEEN. I appreciate that.

I was meeting with some officials from the Balkans this summer, and they raised concerns about Russian influence whenever there

was an opportunity, potential unrest to encourage that unrest in subversive kinds of ways. To what extent are we seeing any of that kind of influence, or can you speak to that with what is going on right now in terms of the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo?

Mr. SCOTT. I think that I would agree with your general view of Russian behavior in an attempt to essentially split allies apart and create areas of uncertainty and potential unrest, and we have seen that also in the western Balkans without a doubt. In the case of Serbia, their dependency on Russia, especially in the area of energy, is significant, and that is why I think it is important that the United States and the European Union are moving forward on efforts toward greater diversification of energy resources, toward a broader strategic plan for all of Europe to reduce dependencies upon Russia or any single source of energy. That is clearly the case in Serbia. Serbia imports all of its gas from Russia, and although the gas it imports is not all the gas they have, because they have their own domestic gas, the company which controls the domestic gas is also owned by Russia. But the government is clearly aware of that.

I think working on interconnectors, especially the Bulgarian interconnector through the southern route, will be key, steps forward for the future. Also diversification of resources, and here I think there great opportunities for American companies in new and renewable sources of energy, carbon sequestration, and other issues where I think there are opportunities for cooperation with Serbia both for their benefit but also for our own.

Senator SHAHEEN. I have to say before I leave Serbia that I had the opportunity to be part of the delegation to the memorial remembrance of the Srbenica massacre this summer, and I very much appreciated, despite the incident that happened there, the Serbian Prime Minister for going there, for meeting with the Bosnian officials and for paying his respects at that remembrance. And I certainly hope they will continue those kinds of symbolic gestures because I think they are very important in reducing tensions within the region.

I am about to run out of time. But I want to go to you, Mr. Rubin, on the energy issues because you raised that in your testimony. And it is my understanding that there is a pipeline proposed across Greece that would have a spur that would go into Bulgaria, which if it were open, would be very positive in terms of providing some alternative energy for Bulgaria. It was described to me as a minor approval that is remaining for Greece before construction on that pipeline can begin.

As Ambassador to Bulgaria, how do you see your role in trying to encourage those kinds of projects to get done so that there is energy diversification?

Mr. RUBIN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

If I am confirmed, this will be absolutely one of the top priorities for me as Ambassador both because of the necessity of helping Bulgaria achieve diverse energy supplies but also because of the role that Bulgaria plays in the region as a potential energy hub.

The interconnector pipeline that you described with Greece is close to agreement. I want to knock on the table when I say that. And I would like to believe that if I am confirmed, before I even

get to post, it will have already been signed and agreed and work can start. They are very close. This has required agreements by both governments, as well as the European Union, and with the change of governments in Greece and other things, there have been, I think, some delays in just getting the agreement finalized, but there is an agreement in principal.

It is not a large length of pipeline. It is actually not a very expensive project as these things go, and it would open up a tremendous new set of possibilities. One would be opening up the flow of trans-Caspian gas through Turkey to Bulgaria. The other would be the gas coming through Greece both through the connectors with western Europe but also through the LNG terminals in Greece.

So it is a lot of bang for the buck, and they are close. And this will be a major priority to see this through and then to follow up with all the other priority projects to ensure that there is energy diversification for Bulgaria but also for the wider region.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I think anything we can do to encourage that project and others are very important as we look at the long-term stability for the region.

And that brings me back to Russian influence because, again, when I was meeting with eastern European officials—I did not meet with anyone from Bulgaria, but I certainly heard from some other of our eastern European allies a great concern about Russian influence in eastern Europe particularly. And this committee has had a hearing about what I would call propaganda that Russia is putting into eastern Europe on a daily basis and the amount of money that they are spending on that.

So can you tell me is that something that the Bulgarians are concerned about? Are they seeing that kind of propaganda and the influence that it is bringing into the region? And what can you do as Ambassador to help respond to that?

Mr. RUBIN. Thank you, Senator.

I think, if I am confirmed, this will be another of my very top priorities to personally get out there and aggressively make the case to Bulgarians across the country, not just in Sofia, but everywhere in the country in every group, whether it is young people or people who may not have traditional connections with the United States, who may not have seen American diplomats before, the importance of the shared values and the shared objectives that we have as NATO allies that we have as members of the Euro-Atlantic community.

The good news, obviously, for Bulgaria is they have achieved membership in both NATO and the EU. That is hugely important, and the progress that they have made since 1991 is astounding. So there is a lot to celebrate. But there is a constant drumbeat in the background saying you will never get there. You are not going to be accepted. You ought to give up on this Western project and just come back to your natural location. And that is spread through local media. That is spread I think through all sorts of groups that receive subsidies to do that. So I think recognizing that working with our natural friends and allies in Bulgaria, which is a majority of Bulgarian society, a majority of the parliament who are strong supporters of the alliance, who recognize the value of this choice that the country has made, but then obviously as Ambassador, I

and my team need to follow through and do everything we can to make the case ourselves and then to work to get the resources for that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Okay. He is telling me to continue.

So, Mr. McKean, first of all, let me say how nice it is to see you in that position, and having served on this committee when you were the committee staff director, we have missed you but you have gone on to do very important work. And I appreciate your willingness to continue to do that.

Let me ask you about Luxembourg because there is a sense that some multinational corporations have tried to take advantage of the tax system in Luxembourg to avoid paying taxes in the United States. To what extent is that still the case, and have there been regulatory reforms that have made that harder to do?

Mr. MCKEAN. Thank you, Senator, and it is nice to see you again as well.

Luxembourg I think as you know, is known not only as a tax haven but as a bank secrecy haven until fairly recently. And they have come into conformity with EU rules and regulations. I think those labels are now in the past. They have really abolished bank secrecy, and their banking industry has now diversified significantly.

In terms of the tax issues, there are still outstanding tax issues that are focused on American companies operating in Luxembourg. The issue was that Luxembourg had very, very low tax rates that were unfairly impacting the rest of Europe. Those cases are being worked through in Brussels, and so my EU counterpart would be the person that would be focused on that.

But I will say that Luxembourg has signed an agreement to implement the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act which, as I understand it, will go a long way towards rectifying any tax issues that might be of note in this country.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

So just a final question for Ms. Hill. I know this is one panel where you do not mind not getting questions. [Laughter.]

Because Chairman Johnson raised the refugee issue—and this is something that Malta, because of its geographic location, has been dealing with for a very long time, mostly economic migrants who are coming from Africa, as you pointed out. Has Malta been involved in the discussions at the EU about how to develop a policy to address the current refugee crisis? And do you know what kind of recommendations they would have for the current situation?

Ms. HILL. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Yes, Malta has been very involved in the current refugee crisis and the current discussions. Although they are still focused on that south to north migration, they did host the EU-African Union Summit on migration earlier in November where they discussed various options for dealing with that particular set of irregular migrants going back and forth. They have been a heavy advocate of the burden-sharing plan that now is being inputted by the EU. Malta has been calling for this burden-sharing plan for years, and it is finally being implemented with the current refugee crisis. So Malta has been very involved in the discussions and very much looking for-

ward to a reasonable burden sharing of the migrant issue across the EU.

Senator SHAHEEN. So they have had a very positive voice in the current discussions then.

Ms. HILL. Yes. They have a very positive voice.

Senator SHAHEEN. And are there other ways in which, as Ambassador representing the United States, that you see that the United States can support what Malta is encouraging and where the EU is moving with respect to how to deal with the refugee crisis?

Ms. HILL. Yes, Senator. I think the United States has a lot of lessons learned that we can share with the EU, with Malta specifically. I think that we have been doing that. Our Coast Guard has been doing phenomenal work with the Maltese Armed Forces in how to deal with these overcrowded boats that are coming through the Mediterranean more effectively. We have also done a lot of information sharing and lessons learned sharing with the Maltese themselves about processing refugees more effectively and also providing for support services for refugees to better enhance their ability to live as refugees in a foreign country. So as Ambassador, I certainly plan to continue to encourage these programs and develop these programs particularly in Malta to help the Maltese deal with the refugee crisis.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you very much. I would agree. I think we have—particularly our Department of Homeland Security has learned a lot because of what we experienced last summer on our southern border. And so some of those lessons that we have learned can be shared with other countries dealing with the current situation.

So thank you all very much. And, again, thank you for your willingness to serve the country, and I look forward to as quick a confirmation process as we can move things in the Senate.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. I think you realize we are pretty well dedicated to moving along as well.

By the way, that crisis has not ended at the southern border. It is on an uptick again.

Again, I just want to thank all the family members here for coming to the hearing and for the support of the nominees in their efforts. I want to thank all the nominees, the witnesses, for your thoughtful testimony, your answers to our questions. And thank you for your service to the Nation and your willingness to serve in the future.

So with that, the hearing record will remain open until December 4 at 5 p.m. for the submission of statements and questions for the record.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:45 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF ERIC RUBIN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO LUXEMBOURG, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE RUBIN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. Bulgaria has a large and abusive orphanage and psychiatric system. The recent European Court case of *Stanev* v. *Bulgaria* found inhumane and degrading treatment in Bulgaria's institutions and a lack of due process for people detained.

- If confirmed, will you advocate for the implementation of the European court's decision? As U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria, will you commit to actively advocating for its implementation?

Answer. We advocate tirelessly for human rights and the rule of law in Bulgaria. If confirmed, I will commit to continuing this work, which is among our top priorities in Bulgaria and anywhere in the world. In April, Ambassador Ries, along with Kyustendil Mayor Paunov and Cedar Foundation Director Lindsay Saltzgiver, inaugurated a Social Rehabilitation and Integration Center that supports and helps integrate people with disabilities and other at-risk adults. The U.S. Government invested $275,000 in this facility.

In promoting societies that include and empower persons with disabilities, we oppose discrimination against persons with disabilities everywhere and in all its forms. While we are not a party to the European Court of Human Rights, we support the swift implementation of decisions of courts with jurisdiction. This is especially salient when the decision pertains to a vulnerable population.

The *Stanev* v. *Bulgaria* case does not relate to orphanages, but we have followed closely Bulgaria's concerted effort to reform its institutions for children. Bulgaria has made much progress moving children out of institutions into family-type settings. This year the government closed 13 institutions for parentless children as part of a plan to close all institutions by 2025 and replace them with alternative, community-based care. With the support of European Union funds, Bulgaria has built smaller centers for children, provided better childcare services by partnering with nongovernmental organizations, and stepped up foster care. Bulgaria knows more work needs to be done, and we will support it in those efforts.

Bulgaria ranked third among Hague convention countries in the number of completed adoptions by U.S. families in FY14 (183). I am proud to say that 70 percent of children that Americans adopted in Bulgaria had special needs. The adoption procedure in Bulgaria is transparent and includes various safeguards to ensure greater security and predictability for all those involved in an intercountry adoption process. There is also an expedited procedure for children with special needs so that they may be quickly placed with eligible families as part of Bulgaria's commitment to deinstitutionalization.

We are deeply concerned with any allegations of human rights abuses, and if confirmed, I will share the American values of respecting the judgment of the judiciary and treating all members of society with dignity and care.

Question. There are currently 5,000 developmentally disabled children who are institutionalized throughout Bulgaria. What can the United States do to advocate for the reintegration of these children into their communities?

Answer. We strongly promote human rights in Bulgaria. Our annual Human Rights Report tracks the progress Bulgaria makes on this front, and we will continue to support and advocate for the reintegration of children with developmental disabilities. Through embassy public diplomacy and exchange programs, we share the American experience of providing community-based services to children with disabilities, and promoting their transition out of institutions and integration into society.

This year, the Bulgarian Government closed 13 institutions for children with disabilities, as part of a plan to close all institutions by 2025 and replace them with alternative, community-based care.

The majority of the children from those institutions were relocated to family-type centers and a smaller number were accommodated in protected housing, reunited with their families, or placed in foster care. In the first 6 months of the year, 106 institutionalized children returned to their families, 326 were adopted, and 2,142 stayed with foster families. More than 1,600 children resided in the newly established centers (family-type homes, protected homes, and transition homes). The

number of institutionalized children declined from over 12,000 when the process of deinstitutionalization commenced to 1,632 as of July.

A comprehensive domestic child welfare system can take decades to develop. We encourage countries to develop robust domestic child welfare systems that support family reunification, where appropriate, and domestic adoption. We also encourage countries to develop practices that are consistent with the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption (Hague Adoption Convention), understanding that a child's best interests may be served both by intercountry adoption and improved child welfare systems.

RESPONSES OF KYLE SCOTT, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SCOTT'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. Serbia is one of the few countries of the region to adopt a no-new-admission policy for placement of children in institutions. As a result, Serbia has one of the lowest rates of institutionalization in the world. Despite this, and an impressive governmental commitment to reform, community services for children with disabilities are still lacking.

- What could the U.S. Ambassador to Serbia do to share the U.S. experience with community integration of people with disabilities?

Answer. There are several resources the U.S. Ambassador to Serbia could draw on to highlight the need for well-funded community services for children with disabilities. Through embassy public diplomacy programs and exchange programs, the Embassy can share the American experience of providing community-based services to children with disabilities. Visits of American officials and experts, such as the recent visit of Special Advisor for International Disability Rights Judith Heumann, allows for senior-level engagement to discuss how the Serbian Government can better provide for persons with disabilities in Serbia. Embassy outreach to civil society activists and NGOs helps build awareness and public support for disability rights, and helps connect them with American activists to enhance their advocacy network.

Question. Despite the progress in lowering the institutional population, Serbia has a legal capacity law that deprives individuals with mental disabilities of their right to make legal decisions or access the courts without support of a guardian.

- What can the United States do to ensure access to justice for people with disabilities?

Answer. American officials can share the importance of providing access to justice for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others. For example, Special Advisor for International Disability Rights Judith Heumann stopped in Serbia in early October to highlight the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (the ADA), as well as the effective implementation and enforcement of disability rights laws, the international independent living movement, and the importance of governments and disabled people's organizations working together to advance the rights of persons with disabilities.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SCOTT'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR JOHNSON

Question. A 2014 U.S. State Department Report on Human Rights Practices in Serbia, and a March 11, 2015, European Parliament resolution highlight the need to strengthen the rule of law and judicial independence in Serbia. The State Department found that although the constitution provides for an independent judiciary, the courts remained susceptible to corruption and political influence.

- If confirmed, what actions will you take to advance and promote respect for judicial independence and rule of law in Serbia?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to continue our efforts to address corruption and political influence in the judiciary. Currently, Embassy Belgrade provides significant assistance through USAID to increase both the independence and efficiency of the judiciary. Programming helps the courts learn how to assume responsibilities over financial and administrative operations, reduce case backlogs and processing times, and improve the enforcement of misdemeanor court decisions. Technical assistance through USAID provides substantive training to

judges and court personnel on laws, procedures and ethics, and on methods for improving efficient case management. In some Misdemeanor Courts, minor renovations at minimal expense have significantly improved efficient use of space, accessibility to court information for the public, and increased safety for the public and court personnel.

Our technical assistance to the High Court Council (HCC), which is charged with the administration and oversight of the judicial branch, helps establish the standards and procedures for measuring the performance of judges, prosecutors, and courtroom staff. In addition, our program is developing new standards for assigning, promoting, and sanctioning judges based on merit rather than on influence or political affiliation. Other areas of U.S. assistance include procurement and budget training that allows the HCC to develop court budgets that are strategic and needs-based. Finally, USAID support to Serbia's Judicial Academy is helping to ensure that judges and prosecutors have the basic skills they need to execute their duties and is establishing a regime of continuous learning so that judges and prosecutors skills are able to evolve with the changing body of law.

If confirmed, I will work to continue and expand these areas of support.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2016

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

Hon. Karen Brevard Stewart, of Florida, nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of the Marshall Islands
Robert Annan Riley III, of Florida, nominated to be Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia
Swati A. Dandekar, of Iowa, nominated to be United States Executive Director of the Asian Development Bank
Matthew John Matthews, of Oregon, nominated to be United States Senior Official for the Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation, APEC, Forum
Marcela Escobari, of Massachusetts, nominated to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:15 a.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Cory Gardner, presiding.

Present: Senators Gardner [presiding], Cardin, and Murphy.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CORY GARDNER, U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO

Senator GARDNER. This hearing will come to order.

Let me welcome you all to today's full Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on nominations.

I want to thank Senator Cardin for his work and cooperation in setting up this hearing today and, of course, the work that this committee did yesterday, as I think Senator Cardin mentioned to you, the excellent work of the Foreign Relations Committee, resulting in a very strong bipartisan bill addressing our concern with North Korea. So we are going to continue that bipartisan effort today.

We have a panel of five very well qualified nominees today, and I want to thank each and every one of them and their families for your willingness to serve, for your commitment to this country, and for being here today. I have had the opportunity to meet and speak with most of you and privately as well, and I appreciate your time being here today.

And I would ask the nominees to keep their remarks to no more than 5 minutes. We are on a little bit of an abbreviated schedule or I guess interrupted schedule today because of the fact that we have several votes that are going to be occurring within the next 15 to 20 minutes. And so you will see members come in and out, and I apologize for that as they make the vote.

And we are also going to be interrupted by the irascible Senator from Iowa who is going to be joining us today and making some comments on our nominee from Iowa.

Senator Cardin, I will turn to you as well.

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

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really want to thank Chairman Gardner for making the arrangements so that we could have five nominees here today. We want to be able to act in an efficient manner in this committee. We have under Chairman Corker and Chairman Gardner, and I thank you very much for accommodating these hearings.

Just so people understand, a lot of the work on a confirmation process is done before the individuals appear before our committee, the material they submit to us, their records, et cetera. And this is an important part of the nominating process.

But I just really want to underscore what Chairman Gardner said, and that is thank you. Each one of you has had a long, distinguished career in public service, serving our country, serving your State, and it is an incredible sacrifice to you personally but also to your families. So I saw some young people walking around outside. So I think we have some family members here.

Senator GARDNER. They certainly were not Senators. [Laughter.]

Senator CARDIN. So we thank the family members for being here because we know this truly is a family event.

Mr. Chairman, what I will do is I will put my entire opening statement in the record where I say very glowing things about each one of you and your service, which is incredible. You served all over the world. You served in the State legislature. You have devoted yourself to public service, and many of you are career senior diplomats. And now you are going to be taking on critically important positions in East Asia, critically important positions in the economic forum and in our own hemisphere where we have some significant challenges. So thank you for being willing to do that.

[The prepared statement of Senator Cardin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Let me start by thanking Senator Gardner for arranging this hearing on these five important nominations. I know that this week has been a very busy time for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee especially with regards to Asia-Pacific issues, but one of our primary responsibilities is to timely consider the President's nominees, so I want to thank you for accommodating this hearing, with its sizable number of nominees.

I also want to thank these nominees for their public service and for their willingness to serve their country in these critical posts during a very trying time for this country. For several of you before us, you are willing to perform this service to our country in places far away from where we sit today. So I also want to thank your families, because these postings are truly a family effort, and a family sacrifice.

First, Ambassador Karen Stewart, has had a distinguished career as a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. She served as Ambassador to Laos from 2010 to 2013, and as Ambassador to Belarus from 2006 to 2008. Most recently she served as Political Advisor to the Vice Chairman of the JointChiefs of Staff and to the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation since 2013. I am sure that, if confirmed, her broad mix of senior domestic and overseas experience will be a huge asset in her position, if confirmed, as Ambassador to the Marshall Islands.

Second, Mr. Robert Riley is also a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, and currently serves as a Management Counselor at our U.S. Embassy in Jakarta. Mr. Riley has over 35 years of experience in management and is recognized in the Foreign Service as an effective negotiator and team leader. I am sure that his experience as a Peace Corps volunteer will serve him well as Ambassador to Micronesia, if confirmed, which has a strong Peace Corps presence.

Let me just say that while it may not get as much attention as it should, the Pacific Islands including the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, represent a critical part our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific.

The Pacific Islands help the United States uphold important principles such as freedom of navigation and free and unfettered commerce. The United States, as a Pacific nation, with a long history when it comes to these islands knows that this region is strategically and economically vital and becoming more so.

Most recently we have looked to the Pacific nations for leadership on some of the world's most complex and urgent issues of our time.

In Paris, during the international negotiations towards a new global cooperative agreement on climate change, delegations from the tiny island nations, especially the Marshall Islands, were a strong and constructive force in brokering the final deal. Perhaps that's because these nations, more so than perhaps any other in the world, understand the harsh, grim realities of climate change.

To put it bluntly, these countries are disappearing from the Earth because of sea level rise caused by climate change. This is not some far off probability or theoretical outcome—IT IS HAPPENING NOW.Today's generations of Marshallese, Micronesians, Kiribase (citizens of Kiribati), and Palauans may be the last to inhabit their countries. Flooded buildings, as well as saltwater inundation of arable land and fresh drinking water sources, are quickly making the low lying islands of these atolls uninhabitable.

Climate change is at the forefront of these country's concerns. I strongly encourage our nominees, if confirmed, to keep the State Department and the Congress aware of the dire circumstances facing these countries. I would urge all members of this committee to pay attention to the plight of these nations and contemplate what our responsibilities are to the people of the Compact of Free Association nations as they face a very real existential crisis.

Our next nominees are being considered for positions at the Asian Development Bank and the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum. With so much global economic news coming out of that region, these will be important jobs for our international economic diplomacy.

So I want to welcome Mrs. Swati Dandekar, the nominee for United States Executive Director to the Asian Development Bank. She is a former Iowa state legislator and a Democratic member of the Iowa Utilities Board. She was a member of the Iowa House of Representatives for the 36th District from 2003 to 2009 and a member of the Iowa Senate for the 18th District from 2009 to 2011.

Mrs. Dandekar serves as the Chair (formerly President) of the National Foundation for Women Legislators and as a board member of the Iowa Math and Science Coalition. She previously served on the Iowa Association of School Boards, and as a board member of the Women in Public Policy (Iowa Charter), and the U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy.

Also, we have with us Mr. Matthew Matthews, nominee to the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as United States Senior Official for the APEC Forum, a position for which he is well prepared, Mr. Matthews is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. He assumed his position as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands and concurrently as the Senior Official for APEC on June 16, 2015. He was Counselor for Economic Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, focusing on trade issues that set the stage for Malaysia's entry to the TPP negotiations, and at the U.S. Embassy in Canberra, Australia, where he focused on implementation of our bilateral FTA. Prior to that, while serving as the Chief of the Internal Unit in the Economic Section at the U.S. Embassy Beijing (2001-04), Matt led a team which worked extensively on Chinese macroeconomic and financial reform Issues.

Finally, we have Ms. Marcela Escobarri, who is the Executive Director of the Harvard Center for International Development and our nominee to be the next Assist-

ant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean. Ms. Escobarri's extensive experience on development in the Western hemisphere and around the world will be of critical importance to responding to the public health crisis caused by the Zika virus, tackling the many challenges in Central America, supporting the implementation of a potential peace deal in Colombia, and addressing the political, social and economic difficulties that Haiti continues to face.

So, Mr. Chairman, we are very fortunate to have before us all of these dedicated Americans, who have devoted so much of their professional lives to serving our country. I look forward to hearing from each of you on your priorities and interests, and if confirmed, how you will work to further U.S. interests and values abroad.

Senator GARDNER. And thank you, Senator Cardin.

Turning to our nominees, we will begin with Karen Brevard Stewart, our nominee for the Ambassador to the Republic of the Marshall Islands. She is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and has been since 2013. I guess she has served as Political Advisor since 2013 for the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. She is a two-time Ambassador to Laos from 2010 to 2013 and to Belarus from 2006 to 2008. Welcome, Ambassador Stewart.

I am going to introduce all of you and then we will get to your comments.

Robert Riley is our nominee to the Federated States of Micronesia. He is a career member of the Foreign Service and since 2013 has served as Management Counselor at the U.S. embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia. Welcome, Mr. Riley.

Matt Matthews is up for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as the United States Senior Official for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, and since 2015 has served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs and concurrently as the Senior Official for APEC. Welcome, Mr. Matthews.

Ms. Marcela Escobari is our nominee for Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development. Since 2007, she has served as Executive Director of the Center for International Development at Harvard University.

I am missing one here. Swati Dandekar. We will be hearing your testimony as well. Senator Grassley is going to introduce you. So I am not going to introduce you at all. [Laughter.]

Senator GARDNER. I thought was making some comments, but he has got them all.

So we will go ahead and start with you, Ms. Stewart. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. KAREN BREVARD STEWART, OF FLORIDA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

Ambassador STEWART. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be United States Ambassador to the Republic of the Marshall Islands. I am grateful to the President and the Secretary for their confidence in nominating me for this position, and I am equally grateful to you to receive your consideration.

With the chairman's permission, I would like to just briefly introduce some of my family who were able to make it here today: my sister-in-law, Kate Stewart; my niece and her husband, Katherine and Joe Stallings; a very dear friend, Alice Buckhalter—all of them

are from Maryland, Senator—and then several friends from my church——

Senator CARDIN. That was a good call. [Laughter.]

Senator CARDIN. I should point out that Mr. Riley was born in Baltimore. That was also pointed out in the resume. Any other connections, please bring them up. [Laughter.]

Ambassador STEWART. As a Foreign Service officer, I have been privileged to serve in a varied and fascinating mix of assignments, including the honor of serving as U.S. Ambassador to Belarus and to Laos. If confirmed, I will draw on the lessons learned in these assignments and my many years of regional policy experience to advance the United States' strategic interests in the Pacific.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is a key partner in the United States' deepening relationship with the Pacific. Our two nations have a close and special relationship dating back to the end of the Second World War and United States' administration of the U.N. Pacific Islands Trust Territory. In 1983, the Marshall Islands and the United States concluded the Compact of Free Association, which then entered into force in 1986. We thus entered into the new phase of our relationship with the RMI. And this compact, which was amended in 2003 to extend greater economic assistance, now provides the structure for much of our bilateral relationship.

The mutual security of our nations is a core feature of this special relationship. Under the compact, the United States has committed to defend the RMI and its people from attack or threats as the United States and its citizens are defended. The United States also enjoys access to Marshallese ports, airports, and airspace, a vital asset for our defense and security needs. The RMI hosts the U.S. Army's Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site on Kwajalein Atoll. This is a major U.S. missile testing and also space tracking and operations facility. And under the amended compact, the United States has access to Kwajalein through 2066 with the option to extend until 2086.

If confirmed, I will work to maintain the strong relationship between the Kwajalein facility and the Marshall Islands Government and to promote its benefits for affiliated Marshallese communities.

The United States and the Marshall Islands also have an important economic relationship. To help achieve the amended compact goal of economic self-sufficiency, the United States, through the Department of the Interior, will provide the Government of the RMI with roughly $70 million a year through fiscal year 2023. Approximately $35 million of this is provided in annual grant assistance, targeting health, education, public infrastructure, environment, public and private sector capacity development.

Another very important aspect of the amended compact is a jointly managed trust fund that will serve as a source of income for the Marshall Islands after the compact's direct grant assistance ends. If confirmed, I will promote outcome-oriented, sustainable economic development and strongly advocate for the wise and accountable use of our assistance to support Marshallese capacity to build a prosperous and healthy future.

Under the amended compact, most citizens of the RMI can live, study, and work in the United States without a visa.

The RMI Government has an excellent voting record with the United States in the United Nations, sharing our positions on many important issues, including on human rights and Israel.

The RMI is also a close ally of the United States in the multilateral climate change negotiations. As one of the nations most vulnerable to the impacts of a rise in sea level, the RMI played a crucial role last December in Paris in furthering our shared goal of ensuring ambitious action by all major greenhouse gas-emitting countries, both developed and developing, in order to reach a historic international agreement. If confirmed, I will continue to work collaboratively with the RMI to tackle environmental challenges.

The RMI is a vibrant democracy that conducted another free and fair election just last November and recently installed a new government. In working with this new government, we will continue to look to the RMI as a reliable partner that strongly backs U.S. engagement in the Pacific and supports U.S. strategic priorities around the globe. If confirmed, I will continue the fine work of Ambassador Armbruster by working closely with the Department of the Interior, the Department of Defense, and the rest of the interagency community to strengthen a bilateral relationship based on partnership and mutual respect between the Marshallese and American people.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, I would like to emphasize that the Republic of the Marshall Islands was part of our trust territory but is now our good friend. The people of RMI are woven into the American fabric, serving with distinction and honor in our military and living and working beside us in the United States. The Marshall Islands remains a dependable partner in bolstering security in the Pacific. As the economic center of gravity shifts to the Asia-Pacific region, the importance to U.S. interests of a stable, increasingly prosperous, and democratic Marshall Islands continues to grow. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you in pursuit of that goal.

I appreciate this opportunity to appear before you today and am pleased to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Stewart follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KAREN STEWART

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be United States Ambassador to the Republic of the Marshall Islands. I am grateful to the President and the Secretary for their confidence in nominating me for this position, and am equally grateful to receive your consideration.

As a Foreign Service Officer, I have been privileged to serve in a varied and fascinating mix of assignments, including the honor of serving as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus and to the Lao People's Democratic Republic. If confirmed, I will draw on the lessons learned in these assignments and my many years of regional policy experience to advance the United States' strategic interests in the Pacific.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is a key partner in the United States' deepening relationship with the Pacific. It is an isolated, sparsely populated, low-lying Pacific island country consisting of approximately 70 square miles of land spread out over 750,000 square miles of ocean southwest of Hawaii and just north of the equator. These characteristics make it vulnerable to natural disasters and the effects of climate change. Our two nations have a close and special relationship dating back to the end of the Second World War, when the United Nations entrusted the United States with the administration of the Pacific Islands Trust Territory. In 1983, the Marshall Islands and the United States concluded the Compact of Free

Association, which its people approved in a plebiscite a few months later and which entered into force in 1986 upon Congressional approval. We thus entered into a new phase of our relationship with the RMI. This Compact, which was amended in 2003 to extend greater economic assistance, provides the structure for much of our bilateral relationship. Mutual security of our nations is a core feature of the special relationship between the United States and the Marshall Islands. The RMI has no military of its own. Under the Compact, the United States has committed to defend the RMI and its people from attack or threats as the United States and its citizens are defended. The United States also enjoys access to Marshallese ports, airports and airspace, a vital asset for our defense and security needs. The RMI hosts the U.S. Army's Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site on Kwajalein Island (known as USAG-KA). The base is the country's second largest employer, second only to the RMI government. The test site plays a significant role in the U.S. missile defense research, development, and testing network. It is used to monitor foreign launches and provide deep-space tracking and is an ideal near-equator launch-site for satellites. In February 2015, the U.S. Air Force and Lockheed Martin broke ground at the future six-acre site of the new Space Fence next-generation radar system at the base. When it comes online in 2018, Space Fence will enable the Air Force to locate and track hundreds of thousands of objects orbiting Earth with more precision than ever before, helping reduce the potential for collisions with our critical space-based infrastructure. Under the Amended Compact, the United States has access to Kwajalein through 2066, with the option to extend until 2086.

Continued access is important, but just as important is a good relationship with the Marshallese. If confirmed, I will work to maintain the strong relationship between USAG-KA and the Marshall Islands government and to promote USAG-KA's beneficial role for affiliated Marshallese communities.

The United States and the Marshall Islands also have an important economic relationship. To help achieve the Amended Compact goal of economic self-sufficiency, through the Department of the Interior, the United States will provide the Government of the RMI with roughly $70 million a year through FY2023. Approximately $35 million is provided in annual grant assistance, targeting health, education, public infrastructure, environment, public sector capacity development, and private sector capacity development. Priority is given to education and healthcare, including addressing the high prevalence of diabetes, heart disease and other non-communicable diseases.

Another very important aspect of the Amended Compact is a jointly-managed Trust Fund that will serve as a source of income for the Marshall Islands after annual direct grant assistance ends under the Amended Compact in FY 2023. If confirmed, I will promote outcome-oriented sustainable economic development and strongly advocate for the wise and accountable use of our assistance to support Marshallese capacity to build a prosperous and healthy future.

Under the Amended Compact, most citizens of the RMI can live, study, and work in the United States without a visa. The Compact obliges the two countries to consult on certain matters of foreign policy. The RMI government has an excellent voting record with the United States in the United Nations, sharing our positions on many important issues, including on human rights and Israel. The RMI is also a close ally of the United States in the multilateral climate change negotiations. As one of the most vulnerable nations to the impacts of climate change, the RMI played a crucial role last December in Paris in furthering our shared goal of ensuring ambitious action by all major green-house gas emitting countries, both developed and developing, in order to reach a historic international climate agreement. If confirmed, I will continue to work collaboratively with the RMI to tackle climate challenge, and also support efforts of the U.S. Mission to further assist the RMI in adapting to the impacts of climate change.

The RMI is a vibrant democracy that conducted another successful, free and fair election just last November and recently installed a new government. In working with this new government, we will continue to look to the RMI as a reliable partner that strongly backs U.S. engagement in the Pacific and supports U.S. strategic priorities around the globe. If confirmed, I will continue the fine work of Ambassador Armbruster by working closely with the Department of the Interior, the Department of Defense, and the rest of the interagency community to strengthen a bilateral relationship based on partnership and mutual respect between the Marshallese and American people.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, I would like to emphasize that the Republic of the Marshall Islands was part of our trust territory, but is now our ally. The people of RMI are woven into the American fabric, serving with distinction and honor in our military and living and working beside us in the United States. The Marshall Islands remains a dependable partner in bolstering security in the Pacific. As the economic

center of gravity shifts to the Asia-Pacific region, the importance to U.S. interests of a stable, increasingly prosperous, and democratic Marshall Islands continues to grow. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you in pursuit of that goal.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and am pleased to answer your questions.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Ambassador Stewart. Thank you very much for your testimony.

We will turn to Mr. Riley. Mr. Riley, again our nominees to the Federated States of Micronesia, please proceed with your testimony.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT ANNAN RILEY III, OF FLORIDA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

Mr. RILEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

I am honored to appear before you today and am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence in nominating me to be United States Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia, or FSM. If confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to work with you, this committee, and other members of Congress to advance American interests in the Pacific. I am thrilled to be associated again with our embassy in the FSM, as I supported the operations of Embassy Kolonia while assigned to our embassy in Manila from 2009 to 2013, and I count myself fortunate to be a member of a select group to have worked with our mission in this beautiful but faraway country.

My sense of service growing up in Annapolis, Maryland was inculcated in me by my late father and namesake, a highly dedicated doctor, who devoted himself to his patients and waived his fees for the poor, and by my 90-year-old mother Fritzi, who raised her four children selflessly while my father worked. She also began her bachelor's degree at age 40, finished her master's at 55, and then worked as a college professor until when was 70.

My stepfather, John Kenney, is an active and wonderful man, who married my mother when he was 88 and she was 85. My dear lovely Timmy is here today. She provides loving support and encouragement. One of my two beautiful and talented daughters Carol is also present. My other older daughter Susan is a Peace Corps volunteer in China. My very good friend, Buddy Shanks, is also here.

The FSM consists of over 600 mountainous islands and low-lying coral atolls spread over 1 million squares of the Pacific Ocean. It faces inherent challenges to economic development, including susceptibility to natural disasters, remoteness from major markets, and limited land resources. The United States and the FSM have enjoyed a close and special relationship for over 65 years. In 1947, the United Nations designated the United States as the Administrating Authority of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, including what is known today as the FSM. And in 1986, the Compact of Free Association between the FSM and the United States entered into force, ushering a new phase in our bilateral relationship.

The compact, as amended in 2003, provides the framework for much of our bilateral relationship. Under the amended compact,

most citizens of the FSM may live, study, and work in the United States without a visa. In addition, the United States is committed to providing over $107 million per year in direct economic assistance and trust fund contributions through 2023. After U.S. contributions to the trust fund and direct sectoral assistance under the amended compact end in 2023, the FSM will begin to draw distributions from the trust fund. The FSM faces a critical juncture as it shifts from direct financial assistance to the use of trust fund distributions. If confirmed, I will work constructively with the Government of the FSM, encouraging it to make the structural reforms needed to ensure its sustained development beyond 2023.

While U.S. contributions to the trust fund and direct economic assistance under the amended compact will end in 2023, the amended compact itself does not expire. Unless otherwise stated, the amended compact will remain in effect until terminated according to its terms. If confirmed, I will do my best to reassure the people of the FSM that the United States remains committed to assisting the FSM as it faces the challenges of the coming decades.

The FSM is an important partner in our Pacific engagement. The mutual security of our nations is an underlying element of our special relationship. The FSM has no military of its own. Under the amended compact, the United States is committed to defending Micronesia and its people from attack or threats as the United States and its citizens are defended. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Government of FSM to highlight our strong support for regional security.

The importance of our strong relationship with the FSM extends beyond defense considerations. The FSM is a loyal friend and ally in many other ways. For example, the FSM votes with the United States at the United Nations over 90 percent of the time. Our people-to-people ties also continue to grow. There are 47 Peace Corps volunteers currently serving in the FSM. If confirmed, I will draw on my Peace Corps experience to work with the Peace Corps and the Government of the FSM to enhance the success of this valuable program.

Finally, the FSM is among the small island nations already impacted by climate change. If confirmed, I will support efforts by the Department of the Interior and other Federal agencies to further assist the FSM in adapting to the impacts of climate change, including by integrating climate change adaptation considerations into long-term planning.

In closing, I can think of no greater honor or opportunity than to lead the U.S. mission in the FSM and work with our valued Micronesian friends on these and other important issues. It is a time of renewed focus on our role in the Pacific, and I am excited to be part of it. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you, and I am happy to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Riley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT RILEY

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today and am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their confidence in nominating me to be United States Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). If confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to work with you, this committee, and other members of Congress to advance American interests in the Pacific.

I am thrilled to be associated again with our Embassy in the FSM, as I supported the operations of Embassy Kolonia while assigned to our Embassy in Manila from 2009 to 2013, and I count myself fortunate to be a member of a select group to have worked with our Mission in this beautiful but faraway country.

My sense of service was inculcated in me by my late father and namesake, a highly dedicated doctor who devoted himself to his patients and waived his fees for the poor, and by my 90-year-old mother, Fritzi, here today, who raised her four children selflessly while my father worked, started work on her Bachelor's degree at age 40, finished her Master's degree at 55, and then worked as a college professor until she was 70.

Also present is my step-father, John Kenny, an active and wonderful man, who married my mother when he was 88, and she was 85. My dear wife Timmy was unable to make it today; she is keeping the home fires burning at my current post in Indonesia. My two beautiful daughters were also unable to be here—Susan is a Peace Corps Volunteer in China, and Carol is attending college in California.

The FSM consists of over 600 mountainous islands and low-lying coral atolls spread over one million square miles of the Pacific Ocean. It faces inherent challenges to economic development, including susceptibility to natural disasters, remoteness from major markets, and limited land resources. The United States and the FSM have enjoyed a close and special relationship for over 65 years. In 1947, the United Nations designated the United States as the Administrating Authoring of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, which included the FSM, and, in 1986, the Compact of Free Association between the FSM and the United States entered into force, ushering in a new phase in our bilateral relationship.

This Compact, as amended in 2003, provides the framework for much of our bilateral relationship. Under the Amended Compact, most citizens of the FSM may live, study, and work in the United States without a visa. In addition, the United States is committed to providing over $107 million per year in direct economic assistance and Trust Fund contributions through 2023. After U.S. contributions to the Trust Fund and direct sectoral assistance under the Amended Compact end in 2023, the FSM will begin to draw distributions from the Trust Fund. The FSM faces a critical juncture as it shifts from direct financial assistance to the use of Trust Fund distributions. If confirmed, I will work constructively with the government of the FSM, encouraging it to make the structural reforms needed to ensure its sustained development beyond 2023.

While U.S. contributions to the Trust Fund and direct economic assistance under the Amended Compact will end in 2023, the Amended Compact itself does not expire. Unless otherwise stated, the Amended Compact will remain in effect until terminated according to its terms. If confirmed, I will do my best to reassure the people of the FSM that the United States remains committed to assisting the FSM as it faces the challenges of the coming decades.

The FSM is an important partner in our Pacific engagement. The mutual security of our two nations is an underlying element of our special relationship.

The FSM has no military of its own. Under the Amended Compact, the United States is committed to defending Micronesia and its people from attack or threats as the United States and its citizens are defended. If confirmed I will work closely with the Government of FSM to highlight our strong support for regional security.

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Finally, the FSM is among the small island nations already impacted by climate change. If confirmed, I will support efforts of the U.S. Mission to further assist the FSM in adapting to the impacts of climate change, including by integrating climate change adaptation considerations into long-term planning.

In closing, I can think of no greater honor or opportunity than to lead the U.S. Mission in the FSM and work with our valued Micronesian friends on these and other important issues. It is a time of renewed focus on our role in the Pacific, and I am excited to be part of it. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and I am happy to answer your questions.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Riley.

And I see Senator Grassley has arrived at the hearing. Now, I will, Ms. Dandekar, warn you that perhaps the only way to outdo

the flattery of the Senator from Maryland is you may or may not want to mention ethanol after your remarks. [Laughter.]

Senator GARDNER. But with that, we will turn to Senator Grassley for the introduction of Ms. Dandekar, our nominee to be United States Director of the Asian Development Bank.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHUCK GRASSLEY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM IOWA

Senator GRASSLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member Cardin.

My short statement will not give enough credit to her devotion to public service. I want to emphasize that, but I still want to say these few words anyway.

Thank you for allowing me to introduce to the committee Ms. Swati Dandekar and her husband Arvind Dandekar. Now, I happen to have known her and her husband personally for many years. Swati immigrated to the United States from India in 1973, earned her bachelor's degree from Nagpur University and a post-graduate diploma from Bombay University, India.

Swati began her public service as a member of Linn-Mar School Board in 1996 and then served there until she was elected to the Iowa House of Representatives in 2002. With her election to the Iowa House of Representatives, she became the first Indian-born American to hold a State legislative position. She served on the Appropriations Committee, Economic Growth and Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittees, as well as the Education and Transportation Committees there in the Iowa House.

She was also appointed to the Vision Iowa Board by then Governor Vilsack, now our Secretary of Agriculture. This board awarded communities across Iowa with grants and funding for community and economic development projects.

In 2008, Swati was elected to the Iowa Senate where she became the first Democratic woman to chair the Senate Commerce Committee.

In 2011, she was elected President of the National Foundation of Women Legislators where her national platform consisted of STEM education and increased application of broadband communication for economic growth.

Republican Governor Branstead appointed Swati to the Iowa Utilities Board as its Democratic member in 2011, where she served until 2013.

Swati has led numerous trade and education missions to India. She was honored as the India Abroad Person of the Year 2002 and the Asia-Pacific American Person of the Year 2008.

I am pleased that Swati has been called by the President to serve again as U.S. Executive Director for the Asian Development Bank. I am confident that she will represent the United States well in that position as she has done very well in all of her other positions of public service.

So I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the courtesy you have given me to allow me to introduce Swati to this committee. And I want you to know that I fully support her nomination, and I hope the committee will see it fit to vote her out for Senate consideration. Thank you very much.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Grassley. Thank you for joining the Foreign Relations Committee today and for that gracious introduction.

Ms. Dandekar, if you would like to proceed with your testimony following that introduction, it would be great.

STATEMENT OF SWATI A. DANDEKAR, OF IOWA, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Ms. DANDEKAR. Thank you, Senator Grassley, for your kind comments. I am really honored to say that we are family friends. Thank you. They are a part of my American family in Iowa.

Senator CARDIN. Let me also thank Senator Grassley for being here. He has incredible responsibilities in the United States Senate and is one of our great Members. And his introduction here means a great deal, and thank you very much for taking the time.

Ms. DANDEKAR. Thank you.

Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to have been nominated by President Obama to be the next United States Executive Director with the rank of Ambassador to the Asian Development Bank.

I came to the United States as an immigrant in 1973 when I married my husband of 43 years, Arvind Dandekar, who is here today. Arvind is President of Fastek International, a software development company. Arvind has always been supportive of my public service. We have two sons. Our older son Ajai and his wife Allison live in Seattle, Washington. Both Ajai and Allison are medical doctors. They have two sons: Evan, 9 years old; and William, 5 years. Our younger son, Govind and his wife Shaneeda live in Vancouver, Canada. Govind is an economist and computer scientist, and Shaneeda is a lawyer. They have two daughters: Ayanna, 2 years; and Iyla, 1 month. Our sons and their families were not able to be here today.

During my 9 years in the Iowa House and Senate, from 2003 until 2011, I had the chance to work at the State level. Additionally, during my 2 years as Commissioner of Iowa Utilities Board, I gained national-level experience. I am excited by the potential opportunity to work internationally as the U.S. Executive Director of the Asian Development Bank. As a legislator, I always worked with both sides of the aisle to develop consensus positions that were acceptable to all interested parties. Senator Joni Ernst was my colleague in the Iowa Senate and we became friends.

I served as the Economic Development Budget chair in the Iowa House and Commerce Committee chair in the Iowa Senate. I have gained insight into State finances and budgets in these assignments.

I also have extensive experience serving on a variety of boards in Iowa, such as Linn-Mar School Board, Vision Iowa Board, Iowa Values Fund, Iowa Power Fund, and Iowa Utilities Board. These experiences have provided me with a firsthand look at the transformative power of appropriate use of development funds.

My extensive background in managing projects and cultivating partnerships will help me to carry out the responsibilities of the

U.S. Executive Director at ADB, which is dedicated to reducing poverty in the Asia-Pacific region through sustainable and inclusive economic growth, investments in human capital, and good governance. If confirmed, my first priority will be to advance U.S. policy interests at the ADB.

Additionally, I will work to ensure that the U.S. Commerce Department and other entities that publicize opportunities for U.S. businesses to compete for business overseas include information on how to compete for contracts from the ADB; strengthen outreach and engagement with NGO's, the nongovernmental organizations, communities and citizens to establish direct feedback channels for information on implementation status of ADB projects; modernize the ADB communications, such as the bank's website, to increase transparency and enhance marketability of the ADB; encourage ADB's efforts to create opportunities for women and girls across Asia for its own female staff; maintain communications with Congress; and advocate for ADB's continued application of high social, environmental, and fiduciary standards, including promoting their adoption by new multilateral institutions in Asia.

My upbringing in India provides me with an excellent understanding of the Asian culture. In addition to English and Hindi, I am fluent in Gujarati and Marathi. I also have working knowledge in Urdu, Punjabi, and Bengali languages. My language skills and cultural awareness will position me well to address challenges facing the ADB.

If confirmed, I look forward to representing the United States at the ADB and ensuring that our country's priority initiatives are advanced. It is my distinct honor to appear before you, and I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to be here today. I look forward to answering any questions you have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dandekar follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SWATI ARVIND DANDEKAR

Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Cardin and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to have been nominated by President Obama to be the next United States Executive Director with the rank of Ambassador to the Asian Development Bank.

I came to the United States as an immigrant in 1973 when I married my husband of 43 years, Arvind Dandekar who is here today. Arvind is President of Fastek International, a software development company. Arvind has always been supportive of my public service. We have two sons. Our older son Ajai and his wife Allison live in Seattle, Washington. Both Ajai and Allison are medical doctors. They have two sons, Evan (9 years) and William (5 years). Our younger son Govind and his wife Shaneeda live in Vancouver, Canada. Govind is an economist and computer scientist, and Shaneeda is a lawyer. They have two daughters, Ayaana (2 years) and Iyla (1 month). Our sons and their families were not able to be here today.

During my nine years in the Iowa House and Senate, from 2003 until 2011, I had the chance to work at the state level. Additionally, during my two years as a Commissioner of the Iowa Utilities Board I gained national level experience. I am excited by the potential opportunity to work internationally as the U.S. Executive Director of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As a legislator I always worked with both sides of the aisle to develop consensus positions that were acceptable to all interested parties. Senator Joni Ernst was my colleague in the Iowa Senate and we became friends. I served as the Economic Development Budget chair in the Iowa House and Commerce Committee chair in the Iowa Senate. I have gained insight in to state finances and budgets in these assignments. I also have extensive experience serving on a variety of boards in Iowa, such as the Linn-Mar School Board, Vision Iowa Board, Iowa Values Fund, Iowa Power Fund, and Iowa Utilities Board.

These experiences have provided me with a firsthand look at the transformative power of appropriate use of development funds.

My extensive background in managing projects and cultivating partnerships will help me to carry out the responsibilities of the U.S. Executive Director at the ADB, which is dedicated to reducing poverty in the Asia Pacific region through sustainable and inclusive economic growth, investments in human capital, and good governance. If confirmed, my first priority will be to advance U.S. policy interests at the ADB. Additionally, I will work to ensure that the U.S. Commerce Department and other entities that publicize opportunities for U.S. businesses to compete for business overseas include information on how to compete for contracts from the ADB; strengthen outreach to and engagement with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) communities and citizens to establish direct feedback channels for information on implementation status of ADB projects; modernize the ADB's communications, such as the Bank's website, to increase transparency and enhance marketability of the ADB; encourage ADB's efforts to create opportunities for women and girls across Asia and for its own female staff; maintain communication with Congress; and advocate for ADB's continued application of high social, environmental, and fiduciary standards, including promoting their adoption by new multilateral institutions in Asia.

My upbringing in India provides me with an excellent understanding of the Asian culture. In addition to English and Hindi, I am fluent in Gujarati and Marathi. I also have working knowledge in Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali languages. My language skills and cultural awareness will position me well to address challenges facing the ADB and communicate how ADB is fueling positive economic development and stability throughout the region.

I have led delegations to India as Iowa Legislator, as Iowa Utilities Commissioner and as President of the National Foundation of Women Legislators. After leading these delegations, I believe empowering women is the key to eradicating poverty and to achieving economic growth. If confirmed, I hope to work closely with NGOs and other international organizations on women's issues as it relates to development financing.

If confirmed, I look forward to representing the United States at ADB and ensuring that our country's priority initiatives are advanced. It is my distinct honor to appear before you, and I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to be here today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Thank you.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you very much.

As you can tell by the bells, we have started a vote. So Senator Cardin will be voting, coming back, and then I will be heading to the floor as well. We will do that a couple times most likely during the hearing.

We will turn now to—thank you, Ms. Dandekar, for your testimony. We will turn now to Mr. Matthews, Matt Matthews, up for the rank of Ambassador during this hearing today. I look forward to your testimony. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF MATTHEW JOHN MATTHEWS, OF OREGON, NOMINATED TO BE THE U.S. SENIOR OFFICIAL FOR THE ASIA–PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION, APEC, FORUM

Mr. MATTHEWS. Good morning, Mr. Chairman. I am happy to be here today with my wife Rachel. My two children, Daniel and Kristen, are grown and live and work in Portland, Oregon and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, so they were unable to join me today. Too bad Senator Cardin is not here. I could tell him that my son graduated from the University of Maryland Dental School. [Laughter.]

Mr. MATTHEWS. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the Senior Official for APEC with the rank of Ambassador. I appreciate the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in me, and if confirmed, I look forward

to working with you to advance U.S. economic interests through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum as we strive to foster a rules-based economic system in the Asia-Pacific region that supports prosperity abroad and jobs here at home.

APEC is the premier economic organization in the Asia-Pacific region and a key venue for engaging the most economically dynamic region in the world. APEC's 21 members span both sides of the Pacific and account for over half the global economy. They purchase 62 percent of our goods exports and comprise a market of 2.7 billion consumers.

Through APEC, the United States works with our partners to tackle a wide range of issues critical to long-term prosperity across the Pacific Rim. For over 25 years, APEC has steadily advanced a vision of growth and integration, within Asia and across the Pacific.

The United States works within APEC to open markets in the Asia-Pacific region and connect them to U.S. exporters. APEC's focus includes eliminating barriers to trade and investment and creating better environments for our companies to do business overseas.

APEC has played and will continue to play a central role in enabling agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership and those at the World Trade Organization by helping economies envision and prepare for a high-standard, rules-based economic system throughout the Asia-Pacific. Agreements like these can deepen America's economic ties to the region and build a more level economic playing field that will help Americans to compete successfully.

The economies of the Asia-Pacific region have benefited greatly over the past half century from progressively freer and more open trade and investment. The vast majority of the region's citizens live better lives because of the region's economic integration, but disruptions in the financial markets, natural disasters in the region, rising inequality in many regional economies, and raising long-term potential growth are key challenges.

From our point of view, APEC is a key part of the solution, and the United States and other APEC members recognize that just as important to ensuring meaningful prosperity is promoting economic growth that is sustainable and benefits all of our citizens.

If confirmed, I will work with Congress, the business community, and my colleagues in the executive branch through APEC to expand and sustain economic growth at home and abroad and to promote new opportunities for our exporters overseas.

If confirmed, I will build on my experience in the Asia-Pacific to advance our economic interests. Most recently I served as the Foreign Policy Advisor to the Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, Admiral Sam Locklear, but I have spent most of my 30-year career in the Foreign Service primarily handling trade and economic issues at our embassies and posts overseas. In particular, my time working on macroeconomic reform and financial market access issues during multiple tours in China and Taiwan and on bilateral FTAs in the region has provided me with a good foundation of knowledge of both the region and the issues that the United States is working to address through APEC.

Mr. Chairman, it would be a great privilege to serve my country as the U.S. Senior Official to APEC with the rank of Ambassador. The Asia-Pacific region represents the future of the global economy, and we can play a key role in shaping and sustaining our vision for the region through APEC. I look forward to helping the United States work through APEC to promote growth and job creation in the Asia-Pacific for American businesses and citizens.

Thank you for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Matthews follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MATTHEW J. MATTHEWS

Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the U.S. Senior Official for APEC with the rank of Ambassador. I appreciate the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in me and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to advance U.S. economic interests through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum as we strive to foster a rules-based economic system in the Asia-Pacific region that supports prosperity abroad and here at home.

I'm happy to be here with my wife, Rachel. My two children are grown and live and work in Portland, Oregon, and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, so were unable to join us today.

APEC is the premier economic organization in the Asia-Pacific region and a key venue for engaging the most economically dynamic region of the world. APEC's 21 members span both sides of the Pacific and account for over half of the global economy. They purchase 62% percent of our goods exports, and comprise a market of 2.7 billion potential consumers.

Through APEC, the United States works with our partners to tackle a wide range of issues critical to long-term prosperity across the Pacific Rim. For over twentyfive years, APEC has steadily advanced a vision of growth and integration, within Asia and across the Pacific.

The United States works within APEC to open markets in the Asia-Pacific region and connect them to U.S. exporters. APEC's focus includes eliminating barriers to trade and investment and creating better environments for our companies to do business overseas.

APEC has played—and will continue to play—a central role in enabling agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and those at the World Trade Organization (WTO) by helping economies envision and prepare for a high-standard, rules-based economic system throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Agreements like these can deepen America's economic ties to the region and build a more level economic playing field that will help Americans to compete successfully.

The economies of the Asia-Pacific region have benefitted greatly over the past half-century from progressively freer and more open trade and investment. The vast majority of the region's citizens live better lives because of the region's economic integration, but disruptions in the financial markets, natural disasters in the region, rising inequality in many regional economies and raising long-term potential growth are key challenges.

APEC is part of the solution, and the United States and other APEC members recognize that just as important to ensuring meaningful prosperity is promoting economic growth that is sustainable and benefits all our citizens.

If confirmed, I will work with Congress, the business community, and my colleagues in the Executive Branch through APEC to expand and sustain economic growth at home and abroad, and to promote new opportunities for our exporters overseas.

If confirmed, I will build upon my experience in the Asia-Pacific to advance our economic interests in this region. Most recently, I served as Foreign Policy Advisor to former U.S. Pacific Command Commander Admiral Sam Locklear in Honolulu, but I have spent most of my thirty-year career in the Foreign Service primarily handling trade and economic issues at our Embassies and Posts overseas. In particular, my time working on macroeconomic reform and financial market access issues during multiple tours each in China and Taiwan, and on bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in both Australia and Malaysia, has provided me with a good foundation of knowledge of both the region and the issues that the United States is working to address through APEC.

Mr. Chairman, it would be a great privilege to serve my country as the U.S. Senior Official for APEC with the rank of Ambassador. The Asia-Pacific region represents the future of the global economy, we can play a key role in shaping and sustaining the vision for the region through APEC. I look forward to helping the United States work through APEC to promote growth and job-creation in the AsiaPacific for American businesses and citizens.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Matthews, for your testimony.

Ms. Escobari is our nominee for Assistant Administrator to the United States Agency for International Development. Welcome and please proceed.

STATEMENT OF MARCELA ESCOBARI, OF MASSACHUSETTS, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. ESCOBARI. Chairman Gardner, thank you for considering my nomination and for the opportunity to testify before you today. It is an honor to be nominated by President Obama to serve as Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean at USAID.

I have had a chance to meet with people from USAID and those working in this community, and I have been impressed by their deep knowledge and commitment.

My own passion for development comes from growing up in Bolivia, one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere, a daughter of two pediatricians who spent most of their life working in public hospitals. I mean, they brought home the joys of making a difference one child at a time, but also the frustrations of seeing children dying more from poverty than disease. I recall telling my parents that I wanted to become a doctor like them and them counseling me that I should, instead, focus on the more structural issues that keep people in poverty instead of its symptoms. At the time, I did not quite understand what they meant, and it, for sure, sounded less fun than being a doctor. But I know that my parents, who are watching from afar today, are proud to see me here trying to do just that.

I want to thank them, my husband Beran, and our sons, Nico and Lucas, and our friends and family, whose unwavering support and love are the reason that I can sit before you today.

Throughout my career, I have had a chance to see international development from different perspectives. As an investment banker working in Latin America, I saw the win-win opportunities of foreign direct investment and the transfer of knowledge across borders. As a consultant working in Africa and the Americas, I saw the importance of partnership across sectors, and most recently as Executive Director of the Center for International Development at Harvard, I got a chance to work on ideas of how to spur economic growth that can be more inclusive and bring evidence to decisionmaking. These experiences have taught me lessons that I hope to bring to this job if confirmed.

First, I believe that there are no silver bullets. Solving poverty is probably among the most complex challenges of our time. Making progress requires a long list of ingredients, from access to quality schooling to jobs that provide sustenance and dignity, and

things we cannot touch like a sense of safety and the rule of law. The list continues, but we have learned the difficult truth that a one-size-fits-all approach will just not work.

Second, the answers to this complexity must be grounded in evidence. Effective policy requires a relentless, data-driven approach to learning.

And third, I have learned the importance of partnership. I worked on a project in Rwanda to help reconstruct the economy after the genocide. It focused on moving the coffee sector from green, low-value coffee to one that could be sourced by Starbucks. Success depended on entrepreneurs willing to venture into export markets, on a government that could provide widespread training to farmers, and USAID providing a loan guarantee to establish the first washing station. This partnership resulted in tripling of incomes of the poorest farmers in Rwanda. And these outcomes would not have been possible without multiple actors working together on a unified strategy.

Finally, I understand that economic growth alone is not enough. Development requires strong and transparent institutions that provide basic services and are accountable to its citizens.

It is an important time for Latin America and the Caribbean. There are winds of change that are bringing hope to millions of people. Historic elections have taken place in Venezuela and Argentina, and judicial systems are holding the most powerful accountable in countries like Brazil and Guatemala. There is a peace accord on the table in Colombia that might bring an end to a brutal 50-year-old war. But it is also a time of fragility. Winds of change can quickly turn to destructive storms, and so we must continue to work skillfully with our partners in the region to ensure that these gains are sustained. Our mission is shared in every sense not just with the American people as an extension of their will and with the burden and privilege of their trust, but also with our neighbors.

I was born in Bolivia, but circumstances gave me the incredible chance to become a citizen of this great country. I fell in love with a great man, but I was also drawn to the United States' core values, its belief in every individual's intrinsic dignity and our right to pursue our own happiness and prosperity in an environment where our freedoms are protected and rules apply equally to everyone. I believe that these values are a source of our Nation's strength, and they must be reflected in our foreign policy.

If confirmed, it would be an honor to give back to a country that has given me so much and to advance these values as Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean at USAID. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Escobari follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARCELA X. ESCOBARI

Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Cardin and members of the committee, Thank you for considering my nomination and for the opportunity to testify before you today. It is an honor to be nominated by President Obama to serve as Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). I am grateful for the trust and confidence placed in me by Administrator Smith and Secretary Kerry at this critical time for the region. I also want to recognize the outstanding work being done by Beth Hogan, who has been leading the Bureau as acting Assistant Administrator.

I have had the opportunity to meet the dedicated staff of USAID, as well as those working for this committee, and I have been inspired by their knowledge and commitment. I have devoted my career to the practice of international development and I remain deeply optimistic about the role that U.S. policy and development assistance can play in improving lives for the poorest communities in Latin America and the Caribbean. If confirmed, I will work hard to make good on the Agency's mission to create prosperous, democratic, and resilient societies.

My passion for development was sparked by growing up in Bolivia, one of the poorest countries in the region, as the daughter of two pediatricians who practiced in the country's ill-equipped public hospitals. They brought home the joys of making a difference one child at a time, but also the frustration of seeing children die more often from poverty than disease. As a teenager, I recall declaring my intent to follow in their footsteps and become a doctor, to which they looked at each other with mild concern. They counseled me to instead focus on the "more structural forces" that keep people in poverty. At the time, I had no idea what they meant; only that it sounded much less fun than being a doctor. I soon figured out that they were encouraging me to tackle the root causes—not simply the symptoms—of the deprivation endured by the children they helped on a daily basis. I know that my parents, who are watching today from afar, are proud to see me here hoping to do just that.

I want to thank them, my husband Beran, our sons Nico and Lucas, and all of our friends and family, whose unwavering support and love are the reason I can sit before you today.

Throughout my career, I've had the opportunity to observe and work on international development challenges from many different perspectives. An early memory—and one that impacted my career choice—was volunteering in an orphanage while in high school. There, I remember caring for a two year old child who could barely sit up because the staff had no resources to provide the most basic human interactions to foster his development. I knew even then, that his suffering was and should be preventable.

Years later, as an investment banker working in Latin America, I saw the win-win potential of foreign direct investment and the transfer of knowledge across borders. As a management consultant working on development projects in Africa and the Americas, I learned how structuring effective partnerships among the private sector, governments, and local institutions can help create economic opportunities. Most recently, as the executive director of an international development research center at Harvard University, I have overseen numerous research projects on how to spur economic growth that is inclusive, and build the capacity of governments to execute more effectively. Experiencing the practice of development from these different perspectives—some up close as a volunteer and some from afar in the private sector and academia—has taught me a number of lessons I plan to bring to this job, if confirmed.

First, I believe that there are no silver bullets. Solving poverty is among the most complex challenges of our time. Making progress requires a long list of ingredients—ranging from access to quality education and healthcare to reliable roads and functional ports. It requires jobs that provide both sustenance and dignity, and a viable transport system that allows people to get to those jobs. We also know that overcoming poverty requires intangibles. It requires effective governance. People must feel a basic sense of safety in their neighborhoods, they must believe in a future for themselves and their children; they must have faith in the rule of law and an impartial justice system. The list of course continues.

But here's what we also know: it is possible to prevail. History has shown us that progress is attainable. The economies of countries like the U.S. have grown twenty times in the last two hundred years, while others have remained stagnant for decades. By studying their experiences, we have learned a lot about what drives growth, and we have had to confront the difficult truth that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work. The varying histories, cultures, capacities, government structures and even geographic locations of countries means that the path to prosperity for El Salvador will be different from that of Haiti.

Second, I believe that the answers to the complex challenge of development must be grounded in evidence. Effective policy requires a relentless, data-driven approach to learning—and learning fast. We must start from the humble position that there is a lot that we still don't know. New technologies have given us the ability to experiment, gather data, and harness new insights at an accelerated pace. If confirmed, I will build on ongoing USAID innovations and evaluations efforts to bring this data driven approach to bear on initiatives to deliver results.

Third, I have experienced first-hand the transformative power of partnership for development. Growth requires a thriving private sector that creates opportunities for its citizens—and one works together with an accountable public sector and vi-

brant civil society. Early in my career I worked on a project in Rwanda to help reconstruct the economy after the genocide. The project helped to transform a coffee sector that produced mostly green, low-value coffee into a competitive global exporter of Arabica coffee beans that are of such high quality that they are now sourced for Starbucks. Success depended on many factors: on entrepreneurs willing to venture into new export markets, on a government that could provide widespread technical assistance to farmers, on USAID's ability to provide a loan guarantee that helped establish the first coffee washing station. This 10-year, cross-sector partnership resulted in tripling the incomes of some of Rwanda's poorest coffee farmers, helping them to send their children to school and envision a new future for them. These outcomes would not have been possible without multiple actors working together on a unified strategy.

In the end, nations can only provide opportunities for their people if they have competitive firms that produce goods the world wants to buy. While leading the Latin American and Caribbean practice for an international consulting firm, I witnessed what happens when local producers became globally competitive. Whether in manufacturing, tourism or music, the challenge is harnessing the specific advantages of local industry and effectively connecting them to global markets. These linkages provide jobs for the unemployed, increase wages for the poor, and ultimately drive sustainable growth and development—impacts that go well beyond a nation's own borders. I very much support USAID's focus on leveraging the investments of the private sector, and I believe that it is in the best interest of the American people to help build resilient economies that are integrated into the global marketplace. This is particularly true in our neighboring economies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Finally, I understand that economic growth alone is not enough. Development requires strong and transparent institutions that provide basic services to people, ensure that rule of law and public safety are maintained, that universal rights are respected, and that governments are accountable to their citizens. If confirmed, I will work diligently to advance the U.S. government's long-standing commitment to promoting democracy, human rights and governance and supporting civil society to advocate for these conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean—from Cuba to Venezuela and beyond.

It is an important time for Latin America and the Caribbean. There are winds of change that are bringing hope to millions of people. Historic elections have taken place in Venezuela and Argentina. Judicial systems are holding the most powerful accountable in countries like Brazil and Guatemala. There is a peace accord on the table in Colombia that may finally bring an end to a brutal 50 year old civil war.

But it is also a time of fragility. Winds of change can quickly turn to destructive storms, and so we must continue to work skillfully with our partners in the region to ensure that these gains are sustained. In Venezuela, a humanitarian crisis is brewing amidst political turmoil. In Central America, we have seen the spillovers of escalating violence, stagnant growth and weak institutions. In Haiti, allegations of electoral fraud have brought the country to the brink of an institutional void. And while Colombia is on the verge of a milestone peace accord, the country has yet to move through the delicate process of disarming and reinserting former fighters into society. We need to combine hope with humility, and a hunger for progress with a clear-eyed recognition of what it takes to create sustainable progress in this complex world.

The region now faces a new threat—the Zika virus. While there is much we still do not know about this disease, I am encouraged by the U.S Government's response and USAID's plan to focus its efforts on mitigating the outbreak through mosquito control strategies, communicating with the public about the virus and how to control it, supporting women and families in affected countries, and innovating to enhance the response and prevent future outbreaks.

As we look for solutions and for ways to support the region's dreams of prosperity and stability, we must not only deploy our own capabilities but also the commitment, knowledge and resources of our partners throughout the region. The solution to some of Guatemala's malnutrition challenges may be found in techniques developed in Argentina's agricultural sector. The answer to the scarcity of employment opportunities in Haiti may be found in the economic zones next door in the Dominican Republic. Ideas to address Central America's insecurity may be found in our own cities or in other cities across Latin America. Our mission is a shared one in every sense, not just with the American people—as an extension of their will and with the burden and privilege of their trust--but also with our neighbors in the region.

I was born in Bolivia, but circumstances gave me the incredible chance to become a citizen of this great country. I fell in love with a wonderful man, but I was also

drawn to the United States' core values, its belief in every individual's intrinsic dignity, in our right to pursue our own happiness and prosperity in an environment where our freedoms are protected and the rules apply equally to everyone.

I believe that these values are the source of our nation's strength and that they must be reflected in our foreign policy. It would be an honor to give back to a country that has given me so much and advance those values as Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean at the United States Agency for International Development. Thank you again for considering my nomination and I look forward to answering your questions.

Senator CARDIN [presiding]. Well, once again, thank all five of you.

As you have noticed, Senator Gardner and I have rotated because there is a vote on the floor of the United States Senate, and we wanted to keep this hearing going. And I apologize for walking out. I have cast my vote. Now he is going over to do his vote, and he will be returning shortly.

But once again, thank you all for your service.

Let me, if I might, ask questions, first starting with Micronesia and with the Marshall Islands. Both are very much subject to the direct impact of climate change. They see it. The Marshall Islands was very helpful to us in Paris, as you pointed out. Micronesia is a great friend with us in the United Nations, as you pointed out.

In both of those countries, we have issues. The Marshall Islands is very important on maritime security issues, which is an area that is growing in tension in the region. We have certain commitments. The development assistance programs and the compact tails off over a number of years in both of these countries. The conditions for Micronesia complying with the compact has been difficult, denying them some infrastructure funds.

So I would welcome both of your views as to how you see us building on our traditional relationships with these two partner countries as we deal with international global issues from maritime security to climate change, to other issues in the United Nations, but also how you see the compact emerging with the United States' assistance during your terms as Ambassadors. Ambassador Stewart, we will start with you.

Ambassador STEWART. Thank you, Senator.

You have addressed a broad set of issues that will be the future work for myself, if confirmed in the Marshall Islands.

I think, first of all, I would like to say that in addressing the compact and the future of the assistance, it would be my goal, if confirmed, to work with the Marshallese for the goal of a more sustainable economic development, in other words, to as much as possible, shift the resources into outcome-oriented programmatic developments that would allow the Marshalls to become ready to become self-sufficient as the grant assistance comes to an end in 2023.

At the same time, the Marshalls are fortunate in having a fairly strong start on their trust fund, which will provide an alternate source of income after the grant assistance ends.

In the area of climate change, as you have noted, Senator, they worked with us very well in Paris, and I imagine we will continue to be close partners in the international negotiations. In terms of their own challenges, in the compact assistance, we are now moving to include resilience and adaptation measures in all of the

projects so that what gets built there is prepared for some of the effects of climate change. And also, we have continuing programs in disaster assistance and preparedness, better even to prepare for droughts and other severe weather elements.

And finally, in maritime security, we already have ship rider agreements with the Marshall Islands, but I think we continue to work with them on how to best preserve, conserve maritime resources and, if necessary, defend those areas.

Thank you, sir.

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Riley, your background in Peace Corps will serve you well here in Micronesia. You understand how important the economic development and infrastructure development is to the country's future. And yet, they have been very slow in moving forward on the conditions of the compact, which jeopardizes their ability to improve the infrastructure of their country, which is part of their economic future.

How do you see your role in trying to expedite the growth, economic growth, infrastructure growth, in Micronesia and partnership with the United States?

Mr. RILEY. Mr. Chairman, there are a lot of similarities between the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

I think one key difference that you identified is the fact that the trust fund is not fully funded in Micronesia as it is in the Marshalls. And there is a lack of economic development in Micronesia. So I will be looking very closely at the situation, if confirmed, on the ground and see where we might encourage private sector development, which I think is a key area in Micronesia. There is very much a lack of private sector development in Micronesia at the present time.

And I am considering looking to U.S. business as partners in that effort. I think there are opportunities in tourism, some niche tourism in particular. There are opportunities in small business, small franchises, Starbucks and so forth, and there is even a possibility of establishing call centers there. They occupy kind of a unique place in the globe between the Philippines and the U.S. and India, and that might be a possibility. So those are some things I am thinking about and will be considering when I arrive in Micronesia, if confirmed.

Senator CARDIN. Well, I appreciate that answer. The call center issue is going to get some of our attention because we think you should be talking to someone in this country when you call for help. [Laughter.]

Senator CARDIN. I understand what you are saying.

Mr. RILEY. These would be American call center companies.

Senator CARDIN. We will do the best we can there.

Let me switch because this is a large panel and I want to give everybody an opportunity with Ms. Dandekar and Mr. Matthews. And both, I want to ask you questions related to China.

Ms. Dandekar, China has established the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and it raises questions as to how it impacts the finance institutions in Asia with U.S. participation limited in how China is proceeding today. I would welcome your thoughts as to how you see the role within the Asian Development Bank in deal-

ing with the efforts by China to divert from the traditional development banks to one which it has more influence on.

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

Yes, AIIB is a new bank. And what they have said, that they will work with multinational—the MDBs. That is what they have said. The requirement for infrastructure in Asia is so vast that AIIB, when they work with MDBs, it will be good for us—I mean for the Asian Development Bank.

The reason is AIIB said that they will work with MDBs because that is how they are going to work to get the good governance. If confirmed, I will encourage ADB to co-finance with AIIB. The reason is that this way we can make sure that there is transparency and there is good governance with AIIB.

Senator CARDIN. I would just caution—look, I do not think any of us disagree that the more players in the field, it adds more flexibility for how to deal with economic development. So I do not think we per se are concerned about China's trying to develop a development bank, but I do question whether China always does what it says and whether their motives are always as pure as what we are trying to do in international development, particularly in our rebalance to Asia. So I think your answer I agree with. We want to engage, but I would just caution that they may, in some instances, be trying to undermine the more traditional development opportunities.

Ms. DANDEKAR. Thank you, Senator, for your comment. And I agree that there is a concern, but I think when AIIB will work with MDBs, we will be able to make sure that they have high standards, good governance, good transparency. By working with them, we will raise their standards too. So I completely agree with you regarding the concerns. But when they work with MDBs, it will really help to make sure that they are doing what they say they will be doing.

Senator CARDIN. I appreciate that. When I get to Ms. Escobari, I am going to be focusing on the corruption issue and good governance issue, but it is going to affect every one of your portfolios. And you are going to be hearing from not only me but this committee as to how we are going to assist you in your work on developing good governance as a condition to programs that you want us to participate with in any other country in the world. So we are going to be insisting upon the good governance, anti-corruption issues.

Mr. Matthews, the fact that China's economy has cooled down considerably—oil prices, of course, are different—how does that affect the work of APEC?

Mr. MATTHEWS. Thank you, Senator.

I would say that it raises the general broad problem that we are in a period of mediocre economic growth. And in APEC, we are looking across the spectrum of how we can operate to improve our economic performance and find new sources of growth whether it is through the economic architecture in trade—and in APEC this year we are initiating work on services trade. It is a great start. It will take us some time. But by opening up services trade among our APEC members, we will be expanding the potential for growth.

In structural reform, we look behind the border barriers growth. We are trying to remove red tape. We are trying to eliminate un-

necessary bureaucratic processing to reduce costs for firms and to speed up their opportunities to take advantage of international trade.

And the third area where we work in APEC to deal with this slower growth environment is improving human capital. You will see it in the work that we are doing particularly with regard to women. This year we are going to be launching work on STEM education for women trying to make sure we reduce the gap and get more women and girls involved in science and technological education to ensure that they are getting the skills necessary to actively work and participate in our economies and bring greater growth potential by just raising overall human capital development.

I would say those three core areas are ways in which we can engage effectively to help improve the potential for growth of our APEC economies.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you for that.

China, I think, presents opportunities for us. So I am not opposed to China's growth. I would rather see them also invest in the same areas you just talked about. Those of us who have visited China recognize that they have held back their own growth by how they have denied the full opportunities to their people. And I think some of the points that you are referring to will provide a more stable environment for APEC. So I appreciate that answer.

Ms. Escobari, I want to get to one of my favorite subjects. I recently was in Central America. I strongly support the President's initiatives in Central America, but I do not think it is enough. The programs seem to be more geared towards the military security front or the police security front rather than dealing with developing safety in communities for the full potential of their population. And impunity issue is horrible.

So tell me how you are going to make anti-corruption, good governance your top priority in the work that you are going to do and how you are going to keep us informed of the progress you are making and the obstacles that you confront in the State Department so that we can remove those obstacles.

Ms. ESCOBARI. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

Indeed, Central America is a priority and it is a key moment for the U.S. Government to invest in that region. I mean, the immigration crisis and the instability, as you said. And I think part of it is about, you know, people leave their countries because of fear and hope, and part of it is bringing hope closer to home. But both stability and economic development, or our key parts of the alliance for progress in the region, are not enough without dealing with governance and creating good institutions.

I think we are all optimistic on the role that CSIG has had in the region in combating impunity. This was a pretty small agency that had important effects through time. And I know that Honduras also wants to embrace a similar model that we are supporting.

So I think that the three-pronged approach of you have got to create jobs, which is I think important and crucial and you can be successful by taking a more regional approach, dealing with the safety issues—and the safety issues are very different in every

country. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach there—and working at the community level and understanding the root causes of each of the problems is key. But as you say, none of that is sustainable without a focus on strengthening these institutions, and I think that should be a priority. And I will maintain you are informed and seek your counsel.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

I admire Administrator Shah, Administrator Smith's initiatives at USAID to find ways to leverage a relatively small amount of assistance to bring about significant change. And we have been successful in doing that. I go back, Mr. Chairman, to President Bush's initiative on PEPFAR and that as a consequential change globally on our fight against AIDS. We need similar creative thoughts in dealing with hunger. And we have an initiative that we are doing at USAID with that. We need a consequential effort to deal with the gang violence in Central America.

But we also need to get a clear message out on anti-corruption that it is going to be tough love. We are not going to provide funds that can fuel corrupt regimes. In Central America, we have democratic regimes, but they have a hard time dealing with the extortion that gangs do in order to carry out their illegal activities. So we need you laser-focused as to how U.S. policy can have a more effective way of reducing anti-corruption strategies in the countries in which we are operating in. And I see that you fully support that. [Laughter.]

Ms. ESCOBARI. Yes, I do support that.

First, I think those commitments are part of this agreement and new funds to the region, that local governments need to be committed to these issues and show progress in them. I also think that corruption is extremely corrosive for development. It creates a huge tax. And we combat it directly and we also combat—the absence of corruption is public services that work. And when we focus on making sure that a system, you know, a health system, works, we are making sure that we are combating corruption too.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much. I appreciate all of your service.

Senator GARDNER [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

And just a quick question to all of you. We have spent a lot of time on this committee talking about the rebalance, talking about the pivot, talking about our Asia rebalance. And we have talked about how it cannot just be a military rebalance with personnel and equipment, but it has to be a diplomatic, it has to be an economic, it has to be all of the above when it comes to making sure that we are providing leadership and showing opportunities for the rebalance to succeed.

So I guess I will start with Ms. Dandekar in terms of what you see our success with the Asia rebalance, how we are proceeding with it, how successful we have been, and what we need to do to truly continue making the rebalance effective.

Ms. DANDEKAR. Thank you, Senator.

I think it is important for ADB to be part of rebalancing, making sure that we have good governance, especially when it comes to economic development and infrastructure, also have good commu-

nications with the region like you mentioned. And I did talk about those issues in my opening statement.

One of the things I have found out, it is important for us to have good governance, meet with the NGO's, the nongovernmental organizations. They are the ones who are going to say that what we are doing at ADB is the right thing. It also gives us good PR for the public to know that we are working on infrastructure, we are working on economic development, we are working on education, and it is because of ADB's partnership those things are happening.

Senator GARDNER. Ambassador Stewart, on the issue of the rebalancing, where we are and how we can be successful, and where we have not lived up to what we should be doing.

Ambassador STEWART. Thank you, Senator.

With my many years of serving in Southeast Asia and South Asia, a priority given to the Asia-Pacific is of great interest to me.

I think in the particular area of the Marshall Islands, it demonstrates our relationship there, demonstrates three of the key themes of an emphasis and a rebalancing towards the Asia-Pacific.

We have first the very strong defense and mutual security relationship, the access that we have to facilities there, and our responsibilities for defense.

But we have also the important factor of the economic development and how we will work together to pick up that area more to work on the theme of mutual prosperity for the Marshall Islands. And I would say that is a broader theme for the Asia-Pacific in general. That is what we hope to achieve here.

And then thirdly, the people-to-people relationship, which I think should be emphasized also and which, in the case of the Marshall Islands, we have free travel back and forth and we can promote that. But I think, again, that would be a theme that I would see throughout the Asia-Pacific.

Thank you, sir.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

Mr. Riley?

Mr. RILEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As in all things, there are many similarities between the Marshall Islands and FSM. I would add that the FSM is geopolitically very important. It occupies a million square miles in the middle of the Pacific between us and China. And I think that PACOM is very much aware of its geopolitical importance and is active in a number of areas in FSM, as I think also in the Marshall Islands. The Coast Guard is also active there. There are a number of maritime initiatives there.

And the defense provisions in the compact are kind of a ready-built rebalance, if you will, in that we have the full responsibility and authority for all defense matters there, as well as the right of strategic denial to any third party military. And I think these are very important provisions in the compact that are good for their defense and for ours.

As far as the economics are concerned, that is something that is kind of built into the end of the compact in the FSM. We are going to have to do a lot to make sure that the economy is ready for 2023, and if confirmed, that will be one of my major priorities.

Senator GARDNER. Mr. Matthews?

Mr. MATTHEWS. Mr. Chairman, for the Asia rebalance, three core areas of course are, on the diplomatic side, sustaining and strengthening our traditional alliance relationships while building out partnerships with other key players for us like Singapore, New Zealand, and Vietnam I think has gone very well over the past few years.

On the military force reposturing, as you know, PACOM has, I think, completed a very effective restructuring and they have been working assiduously to make sure they have the most efficient down-lay of their forces across the Pacific in a way that strengthens our security, and I think they have been successful in that.

And the third element, of course, is on the economic side where I now have some responsibilities. And APEC has been working consistently—and we are redoubling our efforts to do so—to assure that we have that open, transparent, rules-based economic system that supports our market economies and that sustains new opportunities for our businesses. I would say that the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, which grew out of APEC—of course, it is a separate negotiated undertaking, but shares those same values—is a perfect expression of the goals that we seek to ensure are inculcated in the structure of the economic arrangements in the East Asia-Pacific. And if we can get it to ratification this year, that will be a permanent stamp of American leadership in the region.

Senator GARDNER. From a resource point of view, your experience as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific, are we redirecting resources to an adequate point for that bureau? Because I know it had been actually one of the lower resourced bureaus.

Mr. MATTHEWS. I think the East Asian and Pacific Bureau would always appreciate more resources. [Laughter.]

Mr. MATTHEWS. And I could put that vote in for Assistant Secretary Dani Russel. But I do believe that we are making best efforts with the resources that we have got to do all that we can to pursue those goals, and I think we are doing them fairly effectively.

Additional resources for development projects in the Pacific would be appreciated. I would say that there are a number areas where if we have adequate ESF funding, there are significant things we can accomplish in helping develop the capabilities of these economies and making sure that they are active and effective partakers in an open market economy.

Senator GARDNER. Ms. Escobari, would you like to address the question on the issue of rebalance?

Ms. ESCOBARI. Well, my area of expertise is around Latin America.

Senator GARDNER. I understand. I did not expect you to answer but I wanted to give you the chance if you wanted to add something to it.

Ms. Dandekar, the ADB with the AIIB—is there anything that ADB should be doing, any policies that it should be pursuing or perhaps the Senate needs to be addressing when it comes to the experience of the AIIB to make sure that we are competitive, that we are providing leadership and not taken off the scene?

Ms. DANDEKAR. Thank you, Senator.

I have talked about a few things with Senator Cardin before you came.

AIIB is a new bank. As you know, there is so much need, the vast need for infrastructure in Asia. And at this moment, AIIB has said that I am aware of that they will work with MDBs. And the Asian Development Bank will be one of them.

And one of the reasons we should co-finance with them because I think that we can say and MDBs can say that we have to have higher standards, good governance, and transparency.

And going back to my opening statement, I will work with Congress and with Treasury especially to take input from you if you have any concerns regarding how we should handle it and what should we do. I will keep the communications open, if confirmed as an Executive Director of the Asian Development Bank. I would really appreciate that.

Senator GARDNER. Very good. Well, thank you.

And I want to thank all of the witnesses for appearing today. Thank you to Senator Cardin for joining us. Thank you for your testimony, your families, travel. Welcome again to the committee and thank you for being here.

For the information of members, the record will remain open until the close of business next Monday, February 15th, 2016, including for members to submit questions for the record.

We ask the witnesses to respond as promptly as possible to those questions, and your responses will, of course, be made a part of the record.

With the thanks of the committee, this hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:18 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF MS. MARCELA ESCOBARI'S NOMINATION, SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

It is a pleasure to support the nomination of Marcela Escobari, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

If confirmed, Ms. Escobari will bring years of experience and knowledge to the job of Assistant Administrator. As Executive Director of Harvard University's Center for International Development, she focused on developing and disseminating breakthrough strategies to create prosperity in developing countries. Over her tenure at Harvard, the Center tripled in size, with a diversified set of supporters in the public, philanthropic and private realms.

Her over two decades of experience in economic development include serving on the Executive Committee of the OTF Group, a strategy consulting firm that advised private and public sector leaders on how to improve export competitiveness. There, she built partnerships between country governments and private enterprise to increase the competitiveness of sectors with strong potential for economic expansion.

Ms. Escobari has a particular interest on how information and communication technology affects economic development which is, I think, the area in which we should focus our efforts, as that is the approach that will spur entrepreneurship and innovation. Ms. Escobari grew up in Bolivia and worked with indigenous communities there for the World Bank.

I can't think of more relevant experience, background and interests than those of Ms. Escobari to lead the Western Hemisphere Bureau at USAID. I look forward to a speedy confirmation process for her and all her fellow nominees.

RESPONSES OF SWATI A. DANDEKAR, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE DANDEKAR'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Regional Economic Issues

We've seen in recent months how China's economic deceleration and increased global economic uncertainty has led to negative spillovers for countries that for decades have been relying on China as a source of demand for commodities that the region provides.

Question. Historically, what have been the key drivers of economic growth for ADB borrowing countries and how has the slowdown in China and the region harmed those drivers? In light of the changing growth picture in the region, what policy reforms are the most pressing for the ADB? Is the ADB adequately equipped to address the changing needs of the region?

Answer. ADB borrowing countries extend from the Caucasus and Central Asia to the Pacific Islands, so the drivers of growth are extremely diverse. However, China's economic expansion has been a significant engine for export-led growth in many ADB borrower countries. In South Asia, China is a key importer of the region's agricultural commodities and lower value-added goods such as fabrics and garments. China's slowdown not only reduces demand for those exports, but also has created excess industrial capacity that may stunt efforts in South Asia, and in India in particular, to boost labor-intensive manufacturing. Trade between China and Central Asian economies has also increased sharply over the last decade, especially among energy-exporting economies like Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, where exports to China surpassed 10 percent of total exports in 2014. A faster-than-expected slowdown in China would affect global demand and reduce prices in energy and commodity markets, further hindering growth in these economies that are already slowing.

China's slowdown and weak external demand from other key export markets is underscoring the need for many of these borrowers to recalibrate their growth models to bolster domestic demand and develop new engines of growth in areas such as services. Continued investment in infrastructure and human capital along with other structural reforms are also crucial to enhancing their competitiveness. Additionally, China has become the world's largest source of tourists, and a precipitous slowdown in Chinese growth and a weaker Chinese currency could curtail Chinese tourism. Finally, China is also the second-largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) globally (after the United States), and a faster-than-anticipated slowdown in Chinese growth could cause some of that FDI to dry up.

The ADB is well-positioned to support its borrowers as they confront this slowdown. ADB's emphasis on infrastructure and regional integration can improve competitiveness in non-traditional sectors and open up new export markets for developing Asian economies. The ADB is supporting investments in human capital, including increased attention to tertiary education and vocational training. The ADB's policy advice and technical assistance can also support reforms to improve business climates to spur new private investment and help governments do more to mobilize domestic resources. ADB's emphasis on inclusion, including promoting equality for women and girls, increases opportunities for a greater number of people to benefit from those sources of growth.

The ADB's merger of its ordinary capital and concessional lending resources, which will significantly expand lending capacity to all ADB borrowers, is an important step for positioning ADB to meet the region's needs. The next steps are to ensure that ADB enhances its internal capacity to manage this additional lending as effectively as possible, including devoting more resources to anti-corruption and integrity due diligence. The ADB should also continue strengthening its framework for monitoring and evaluation and incorporating lessons learned on what parts of its assistance are most effective and which are not, which will allow ADB to better support inclusive growth and poverty reduction going forward.

Anti-Corruption

In your comments about the AIIB, you stated that by working with them the ADB could bring higher accountability standard to their operations. In that regard, I am particularly interested in the ADB's Office of Anticorruption.

Question. First, I am concerned that it may not be as effective as it could be in dealing with an expanding portfolio. Please provide your view on the effectiveness of the current Office of Anticorruption, and what you would do to improve it. Second, please explain the authorities the Office would have in any co-financing project with the AIIB. What is the role of the Office in existing co-financing projects?

Answer. ADB's Office of Anticorruption and Integrity (OAI) is only one of several units devoted to ensuring accountability at ADB (including most prominently the ADB's Accountability Mechanism, for which the United States has been a strong and key proponent). OAI's mandate is underpinned by ADB's zero tolerance for corruption, and its fundamental role is to ensure that ADB builds and maintains a culture of integrity among the institution's staff, fairly and transparently reviews procurement processes, and provides advice on integrity due diligence. If confirmed, I will aim to set the highest example by my own conduct. There are reforms that could strengthen OAI, such as updating the institution's code of conduct and implementing stronger provisions for disciplinary action.

Beyond setting a good example and updating ADB's codes, OAI needs resources to perform the expanding set of key accountability tasks that it is charged with carrying out. Due diligence and investigative requests will increase as ADB, with more resources after the merger of its lending balance sheets, strives to expand its nonsovereign portfolio and co-financing in accordance with its current strategy. Additional staffing will be needed to ensure that OAI can complete its investigations in a timely fashion. Finally, OAI is one of the units at ADB charged with the important mandate of ensuring a respectful workplace for all. To consolidate the good work OAI has achieved to date and to bring about necessary improvements, major shareholders like the United States will need to lead by impressing upon ADB's Management the importance of fully funding and staffing OAI.

OAI's role in projects co-financed with other institutions is the same no matter which institution is involved, but this role depends on the type of co-financing arrangement. For joint co-financing, ADB generally administers the funds and the project, and ADB's policies and procedures will always apply, including ADB's Anticorruption Policy. In these cases, OAI operates exactly as it would if the project were solely financed by ADB. In some instances, a co-financier will request application of its own anticorruption policy in addition to ADB's policy, usually to add its own bidder debarment list alongside ADB's. In those cases, if an OAI review determines that the co-financier's policies and procedures are fundamentally consistent with ADB's, OAI recommends that the Board approve the recognition of the additional sanction list. For parallel co-financed projects, each co-financier independently administers its own project in accordance with its respective policies and procedures. My understanding is that under the draft ADB-AIIB co-financing agreement, ADB would administer the co-financed funds and thus the full ADB OAI review for joint co-financing would apply.

U.S. Arrears to ADB

> In my opinion, the U.S. should always lead by example and fulfill its commitments to all the international organizations to which it belongs. U.S. arrears to the ADB exceed $300 million.

Question. What impact, if any, do these arrears have for U.S. participation in the ADB?

Answer. I fully share the view that the United States should lead by example and fulfill its commitments to all international organizations in which it is a member, including the ADB. I appreciate that the FY 2016 appropriations clear our unmet commitments and complete our payments for the ADB's general capital increase, preventing us from forfeiting shares and ensuring that the United States remains the joint largest shareholder with Japan. However, the $297 million in unmet commitments that we still have to the Asian Development Fund (AsDF) undermine U.S. leadership and influence at the ADB and directly affect the AsDF's financial capacity for supporting the poorest countries in Asia. U.S. unmet commitments to the AsDF reduce our ability to influence policy priorities for both the AsDF and the ADB as a whole during AsDF replenishment discussions, including those currently taking place. Other donors and ADB Management are less willing to support our policy proposals if they do not believe that we will back our ideas with full funding of our commitments.

Beyond the $297 million that the United States has not been able to contribute, our actions also impact other donors, who hold back some of their contributions until the United States is able to meet its commitments. My understanding is that other donors have required that AsDF withhold $138 million of their contributions due to U.S. unmet commitments. This financing is critical for supporting countries

like Afghanistan, Nepal, and the small island countries of the Pacific (such as Micronesia and the Marshall Islands), even with the expansion of the ADB's and AsDF's lending capacity that will result from the merger of the ADB's ordinary capital and AsDF lending resources.

RESPONSES OF MATTHEW JOHN MATTHEWS, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. SENIOR OFFICIAL FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION (APEC) FORUM, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

NOMINEE MATTHEWS'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Top Priorities

Mr. Matthews, you would clearly bring a lot of experience and perspective to APEC. At the same time, things are changing in the Asia-Pacific region—on the economic front China's shifting economic policy is challenging existing institutions and relationships.

Question. What do you see as the most important issues facing APEC today?

Answer. Global economic growth continues to face major challenges and growth in the Asia-Pacific region remains moderate and uneven. APEC economies need to work together to ensure that the region's historically robust growth can continue. The rise of economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region requires closer coordination and cooperation on issues that include trade policy, customs processing, and rules making by regulators.

Question. Is APEC prepared to meet those challenges?

Answer. APEC is an important part of how we meet these challenges. Its collaborative, non-binding nature allows economies greater freedom to discuss and engage with ideas than would otherwise be possible. The organization is also addressing new drivers of growth, such as services and digital trade.

APEC and U.S. Foreign Policy

The Asia-Pacific region is presenting us with some of the most difficult security and diplomatic challenges today.

Question. What do you see as the proper roles of APEC and the East Asia Summit (EAS) in U.S. foreign policy? What are the implications of U.S. membership in the EAS for its engagement with APEC?

Answer. EAS and APEC are complementary. APEC provides an opportunity to advance trade and investment issues in the Asia-Pacific region, which includes important trading partners in the Western Hemisphere. The EAS provides a forum to address political and security issues in the region.

Question. Some have suggested that APEC consider downgrading its annual meeting to a ministerial meeting rather than a leaders' meeting with heads of state. How do you assess such suggestions?

Answer. The first APEC Leaders-level meeting took place on Blake Island in Seattle, Washington during the United States' first hosting of APEC in 1993, four years after its founding. Since then, Leaders have met annually to address pressing challenges and solidify their common vision for how to achieve regional economic integration and inclusive growth. As the premier economic forum in the region, Leaders-level participation demonstrates the importance we place on the Asia-Pacific economy, and our active participation in it as a Pacific power is critical to balancing interests from across the region and shaping its agenda.

APEC Expansion

With the rise of many dynamic economies in the region, APEC's membership may no longer reflect the true balance of influence and interests there.

Question. Do you believe APEC should be expanded to include India?

Answer. We welcome India's interest in joining APEC. India has substantial and growing economic linkages with the United States and other APEC member economies. Interagency discussions are currently underway regarding India's interest in membership and to better understand how APEC fits into India's domestic economic reform agenda.

Question. Are there other nations in the Asia-Pacific region that might be potential members for the group?

Answer. The following economies have expressed interest in APEC membership: Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Macau (China), Mongolia, Pakistan, Panama, and Sri Lanka. There is currently no consensus among APEC members on the parameters of membership expansion or on which of the roughly dozen candidates, including India as well as other countries in the Americas and South and Southeast Asia, should be considered.

Question. What are the pros and cons of enlarging APEC?

Answer. New members could extend APEC's reach and influence and could be an important mechanism to accelerate reform in the economies of new members. However, admitting new members could make the organization unwieldy and slow momentum toward regional integration. APEC serves as an effective forum to advance free and open trade and investment, and any expansion would have to be evaluated based on its impact on the organization.

RESPONSES OF MARCELA ESCOBARI, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE USAID, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE ESCOBARI'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. Throughout my career in development, my guiding principle has been to improve the lives and dignity of the people living in the countries I have sought to help. This has meant promoting inclusive growth strategies that help people access capital and networks, as well as supporting the development of strong institutions and governance to ensure that the benefits of development are widely shared and individual rights are respected.

In my role as Executive Director at the Center for International Development (CID) at Harvard University, I have sought to promote a comprehensive approach to development that includes improving governance, and promoting human rights and democratic principles. The Center is focused principally on exposing students of public policy to practitioners in the field and managing research initiatives. Examples of actions that I have pushed forward in this role include facilitating a fellowship at Harvard's Carr Center for Human Rights for a Venezuelan non-governmental organization (NGO) representing political prisoners and advocating for judicial accountability. This fellowship will enable a research project to analyze how to increase the cost to authoritarian governments that bypass judicial systems. When completed, this work will be made widely available. I also facilitated the engagement of the Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS) to teach a course at Harvard on strategies to combat authoritarian regimes, helping educate public policy students from around the world on promoting human rights and democracy most effectively.

I have also worked on e-government efforts, including writing a paper on the topic to show the value of efficiency and transparency in government procurement, services and regulations. Lastly, many of CID's programs address topics that improve the capability and accountability of government. In particular, one of our projects in Venezuela seeks to help navigate the transition of the country to a more democratic and prosperous society.

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

Answer. The human rights landscape in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has improved over the past several decades, but serious issues remain. In many countries, democratically elected populist leaders inhibit political participation and curb checks and balances by restricting or co-opting the power of legislative and judicial branches of government. Human rights defenders, labor activists, members of the media and other political activists remain at elevated risk of intimidation and violence.

High levels of violence across Latin America and the Caribbean—driven in part by high inequality and exacerbated by corruption, impunity, and lack of effective law enforcement—continue to threaten public safety and constrain efforts to spur

economic growth. Central American migrants to the United States, who often leave their countries because of security concerns, are vulnerable to numerous human rights violations including human trafficking and threats to life during their journey. Dysfunctional justice and security sectors only worsen the situation. Women and girls, as well as LGBTI persons, are especially susceptible to gender-based violence.

If confirmed, I will commit to employing a human rights-based approach to address these long-standing issues in LAC, from Cuba to Venezuela and beyond. I support USAID's continued work and consultation with government, civil society, and private sector partners to include all citizens in the benefits of development efforts. I was pleased to see increased resources for the region and for democracy and governance in the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 request, and commit to leveraging these resources in support of independent civil society organizations that serve as a counterweight to the forces of repression, corruption, and disenfranchisement. Also, I will support USAID's work to reduce violence, particularly in Central America, through crime and violence prevention programs, justice sector reform, and government, social services, and civil society strengthening. I understand USAID is developing a new human rights program to improve national human rights protection systems that will work to protect vulnerable populations in the Northern Triangle. If confirmed as Assistant Administrator, I believe I can play an important role in sharpening these efforts and in leveraging our relationships in the region to support inclusive growth and protection of human rights. Through these actions, I hope to accelerate USAID's contribution to a safer, more inclusive and prosperous Latin America and the Caribbean.

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 Latin America and the Caribbean in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Having worked on these and other development issues for many years, I understand that donors alone cannot bring about these changes. Addressing human rights issues requires a commitment by governments in the region to respect the fundamental freedoms—including freedom from violence—of their citizens. This includes passing and enforcing laws that protect citizens in each country as part of a comprehensive rule of law system—a challenge that has long plagued many countries in the region. Public awareness about human rights, including norms and responsibilities, as well as citizen engagement are also crucial to creating a culture of respect for human rights. Civil society organizations and the media play an important role in educating citizens about their rights, in monitoring the protection of those rights, and in calling for the enforcement of laws designed to protect citizens. However, in several of the countries in the region, many of these same groups face near constant threats, systemic persecution or intimidation. I understand that many of USAID's programs are designed to squarely address human rights challenges, and that the Agency is designing specific human rights protections programs for the Central America region. I look forward to advancing this work, if confirmed.

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 from Latin America and the Caribbean?

Answer. Engaging in consultations with human rights, civil society, and non-governmental organizations is fundamental to USAID's work in Latin America and the Caribbean. I If confirmed, I will make this a priority. Indeed, I believe that doing so is critical to help inform program design, implementation, and sustainability for all of the Agency's programming, including in the areas of democracy, human rights and governance.

Question. Will you engage with Latin American and Caribbean governments on matters of human rights, civil rights and governance as part of your mission?

Answer. Active engagement with governments in the region on matters regarding human rights, civil rights and governance will be vital to addressing the issues previously mentioned. Engagement will also support all of USAID's programs, including those that seek to improve citizen security and strengthen democracy and governance, so that they foster more sustainable development in LAC. If confirmed, I will prioritize engagement with Latin American and Caribbean governments as a central part of my role and mission as Assistant Administrator.

Central America

I am deeply concerned about the situation in Central America—where youth face extreme levels of violence and where weak public institutions

struggle to uphold the rule of law and address the corrupting influence of illicit trafficking.

Question. In your opinion, what steps do we need to take to achieve consequential change in Central America? What investments will you make in programs that advance democratic governance, strengthen the rule of law, and combat corruption?

Answer. Social development and economic growth in Central America have been stymied in recent years by a dramatic rise in crime and violence-particularly in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. This insecurity is rooted in deep-seated issues of social and economic inequity, weak criminal justice institutions, the failure to expand economic opportunity for vast segments of the population, and increases in gang violence and transnational crime. As these long-standing challenges in Central America have worsened, we have seen the consequences manifest at our border, where thousands of unaccompanied children left their homes in Central America to make the dangerous journey to the United States.

I believe that investing now in advancing democratic governance, strengthening the rule of law, countering gangs and combating corruption will have sustained long-term benefits for both the region and our own nation. These investments are also critical to enable USAID's other programs to yield benefits for the people of these countries. If confirmed, I will support implementation of the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America, which directly addresses the root causes of migration by focusing on three interrelated objectives: prosperity, security and governance. By advancing these three objectives in tandem, the Strategy seeks to foster a secure, economically integrated Central America that provides opportunities to all its citizens, and is governed by more accountable, transparent and effective public institutions.

If confirmed, I will also support investments in Central America that are evidence-based. It is my understanding that USAID is already seeing some tangible results of the Agency's crime prevention activities in El Salvador. Initial analysis from a rigorous impact evaluation points to a 66 percent drop in homicides in the 76 communities where USAID targets its programming, which is in contrast to other communities where homicide rates have climbed sharply over the past year. If confirmed, I will support the Agency's efforts to have their investments to advance development, democracy and human rights principles grounded in evidence of what is working in Central America.

Colombia

President Santos recently visited Washington to commemorate 15 years of close cooperation between the U.S. and Colombia. Through Plan Colombia, our two countries paved the way for a stronger and more democratic nation, and one that stands on the brink of peace. During the visit, President Obama announced a new framework for bilateral cooperation, which he called ″Peace Colombia″ and has requested more than $450 million in support of implementation of a potential peace agreement.

Question. What is your vision for USAID's priorities in Colombia as the country moves forward in a direction of peace? What do you believe USAID's strategy should be in support of a post-conflict society in Colombia?

Answer. USAID has maintained a long and deep presence in the most challenging and conflict-affected regions of Colombia, and this continued support will be necessary to maintain a sustained peace post-accord. My understanding is that USAID's strategy moving forward will be to focus on post-conflict programming by expanding support for the reintegration of ex-combatants, stabilization plans, transitional justice and post-conflict readiness efforts. If confirmed, I will strongly support enhanced assistance to the Government of Colombia in implementing its own peace accord commitments and establishing a stronger state presence in conflict-affected areas of the country.

Human Rights and Anti-Corruption in the Hemisphere

Over the past year, from Guatemala to Brazil to Venezuela, Latin American civil society has spoken out more loudly than ever against corruption and violations of human rights.

Question. Given the vital importance of strengthening democratic institutions, promoting good governance, and strengthening civil society, what priority will you place on these issues and how can we best tailor our assistance programs to address these issues?

Answer. Issues related to democratic governance are paramount to the development of safe, prosperous countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. If confirmed, I will prioritize these issues as fundamental components in all of the work USAID does in the region. Anti-corruption and transparency issues cannot be fully addressed with stand-alone governance programs. It is therefore critical that the principles of good governance, especially transparency and anti-corruption, are integrated into all development sectors in which the Agency works. USAID's health and education reform programs, for example, must include mechanisms to deter corruption and to support transparency of governance in their respective sectors.

I also believe that human rights principles are foundational to a country's ability to achieve sustainable, inclusive economic growth. If confirmed, I will support the efforts of the region's civil society to monitor human rights and corruption, to educate and empower citizens on their rights, and to propose solutions to intractable problems.

Haiti

> Since Haiti's devastating earthquake in 2010, the U.S. Congress has appropriated more than $4 billion in foreign assistance. USAID has been at the forefront of our efforts, with critical programs to strengthen Haiti's health sector, food security, economic infrastructure, and the rule of law. Repeated GAO studies have suggested that the U.S. has not achieved the results that we have hoped for. And, with the president stepping down last Sunday to make way for an interim government, many analysts have observed that weak democratic institutions are a hurdle to economic growth and stability.

Question. What will your priorities be for USAID's programming in Haiti? Should more attention be paid to strengthening democratic institutions and promoting good governance?

Answer. Haiti's political environment continues to be challenging and complex. As the poorest country in the region, it has suffered from political instability and low productivity for decades. The 2010 earthquake exacerbated that reality. In order to have sustainable growth, greater political leadership and good governance are needed, but short-term economic pressures further drive instability and corruption. This chicken and egg dilemma is not reason to give up, but rather to take a hard look at what is working and what is not, apply lessons learned and speed the Agency's execution and implementation. Despite the challenges in Haiti, my understanding is that several of USAID's projects, specifically in the health and agriculture sectors, are bearing fruit and that the Agency has made considerable progress in addressing bottlenecks in the obligation of funds.

To help Haiti achieve results that strengthen democratic institutions, it is my understanding that USAID focuses on key areas of capacity building for the Government of Haiti, which includes promoting political competition and consensus building, improving access to justice and legal assistance, and protecting human rights and vulnerable populations. The course of Haiti's future ultimately depends on Haitians themselves, but if confirmed, I will reinforce USAID's commitment to providing support to build Haiti's capacity to provide for its citizens.

ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE ESCOBARI'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. If confirmed, what will be your main priorities in Latin America and the Caribbean region?

Answer. If confirmed, I will focus on promoting inclusive growth, citizen security, and good governance in a manner that benefits all citizens. To achieve these objectives, I will amplify and expand USAID programs that are demonstrating results, and work with Congress to institutionalize and build on successful programs in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). My current priorities include expanding the Agency's work on democracy, human rights, and governance in LAC, particularly in Central America, Venezuela, and Colombia. I will also work to enhance the Agency's impact in Haiti, promote universal human rights and democratic reforms in Cuba, and further the implementation of the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America.

While I will bring to this role a clear focus on results, I am a strong believer that no one has a monopoly on good ideas, and I welcome broad input on priorities, ways to evaluate program impact, and which programs are most effective in advancing the interests of the United States and the people of the region. I will use the man-

agement skills I have developed throughout my career to provide leadership, guidance, and tools that enable USAID's staff to deliver results in these priorities.

Question. What countries are in need of the most USAID programming in that region?

Answer. It is my understanding that USAID programming advances U.S. national interests of prosperity and security, and responds directly to U.S. policy priorities. Currently, these priorities include maintaining assistance to Central America, with a particular focus on the Northern Triangle, Colombia, Haiti, Cuba, and the Caribbean.

In Venezuela, a humanitarian crisis is brewing amidst political turmoil. In Central America, we have seen the spillovers of escalating violence, stagnant growth and weak institutions. And while Colombia is on the edge of a milestone peace accord, the country has yet to move through the delicate process of reinserting the guerillas into the economy, disarmament, and strengthening civil society throughout the country. These countries will require attention and targeted programing. If confirmed, I look forward to working with USAID staff and the Congress on these priorities.

Question. On Central America, what specific programs will USAID be implementing in that region as a result of the passage of FY 2016 Omnibus?

Answer. My understanding is that the fiscal year (FY) 2016 Omnibus provides greater resources than previous years to support the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America. This increase in funding will allow USAID to expand successful crime and violence prevention programs. The increase also facilitates USAID's execution of new regional and bilateral approaches designed to target assistance to those most likely to engage in violence at home or in the community, so as to significantly reduce homicides and other types of violence. In addition, these funds will enable the Agency to initiate programs in the areas of prosperity and governance, which address the core drivers of migration from Central America. For instance, I understand that new programs will support trade and investment facilitation across Central America, small and medium business competitiveness in Honduras, and agricultural value chain strengthening in Guatemala. These new efforts aim to provide rural households with more opportunities to connect to viable markets, and to diversify and increase their incomes. FY 2016 funding also enables USAID to support new civil society and governance programs designed to improve the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of public institutions in all three Northern Triangle countries. These programs will increase transparency and citizen participation in El Salvador, strengthen anti-corruption efforts and reforms in Honduras, and empower civil society to advocate more effectively in Guatemala.

Question. In Haiti, it has been reported that projects have been delayed or have failed to meet their desired results. If confirmed, what would you do to achieve better results? Please be specific on the programs.

Answer. My understanding is that the U.S. Government updated the 2011 ″Post-Earthquake U.S. Government Haiti Strategy: Toward Renewal and Economic Opportunity″ in 2015, specifically to respond to delays in some areas and improve cost efficiency and sustainability. The updated strategy is now extended to FY 2018, and continues to guide the United States' overall approach to development assistance to Haiti. The U.S. Government is aligning its programs with the Government of Haiti's priorities and supporting specific activities where the Haitian government demonstrates political will and leadership necessary to address needed reforms.

I believe in using evidence in policy making, and if confirmed, will support USAID to continue to monitor progress, scale up those interventions that are bearing fruit and terminate programs that are not working. For example, my understanding is that program activities that lack political will have ended, such as the reform of the state electric utility. With Congressional approval, USAID has reprogrammed funds to support programs that better address other key issues in the country. For example, USAID has shifted funds away from infrastructure and energy and is moving them into programs to improve the capacity of the Ministry of Health, address key human rights challenges such as child labor, to provide nutrition programs for vulnerable populations, and increase workforce development training with private enterprises in agribusiness, construction, and textile value chains. If confirmed, I will also work with the Agency to conduct routine analysis of each of the programs within the Haiti portfolio to determine appropriate actions and maintain a good understanding of the role of government capacity in the success of these projects.

Question. In Colombia, what role will USAID play if a peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and the FARC is reached by March 2016?

Answer. USAID strongly supports Colombia's expected implementation of a peace agreement. The United States-Colombia partnership will be critical to U.S. interests in a post-accord era. Key USAID program priorities will include political participation and transitional justice, reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants, and promoting inclusive economic growth, especially in rural areas of Colombia. USAID's role will be to maintain its deep presence in the most challenging and conflict-affected regions of Colombia, as this continued support will be necessary to maintain a sustained peace led by the Government of Colombia. USAID's strategy will be to focus on post-conflict programming by expanding support for the reintegration of ex-combatants, stabilization plans and post-conflict readiness efforts. If confirmed, I will strongly support USAID assistance to the Government of Colombia in implementing its own peace accord commitments and establishing a stronger state presence in conflict-affected areas of the country.

Question. What is the current status of USAID funding for human rights and democracy in Cuba?

Answer. USAID's commitment to democracy in Cuba remains strong, and if confirmed, I will continue to make this a priority. For the past 20 years, USAID has promoted democracy in Cuba by providing humanitarian assistance to political prisoners and their families, supporting local civil society actors and groups, and facilitating the free flow of information to, from and within the island. With FY 2015 resources, it is my understanding that USAID recently put out Requests for Proposals that will focus on new programming in humanitarian assistance for political prisoners and their families, and in human rights support for civil society groups. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to continue USAID's efforts to advance human rights and democracy in Cuba.

Question. What are the current and future USAID initiatives to support civil society and democratic governance initiatives in Venezuela?

Answer. My understanding is that USAID has provided assistance to support open democratic processes in Venezuela since 2002. Over this time, the Venezuelan executive has increasingly undermined the autonomy of other branches of government and thereby limited citizen rights. Given the recent parliamentary election in December 2015, USAID remains hopeful and committed to supporting initiatives in Venezuela, especially in the areas of democracy, human rights and civil society strengthening. If confirmed, and as the political landscape in Venezuela develops, I look forward to exploring opportunities for further USAID support for governance as well as broad economic stability. I believe that greater levels of peace, stability and rule-of-law in Venezuela are in the best interests of Venezuelans, the American people and the neighboring community in Latin America.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2016

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

Christine Ann Elder, of Kentucky, nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Liberia
R. David Harden, of Maryland, nominated to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development
Elizabeth Holzhall Richard, of Virginia, nominated to be Ambassador to the Lebanese Republic
Stephen Michael Schwartz, of Maryland, nominated to be Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia
Kelly Keiderling-Franz, of Virginia, nominated to be Ambassador to the Oriental Republic of Uruguay
Mark Sobel, of Virginia, nominated to be United States Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund for a Term of Two Years
Adam H. Sterling, nominated to be Ambassador to the Slovac Republic

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:55 a.m., in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker [presiding], Perdue, Isakson, Barrasso, Cardin, Menendez, Shaheen, Murphy, and Kaine.

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

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Today, the committee will consider seven nominations.

First on our panel, we have Ms. Christine Elder, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of counselor, nominated to be Ambassador to Liberia. Ms. Elder is currently director of the Office of Southern African Affairs in the Bureau of African Affairs at the Department of State, a position she has held since 2013. Previously, Ms. Elder served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Mozambique from 2010 to 2013, and as a strategic planning officer in the Bureau of International Programs from 2007 to 2010.

Thank you so much for your service.

We have Mr. David Harden. He is nominee for Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance for USAID. He is a career member of the Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, and currently serves as mission director at USAID Mission in the West Bank and Gaza, a position he has held since 2013. Prior to this, he was deputy mission director at USAID Mission in Iraq from 2012 to 2013, and senior adviser to the Special Envoy for Middle East Peace from 2009 to 2012. Mr. Harden also served as senior development adviser in Libya in 2011.

Thank you so much.

Next we have Ms. Elizabeth Richard nominated to be Ambassador to Lebanon. Ms. Richard, a career member of the Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, is the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the Department of State, a position she has held since 2013. Previously, Ms. Richard served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Yemen from 2010 to 2013, border coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan from 2008 to 2010, and as director of counternarcotics law enforcement and rule of law programs at the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan from 2006 to 2007.

Thank you so much.

Lastly, we have Mr. Stephen Schwartz, a career member of the Foreign Service, class of counselor. He currently serves as director of the Office of Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Island Affairs at the Department of State, a position he has held since August 2015. Previously, Mr. Schwartz served as director of the Office of Western African Affairs from 2013 to 2015, deputy chief of mission at U.S. Embassy in Zambia from 2010 to 2013, and deputy director of the Office of Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands from 2008 to 2010.

You all are very accomplished, and your resumes are very long. Thank you so much. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you all for being here.

I do not know if you want to make an opening comments?

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

Senator CARDIN. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to welcome not only four nominees but also the second panel of three nominees. Thank you. Each one of you has served your Nation in an extraordinary way in a career of public service, and we thank you and your families, because we know it is a family sacrifice. And we particularly appreciate your willingness to continue to serve our country in critically important positions.

I am going to put my full statement in the record, so we can go right to the hearing.

But, Mr. Chairman, I need to point out that Mr. Harden and Mr. Schwartz should be given special attention since they are from Maryland. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. As with so many of the folks in the State Department, they are from Maryland.

We welcome you, we certainly do thank all the families, in particular, for being here and for the support.

Senator FLAKE. Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes?

Senator FLAKE. May I just say, I have to go to another hearing, but I wanted to say how much I appreciated meeting with Ms. Elder and Mr. Schwartz in my office earlier. They are going to do great in Africa.

People tend to go to one country and go to another, go to another, and they are old Africa hands. And I appreciate their families and their sacrifice that they have made as well. I am just glad that they are here, and I am glad that we are so well-represented on that continent.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you for your tremendous efforts in the continent of Africa.

Yes, sir, Senator Isakson?

Senator ISAKSON. I just want to say I could not have said it better than Senator Flake did. I met with the nominees as well. They are outstanding citizens of our country. And to go to the countries they are going to and be the face of America where they are, we are very lucky to have people willing to sacrifice and do it.

I commend all of you for your commitment to the country.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

It appears you are not going to have a lot of questions. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. So we thank you, Senator Isakson.

With that, if we could begin testimony with Ms. Elder. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF CHRISTINE ANN ELDER, OF KENTUCKY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

Ms. ELDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee. It is truly an honor to be here today as the nominee to represent the United States in Liberia.

I am grateful for the confidence of the Secretary and the President in this nomination and deeply appreciative of the support, indeed, of my family, my friends, and my colleagues.

I especially would like to thank my husband, Paul Hughes, who was himself a Foreign Service Officer and grew up in the Foreign Service. He is here with his sister, Alice Hughes, and her husband, Dr. John Sharretts. Not here but very much in our hearts are my stepchildren, Ellie and Christopher in Washington State in school, my brother in Ohio, and my parents in Kentucky.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Liberia do share a deep historical bond. If confirmed, I will deepen that partnership as Liberia continues to recover from Ebola, to restructure its security sector, strengthen its democracy, and expand economic growth and opportunity.

It was not long ago that Liberia and its neighbors were mired in the Ebola crisis. Peace hard-won through daily determination after a devastating civil war was threatened. We harnessed the full force of the U.S. Government, bringing together Departments of Defense and State, USAID, CDC, and others. We sent over 3,000 U.S. troops to set up treatment centers and help train new health care workers to replace hundreds who had died trying to save others.

Our assistance was over $500 million, and this was all in support of Liberia's own efforts.

If confirmed, I will lead our Embassy team working together with Liberians on the Global Health Security Agenda to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks, so that they do not become epidemics.

The $257 million MCC compact will boost Liberia's participation in Power Africa, where only 2 percent of the population has access to electricity. This project will quadruple power generation.

We remain Liberia's closest partner on national reconstruction. We have invested more than $2 billion since the end of civil war in 2003. Of that, over $350 million went to help rebuild their security sector. The growing capabilities and competence of their forces in that sector are reflected in the U.N. Security Council's authorization for the further reduction of the UNMIL mandate to a residual force as they conclude their peacekeeping mandate this year.

In recovery, the Liberian Government is rightfully focused on job creation. President Sirleaf understands the importance of battling corruption and also in advancing reforms to attract foreign investment.

If confirmed, I will advance U.S. interests to the benefit of both of our economies. I will ensure that our assistance is wisely spent, and well-coordinated.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, the Liberian people want to lift themselves up, and they are deeply grateful for our counsel and our support. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be here, and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Elder follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHRISTINE ELDER

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Liberia. I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence that the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee and their staffs to promote and protect U.S. interests in Liberia. It has been my privilege in over 25 years of public service to have worked in both the Departments of State and Commerce, in both the Civil and the Foreign Service. I have served in Mozambique as Deputy Chief of Mission and with other postconflict countries in transition, and have worked on African issues for most of the past decade.

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 unique history. I deeply appreciate the love and support of my family, friends, and colleagues who have made me the person before you today.

I would especially like to thank my husband Paul Hughes, who was previously a Foreign Service Officer and grew up with Foreign Service parents, and acknowledge my sister-in-law Dr. Alice Hughes, who was born during their parents' assignment in South Africa, and has also dedicated herself to a life of public service. Unable to join us today but very much in our hearts are my stepchildren Ellie and Christopher, in school in Washington State, my brother in Ohio, and my parents in Kentucky.

Mr. Chairman, the United States and Liberia share a special bond rooted in our deep historical ties, and preserved through our commitment to democracy, human rights, and economic prosperity. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen our bilateral relationship and ensure that the United States remains a steadfast partner as Liberia continues to recover from the Ebola epidemic, reform its security sector, strengthen its democracy, and expand economic growth and opportunity for all its citizens.

Not long ago, Liberia and its neighbors were mired in crisis, confronting the deadliest and longest-recorded Ebola outbreak in history. As the death toll rose, the

country began to experience profound second-order effects: schools closed; an already fragile healthcare system collapsed; and commerce, industry, and tourism came to a standstill. Liberia's peace and democratic stability, earned through daily, dogged determination during the course of Liberia's post-civil war period, were suddenly under grave threat as a result of the epidemic.

In combatting Ebola, the United States adopted a vigorous, whole-of government approach to support Liberia's own efforts. The State Department, the Department of Defense, USAID, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other elements of the Department of Health and Human Services, all played critical roles. Our humanitarian assistance, including food aid, totaled more than $509 million. The President deployed almost 3,000 troops to build treatment centers and assist in training healthcare workers. The Government of Liberia acted with determination to educate the Liberian people as local health care workers risked and—in many cases—gave their lives to save and ease the suffering of others. While no one can rule out a relapse, today Liberia has been declared Ebola-free, and with continued assistance from the United States, is on its way to recovery. We have confidence that if there is another outbreak, the country and its neighbors will be better able to control its spread.

If confirmed, I will lead our embassy's well-integrated interagency team, which remains deeply engaged in a partnership with Liberia to prevent, detect, and respond to future outbreaks before they become epidemics. I will make every effort to ensure U.S. assistance is spent wisely, and that synergetic efforts with the Liberian government and other partners support Liberia's development and post-Ebola recovery plan, as well as advance the Global Health Security Agenda.

Thirteen years after the end of Liberia's civil war and throughout the Ebola crisis, the security situation in Liberia has remained largely stable, and the country has made major security strides. The United States remains Liberia's closest partner in the reconstruction effort, investing more than $2 billion in rebuilding the country since signing the peace accord in 2003, including over $350 million on security sector reform. Since the signing of the peace accord, the country has successfully held two presidential and general elections, as well as Senate midterm elections and several by-elections. The U.N. Security Council lifted targeted sanctions in September 2015, and the United States lifted targeted individual sanctions in November 2015. The U.N. Security Council also authorized reducing UNMIL's remaining military and police components to a residual force by June 30, 2016, as they complete the final phase of the peacekeeping mandate. If confirmed, I will continue our bilateral efforts to promote the Government of Liberia's capacity to manage conflict early warning and response, to provide for its own security, and to strengthen the frameworks and institutions that underpin the rule of law.

But more work lies ahead to secure a lasting peace. Civil society is still fragile, and the country is challenged by widespread corruption, a lack of resources, and poverty. The next test will come in October 2017, when Liberia holds presidential elections. If confirmed, I will champion efforts such asUSAID's five-year, Liberia Elections & Political Transitions program to ensure the people of Liberia continue on their chosen path of democracy by conducting free, fair, and peaceful elections in 2017.

As the situation in Liberia normalizes and the country continues to rebuild, economic development remains a top priority for the Liberian government. The government is rightly focused on job creation, including revitalization of the mining and rubber sectors, but also including diversification beyond commodities. President Sirleaf's government understands that battling corruption and advancing governance and economic reforms through initiatives such as the Partnership on Illicit Finance and accession to the WTO are important means of attracting foreign investment and bolstering the economy.

Broadening the U.S.-Liberian relationship to increase emphasis on trade and investment will also be one of my priorities, if I am confirmed. I believe Liberia's growth and recovery will depend on inflows of private capital, and there are opportunities for American businesses to benefit from increased trade and investment in Liberia's largely untapped mining, fisheries, agriculture, power, and service sectors. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will work to advance U.S. business interests for the benefit of both the American and Liberian economies. I will also leverage our robust development assistance portfolios, spanning multiple sectors to help fight corruption, promote transparency and good governance, and help the Government of Liberia ensure that all Liberians have access to basic services, rights, and opportunities.

One key means to advance economic, social, and political development in Liberia is the recently signed $257 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact. Liberia's MCC Compact will enhance Liberia's engagement in the President's Power Africa initiative, focusing on the development of Liberia's power and road sec-

tors. The local electricity utility currently reaches only two percent of the population. The MCC project will quadruple Liberia's power generation and significantly lower electricity rates for Liberians, which at 52 cents per kilowatt hour, are roughly five times the U.S. average. If confirmed, I will work closely with Liberia's government to support sustainability in the power and transportation sectors through targeted capacity building, and by encouraging robust private sector participation and investment in vital infrastructure.

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.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you very much. I know we have abbreviated our opening comments. As a matter fact, we just did not give them, to give you time to be here and us finish this meeting. But we thank you all again for being here and your service.

Mr. Harden?

STATEMENT OF R. DAVID HARDEN, OF MARYLAND, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. HARDEN. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee for the assistant administrator for the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance at the United States Agency for International Development. We call it DCHA.

If confirmed, I look forward to working alongside the nearly 900 men and women of DCHA who seek to end extreme poverty and to promote resilient democratic societies.

I particularly want to thank my friend, colleague, and mentor, Tom Staal, for his leadership at DCHA over the past 18 months. My parents are here today, and my own family is watching this hearing from afar. My wife, Sharon, is that the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv. Tyler, my son, is at a tech startup in San Francisco. Ryan is at the U.S. Air Force Academy. And Waverley is at Bowdoin College.

We are a Foreign Service family. And like thousands of others, we have represented America in some of the toughest places on Earth. In 1999, Sharon and I packed up our preschoolers and moved to Bangladesh, and we have been overseas ever since.

My family's experience living in crisis zones has forged my understanding of the complex challenges in the world today and the importance of a robust American engagement. I believe USAID's DCHA Bureau represents the best of America. Its offices of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and Food for Peace are the first responders in global crises. They feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, comfort the sick, and shelter the displaced.

DCHA also assists nations with transition, and works to address the root causes of instability. The Office of Transition Initiatives and Conflict Management and Mitigation seek to improve delivery of basic services, give voice to the marginalized, and reduce the risk of violence.

DCHA teams continually analyze risk, whether of famine, mass atrocities, communicable disease, or flooding, in order to build the resilience in our partner nations. The Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance helps nations build effective institutions and robust civil societies so they can provide secu-

rity and justice, economic opportunity and political freedom for their people.

The Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad supports world-class global education and health facilities. It also promotes American values.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress on four key areas. First, I will ensure DCHA is at peak operational capacity to be prepared for the crises ahead. Second, I will make certain our international food assistance remains cutting-edge, innovative, and reaches the most people in need. Third, I will work to expand funding for democracy, human rights, and governance, because we know these crises are in large part due to failed governance and undemocratic institutions. Finally, I look forward to working with the interagency and international colleagues to envision our world in 2025 and to advance a strategy to address regional instability and fragility.

If confirmed, I will lead with integrity, work for results, and be strictly accountable for U.S. taxpayer dollars.

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

[The prepared statement of Mr. Harden follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF R. DAVID HARDEN

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee for Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). I am grateful for the trust and confidence President Obama, Secretary Kerry, and Administrator Smith have in my leadership for a bureau so central to the United States' humanitarian, development, and foreign policy agenda. If confirmed, I will work to achieve USAID's mission of ending extreme poverty and promoting resilient democratic societies.

I look forward to working alongside the nearly 900 men and women who are leading DCHA programs in approximately 115 countries across five continents. I want to thank these colleagues for their unparalleled commitment, passion, and service. I also particularly want to acknowledge Tom Staal for his leadership of DCHA for the last 14 months. Tom has lived a storied life and career—he has also been a friend, mentor, and colleague as we worked together in Beirut, Baghdad, and Washington. USAID is stronger—and the world is better—because of Tom's service.

I would also like to thank my mother and father—who are here today. They taught me to work hard and follow my dreams and then gave me the opportunities to do so.

My own family is watching this hearing from afar—Sharon from the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, Tyler at a tech start up incubator in San Francisco, Ryan from the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado, and Waverly from Bowdoin College in Maine.

We are a Foreign Service family, like thousands of other families who represent America in some of the toughest places on earth. In 1999, Sharon and I packed up our preschoolers and moved to Dhaka, Bangladesh. We have been overseas since. The entire family has represented America for many years—in the hallways of the international schools, at gymnastic competitions, and on the streets and in the markets of South Asia, the former Soviet Union, and the Middle East. Street children in Dhaka, orphans in Almaty, and the children of war in Israel and Gaza have seen a compassionate America, because in the Foreign Service the whole family serves as diplomats abroad.

And yet there are unique challenges. Sharon and I worried about our young family living far from home on 9-11 when America was attacked. We have battled dengue, typhoid salmonella—and the innumerable childhood accidents that become near crises in lesser-developed countries. We gave Waverly a gas mask during the early days of the Syrian war, and explained to Tyler and Ryan's school that they should still fly back home to our family despite Tel Aviv being rocketed. During the 2014

war between Israel and Hamas, our family went to the bomb shelter more times in a single month than I did during my 17 months in Iraq. Foreign Service families face these types of challenges every day.

I appear before you today only because my family was willing to make the sacrifice of public service and accept the challenge of living abroad for close to two decades. To Sharon, I am forever grateful for her partnership on this extraordinary journey.

My family's firsthand experience living in crisis zones has forged my understanding of the complex challenges the world faces today and the importance of U.S. engagement abroad. From my perspective, USAID's DCHA Bureau represents the best of America's enduring leadership and goodwill. DCHA's Offices of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and Food for Peace are the first responders to global crises—whether an earthquake in Nepal, typhoon in the Philippines, Ebola in West Africa, or war in Syria, South Sudan, or Yemen. They feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, comfort the sick, and shelter the displaced. There is no more powerful and iconic symbol of America abroad than when USAID sends a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) into the heart of an emergency. Recall the images in 2014 of USAID and U.S. military personnel deploying to stem the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and of USAID coordinating with the U.S. military to deliver food and water by air to Yazidis trapped by ISIL on Iraq's Sinjar Mountain. Today, USAID has DARTs coordinating the U.S. humanitarian responses alongside State Department and other agencies in Syria, Iraq, and South Sudan—all massive complex crises that have been going on for years. Just last week, Administrator Smith announced the deployment of a DART to Ethiopia to avert a humanitarian crisis arising from an El Nino-triggered drought and to protect development gains.

DCHA also assists nations with the difficult task of post-crisis political and social transition and works to address the root causes of instability before conflicts become humanitarian emergencies. The Office of Transition Initiatives, for instance, has programs in Burma, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Somalia, where they work with national and local leaders to provide basic services and give a voice to people in marginalized communities. The Conflict Management and Mitigation office assesses the prospects of conflict and works with local and international organizations to reduce the risks of violence by supporting grassroots demands for peace. Teams from across DCHA continually analyze risk, whether of famine, mass atrocities, communicable disease, or flooding, to build resilience in our partner nations. To fulfill the U.N.'s initiatives on Women, Peace, and Security, DCHA teams also provide protection to women and girls in conflict settings and promote the participation of women in peacebuilding. By so doing, they directly mitigate the prospect of collapse, instability, and political vacuum—catastrophic events that undermine global development gains and challenge American interests abroad.

The Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance helps nations build effective institutions and robust civil societies so they have better potential to provide security and justice, economic opportunity, and political freedom for their people. The crises we see today so often reflect a lack of democratic foundations, effective governing institutions, and respect for human rights. The Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) directly supports some of the leading global education and health facilities—facilities that provide world-class services and promote American ideas and values. For instance, ASHA supports schools, like the Abaarso School of Science and Technology in Somalia, which shape tomorrow's global leaders who share our vision of peace and prosperity.

DCHA demonstrates extraordinary global reach and impact—it is also often the face of a generous America abroad when nations and people are at their most vulnerable.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress, the interagency, and the international community on four key areas.

First, I will ensure that DCHA is at peak operational capacity. As it stands, DCHA is a highly functional and effective organization. And yet we know the world will see new crises—whether rapid onset natural disasters or greater suffering from expanding wars. To achieve peak capacity, we must be prepared for the crises ahead—both known and unknown. Working with our Offices of Programs, Policy, and Management and Crises Surge Support, we will continue to prioritize staffing and facilities alignment, budget flexibility, coordinated analytical functions, and cross team integration. Through our Office of Civilian-Military Cooperation, I will deepen DCHA's already strong partnership with the military combatant commands. I will also expand its communications capabilities—both at home and abroad. I am acutely aware that the integrity and accountability of our assistance is of the highest concern and something I have championed in the West Bank, Gaza, Iraq, and Libya.

Second, I look forward to working with this committee to ensure our international food assistance remains cutting-edge and reaches the most people in need. The United States has a proud history of feeding the world's most hungry people. The complex emergencies we face today and in the future will require us to continue to adapt to meet growing demands and challenges most effectively and cost-efficiently. We will continue to harness our analytical tools, technology, and resources to determine the appropriate mix of U.S. commodities, local and regional food purchases, and market-based assistance to get the right food to the right people at the right time.

Third, I look forward to working with this committee to expand funding for democracy, human rights, and governance. The crises we face today are in large part a result of failed governance and undemocratic institutions. Extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated in fragile states. Sound governing structures must underpin everything we do in development. Additionally, strong civil societies help give voice to the disenfranchised; champion human rights; fight modern slavery; counter violent extremism; bolster anti-corruption efforts; and promote better responsiveness to citizen concerns. I will also tighten the analytical link between our work in democracy, human rights, and governance and its causal impact on political freedom, economic opportunity, and social inclusion. Democracies are more resilient to disasters and typically do not go to war with each other. Democracy, human rights, and governance must be at the center of our development agenda if we are to get ahead of crises and end extreme poverty.

Finally, I look forward to working with my State Department and other interagency colleagues and the international community to envision our world in 2025, particularly as it relates to regional instability in the Middle East, and fragility and resilience in sub-Saharan Africa. We must anticipate and prepare for future crisis drivers and consider how to better leverage emerging technology, big data, and the private sector into our responses. I have been impressed with the foresight of my predecessors—how they deepened our analytical capabilities, strengthened our relationships with the military, and integrated resilience planning. I would like to leave the same legacy for the next generation of DCHA leaders—envisioning and preparing for tomorrow's highly complex and connected world.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, I am honored to be considered as Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance. I am also humbled by the challenges and responsibility ahead. If confirmed, I will lead with integrity, work tirelessly for results, and be strictly accountable for U.S. taxpayer dollars. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Ms. Richard?

STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH HOLZHALL RICHARD, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE LEBANESE REPUBLIC

Ms. RICHARD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member Cardin. I especially would like to thank the Senator from Virginia. Not all of us in the State Department are from Maryland. Some of us are from Virginia.

Thank you for staying, sir.

I am honored by President Obama's decision to nominate me to be Ambassador to Lebanon. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to achieve the important policy objectives we have there.

Over my 30 years in the Foreign Service, I have served in a number of challenging posts, as you noted, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen. In those places, I have seen firsthand what a huge difference the United States can make when it leads.

The effects of the crises now raging across the Middle East make our leadership more important than ever. The Middle East is undergoing a period of unprecedented instability, but against this backdrop, the resilience of the Lebanese people is remarkable.

Lebanon faces three major challenges: the conflict in Syria; an ongoing governance crises; and the activities of Hezbollah, a terrorist organization that puts its own interests and the interests of its benefactors and patrons ahead of those of the Lebanese people.

Our partnership with the country's legitimate state institutions and its people is essential in helping Lebanon address these challenges.

Mr. Chairman, I am really struck by the incredible generosity of Lebanon in welcoming more than 1 million Syrian refugees, and I am very, very proud of the generosity of the American people as well. Our assistance to Syrian refugees and the communities that host them has eased this burden.

However, extremist groups like ISIL and al-Nusra continue to pose a grave threat to Lebanon and to U.S. interests in the region. With the generous support of Congress, we are helping Lebanon security institutions in their fight against extremism.

Effective security must be buttressed by effective political leadership, however. As you know, Lebanon has been without a President for almost 2 years now. It is time for the country to elect a President and to restore a functioning cabinet and parliament.

As for Hezbollah, its ongoing intervention in Syria to prop up the Assad regime was undertaken without the consent of the Lebanese people.

The administration strongly supported the Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act passed by Congress just last December. Our shared goal is to dismantle Hezbollah's international financial network while supporting, at the same time, the legitimate Lebanese banking and other institutions.

If confirmed, I will do all I can to expand our anti-money-laundering and counterterrorism finance cooperation with Lebanon.

Most importantly, Mr. Chairman, I want to remember that Lebanon is hallowed ground for U.S. diplomats and for our military colleagues as well. The tragic bombings of the Marine barracks and the U.S. Embassy in Beirut in 1983 will never be forgotten.

If confirmed, my highest priority will be the safety and security of all Americans in Lebanon. There is really no job more important to me than that. So with that, Mr. Chairman, members, thank you very much for the opportunity to be here today and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Richard follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH H. RICHARD

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored by President Obama's decision to nominate me as U.S. ambassador to Lebanon. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee on achieving our policy objectives in Lebanon.

Over the course of my 30 years as a Foreign Service Officer, I have had the privilege of serving in some of our most challenging posts, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, and—most recently—Yemen. In my diplomatic efforts to advance U.S. policy objectives, as well as in overseeing security assistance, counter-narcotics, economic and governance programs, I have seen firsthand how influential the United States can be when it engages. The effects of the crises raging across the Middle East on our national interests make U.S. leadership more imperative than ever.

The Middle East is undergoing a period of unprecedented instability. The roots of this instability are deep and systemic: weak political legitimacy, ineffective institutions, fragile economies, and religious sectarianism. Amidst this backdrop of un-

certainty, the resilience of the Lebanese people stands out. For centuries, Lebanon has been a rich tapestry of different religions and ethnicities. Respect for religious freedom and confessional tolerance lie at the very core of Lebanese identity. We must do all we can to help Lebanon continue to uphold these principles. If confirmed as ambassador, I will dedicate myself to further strengthening our partnership with Lebanon.

Lebanon today faces three major challenges: the spillover effects of the conflict in Syria, which has brought more than a million refugees to Lebanon; a political crisis that has severely hindered the work of government institutions and has deprived the Lebanese people of basic services; and—of course—the activities of Hizballah, a terrorist organization that puts its own interests and those of its foreign backers ahead of the Lebanese people. Our partnership with Lebanon's legitimate state institutions and our assistance to the Lebanese people are essential in helping Lebanon address all three of these challenges.

I am struck by the incredible generosity of towns and villages all across Lebanon in welcoming more than a million Syrian refugees. And I am very proud of the generosity of the American people as well. Our assistance to Syrian refugees—and the Lebanese communities which have graciously hosted them for nearly five years—has helped to alleviate the tremendous burden on the country. Just last month in London, Secretary Kerry announced over $133 million in new humanitarian aid, bringing the U.S. contribution to Lebanon to over $1.1 billion since the start of the crisis. The Department is grateful to Congress for supporting this assistance, which demonstrates America's unwavering resolve in addressing one of the most heart wrenching situations in the world today. If confirmed, I will work hard to help Lebanon address this enormous humanitarian challenge.

Extremist groups such as ISIL and the Nusra Front pose a grave threat to Lebanon, and to U.S. interests in the region. Our partnership with Lebanon's security forces has played a critical role in preserving Lebanon's security against such threats. Lebanon is also a member of the Counter-ISIL Coalition we lead. If confirmed, I will do my best to build upon our strong relationships with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces. The November 12 bombing in Beirut, which killed 41 innocent civilians and injured many more, is a tragic reminder of the threat posed by ISIL. I was moved to learn that the U.S. Congress observed a moment of silence on the floor soon after the attack. This gesture showed that the American people stand shoulder to shoulder with the Lebanese as they battle ISIL and other extremists.

With the generous support of the Congress, we are supporting the Lebanese military with the tools and training it needs to fight ISIL and other extremists. Our security assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces, more than $150 million in fiscal year 2015, makes a real difference on the ground. The Lebanese military has turned the tide against ISIL along the rugged border with Syria, so that northeastern Lebanon is no longer in immediate danger from extremist groups. Lebanese aircraft now use U.S.-supplied Hellfire missiles to pinpoint terrorists and take them out. Our partnership with the Lebanese Internal Security Forces is no less impressive. For example, FBI-trained Internal Security Forces now conduct forensic investigations to help bring justice for the Lebanese people in cases of terrorist attacks and serious crimes.

Effective security needs to be buttressed by effective political leadership. Lebanon has been without a president for almost two years—much too long. Now is the time for Lebanon to uphold its democratic principles and elect a president according to the Lebanese constitution. The Lebanese people deserve a government that can deliver basic services, promote economic prosperity, and address the country's most pressing security challenges. The United States has been clear and consistent: Lebanon needs a president and a fully functioning Cabinet and parliament without delay. This is first and foremost a Lebanese responsibility; they are the ones who have the greatest stake in their country's success. Through our leadership in the International Support Group for Lebanon, the United States has rallied the international community to speak with a united voice in calling for an end to the presidential vacancy. If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to supporting the Lebanese in their efforts to seat a functioning government.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Lebanon's voices for moderation and progress to support Lebanon's quest for full sovereignty and independence. Hizballah's ongoing intervention in Syria to prop up the Asad regime—undertaken without the consent of the Lebanese people—contradicts the 2012 Baabda Declaration, which clearly—and wisely—states Lebanon's policy of dissociation from foreign entanglements. Hizballah's activities in Syria create serious security challenges for Lebanon. If confirmed, my mission will be to do everything I can to support Lebanon

to exercise full sovereignty throughout the country and to help build up the Lebanese military, its sole legitimate defender.

The administration strongly supported the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act passed by the Congress last December. We have made clear to all that our goal is to dismantle Hizballah's international financial network while supporting Lebanese institutions and the Lebanese people. This will contribute directly to promoting Lebanon's economic prosperity.

The success of the Lebanese banking sector, a backbone of the country's economy, relies on upholding an already excellent reputation. Both Lebanon and the United States have an interest in ensuring Hizballah cannot penetrate the Lebanese financial sector. If confirmed, I will dedicate myself to working with the Lebanese financial sector to enhance our anti-money laundering and terrorism finance cooperation.

Our commitment to Lebanon's economic prosperity is one of the cornerstones of our bilateral relationship. From university scholarships that foster a new generation of Lebanese entrepreneurs to water and sanitation projects for rural communities, our assistance helps Lebanon deal with the economic fallout of a region in turmoil. If confirmed, I hope to expand trade between Lebanon and the United States and to promote U.S. exports to Lebanon. Lebanon's accession to the World Trade Organization would be a positive development and we stand ready to help better connect Lebanon to the global economy.

Most importantly—I want to remember that Lebanon is hallowed ground for America's diplomats and our colleagues in uniform. The tragic bombings of the Marine barracks and the U.S Embassy in Beirut in 1983 will never be forgotten. If confirmed, my highest priority will be the safety and security of all Americans in Lebanon. There is no job more important to me.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for this opportunity to address you. If confirmed, I look forward to seeing you and members of your staff in Beirut. I welcome the opportunity to address any questions you might have. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you for your testimony.

Mr. Schwartz?

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN MICHAEL SCHWARTZ, OF MARYLAND, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

Mr. SCHWARTZ. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today to be considered for the position of United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia. I am sincerely grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have shown in me through this nomination.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me to introduce my family. With me here today are my wife, Kristy Cook, and our two children, Hannah and Jonas. I thank each of them for their support and sacrifice.

In addition, I would like to pay tribute to my father, Robert, who fell ill and was unable to travel here for the hearing, and to my late mother, Carole. Their influence continues to shape and motivate me every day.

Mr. Chairman, the people of Somalia are regaining control of their country, and intensified U.S. engagement is vital to their success, and to ours. With measured, but real progress, Somalia is no longer a failed state, but a fragile recovering country with promise. Somalia's vibrant diaspora members are making important contributions to this renewal.

Last May, Secretary Kerry became the first Secretary of State to visit Somalia. While there, he announced that planning had begun to reestablish U.S. diplomatic premises in Mogadishu. If confirmed, fulfilling that commitment will be one of my top priorities, with the

safety and security of U.S. Government personnel always foremost among my considerations.

Mr. Chairman, we are working with Somalia's international partners on security, building governance institutions, and providing relief and development. For security, our top priority is to degrade al-Shabaab, an Al Qaeda affiliate. We are achieving this goal primarily by supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia, also known as AMISOM, and building the capacity of the Somalia military and police.

Security gains have created space for political developments, as outlined in Somalia's Vision 2016. In the coming months, Somalis plan to continue developing a new constitution, complete the formation of regional administrations, and agree on the rules governing the electoral process.

To grow the economy and build capacity, the United States supports the New Deal Compact as the basis of a strong Somali-led development partnership. Much more progress is needed, however, if Somalis are to enjoy a better future.

More than 20 years of conflict have uprooted 2 million Somalis both in and outside the country. Today, more than 700,000 Somalis are estimated to be acutely malnourished—many of them children.

Mr. Chairman, Somalia has many challenges but it is moving in the right direction and can count on the United States as a full partner. My nomination reflects our deepening relationship with the country and its people, and our faith that better times are ahead.

If confirmed, it will be my honor to lead our mission as the first United States Ambassador to Somalia in over 25 years. I thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Schwartz follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STEPHEN M. SCHWARTZ

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today to be considered for the position of United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia. I am sincerely grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have shown in me through this nomination.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me at this time to introduce my family. With me today are my wife, Kristy Cook, and our two children, Hannah and Jonas. The Foreign Service offers families unusual opportunities and challenges, and I thank each of them for their support and sacrifice. In addition, I would like to pay tribute to my father Robert, who is recovering from surgery and was unable to travel; and to my late mother, Carole, who died just two months before I began my Foreign Service career. Their influence continues to shape and motivate me every day.

Mr. Chairman, the people of Somalia are regaining control of their country and intensified U.S. engagement is vital to their success, and to ours. With measured but real progress over the last few years, Somalia is no longer a "failed state," but a fragile, recovering country with promise. Somalia's vibrant diaspora members are returning to help reconstruct their nation and, in so doing, are renewing and strengthening the linkages between the United States and Somalia.

On a governmental level, we are doing the same. The Somali government reestablished its embassy in Washington, D.C. last November, after a 24-year absence. Two years earlier, the United States officially recognized the Federal Government of Somalia for the first time in 21 years.

Last May, Secretary Kerry became the first Secretary of State ever to visit Somalia. While there, he announced that planning had begun to reestablish U.S. diplomatic premises in Mogadishu. As a first step, in September we established the U.S. Mission to Somalia, co-located in Embassy Nairobi. If confirmed, fulfilling the Sec-

retary's commitment will be one of my top priorities, with the safety and security of U.S. government personnel always foremost among my considerations.

Mr. Chairman, our policy for Somalia is focused on three key areas: security, governance institutions, and relief and development. For security, our top priority is to degrade al-Shabaab, an al-Qaida affiliate, so it is no longer a pernicious and destabilizing force. If confirmed, I will help lead our efforts to support and strengthen the African Union Mission in Somalia, better known as AMISOM, while we work to build the capacity of the Somali military and police so that they can assume responsibility for their own country's security.

Security gains have created space for political progress and state formation, as outlined in Somalia's "Vision 2016." Much more work needs to be done to hold a referendum on a permanent national constitution; complete the creation of Federal Member States and establish functioning governmental authorities; and to adopt rules governing political parties and an electoral process. If confirmed, I will lead the United States government's efforts to help Somalia build these institutions as the foundations of durable, accountable, inclusive, and effective governance.

To grow the economy and build capacity, the United States has supported the New Deal Compact as the basis of a strong, Somali-led development partnership. If confirmed, I will redouble our efforts to work with Somali authorities, civil society, the private sector, and the international community to improve education, support growth and employment in key economic sectors, and help Somalis realize a better future in areas liberated from al Shabaab's oppressive rule.

Over two decades of conflict have left over a million Somalis displaced in their own country, and almost a million as refugees in neighboring countries. More than 700,000 Somalis are estimated to be acutely malnourished, many of them children. The United States is committed to addressing humanitarian needs in Somalia and supports efforts to achieve durable solutions.

Mr. Chairman, Somalia has many challenges, but it is moving in the right direction. My nomination is a reflection of both our deepening relationship with the country and its people, and our faith that better times are ahead. I can assure you that, if confirmed, it will be my honor to lead our mission as the first United States Ambassador to Somalia in over twenty-five years. I will work hard to advance U.S. interests, and strengthen our bilateral relationship. I look forward to the opportunity to work with the committee to achieve those goals.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you all. We are very fortunate to have people of your caliber in the Foreign Service and do the things that you do, and the sacrifice that you have made on behalf of our country for many, many years.

I am going to defer on oral questions. I will give written questions. I hope that does not disappoint you. I know you all prepped for this meeting. I think Senator Cardin may be doing the same thing. I will let him speak to his own, but I am going to defer, because of the length of this meeting, and the fact that we have another panel. I am going to do mine in writing.

But again, your testimony is very good. We are very fortunate to have people, again, of your caliber, and we thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I really just want to underscore what the chairman said. The nomination process is a very important process in the Senate and confirmations we take very, very seriously. A good deal of work is done before the hearings in going through the resumes and records of those who are nominated by the President.

We had a relatively easy task with the panel before us and the next panel, because your career service to our country is incredible, and we thank you very much for everything you have done to help America.

We will be asking questions for the record, I want to make that clear, because it gives us a chance also to emphasize areas of major concern.

So I have a quote from Mr. Harden. In his statement, he covered an issue that I will be talking to each one of you about in your po-

sitions, and that is, " I look forward to working with this committee to expand funding for democracy, human rights, and governance. The crises we face today are in large part a result of failed governance and undemocratic institutions. ... I will also tighten the analytical link between our work and democracy and human rights and governance and its impact on political freedom, economic opportunities, and social inclusion. Democracies are more resilient to disasters and typically do not go to war with each other. Democracies, human rights, and governance must be at the center of our development agenda if we are going to get ahead of crises and extreme poverty."

The questions I am going to be asking all the nominees, including second panel, is what you have done to advance human rights in your career and how you intend to use the position, if confirmed, to advance our ideals.

America's strength is in its values. Although we do have the strongest military in the world, there is no question about that, and we have very strong commitment to diplomacy and development assistance, it is in promoting these values that give America its strength and stability globally.

We are going to be asking you to make a commitment to work with this committee, to advance those good governance issues in the countries. And the countries that are represented, the three Ambassador nominees here, all are challenged. We need to do a more effective job using your diplomatic skills. And in the next panel, we have countries also that we can do better.

So I look forward to your response, but more importantly, I look forward to working with you to advance America's values so we can get world stability. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thanks to the witnesses. I cannot help but notice that four of the seven on these two panels are Virginians. You can see, Mr. Chair, why I fought so hard to be on this committee. I see more Virginians here than if I was down in Richmond strolling around my neighborhood.

But the Virginia connection with the State Department, nine Secretaries of State and then so many State Department personnel, Foreign Service personnel live in the commonwealth, is something that we really cherish.

It is one of the reasons why Virginians care a lot about these issues. These foreign relations issues are not particularly foreign in a State where one out of nine Virginians was born in another country, and they care deeply about where they are from, and they care deeply about the work that you do.

I also want to thank Mr. Harden. He schlepped me around the West Bank twice. I know in the life of a Foreign Service professional, it is always good to have a codel, but the best day is the day that they leave. [Laughter.]

Senator KAINE. But you are a good sport.

I want to focus on Lebanon. Ms. Richard, I am so glad you pointed out that the Lebanese Embassy, the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, is hallowed ground. Anybody who wonders about the work that we do

and how hard it is, or anybody who wonders about the sacrifice that people like you all make, the need to go to the U.S. Embassy in Beirut.

Senator King and I serve together on the Armed Services Committee. We were there in February 2014, and we walked out on a morning and we went to the memorial there for the victims of the two bombings, the Embassy bombing in 1983 and the Embassy Annex bombing in 1984, as well as a memorial to the Marines who were killed in the barracks bombing, and other State Department and U.S. personnel who were killed in the years to follow during the war. It is a very, very sobering thing, to see the number of Embassy personnel, both U.S.-born and Lebanese, who were killed. It makes the risk so palatable.

We then went upstairs at that weird hotel that they have on the Embassy grounds, and in the middle of a meeting, we were getting ready to go downtown to meet with President Suleiman, we heard an explosion. We walked out on the balcony and we could look into downtown Beirut and see the smoke coming up from a suicide bomb that had been detonated in front of an Iranian cultural center.

Angus and I were sure our meetings were going to get canceled. The Embassy personnel there was used to dealing with it. The Lebanese President was used to dealing with it. And just quickly, for my colleagues, we went ahead and did the meeting, and when we were with President Suleiman, who at that point was 2 months from the end of his term, he was taking calls from everybody trying to deal with the crisis while he was meeting with us.

At one point, he just looked up and said, it was not like he was looking at us, but he just said, I think this is our fault. And Angus and I did not know what he meant. So we said, what do you mean, this is your fault? He said, I think it is Christians' fault. He said, we could have played the role of peacemaker and bridge builder but instead what we have done is we played the role of trying to be with whoever was up at whatever point in time.

Now a statement that is made like that in the heat of emotion, I am a Catholic, I blame myself for everything, too, so I did not necessarily take it as a completely accurate description of the reality, but it was a cri de coeur really of despair and a tough circumstance.

Yet here we are, 2 years later, and there is not a President. We have been 2 years without a President.

We had Lebanese parliamentarians visit us 2 weeks ago. Senator Shaheen and I visited with them. They really could not see a particular path forward that they could describe to us.

I have to believe that in any Nation, much less one that is in the midst of a refugee crisis where now one in four of the population of the country are refugees from Syria, in any Nation, the lack of a President would be a challenging governance question. In this Nation, it has to be just devastating.

So what can we do, mindful of the notion that these nations have to figure out their own internal politics themselves? But what can we do? We invest a lot in Lebanese Armed Forces through security cooperation. They deeply appreciate that. We saw that in action.

But what can we do to help them move to a chapter where they are not going to be gridlocked while they are in the midst of such difficulty?

Ms. RICHARD. Thank you, Senator. Thank you, really, for your interest in Lebanon. It is such an important part of the region.

At the end of the day, you are exactly right. The Lebanese have to solve this problem, but we can do a lot, I think in encouraging them and forcing them to face up to the fact that, at the end of the day, what will save Lebanon are institutions and not personal relationships and individuals.

The cabinet does meet from time to time, and they met in November to pass a very important anti-money-laundering law. So they are able to focus and realize things that are in their national interests.

But you are right. We must do a lot more to encourage them and to work with others who have influence in Lebanon—we are not the only ones, the Saudis and others—to help focus the Lebanese leadership on the need for restoration of the institutions.

Senator KAINE. The other thing I would like you to comment on, the parliamentarians were expressing the concern that they feel like they are victims in a big proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

There is an old-fashioned American phrase, they did not use it, but I have heard it before, "When the elephants fight, the fleas get trampled." They kind of feel like there is a proxy war that is going on, and they are just kind of like the collateral damage, sometimes.

How, diplomatically, can we deal with that issue? I know we have Saudi Arabia and Iran at the table with respect to the ceasefire discussions in Syria. Is there anything we can do with respect to promoting stability in Lebanon that we should be asking while they are there at the table on the Syrian issue, which is so connected to Lebanon, that we should be asking of them?

Ms. RICHARD. Yes, Senator. You are absolutely right. We do have this opportunity in the context of Syria.

We have talked about this with the Saudis, with the Iranians, and with others in the region, about the need to separate Lebanon from the real issues at hand in Syria.

I know that Secretary Kerry and others continue to make that point, the importance of separating Lebanon out.

At the same time, we are talking with Saudi Arabia even now about this issue of withdrawing support of the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces.

Senator KAINE. As I understand it, Saudi Arabia has recently delayed indefinitely about $3 billion worth of military support for the Lebanese Armed Forces.

Ms. RICHARD. Yes, sir. And our point to them is that if the ultimate objective here is to limit the ability of Hezbollah to do what it is doing, the solution is to invest in Lebanese institutions and not to withdraw support from them at this critical time.

Senator KAINE. What is your perception on the Lebanese institution side? This will be my final question. What is your perception of the degree to which the Lebanese Armed Forces are viewed as an inclusive body that is not too slanted toward one of the power factions or another?

Ms. RICHARD. Both the Lebanese Armed Forces, Senator, and the Internal Security Forces, which is the police, are seen to be extremely professional and not very much polluted, let us say, by some of the worst parts of the interconfessional fighting. Very professional, very dedicated, and loyal to the government.

We have high confidence in both institutions. That is why we continue to work with them.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you so much.

And thanks to all the witnesses. I have great respect for the service you provide.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Having been to Lebanon, and certainly with the existing situation that is there and the resilience of these people in light of what is occurring, it is amazing. I appreciate your emphasis, not to in any way diminish the roles that the other three are going to play.

We thank you so much for being here. We hope that you will respond to our written questions promptly. I know that you will. Again, we thank you for your commitment to our country and to what you do on our behalf.

With that, with no fireworks, you are welcome to leave. You are dismissed. Thank you.

Next we will move to the second panel. We will begin with introductions, and we thank all of you for being here.

Ms. Kelly Keiderling, a career member of the Foreign Service, class of minister counselor, is Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the Department of State, a position she has held since 2013. Ms. Keiderling served as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Venezuela from 2011 to 2013, strategic language issues coordinator in the Bureau of Human Services in 2010, and chief of staff in the Office of Iraq Affairs from 2009 to 2010.

Thank you so much for being here.

Next, we have Mr. Mark Sobel to be U.S. executive director of the International Monetary Fund for a term of 2 years. Mr. Sobel is a Deputy Assistant Secretary for international monetary and financial policy at the U.S. Department of Treasury. Mr. Sobel has worked for the U.S. Department of Treasury since 1978 in a variety of positions, having served in his current position since 2000.

We welcome you here.

Lastly, we have Mr. Adam Sterling, a career member of the Foreign Service, class of counselor. He currently serves as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy at The Hague in the Netherlands, a position he has held since 2013. He serves concurrently as charge at The Hague from 2013 to 2014. Previously, he served as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan from 2010 to 2013, with service as charge from 2010 to 2011 and during 2012. He also served as director for Central and Eastern European affairs on National Security Council staff from 2006 to 2009.

Again, a very distinguished panel whose service we appreciate deeply, and certainly the support of their family members and others that allow them to do what they do so well.

So with that, Ms. Keiderling, if you would begin, and summarize your comments.

Without objection, for both panels, your written testimony will certainly be entered into the record. Again, we thank you. And you can begin.

STATEMENT OF KELLY KEIDERLING–FRANZ, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE ORIENTAL REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY

Ms. KEIDERLING-FRANZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and to all the members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to the Oriental Republic of Uruguay. I deeply appreciate the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me by sending my name to the Senate for your consideration.

My family accompanies me here today, my husband, David Franz, who is also a Foreign Service Officer; my daughter, Katherine; my son, Alex. Yes, we pulled them out of school so that they can learn how our government functions.

Like my kids who have grown up in the Foreign Service, I too am a child of the Foreign Service. My father grew up in the New Jersey of the Great Depression, and he was forever grateful and very proud to represent our country as a Foreign Service Officer. He met my Bolivian mother at his first overseas post in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

I grew up in this bicultural, international environment as an outsider. My parents taught me to consider various points of view and to search for common ground. So since entering the Foreign Service in 1988, I have a carried that essential approach with me, building bridges of understanding and of joint endeavor.

Overseas, I have served three tours in the Western Hemisphere, two tours in post-Soviet countries, and three tours in Africa. I believe that the breadth of my career experiences and work on various policy issues would prepare me well to represent the United States, should you vote to confirm me.

The United States and Uruguay cooperate across a broad spectrum of issues. We are partners in making our world more secure. We fight against drug traffickers, human smugglers, illicit financial flows, cybercriminals, and international terrorism. We cooperate in international peacekeeping and the protection of civilians. We seek to increase bilateral trade and investment, to create more jobs and opportunity at home.

With Uruguay, we can reassert our hemisphere's commitment to democratic governance, to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, to freedom from arbitrary detention and arrest, and to independent judiciaries.

Both Uruguay and the United States have a common cause in the equal treatment of people without regard to their race or gender, sexual orientations, social origins, or religion. We believe human rights are universal and intrinsic to each individual.

The United States and Uruguay share these many interests and values. And should you vote to confirm me as U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay, my commitment to you and to my fellow Americans is to do my best to help build a world that is more secure, more prosperous, and more just. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Keiderling-Franz follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KELLY KEIDERLING-FRANZ

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Oriental Republic of Uruguay. I deeply appreciate the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me by sending my name to the Senate for your consideration.

My family accompanies me today: my husband David Franz, who is also a Foreign Service Officer, my daughter Katherine and my son Alex.

Like my kids who have grown up in this business, I, too, am a child of the Foreign Service. My father grew up in the New Jersey of the Great Depression. He was forever grateful and proud to represent our country as a Foreign Service Officer. He met my Bolivian mother at his first overseas post, in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

I grew up in this bicultural environment, and was always the foreigner, the outsider. Overseas, my father and mother taught me that the people around me would judge the United States based on my own character and actions. I did my best as a kid to be worthy of that responsibility, even though I thought back then that it was an unfair burden. My parents also taught me to look beyond myself and consider various viewpoints and motivations and then to search for common ground.

Since entering the Foreign Service in 1988, I've carried that essential approach with me, building bridges of understanding and of joint, principled endeavor. Overseas, I've served three tours in the Western Hemisphere, two tours in post-Soviet nations, and three tours in Africa. At State Department headquarters, I've worked in a variety of assignments, most recently, in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. I believe that the breadth of my career experiences and work on various policy issues would prepare me well to represent the United States, should you vote to confirm me for the position of United States Ambassador to Uruguay.

The United States and Uruguay cooperate across a broad spectrum of common interests. If confirmed, I would continue and strengthen our joint endeavors. The United States and Uruguay are partners in the fight against drug traffickers, illicit financial flows, cyber criminals, human smugglers, and international terrorism.

On the international stage, our countries cooperate in international peacekeeping operations and the protection of civilians in conflict areas. Uruguay has a seat on the U.N. Security Council for the next two years; we look forward to engaging Uruguay on the issues that arise before the Council.

Both our countries seek to increase bilateral trade and investment to create more jobs and economic opportunity at home. We prepare our young people with 21st century, global skills so that they might be successful and contribute to our societies. We seek effective responses to climate change and to building resilient communities.

The United States and Uruguay have a common commitment to democratic governance and the defense of human rights. If confirmed, I would work with Uruguayan leaders to reassert our hemisphere's commitment to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention, to fair and independent judiciaries, and to responsive legislatures.

Both Uruguay and the United States have a common cause in the equal treatment of people without regard to their race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, social origin, or religion. We seek to reintegrate victims of human trafficking back into our societies. We believe human rights are universal and intrinsic to each individual.

The United States and Uruguay share these many interests and values. We believe that the law applies equally to all and that our nations are stronger because of the rule of law. Both our nations have been proponents of creating—and defending—international norms that make our global systems more secure, that increase economic prosperity, and that assert that citizens have a right to determine how they are governed.

Should you confirm me for the position of U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay, my commitment to you, members of the committee, and to my fellow Americans is to do my utmost to nurture and strengthen the strong partnership between the United States and Uruguay, and to help build a world that is more secure, more prosperous, and more just.

Senator CARDIN. [Presiding.] Thank you very much.

Mr. Sobel?

STATEMENT OF MARK SOBEL, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Mr. SOBEL. Thank you, Chairman Corker. Thank you, Ranking Member Cardin. I thank all the members of the committee. I am greatly honored to have been nominated to serve as U.S. executive director to the IMF. I thank Secretaries Geithner and Lew for their support.

I am delighted to be joined today by my wife, Martha Halperin.

In the interest of brevity, I will shorten my statement, just for the record. Seventy years ago, as our brave soldiers fought in World War II to liberate the globe from tyranny and dictatorship, our Nation's financial diplomats took the lead in creating a new vision for international economic cooperation. Their vision shunned protectionism and beggar-thy-neighbor currency policies, forces that helped catalyze war, and instead trumpeted multilateralism and shared prosperity.

At the center of that vision, they created the IMF. Since its inception, the fund has well-served the world economy and U.S. national security and economic interests, whether it be in helping to mitigate economic crises in Latin America in the 1980s, support the transition of the ex-Soviet States in the 1990s, combat the Asian and emerging-market crises of the latter 1990s, provide concessional support and debt relief for poverty alleviation in low-income countries, or tackle the European crises of the past years.

Without the IMF, these developments had the potential to rock geopolitical stability to a much greater extent, often in countries with strategic significance to our national security. Without the IMF, these developments also had the potential to spread more virulently around the world and seriously harm U.S. growth and jobs through decreased export opportunities, lost foreign investment, and financial shocks.

Throughout my career, I have seen firsthand the IMF's strengths. Its ability to act as the world's first and rapid crisis responder is an unparalleled global public good, as is its excellence in designing and supporting country reform programs. The IMF brings together officials from around the world, creating a culture of shared understanding. It fosters multilateral rules of the road. Its technical assistance helps countries build infrastructure for more robust economic policies. The IMF surveillance can help prevent crises.

But despite the fund's strengths, the organization, like any other, has room for improvement, for example in better analyzing and articulating policies to tackle modest global growth, addressing global rebalancing and exchange-rate issues, strengthening its work on crisis prevention and debt sustainability, supporting pro-poor spending in low-income countries, and helping make financial sectors more resilient.

I firmly believe in tenaciously defending U.S. interests and in advancing multilateralism, as well as in working pragmatically and collegially with analytic rigor in a nonpartisan manner. I also believe in the IMF's mission and that our Nation's leadership of the fund is critical. Those beliefs have guided my career.

If confirmed as U.S. executive director, I will work vigorously to continue to strengthen and improve the IMF consistent with those beliefs. I will dedicate myself to doing my utmost to work with Congress to help forge a stronger consensus in our country in support of the IMF and its critical global role.

And I thank this committee for its strong backing of the fund in securing the recent passage of legislation to implement the 2010 quota and governance reforms.

Again, to have been nominated by the President to represent the United States in the IMF, the very institution at the center of America's post-World War II global economic and financial vision, is a tremendous and humbling honor and a responsibility that I am eager to undertake. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sobel follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARK SOBEL

Thank you Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin and members of the committee. I am honored that President Obama nominated me to serve as Executive Director of the United States to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and I am grateful to Secretary Geithner, Secretary Lew, Under Secretary Nathan Sheets, and former Under Secretary Lael Brainard for their strong support throughout my career. I am delighted to be joined today by my wife, Martha Halperin.

Working with talented Treasury colleagues and senior officials in administrations from both parties in a career spanning over three decades in the civil service, I have had the rare privilege and honor of holding a front row seat in the making of American financial history.

Since 2000, I have served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Monetary and Financial Policy. During the transitions in 2001 and 2009, I had the great honor of being designated as the Acting head of International Affairs and I also served in the past year as the Acting U.S. Executive Director at the IMF. Earlier in my career, I served as an Assistant Financial Attache in Bonn, Germany; Director of Treasury's International Monetary Policy and Transition Economy Offices; and a member of the staff of the U.S. IMF Executive Director.

Over the last decade, I have been particularly proud to play a role in America's leadership in building and establishing the G-20 Finance Ministry and Leaders process and reforming the IMF.

Seventy years ago, as our brave soldiers fought in World War II to liberate the globe from

tyranny and dictatorship, our nation's financial diplomats took the lead in creating a new vision for international economic cooperation. Their vision shunned protectionism and beggar-thy-neighbor currency policies, forces that helped catalyze the war, and instead trumpeted multilateralism and shared prosperity.

At the center of that vision, they created the IMF. Since its inception, the Fund has well served the world economy, and U.S. national security and economic interests—whether it be in helping to mitigate economic crises in Latin America in the 1980s, support the transition of the ex-Soviet states in the 1990s, combat the Asian and emerging market crises of the latter 1990s, provide concessional support and debt relief for poverty alleviation in low income countries, or tackle the European crisis of the past years.

Without the IMF, these developments had the potential to rock geopolitical stability to a much greater extent, often in countries with strategic significance to our national security. Without the IMF, these developments also had the potential to spread more virulently around the world and seriously harm U.S. growth and jobs through decreased export opportunities, lost foreign investment, and financial shocks.

Throughout my career, I have seen first-hand the IMF's strengths. Its ability to act as the world's first and rapid crisis responder is an unparalleled global public good, as is its excellence in designing and supporting country reform programs. The IMF brings together officials from around the world, creating a culture of shared understanding. It fosters multilateral rules of the road. Its technical assistance helps countries build the infrastructure for more robust economic policies. The IMF's surveillance can help prevent crises.

But despite the Fund's strengths, the organization—like any other—has room for improvement, for example, in better analyzing and articulating policies to tackle modest global growth, addressing global rebalancing and exchange rate issues, strengthening its work on crisis prevention and debt sustainability, supporting propoor spending in low income countries, and helping make financial sectors more resilient.

I believe firmly in tenaciously defending U.S. interests and in advancing multilateralism, as well as in working pragmatically and collegially, with analytic rigor, and in a non-partisan manner. I also believe in the IMF's mission and that our nation's leadership of the IMF is critical. Those beliefs have guided my career.

If confirmed as U.S. Executive Director, I will work vigorously to continue to strengthen and improve the IMF, consistent with those beliefs. I will dedicate myself to doing my utmost to work with Congress to help forge a stronger consensus in our country in support of the IMF and its critical global role, and I thank this committee for its strong backing of the Fund in securing the recent passage of legislation to implement the 2010 quota and governance reforms.

Again, to have been nominated by the President to represent the United States in the IMF—the very institution at the center of America's post-WWII global economic and financial vision—is a tremendous and humbling honor and a responsibility that I am eager to undertake.

Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Sterling?

STATEMENT OF ADAM H. STERLING, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Mr. STERLING. Ranking Member Cardin, appearing before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to the Slovak Republic is an honor and privilege. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have placed in me.

Mr. Ranking Member, I bring 26 years of Foreign Service experience to this position. For more than 20 of those years, my partner in all aspects of this global life has been my wife, Veerle Coignez. Veerle works to advance global health as an expert consultant to the Global Fund to Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB. Veerle broke away from a mission with the Global Fund to fly here yesterday all the way from India.

Our family diplomatic team includes as well our 17-year-old daughter, Elka, and 15-year-old son, Bram. They broke away from school in our current home in the Netherlands to fly all the way back here from there yesterday. I am exceptionally proud to introduce the three of them to you.

My experience includes leading two U.S. missions overseas and work on the Slovak Republic and its neighbors as director of Central and Eastern European affairs on the National Security Council staff.

Less than a quarter century after the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the Slovak Republic has emerged as a trusted NATO ally and stalwart member of the transatlantic community. A democratic and increasingly prosperous Slovakia serves as a powerful example and source of stability in its strategically important region.

The accession of Slovakia and six other countries to the NATO alliance in 2004 strengthened our collective security. Slovak soldiers have participated in a variety of NATO operations, including today in Afghanistan as part of the Resolute Support mission.

Slovakia has also shown a strong willingness to invest in its defense capabilities, committing to ramp up defense spending from approximately 1 percent of GDP to 1.6 percent by 2020. Last year's decision to purchase nine U.S.-made Blackhawk helicopters is tangible evidence of progress. If confirmed, I will seek to build upon this modernization momentum.

Slovakia has also provided significant support to the people of Ukraine by enabling reverse flows of natural gas to Ukraine. If confirmed, I will seek even closer bilateral cooperation on issues affecting Ukraine.

One of the newer members of the eurozone, Slovakia has one of the fastest growing economies in Europe. Our economic partnership also continues to grow with some 140 American companies operating in Slovakia, and trade between our two countries exceeding $2.5 billion in 2015.

While economic progress continues, Slovakia still continues faces the challenges of fighting corruption and institutionalizing the rule of law. If confirmed, I will make promoting opportunities for U.S. business and improving Slovakia's investment climate one of my top priorities.

We will also continue to advocate for the rights of minorities, for greater inclusion of Roma, and for the human rights and dignity of all refugees and migrants, regardless of background.

Mr. Ranking Member, Slovakia shares our democratic values as well as our goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. If given the opportunity, I will do my utmost to advance our shared aims. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sterling follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ADAM STERLING

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, appearing before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to the Slovak Republic is an honor and a privilege. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the trust and confidence they have placed in me.

Mr. Chairman, I bring 26 years of Foreign Service experience to this position. For more than 20 of those years, my partner in all aspects of this global life has been my wife, Veerle Coignez, a native of Belgium, whom I am pleased to introduce to you. In addition to representing her adopted country abroad with enthusiasm and finesse, Veerle works to improve global health as an expert consultant to the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Our family diplomatic team includes as well our 17-year-old daughter, Elka, and 15-year-old son, Bram. I am exceptionally proud to introduce them to you as well.

My experience includes leading two U.S. missions overseas and advancing U.S. interests across Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East. I am now serving for the second time as charge d'affaires in the Netherlands, after serving two periods as charge d'affaires in Azerbaijan. My background with the Slovak Republic and the rest of Central Europe includes more than two years as Director for Central and Eastern European Affairs on the National Security Council staff.

Less than a quarter century after the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia, I am happy to report to you that the Slovak Republic has emerged as a trusted NATO ally and stalwart member of the transatlantic community. Located in the heart of Central Europe, a democratic and increasingly prosperous Slovakia serves as a powerful example and source of stability in this strategically important region.

The accession of Slovakia and six other Central and Eastern European countries to the NATO Alliance in 2004 strengthened our collective security. Slovak soldiers have participated in a variety of NATO operations, including in Iraq and in Afghanistan, where they remain today as part of the Resolute Support Mission.

Slovakia has also shown a strong willingness to invest in its defense capabilities, committing to ramp up defense spending from approximately 1 percent of GDP to 1.6 percent by 2020. Last year's decision to purchase nine U.S.-made Black Hawk

helicopters through the Foreign Military Sales program is tangible evidence of Slovak progress in this area. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to build upon this modernization momentum and support Slovakia's transition away from legacy military equipment to modern, NATO-interoperable systems needed to bolster their capacity to secure NATO's eastern flank.

Beyond its growing role within NATO, Slovakia has provided significant support to the people of Ukraine. By enabling reverse flows of natural gas to Ukraine starting in late 2014, Slovakia has helped Ukraine get through the winters and gain negotiating leverage with Russia over future gas supplies. Slovakia also continues to draw from its recent history to advise Ukraine on difficult, but needed reforms. If confirmed, I will seek even closer bilateral cooperation on issues affecting Ukraine, including maintaining unity on sanctions on Russia over its aggression in eastern Ukraine and attempted annexation of Crimea, providing support for Ukraine's choice to integrate with Europe, and opposing Russia's efforts to cut out Ukraine as a gas transit country.

One of the newer members of the EU and the Eurozone, Slovakia has one of the fastest growing economies in Europe. It is not surprising that our economic partnership also continues to grow, with some 140 American companies operating in Slovakia and trade between our two countries exceeding $2.5 billion in 2015. While economic progress continues, Slovakia, like many former Warsaw Pact countries, continues to face the challenges of fighting corruption and institutionalizing rule of law. If confirmed, I will make promoting opportunities for U.S. business and improving Slovakia's investment climate one of my top priorities. This will include support for conclusion in 2016 of a deep and comprehensive trade agreement under the U.S.-EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

If confirmed, I will continue our long-standing support to the government of Slovakia on judicial reform, where notable progress has been made in recent years but where significant work remains to be done. We will also continue our vigorous dialogue on human rights and advocate for the rights of minorities, for greater inclusion of Roma, and for the human rights and dignity of all refugees and migrants, regardless of background.

People-to-people ties between our countries have strengthened with Slovakia's greater integration into the transatlantic community. If confirmed, I will look for new ways to expand and develop exchange programs that build on ties first created by the waves of Slovak immigrants who came to the United States over a century ago and helped build our country's industry and culture. Slovak-Americans remain today a vital element in the U.S. relationship with Slovakia. I will, if confirmed, pursue a strong partnership with that community.

We have several agencies represented at Embassy Bratislava. Besides the Department of State, there is the Department of Defense and the Department of Commerce, with others like the Department of Homeland Security making frequent visits from neighboring Vienna. If confirmed, I will manage the Embassy as an efficient, effective and secure operation driven by a commitment to advance America's interests.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the committee, Slovakia shares our basic democratic values, as well as our long-term goal of a Europe whole, free and at peace. If given the opportunity, I will do my utmost to further strengthen and leverage our shared aims. I would welcome you to Bratislava to see first-hand our talented Embassy staff, who work tirelessly in pursuit of American interests. I thank you again for your willingness to consider my nomination and would welcome your questions.

Senator CARDIN. Once again, I want to thank all three of our nominees for being willing to come forward.

And to your families who are here, and those who could not make it here, we thank you. As I said earlier, we know it is a shared sacrifice and we very much appreciate that.

Chairman Corker was called to another meeting where he had to vote. The Banking Committee is having a vote on an important position in Treasury dealing with international finance, so that is the reason why he is not here.

As we explained earlier, the seven nominees that are before us today have all been well-vetted from the point of view of their background and their previous commitments to public service. There will be questions asked for the record.

We have a minute or two. Let me, if I might, Uruguay has certainly been one of the leaders in our hemisphere working with President Obama to advance human rights issues, meeting with President Obama, with the Cuban activists. It seems to me there is great promise in that country to see stronger leadership in advancing the good governance in our own hemisphere.

I would be interested in your views as to how we can build on that bilateral relationship to help so many countries in our hemisphere that have significant problems with corruption and good governance.

So let me give you a chance, if I might, to respond, in regards to your thoughts there.

Ms. KEIDERLING-FRANZ. Certainly, thank you, Senator Cardin. It is very true that Uruguay itself has a long tradition of good governance and respect for human rights, and for building its own society that is more equal.

It has for a very long time asked American administrations to improve the relations between the U.S. and Cuba, so you will not be surprised when it welcomed, of course, the opening of embassies in the two countries.

This is an opportunity I think for us together with Uruguay now to use its strong and credible voice when it comes to issues of democratic governance and respect for human rights to make the push now in Cuba and in places like Venezuela to speak out for those who need their human rights respected in those countries and elsewhere, where the equal treatment of people is not as we would all hope it to be.

If confirmed, I would hope to work with Uruguay to make the case for improved democratic governance and respect for human rights, just like Uruguay has at home, as we try to be ourselves across the hemisphere.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. We look forward to working with you on that.

Mr. Sterling, in Slovakia, obviously a close ally of the United States, one of our military allies, a lot of things to be celebrant about. However, they are not where they should be on fighting corruption. They have had serious challenges. Maybe expect more from our allies, to show by example.

How do you see our mission working with the government to advance better standards to deal with governance issues?

Mr. STERLING. Senator Cardin, corruption is, indeed, a serious problem in Slovakia, as it is in many other countries in the region. The United States has been working with Slovakia since it achieved independence in 1993 to build institutions that are well-rooted in the rule of law.

The United States role, as I see it, is twofold. One, it is advocacy for good governance, for promoting the message that governance matters, both to underlie our bilateral relations and the place of Slovakia within the European Union and NATO. And second of all, we give technical assistance in a number of areas. For example, last year, we provided legal assistance to help promulgate a new judicial ethics code. We are now working with prosecutors through expert assistance in promulgating a new prosecution ethics code.

All of these are steps in the right direction. But of course, the ultimate proof of success is how they are implemented. We will follow up to make sure that these new standards are met.

Senator CARDIN. There are certainly institutional changes that have to be made. But you are correct. It is whether there really is a commitment to change some of the longstanding problems, and that takes political leadership. But support from the United States can make that more of a reality, so we will be looking forward to your assessment as to what we can do to strengthen that encouragement and our bilateral relationship.

Mr. Sobel, IMF is a critically important tool for international stability, for international development. If it does not put a priority on good governance, you can put all of the economic resources into a country and it will be wasted. So how are you going to exercise leadership to make sure that the principles of integrity and anticorruption go into the policies at IMF?

Mr. SOBEL. Thank you for the question, Senator. It is a good question. I fully agree with the thrust of your remarks.

The IMF has a macroeconomic and economic reform mandate. Economic reforms can provide a critical foundation for combating corruption.

I remember early in my career, I worked on the Soviet Union when it collapsed. We found there were all types of price controls. That meant that goods for siphoned off to a black market. There were poor privatizations where, shall we say, business people basically took resources away from the people and state.

So I think that there is much that can be done. There is much that can be done in terms of liberalizing prices. There is much that can be done in terms of avoiding export quotas and like that result in rent-seeking behavior.

The fund has emphasized issues such as corporate governance. There is a prominent case now where Madam Lagarde recently spoke about the need to tackle anticorruption far more forcefully in Ukraine, which is a critical program, and was putting elements on the table, such as disclosure by officials of assets, improving corporate governance in state-owned enterprises, looking at privatization, strengthening the prosecutor general's office and the anticorruption agency.

So I think that there is much that the fund can do in this realm to help combat corruption and strengthen governance. I promise you I will work actively to promote those objectives.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you. It is critically important we use all of our opportunities, particularly on countries that are struggling.

Ukraine has incredible challenges, and Russia is the culprit for its instability today. There is no question about that. It is continued interference in the territorial integrity and its intimidations of its political system is pretty clear. But if Ukraine cannot get its governance in order, it is not going to be able to make it.

IMF can play a role, as can the other tools that we have available in our international and bilateral diplomacy toolbox that need to be postponed deployed. So I thank you very much for your response.

As we said earlier, we expect there will be questions for the record that will be asked to each of you. We ask that you would

respond to those questions as promptly as possible so that we can try to take action on these nominations as quickly as possible.

With that, we will keep the record open until close of business on Monday for the purposes of questions to be asked.

Senator CARDIN. With that, the hearing stands adjourned. Again, thank you all very much.

[Whereupon, at 11:48 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF CHRISTINE ELDER, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE ELDER'S RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. A theme throughout my career has been working with countries in transition, whether from communism or civil war. Democracy, rule of law, and human rights are central to the stability and growth of any civil society, and strengthening all three has been at the heart of my 25 year career. While the challenges and opportunities are unique in each country, human rights and democracy are always at the center of U.S. values and how we engage with governments and civil society overseas.

One formative example early in my State Department career was when I worked with the University of Dayton to create a lane for civil society engagement after the 1995 signing of the eponymous Peace Accords. Supporting the efforts of the University-led consortium with high-level, official U.S. participation led to several reunion summits in Dayton where Balkan leaders took stock of progress. The impact of this joint effort was that lasting ties were created between Balkan and Ohio communities in business, education, culture, health, and local governance, which substantially strengthened the political agreement and persist to this day.

Another example of my work in this area comes from when I served as Charge d'Affaires in Maputo, Mozambique. During street riots where excessive and deadly force was used by law enforcement to quell unrest, as Charge d'Affaires I immediately engaged the Foreign Minister to call for restraint, transparency, and public and diplomatic communication. I also worked with my diplomatic counterparts to strengthen and coordinate our response. The result was a clear understanding that the eyes of the world were upon the government, that they owed their citizens better, and they would be judged by their response.

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. While the government of Liberia generally respects the human rights of its citizens, the country is still confronting serious human rights challenges, including lengthy pre-trial detentions, a weak judiciary, official corruption and impunity, widespread gender-based violence, and continued use of child labor in rubber-producing areas of the country. There are also some reports of discrimination against those on the margins of society based on religious belief or cultural practice. For example, victims of human rights abuses, Ebola survivors, LGBTI individuals, and persons with disabilities all face stigma or some form of harassment in Liberia, such as discrimination against the LGBTI community.In addressing these issues, I would—if confirmed—help Liberia continue to overcome the legacy of 14 years of civil war, work closely with the Liberians to push forward the post-war peace and reconciliation process which has been stalled since the civil war, rebuild its civil society organizations and government institutions central to the protection of human rights, and achieve social and political reconciliation.

I would continue to ensure the U.S. government, through its words and deeds, encourages the protection and promotion of human rights in Liberia. Currently, our programming in Liberia is wide-ranging and collaborative. U.S. Embassy Monrovia is working alongside the Government of Liberia as well as local and international

nongovernmental organizations to improve access to justice, reduce discrimination, fight corruption, and provide victims of human rights abuses with the necessary resources to fully recover.

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. A lack of government resources, impunity, and corruption pose significant hurdles in strengthening rule of law. Although there is the political will in the Government of Liberia to tackle the human rights issues previously mentioned, government funding for its own human rights institutions, such as the Independent National Commission on Human Rights or the National Commission on Disabilities, is insufficient. This lack of adequate funding will, unfortunately, continue to be a problem since the prospects of Liberia's economy in the short-term are limited and high levels of government corruption persist. Impunity for abuses of authority, including for corrupt practices and for incidents in the security forces, also contributed to lack of accountability and weak rule of law.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I would work alongside our many international partners to encourage the Government of Liberia to fight corruption at all levels, which should have the added benefit of making more efficient use of scarce government funds for other important priorities such as strengthening the public institutions critical in the protection of 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 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. If confirmed, I would meet with a wide range of human rights, civil society, and non-governmental organizations, both in the United States and in Liberia, that work to promote respect for human rights.

As Ambassador, I would make certain the Embassy continues to follow the robust Leahy vetting process to ensure that U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce respect for human rights. In our ongoing security assistance and security cooperation dialogue with the Liberian government, the Embassy consistently emphasizes that this assistance is contingent upon the government, senior officers of the Liberian National Police (LNP) and Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), and individuals within the security organizations continuing to uphold applicable human rights standards. The government of Liberia is well aware that we are serious about ensuring security assistance and cooperation activities reinforce human rights, and has periodically asked the Embassy whether individuals under consideration for senior leadership positions in the security sector would be acceptable under Leahy guidelines, or whether their presence would pose an obstacle to cooperation because of Leahy. That kind of early and consistent dialogue has been fruitful. As Ambassador, I would continue to ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation 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. The Embassy team has excellent relationships with all levels of the Government of Liberia that enable us to deliver hard messages when warranted, including in the case of a political prisoner.Liberia has a lively, free press demonstrated by sometimes strong criticisms of the president, her family, and the government. We have seen some cases in which the person levelling that criticism has been arrested for breaking a law. If confirmed as Ambassador, I would engage with the Government of Liberia at an appropriate level to highlight the potential impact of any heavy-handed government response. I would advocate for speedy consideration of court cases or pursuit of alternative dispute resolution measures. In addition, I would engage with civil society and the press to underscore our support for, and advocacy of, the exercise of freedom of expression. As Ambassador, I would maintain and strengthen the relationships we have at all levels with the Government of Liberia that enable us to have what are sometimes difficult conversations.

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

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, human rights, good governance, and civil society would be central components of my efforts in Liberia. For example, as Ambassador, I would press for the Government of Liberia to fully implement its Second

National Action Plan as a member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). As a global forum where governments work closely with civil society, OGP is a natural fit for Liberian officials to develop specific, practical commitments to improve transparency and good governance. If confirmed, I would ensure the U.S. Embassy continues to monitor and promote respect for human rights and support Liberia's own efforts to foster a vibrant, democratic civil society.

Question. Ms. Elder, if confirmed, you will be going to Liberia at a particularly pivotal time. The United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia is scheduled to drawdown its presence after 13 years. Liberia is just now beginning to recover from the devastating effects of Ebola, and is slated to have general elections next year in which longtime President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is not eligible to run.

What, if confirmed, will be your major priorities in a nation that stands at such a critical crossroad?

Answer. If confirmed as Ambassador, beyond serving and protecting American citizens, my top policy priorities would be to promote a secure, stable Liberia with enhanced rule of law, foster broad-based economic development, and stabilize the country's human development situation. These priorities will help address the issues raised by UNMIL's drawdown, recovery from Ebola, and a pending presidential election.

The U.S. Embassy's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) programs seek to build government capacity to manage its civilian security responsibilities professionally while maintaining security throughout the country. They also work to strengthen the rule of law by building effective justice sector institutions that follow democratic norms to improve citizens' access to reliable and impartial justice and peaceful dispute resolution. USAID's Access to Justice Activity specifically works to improve overall access in counties outside of Monrovia. If confirmed, I intend to continue these programs and ensure that the improved security and stability in Liberia over the last decade continues throughout UNMIL's transition in 2016, and the 2017 presidential elections.Liberia's high levels of poverty and food insecurity will also not decline without sustainable, inclusive economic growth. If confirmed, I will continue to leverage USAID programs to strengthen health infrastructure, and build Liberia's capacity to prepare and respond to potential future threats. I will also support programming that focuses on preventing and raising awareness of other deadly diseases, such as malaria, as well as improving the availability of a qualified healthcare workforce.

Question. Given the instability that elections can precipitate in fragile and recovering countries are you concerned about the full scale drawdown of the U.N. Mission this year?

Answer. Maintaining security and stability through the 2017 presidential election is an important goal of the United States.

After several years of phased drawdowns, the U.N. peacekeeping mission plans to hand over day-to-day security responsibility to Liberian security services by June 30 of this year. UNMIL will reduce its strength from 3,590 to 1,240 military and its authorized police strength from 1,515 to 606 police personnel. UNMIL residual forces will remain at least until the U.N. Security Council's planned review by December 15, 2016, of Liberia's capacity to ensure security and stability based on conditions on the ground at that time. Only then will a decision be made on the possible withdrawal of UNMIL and the transition to a future United Nations presence. In the most recent elections, in December 2014, UNMIL provided some logistical support to the Elections Commission, while Liberia's civilian security agencies maintained order.

As UNMIL draws down and prepares for a potential transition, the United States is continuing bilateral efforts to promote the Government of Liberia's capability to assume full security responsibility, particularly in the lead-up to the upcoming 2017 presidential elections. We have bilateral police advisors who focus on developing senior Liberia National Police (LNP) leadership to take ownership of training, operations, and logistical support as well as the specialized units of the LNP, which handle civil unrest and emergency response.

If confirmed, I pledge to work with the Embassy team and international partners to closely monitor Liberia's security capacity, especially its ability to maintain security for the elections, and to make appropriate recommendations to ensure that the 2017 elections are unmarred by security issues.

Question. What steps will you take, if confirmed, to help ensure that elections are peaceful, credible and reflect the will of the Liberian people?

Answer. The 2017 general elections will be a critical juncture for Liberia's fragile post-war democracy. It offers the first full, post-war political transition in Liberia,

the first time one president constitutionally turns over to another president since 1944. Our partnership with Liberia encourages this continued progress in democratic governance to help Liberia fully turn the page on its long history of suffering. If confirmed, I will continue our programming on the ground to provide comprehensive support to the Liberian National Elections Commission (NEC), civil society organizations, and media outlets in promoting a participatory and fair democratic governance environment in the run-up to the 2017 elections.

We also support the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) via the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Our support has promoted public input into the on-going constitutional reform process, such as the National Constitutional Conference held in 2015, which brought together delegates from all sectors of Liberian society to provide input and to debate potential constitutional referendum provisions.As Ambassador, if confirmed, I will also personally engage Liberian political leaders, the NEC, civil society and the media in an effort to ensure a fair, transparent, and peaceful election. I will also ensure that after this election, our assistance to strengthen democratic institutions continues apace.

Question. Corruption is a persistent problem in Liberia. Despite leadership, commitment and actions at the highest levels of government to rooting it out, it remains endemic, including in the security sector. According to Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer, police are viewed as the most corrupt institution in the country; 75 percent or more of surveyed Liberian citizens reported paying a bribe to police.

If confirmed, how will you engage the Liberian government on issues of corruption? Do you have adequate funding to help build and support anti-corruption efforts?

Answer. The fight against corruption in Liberia has taken major steps forward in the past years. The United States and other donors are helping the Liberian judicial system build its capacity to prosecute cases of corruption, and President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has, on several occasions, taken a public stand against corruption. If confirmed, I would continue U.S. government programs to support the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) and associated Government of Liberia entities in their efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict perpetrators of corruption-related crimes while also supporting LACC's mandate to educate the public regarding the fight against corruption. The U.S. Embassy's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) section has a comprehensive law enforcement program that is building institutional capacity by mentoring senior Liberian National Police and Liberian Drug Enforcement Agency officials, training specialized units like the Emergency Response Unit and Police Support Unit, and helping the police to put in place appropriate financial management systems and manage their logistics assets.

INL will continue to incorporate anti-corruption efforts within its law enforcement and justice sector programming as well as explore new opportunities to partner more closely with civil society to counter corruption. Liberia has also joined the United States in the U.S.-Africa Partnership on Illicit Finance, launched during the 2014 U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit; if confirmed as Ambassador, I would work with Liberia to realize this partnership's full potential to help Liberia stem illicit finance from corruption and other illegal activities so that Liberia becomes a more attractive investment destination.

Question. What role is there for the United States in helping address police corruption specifically?

Answer. Reforming the Liberian justice system and addressing police corruption are U.S. priorities. The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs' (INL) programs are building government capacity to manage its civilian security responsibilities professionally while maintaining security throughout the country. They also work to strengthen the rule of law by building effective justice sector institutions that follow democratic norms to improve citizens' access to reliable and impartial justice and peaceful dispute resolution.

Our bilateral police program specifically helps develop senior Liberian National Police (LNP) leadership at multiple levels, so they can take ownership over LNP training, operations, and logistical support. U.S. assistance also focuses on broad reform of the police, the criminal justice sector, and the corrections system, while providing complementary and immediate efforts to bolster basic skills and professionalism capacities through training and equipment. These efforts include a bilateral Senior Police Advisor partnering with the LNP's Professional Standards Division, which is responsible for investigating complaints against police officers. A Police Finance Advisor is also helping the police put in place appropriate financial

management systems and controls to improve accountability and transparency. Additional INL programming includes a Logistics Advisor helping the police to improve management of its logistics assets.

Question. UN Security Council Resolution 2116 calls for UNMIL to strengthen the Liberia National Police's capabilities to manage existing personnel, and improve training programs to expedite the LNP's readiness to assume security responsibilities.

Are any of the U.N.'s activities aimed at countering police corruption? What will you do as Ambassador to see that the training addresses this?

Answer. The U.N. has a robust police mentoring, training, and advisory program, which includes efforts to counter corruption and strengthen professionalization. After June 30, 2016, the U.N. still plans to have 606 police officers working closely with the Government of Liberia on these efforts. Over the past year, the United States has shifted its focus from seconding police officers to the U.N. mission to bilateral police support efforts, while continuing close coordination with the U.N. police component of UNMIL. The U.S. Embassy is expanding current anti-corruption efforts with police training and mentoring as well as exploring new opportunities to partner more closely with civil society to counter corruption. As Ambassador, if confirmed, I pledge to continue the current practice of combining diplomatic pressure with technical programmatic assistance. I would also continue the dialogue with the U.N. on the centrality of anti-corruption efforts within the international community's efforts to reform and support the Liberian National Police.

Question. Liberia is a Tier Two trafficking country according to the most recent TIP report. There seems to be a discrepancy between the steps the government has been willing to take for trafficking of Liberians beyond borders and what they will do to address the problem internally. The report indicates that while penalties for the sex and labor trafficking of children are appropriate, that the penalties for sex and labor trafficking of adults are neither sufficiently stringent, nor commensurate with those prescribed for other serious offenses, such as rape.

What more should the United States do to help Liberia address trafficking in persons domestically?

Answer. We commend the government for its work in facilitating the repatriation of and providing care for 16 Liberian women subjected to forced labor in Lebanon last year. However, the Government of Liberia should do more to address trafficking within its borders, particularly from rural to urban areas. Internal trafficking is more prevalent than transnational trafficking, with the majority of victims of internal trafficking being children. If confirmed, I will encourage the government to ramp up efforts to identify and investigate internal trafficking cases and hold perpetrators to account. Additionally, I will also encourage the government to increase its funding and resources to the Women and Children Protection Section, which had the lead in investigating such crimes. Finally, I will encourage the government to implement its five-year Trafficking in Persons National Action Plan, launched in March 2014, but which remains only partially implemented.

It is also important that Liberia's Trafficking in Persons Task Force, convened by the Minister of Labor, meets regularly and receives sufficient funding; it remains without an operating budget. The U.S. government and the international donor community continue to provide training to Liberian law enforcement on trafficking and support for the protection of victims through shelter care and other means; however, the Liberian government should take greater ownership in building the capacity of its officials to better identify, investigate, and prosecute trafficking cases, as well as increase efforts to provide enhanced protection and services for victims.

Question. Will you commit, if confirmed, to working with Liberian authorities to see that legal penalties for trafficking are appropriate?

Answer. The 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report states that the prescribed penalties for sex and labor trafficking of adults are neither sufficiently stringent nor commensurate with those prescribed for other serious offenses, such as rape. If confirmed, I will encourage the government to prescribe increased penalties for the sex and labor trafficking of adults. I will work to ensure the Government of Liberia works to meet this minimum standard of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, among other minimum standards.

RESPONSES OF R. DAVID HARDIN, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE HARDIN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. Since 2010, the USAID Food for Peace office has been relying more and more on International Disaster Assistance funds to provide emergency food in interventions that are critical to U.S. national security. Last year, Food for Peace spent almost a billion dollars from "IDA" on food, representing almost half of total funds spent for emergency food assistance. For example, without IDA, we would not be feeding displaced Syrians since U.S. commodities from the Farm Bill simply cannot reach them. If confirmed, do you agree to work with me and my colleagues to see the Food for Peace program fully reformed to meet today's challenges?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and your colleagues to ensure that we are able to maximize Food for Peace (FFP) program resources for greatest impact and effectiveness around the globe. The world is facing unprecedented levels of humanitarian need, with approximately 60 million people displaced by conflict-the largest amount ever recorded. USAID needs to be flexible, adaptive, and creative to meet the demands presented by the growing complexity and number of humanitarian crises.

USAID carefully evaluates each specific country context to determine which tool to use based on market and security conditions, nutritional impacts, timeliness, etc. Resources provided through the International Disaster Account (IDA) account have been absolutely critical to USAID's food assistance response in numerous countries, including the response in Syria and neighboring refugee-hosting countries where the United States is the largest donor of food assistance thanks to these funds. I also understand that there are times, such as right now in Ethiopia, which is currently suffering from food shortages due to the impacts of El Nino, where in-kind assistance may be the most appropriate response.

I believe that the flexibility provided through IDA, along with the important but modest changes to the Title II program in the Agricultural Act of 2014 (or the "Farm Bill"), have enabled USAID to make important progress in improving the efficiency and flexibility of its Food for Peace development and humanitarian programs. If confirmed, I will build on our past progress and continue to work towards achieving additional flexibility in emergency food assistance as outlined in the administration's FY 2017 Budget Request. I am committed to ensuring that USAID has the most appropriate tool for each circumstance and can best meet the needs of vulnerable populations around the globe.

ADMINISTRATOR-DESIGNATE HARDEN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. Over nearly two decades, I have led efforts to promote democracy, human rights and good governance in some of the most fragile states in Central and South Asia and the Middle East. I have advised garment workers in Dhaka, Bangladesh; I've met with victims of sex trafficking in Mumbai, India; and I have negotiated with the government of Nepal on how to reduce its trafficking risks. In Central Asia, I have stood face-to-face with local police and Ministry of Interior officials who were seeking to close down our civil society partners in Almaty, Kazakhstan and in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. I have overseen election observation efforts in Bangladesh, Iraq and the West Bank.

For the past decade I have led democracy, human rights, and governance programs in Iraq, Libya and the West Bank-implementing programming with rigorous oversight. We have seen particular success in anti-corruption efforts in health financing in the West Bank and expanded access to justice for women and children in Iraq.

I've also overseen nearly people-to-people activities under reconciliation grants between Israelis and Palestinians for over a decade. My most searing experiences have been negotiating protection space for victims of war in Iraq, Libya, West Bank and Gaza, and Israel.

For nearly two decades, I have advocated for central components of our humanitarian assistance, development and foreign policy goals and, most importantly, our fundamental values as Americans-and fought to change conditions on the ground in direct support of democracy, human rights, and good governance.

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

Answer. The most pressing human rights issue is closing political space in many countries—what Freedom House refers to as the "democratic recession." Over the last several years, the crackdown on civil society and political parties, the passage of restrictive NGO and media laws, and the restrictions on foreign funding of democracy and human rights groups pose the greatest threat to the advancement of human rights globally.

If confirmed, I would take several important steps to elevate further USAID's leadership in addressing this phenomenon. We would improve data collection and analysis, expand the reach of programs to those who are historically excluded, and closely engage public and private sector partners as well as diaspora communities in these efforts. If confirmed, I would also advance USAID leadership on President Obama's Stand with Civil Society Initiative and lend my voice to ongoing efforts to elevate human rights as part of our broader mission.

First, I would work to enhance USAID's ability to anticipate the threat of closing space so that the Agency can respond earlier. If confirmed, I'd like to do more to combine external analysis and data with our own field resources and analysis to identify emerging threats and then rapidly mobilize diplomatic and programmatic responses in order to reverse or impede crackdowns and restrictive legislation.

Second, I would support expanding the reach of our programs to those historically excluded from the political system, especially youth, indigenous communities, the rural poor and women. Not only do these citizens have the most to gain from inclusion, they represent new constituencies that can be mobilized for broad impact. For example, USAID has a robust gender inclusion approach, enshrined in our program design and strategic planning process, which has resulted in innovative approaches to empowerment of women across development sectors.

Third, there is an opportunity to seek the support of the private sector, diaspora communities and philanthropists for expanding political space. USAID is promoting the use of technology for migrants and watchdog NGOs to report on unjust labor practices within global supply chains in partnership with private sector innovators.

Finally, if confirmed, I would prioritize using social media to communicate our values and reach out to meet people, especially youth, where they spend time, where they get their news, and where they form their opinions. We have seen the incredible influence social media platforms wield, and in order to effectively promote human rights and democracy in today's world, we must have a presence in that space.

If confirmed, I hope to lend my voice to the ongoing effort to elevate human rights as part of our broader development mission. This includes bringing greater focus to our efforts to end human slavery, to counter the threat of atrocities and crimes against humanity, and to help societies achieve all of the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of 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 advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. A significant obstacle to addressing the increasing number of countries with closing spaces is our limited ability to fundamentally alter the dynamics driving closing space trends. Much broader issues impact this disturbing trend, such as nationalism, counterterrorism policies, questioning of Western power model, and clashes between economic interests and civic activism. Amidst these larger factors, USAID is supporting a number of programs that support, defend, and sustain civil society amid a rising tide of global restrictions, including programs such as Legal Enabling Environment Program, Civil Society Innovation Initiative, The Information Safety and Capacity project, Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index.

Budget constraints, particularly in the Democracy, Rights and Governance (DRG) sector, pose additional challenges. For example, in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), the Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) manages the Human Rights Grants Program (HRGP), which provides Missions with resources to respond to urgent or unforeseen challenges. Over the past five years, the HRGP has provided approximately $10 mil-

lion annually to USAID Missions to address urgent human rights challenges. This past year, we received requests that totaled more than $40 million, demonstrating both an increase in demand for human rights programs and a lack of core democracy, human rights, and governance funding for human rights in the majority of Missions. If confirmed, I would commit to expanding such creative funding mechanisms, which have rewarded innovative successes in a competitive environment.

USAID has prioritized human rights as a fundamental underpinning of our development approach across sectors. USAID's Mission Statement emphasizes promoting "resilient, democratic societies," which entails promoting free, peaceful, and self-reliant societies with effective and legitimate governments. Human rights such as the freedom of life, liberty and security of the person, freedom of movement, freedom from discrimination, and the right to participate in free elections are fundamental to the vision described in the Agency's Mission Statement. Helping states to respect, protect and fulfill their obligations will remain a key priority for me, if confirmed as Assistant Administrator. I will also ensure we continue to integrate human rights in our work by promoting civil and political rights in our programming, and countering discriminatory practices that hinder countries' development.

If confirmed, I will work to better evaluate the impact of our efforts to improve human rights and democracy. I look forward to sharing the best practices of our evaluation work.

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 abroad?

Answer. You have my personal commitment that, if confirmed, I will engage regularly with civil society and other non-governmental organizations at home and abroad.

Our engagement with civil society is critical for a number of reasons. First, these groups are an invaluable source of information and ideas, possessing extensive networks and varied resources that advance our common cause to protect human rights and promote democratic governance. Second, we must demonstrate our shared commitment to getting those under threat the support and protection they need. Civil society groups are on the front lines of delivering development assistance in dangerous contexts and are constantly identifying new solutions to development challenges. Third, engagement with our stakeholders improves the quality of USAID programs and our policies because as a result of our engagement, policies better reflect the reality of those on the front lines.

As part of President Obama's Stand with Civil Society agenda, USAID works in partnership with other governments, the philanthropic community, and multilateral institutions, and will continue to focus on three lines of effort:

- ♦ modeling positive engagement between governments and civil society and creating a supportive environment for civil society;
- ♦ developing new assistance tools and programs, including the civil society "hubs" that the President announced last year; and
- ♦ coordinating bilateral and multilateral diplomatic pressure to push back against restrictions on civil society.

If confirmed, I am committed to the core elements of the Stand with Civil Society agenda, including the commitment to consult with civil society as a matter of course.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to engage on these issues in my position as Assistant Administrator. It is my experience that USAID programs are most effective when our development assistance is closely aligned with our diplomatic efforts.

Under the President's Stand with Civil Society Agenda, the U.S. government leverages both development assistance and diplomatic engagement to push back against the most restrictive political environments. For example, in Cambodia, our support for civil society has resulted in an expansion of citizen activism and media attention on key land and environmental issues, and increased the accountability of the National Assembly through more public hearings.

If confirmed, I will take every opportunity to support, echo, and enhance key diplomatic messages that respect human rights (including civil and political rights) and democratic governance.

Question. As you know, 2015 was a year of unprecedented humanitarian need. In 2015 we saw an increasing number of refugees fleeing places like Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo. Prolonged violent conflict has resulted in ongoing humani-

tarian needs in Syria, South Sudan, and Yemen. And this year we have also had to respond to natural disasters in Nepal, Burma, and Micronesia. My understanding is that The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance responded to an astounding 49 crises in 45 countries.

- ♦ Do you think this is a brief period of unprecedented humanitarian need, which will ebb, or is this degree of widespread humanitarian need the new global norm?
- ♦ How should humanitarian needs be prioritized by DCHA when they exceed the resources available?
- ♦ To what degree are emergency response plans shaped by lessons learned and by data on aid effectiveness? Do you believe the current approach is adequate and sustainable?

Answer. While I cannot state conclusively whether the world is experiencing a new norm for humanitarian assistance given all the variables that cause and prolong conflicts, it is clear that the current global humanitarian needs will persist in the years to come. Today's conflicts are extraordinarily complex in nature, and it will take years before normal government services and development programs can take root in some of the hardest hit areas of Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and many other locations in the throes of war. Humanitarians are being called on to deliver these essential, life-saving services; they will have to keep doing so until the situations allow other actors to start their work.

I believe we should prioritize assistance based fundamentally on need and on the basis of saving lives and alleviating human suffering. USAID funding supports the current and new humanitarian caseloads characterized by acute humanitarian needs and high numbers of vulnerable people. We prioritize our responses based on humanitarian need, which is especially critical when these needs exceed USAID's available humanitarian resources. In these instances-when USAID must prioritize responses because global funding from others is not filling the gap-funding may be reduced for some of our disaster risk reduction programs as well as responses to protracted caseloads in countries where USAID has responded for years and life-saving needs are being met. USAID also uses available data and tools to help inform prioritization of need, like the Famine Early Warning Network (FEWS NET) which is a critical tool in planning and prioritizing food security crisis.

The Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) is working diligently to address humanitarian needs globally, while also supporting efforts to shrink these needs-especially in natural-disaster-prone countries. The Agency's strategic outreach to other donors and our support for public-private partnerships helps USAID meet the first objective of expanding the funding base. Our preparedness, disaster risk reduction, and resilience work serves our second objective of shrinking needs.

As the lead federal coordinator for the US government's international disaster response, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) also constantly seeks opportunities to improve future disaster responses. The After Action Review (AAR) is one method by which DCHA/OFDA captures lessons and identifies recommended changes for institutional implementation. The AAR process starts with DCHA/OFDA gathering lessons from response staff and intra/interagency partners through interviews, surveys, and workshops. During this process, OFDA develops and validates various recommendations for future responses. Through a change control process, recommendations are then incorporated into DCHA/OFDA's disaster response systems, policies, and procedures. AARs have served as the impetus for the development of some of DCHA/OFDA's core systems, including the Disaster Assistance Response Team and Response Management Team structures, and USAID's Field Operations Guide. The AAR process continues to serve DCHA/OFDA's interests as a nimble and adaptive organization that continuously captures and applies real-time organizational learning.

Finally, humanitarian aid effectiveness is also a core area for DCHA as well as the wider international humanitarian system of the United Nations, international and national NGOs, and other donor governments. DCHA works closely with think tanks and organizations that seek to make humanitarian assistance more effective through data-driven studies across the sector, including with the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), Cash Learning Partnership (CALP), and FEWS NET. These types of engagements improve coherence across the broader system, enhance evidence-based decision-making for disaster responses, and allow for any necessary restructuring across the international humanitarian system. DCHA also leads donor engagement through ef-

forts like the Good Humanitarian Donorship group, which seeks to improve aid coherence among donors in order to also improve effectiveness.

Question. At a Syria donors conference in London in February, there appeared to be some shift in emphasis from immediate humanitarian needs to support for longer term needs such as education and job opportunities.

Please discuss the current and planned balance of U.S. humanitarian and development aid to Syria. In your view, at what point should the U.S. leadership on the Syria response shift from DCHA to other development-focused entities within USAID?

Answer. On February 4, 2016, world leaders from 45 countries pledged over $11 billion in aid for Syrian refugees and host countries at the "Supporting Syria and the Region 2016" conference in London, including $5.9 billion for 2016. Germany, the United Kingdom, Kuwait, Norway, and the United Nations (UN) hosted the conference and advocated a new humanitarian approach that combined financial assistance to refugees with the economic development of host countries in an effort to help refugees find safe haven closer to home, and identify critical steps to ensure protection of civilians in Syria. Secretary Kerry announced the U.S. pledge of $601 million for humanitarian assistance and more than $290 million in education funding. The U.S. Government remains the largest single donor of humanitarian assistance to Syria and the region, having contributed over $5.1 billion since the beginning of the crisis. At the conference, the participants acknowledged the urgency of the refugee crisis and discussed ways to ensure parties to the conflict abide by the U.N. Security Council Resolutions calling for protection of civilians and increasing humanitarian access in Syria.

The Syrian conflict continues to be the largest and most complex humanitarian emergency of our time, driving record levels of displacement. One in five people displaced globally is Syrian. An estimated 13.5 million people in Syria are in need of humanitarian assistance. According to the UN, the number of people in need of assistance in Syria has increased, as has the level of need in many categories. To address these needs, the U.N. has requested over $9 billion in humanitarian assistance to Syria and the region in 2016, an increase over the U.N. 2015 request. The U.S. Government remains committed to responding to the urgent humanitarian needs of the Syrian people and communities hosting them. Given the current insecurity and severe humanitarian needs, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and the Office of Food for Peace continue to lead in responding to the Syria humanitarian crisis.

Separate from humanitarian assistance, USAID, through the Office of Transition Initiatives and the Middle East Bureau, is supporting moderate opposition communities to ensure they have a role to play in the future of Syria. This includes supporting livelihoods, public services, governance, and other activities to extend the relevance and visibility of moderates. To date, USAID has provided more than $160 million in non-humanitarian assistance programming to Syria. This type of programming could assume a larger role as opportunities to support a transition emerge.

Question. Some analysts have suggested that the location of DRG within DCHA puts democracy programs at a disadvantage, because they must constantly compete with humanitarian emergencies for attention and resources.

- Do you think DCHA is the appropriate organization for democracy promotion?
- How would you prioritize democracy promotion activities in the context of programs aimed at stabilizing economies and ensuring access to food and basic services?

Answer. As I mentioned in my opening statement, the crises we face today are in large part a result of failed governance and undemocratic institutions. The placement of the Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) within the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) ensures that USAID has a single bureau with all the critical capabilities required to respond to fragile and failing states—from first response and transition assistance to the long-term institutional reforms needed to rebuild societies emerging from conflict.

Through crisis coordination teams and other internal coordination mechanisms, we have been able to ensure that DCHA's urgent and long-term democracy, human rights, and governance investments are coordinated to maximize impact. As humanitarian crises increasingly are driven by state fragility and conflict, we must integrate longer-term democracy and peacebuilding investments with our shorter-term humanitarian responses to lay the groundwork for quicker post-conflict recovery.

Studies by partners such as Mercy Corps have shown that community-level governance investments can support broader economic development and food security outcomes and enhance post-conflict recovery.

In complex emergencies, we prioritize humanitarian response, but we also find that peace-building and statebuilding are often underway even in moments of crisis. In terms of prioritizing democracy promotion in the context of fragile and failed states, the Agency was an early and enthusiastic supporter of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States where these countries themselves identified five peacebuilding and state-building goals: (i) legitimate politics; (ii) economic foundations; (iii) justice; (iv) security; and (v) effective delivery of goods and services.

Question. Please discuss any lessons learned by DCHA in recent years with respect to democracy promotion, particularly regarding the opportunities created during the "Arab Spring."

- Are certain types of activities consistently more successful than others? Do the challenges of quantifying progress in democracy and good governance make it harder to promote these programs in a USAID environment increasingly focused on performance data?

Answer. DCHA has learned a number of lessons over the years with respect to democracy promotion, particularly with regard to the "Arab Spring."

- Chief among those lessons is the recognition that this is not a short-term effort or one without risks and trade-offs. USAID must maintain a long view in recognition that real, long-term stability will not come to the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region until there is significant democratic reform, including meaningful participation and inclusion for all citizens.
- It is critical that we invest in supporting democratic actors and the voices of those with an interest in peaceful transitions and productive reform. That means supporting women and youth, who collectively make up 80 percent of the population in many MENA countries.
- Tunisia, the birthplace of the Arab Spring, is considered its primary success story. USAID's early, critical support for constituent assembly elections paved the way for an elected government. We have also begun to see progress in private sector development, which has generated youth employment.
- In other countries, democratic gains have proved elusive, as transitions from authoritarian rule have given way to volatility and unrest, and in some cases civil war. These outcomes have necessitated that USAID adjust programs to focus on shorter-term outcomes such as conflict mitigation and stabilization.
- We need to also bear in mind the limits of USG programs and influence to sustain transformational democratic change in a society. Even with the support of all the world's leading democratic nations and the international community--real and lasting democratic change needs to take root from within. USAID can nurture those opportunities, but the drivers must be indigenous.

Some democracy promotion activities that have proven to be more successful include:

- Empowering local level/municipal governance structures to improve service delivery, while being more transparent and accessible to their constituents.
- Strengthening civil society, as it often fills an important space in terms of local governance and service delivery when central power structures are collapsing or weak, particularly in conflict-affected areas.
- In prioritizing activities, USAID has found that it is most effective to focus efforts on two or three core challenges, rather than attempting to address all issues individually as they arise. The Agency also cultivates and leverages partnerships with governments, civil society, the private sector, and other international donors, where possible.

Quantifying results

- USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) has formulated a comprehensive Learning Agenda that applies a strategic approach to evidence-based research in priority areas. To implement the agenda, the DRG Center has strengthened the capacity of officers in headquarters and the field to engage in more rigorous learning. The Center has trained hundreds of USAID staff and partners as well as hosted three state-of-the-art Learning Clinics that incorporate training sessions alongside real-time evaluation design.
- While there are nuances to quantifying democracy and good governance, we have demonstrated that effective measurement and evaluation can be conducted

in the DRG field. In total, the DRG Center has provided technical assistance for 22 performance evaluations, five high-quality public opinion surveys to inform project design, 13 research grants to advance knowledge in key areas, and 26 impact evaluations completed, underway or in design. These impact evaluations range in scope from assessing to what extent different civic education approaches increase student knowledge and participation, to assessing how increased information on parliamentary performance affects legislative output and voter behavior.

- Within this agenda, USAID intends to organize and disseminate existing or new evidence, and produce conclusions and recommendations through academic research, program evaluations, and multi-method tests of the assumptions and theories of change that guide DRG programming.
- We believe that progress in both quantitative and qualitative evaluations in the DRG sector supports rather than impedes effective, evidence-based programming.

Question. The administration's FY 2017 budget requests $2.72 billion to be allocated to democracy and governance assistance, an 18% increase over FY2016, but does not specify which programs or accounts should be expanded.

- If Congress funds an increase, where do you believe the additional funds would be best spent within the democracy and governance portfolio?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue to work with my colleagues in the regional bureaus and the Agency's budget team to take a closer look at bilateral programs based on where assistance is in greatest need, where it can be most effective, and where it best serves our foreign policy. The President's FY 2017 budget request proposes increased funding across all Governing Justly and Democratically program areas, with the biggest increases going to programs that strengthen civil society and improve good governance.

The FY 2017 request broadly supports three U.S. Government policy goals: addressing democratic backsliding and closing political spaces by promoting government accountability, citizen participation, and protecting fundamental human rights; supporting democratic political transitions where U.S. foreign assistance can make an impact; and sustaining our overall aid investments in countries that are making progress.

In terms of allocation within or between DRG programs in a given country, this would be driven by the local context, including an analysis of host country priorities, capacity and political will, programming from other donors, and U.S. foreign policy priorities. In some cases, regional or cross-border programs may be considered as a more effective approach if a problem is transnational in nature.

Question. Last week USAID deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to lead the U.S. Government response to the drought in Ethiopia, which includes the provision of emergency food assistance, drought resistant seeds to plant new crops, safe drinking water, and nutrition treatments. But USAID's Feed the Future program has been in Ethiopia for years working on long term agricultural production and nutrition projects.

- Please discuss the balance between our immediate emergency food aid needs with our activities to foster long term agricultural development. Do you think we have struck the right balance between the two?
- As you know, investing in long-term stability ultimately reduces the need for emergency food aid. If we forget about the balance between the two for a moment-do you think we are channeling sufficient resources towards the development side?

Answer. Ethiopia is experiencing an extraordinary drought—the worst drought in fifty years. Triggered by El Nino, the drought follows successive poor rainy seasons and the scale and severity now exceeds many people's ability to cope. Many of the areas affected by this drought are densely populated and not chronically affected by drought in average years. Conditions are expected to worsen in the summer months. An estimated 10.2 million people are in need of relief food assistance-a number that is expected to increase. Another 8 million people are chronically food insecure.

USAID is working to help address urgent needs, sustain the development progress made, and reduce the risk of undermining longer-term food security gains through a combination of joint humanitarian and development action. In the immediate term, USAID is acting quickly, decisively and at-scale through an integrated response to help mitigate the humanitarian, development and economic impact of the drought and speed recovery once drought conditions subside. In the medium-to-long

term, staying the course means sustaining our resilience and development investments in Ethiopia to continue to help accelerate the country's upward development trajectory and further enhance 'the ability of people, households, communities and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recovery from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth'-USAID's definition of resilience.

The U.S. Government began responding early to the impacts of the drought in mid-2015 through modifying existing development programs and through rapid response programs that were standing at the ready when early warnings, including the USAID-supported Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), projected worsening food security and water situations. When the outlook indicated increased food insecurity, USAID/Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) began shipping more than 28,000 metric tons of relief food assistance to Ethiopia valued at nearly $24 million between July and September 2015. Since October 2015, USAID/FFP provided nearly 447,000 metric tons of relief food assistance in Ethiopia, valued at over $267 million, more than double the tonnage provided during all of last fiscal year.

At the same time, USAID is working with partners to prepare for the upcoming rains and summer planting season, which typically feeds 85 percent of Ethiopia's population. By getting seeds into the hands of more than 1.7 million farmers, USAID is helping them plant before the rains fall, in hopes of alleviating some of the food needs in the future. The USAID seed intervention is an integrated response between the humanitarian and development offices that provides emergency seed needs in close coordination with the long-term agriculture development programs.

The balance between emergency assistance and long-term agricultural development is complex, but USAID is making progress toward improving the population's resilience. The development and resilience gains in Ethiopia have saved and sustained lives in a cost-effective manner. The difference between this drought and severe droughts of the past—such as the 1984 drought—is the development investments. Despite drought conditions being worse than 1984, and high population growth, the loss of life is drastically lower. With support from USAID, Ethiopia has worked to build safety nets for their people, invested in agricultural development, and enhanced their resilience to recurrent droughts. This progress is helping Ethiopia respond to emergency needs and protect lives and livelihoods, while safeguarding against the loss of critical development gains from routine shocks. Some shocks overwhelm even the most advanced emergency response and safety net systems, and Ethiopia's current drought is such an example.

Programs under Feed the Future (FtF), the U.S. Government's global food security and hunger initiative, have laid a strong resilience foundation for areas chronically affected by drought, in part by utilizing a multi-sectoral approach through climate smart agriculture, livestock production, and natural resource management. FtF programs in Ethiopia are helping farmers by promoting "best agricultural practices" that sustainably increase agricultural and livestock productivity as well as farmer incomes. FtF has introduced high producing crop varieties that respond better to droughts, flooding, and other stresses; extended improved crop, soil, and water management practices; promoted energy-efficient agricultural technologies; and advocated for innovative practices and policies so that smallholder farmers can cope with adverse conditions.

FtF investments in livelihoods have integrated USAID/FFP-supported development food assistance and agricultural productivity activities. For example, USAID/FFP supports the Government of Ethiopia-led Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), which annually addresses the basic food needs of 5-8 million chronically food insecure people through the seasonal transfer of food and cash resources in exchange for work on natural resource management projects, like terracing and irrigation systems, that generate economic benefit to the community as a whole. The PSNP has lifted 1.5 million people out of poverty, reduced the annual household food gap, improved the land productivity, and helped people protect their assets during times of stress. In the drought-affected highlands, USAID/FFP's investment in the PSNP is complemented by FtF investments in the Graduation for Resilience to Achieve Sustained Development (GRAD) program aimed at assisting poor, rural households currently enrolled in the PSNP to achieve self-sufficiency and 'graduate' from food assistance. The GRAD program has successfully helped around 200,000 people graduate to date and increased annual incomes among GRAD beneficiaries by approximately $330.

USAID must continue to strengthen the population's ability to cope through long-term FtF investments. While the current drought may result in temporary setbacks, Ethiopia has experienced robust, agriculture-led growth over the past decade. This is exemplified by the 10.3 percent GDP growth rate in 2014. Ethiopia also achieved a 33 percent decline in poverty between 2000 and 2011. FtF is helping to accelerate

this progress in partnership with the Government of Ethiopia's Agricultural Growth Program and Growth and Transformation Plan.

This progress is matched by steady improvements in health, nutrition and human capital supported and accelerated by FtF and USAID's Global Health initiatives. The prevalence of chronic malnutrition (stunting) was reduced from 57 percent to 44 percent over the last decade and the under-five mortality more than halved from 146 to 68 per 1,000 live births during the same period. As capacity is built, USAID remains committed to respond to extraordinary events—like the current El Nino-induced drought—to save lives, reduce suffering and to mitigate the economic and social impacts of disaster.

The climatic irregularities in East Africa are increasing in frequency and our development and resilience investments are making a substantial difference. However, effectively responding to these new environmental realities will require sustained development investments over time, focused on enhancing the growing population's ability to cope.

Question. The United States is the largest donor of food assistance.

- Please discuss the role of other donors and the challenges of burden sharing, particularly any efforts to include emerging donor contributions.

Answer. The United States has a proud 60-year history of providing hope and help to over three billion people across the globe. Currently, the world is facing unprecedented levels of humanitarian need, with approximately 60 million people displaced by conflict-the largest amount ever recorded. International humanitarian organizations are in dire need of increased support from as many donors as possible. If confirmed, I plan to continue USAID efforts to coordinate with other donors on large-scale responses to ensure interventions are appropriate, targeted, and well supported.

Over the past five years, in addition to the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, the European Commission and Germany were significant donors to the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), the largest multilateral humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. It is my understanding that in February, Germany provided an unprecedented contribution of over $600 million to WFP's emergency operation in Syria—the largest single contribution in WFP's history. Prior to this the United States had contributed more than all other donors combined to this effort and so greatly welcomed this increased support from Germany. Emerging donors such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have also increasingly stepped up their efforts, with Saudi Arabia providing over $500 million to WFP in 2014 to respond to food insecurity among conflict-affected populations in Iraq.

In light of the number of emergencies currently being faced by the international community, including the current challenges associated with El Nino, burden sharing must be a priority in order to ensure we are meeting the needs of our world's most vulnerable populations. The United States cannot meet global humanitarian needs alone. If confirmed, I look forward to actively engaging both traditional and non-traditional donors to increase their contributions in order to collectively contribute to effective global humanitarian response efforts.

Question. What is your sense of how well the different offices within DCHA are coordinated? Please explain how they coordinate their activities.

Answer. The Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) systematically coordinates its nine offices within the bureau, other USAID bureaus, and the interagency. For efforts that require significant coordination across the bureau (but do not require an agency-wide task force), DCHA has created crisis coordination teams to manage its effectiveness. These teams are called Crisis and (Political) Opening Action Coordination Teams (COACTs). COACTs help eliminate duplication of efforts, achieve efficient use of resources and ensure strong coordination among DCHA offices and programs—in responding to and addressing crises and political openings. COACTs are established for specific crisis or political openings, such as in advance of the recent elections in Burma or the outbreak of conflict in the Central African Republic.

COACTs integrate DCHA's work with regional and other pillar bureaus by including other bureau personnel on the teams. COACT advisors ensure that Bureau and Agency leadership are briefed regularly on fast moving developments and are equipped to strategically guide resource allocation, programming, and policy decisions. COACTs also ensure effective coordination and information exchange with the National Security Council, Department of State, Department of Defense, relevant embassies, and other agencies.

The COACT does not supersede the authorities of Missions, Response Management Teams, Disaster Assistance Response Teams or offices as outlined in USAID agency policies.

Question. USAID's Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) is an important component of our foreign assistance and international diplomacy efforts. As you noted in your testimony, ASHA supports medical and educational facilities that "provide world-class services and promote American ideas and values." In FY15, ASHA awarded 38 grants totaling $23 million to US institutions operating in 25 different countries. Awards ranged from $173,000 to $1.2 million and targeted institutions in Africa, Asia, Latin and Central America, the Middle East and North Africa and Europe and Eurasia. The President's FY17 budget requests $5 million for ASHA. This represents a nearly 81 percent decrease from the FY16 enacted level of $26 million and a 78 percent decrease from the FY15 enacted level of $23 million.

- How do you view ASHA's role within the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance?
- With a proposed 81 percent decrease in funding, please discuss how ASHA will continue to promote American ideas and values in a meaningful way.
- How would ASHA prioritize projects and regions with such limited resources? Would ASHA be able to maintain its geographical diversity?
- ASHA's investments have enabled us to sustain long-term public-private partnerships dedicated to advancing U.S. values abroad. What impact would a reduced budget have on ASHA's ability to protect and sustain past investments?

Answer. USAID/ASHA is an integral part of the Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) Bureau portfolio and complements the Agency's humanitarian, transition and resilience work. USAID/ASHA supports educational and medical institutions that expand access to quality education and health services and have educated successive generations of global citizens and leaders, deepening their understanding of American ideas and practices. The program is strategically positioned to ensure stability in uncertain times; promote American ideas and values in meaningful ways by providing critically needed advanced medical and trauma care; deliver American style education to the most marginalized populations; and ensure talented young people have a constructive track to realize their future aspirations.

In my current capacity as the Mission Director in the West Bank and Gaza, I have witnessed first-hand the valuable impact of ASHA funding to both the Israelis and Palestinians. This funding and out relationship to partner institutions make us a stronger, better and more efficient Mission. Additionally, these institutions reflect American values and serve as drivers of stability, security, and prosperity in the region.

The funding included in the FY 2017 request, combined with the significant resources appropriated in FY 2016, will help to meet the goals of the USAID/ASHA program. The funding request reflects difficult tradeoffs in this constrained fiscal environment, but will allow USAID/ASHA to continue to contribute to U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy objectives by fostering strong civil society institutions and excellence in higher education and innovation.

USAID/ASHA partners are legitimate, self-sustaining local organizations with historic linkages to the United States. Projects are chosen through a competitive grant process on the basis of program design, potential for impact, and technical merit. This criteria enables the Agency to strategically select ASHA partners in a fiscally constrained budget environment. ASHA does not select projects based on geographical region and does not anticipate a change in funding criteria that would impact geographic diversity.

Over the course of 60 years, USAID/ASHA has awarded nearly $1 billion to 300 institutions in 80 countries. Although the loss of USAID/ASHA grant funds may impact institutions that use ASHA grants for capital inputs to expand and improve programs, these organizations are not dependent on ASHA funding for continued operations.

RESPONSES OF ELIZABETH RICHARD, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE LEBANESE REPUBLIC, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE RICHARD'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. Promoting human rights around the world has been an important part of all of my assignments over my 30-year career in the Foreign Service. As Deputy to the Ambassador for War Crimes Issues, I helped oversee our worldwide efforts to hold war criminals accountable for their actions. In setting up the Special Court for Sierra Leone, in improving the functioning of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and in advancing U.S. support for justice in Darfur, I was part of a team dedicated to the protection of human rights. As the director of counter-narcotics, civilian police training and rule of law programs in Afghanistan, I ensured that all our efforts underscored that peace and stability could only come through democratic governance and the protection of every citizen's basic human rights. And in Yemen, at the start of the Arab Spring, the determined efforts of our entire U.S. Embassy team helped to peacefully end the autocratic reign of Ali Abdullah Saleh, support new elections, and ensure that the ensuing National Dialogue Conference included representatives of all constituencies: women, youth, and minorities. While the country has tragically slipped into armed conflict, a precedent for democratic governance that gives voice to all segments of the population has been set.

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

Answer. The most pressing human rights issues in Lebanon include upholding the rights of refugees, improving prison conditions, preserving space for civil society to be active, preserving religious freedoms in areas threatened by extremist groups such as ISIL, enhancing anti-trafficking efforts, raising the profile of domestic abuse (particularly against women) as a human rights issue, and preserving the right of organized labor to advocate for wages and better occupational health and safety standards. If confirmed, I will make the promotion of human rights in Lebanon one of my highest priorities. U.S. leadership on this important issue is key to advancing nearly every aspect of our bilateral relationship, including the fight against ISIL and other extremist groups. If confirmed, I will work closely with key Lebanese leaders, including the heads of the main security services and ministers with oversight responsibilities, in order to highlight alleged human rights abuses and press for prompt and transparent government investigations. The State Department's annual Human Rights Report regularly garners press attention in Lebanon and is studied carefully by NGOs and other groups working on human rights issues in Lebanon and remains one of our most effective tools in highlighting human rights issues around the world.

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 Lebanon in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The lack of a fully functioning government in Beirut is one of the biggest obstacles, if not the biggest obstacle, to pressing forward on our human rights agenda in Lebanon. This means key legislation on issues ranging from trafficking to domestic abuse cannot be passed promptly into law. The influence of Hizballah in Lebanon, a terrorist organization, is another major obstacle to promoting human rights in every area of Lebanon. If confirmed, promoting human rights throughout Lebanon will be one of my highest priorities.

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 Lebanon? 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 continuing my predecessors' tradition of meeting with human rights advocates, civil society and other non-governmental or-

ganizations in the United States and with human rights NGOs in Lebanon. Lebanon is home to a large community of very active NGOs devoted to human rights issues. Our Embassy in Beirut constantly engages with local NGO leaders to learn about alleged human rights abuses and hear their views on how the United States can be even more effective in promoting our human rights agenda in Lebanon. If confirmed, I will continue our strong compliance with the Leahy Law, including maintaining robust vetting procedures.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will actively engage with Lebanese leaders on cases involving political prisoners and/or other unjustly detained people.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will make promoting human and civil rights and governance one of my highest priorities. In addition to promoting human rights for its own sake, encouraging Lebanon to uphold its commitments on human rights underpins nearly every pillar of our bilateral relationship, from working with the Lebanese Armed Forces to combating ISIL and other extremist groups to providing assistance to Syrian refugees and the Lebanese communities that host them.

Question. What are the issues at play preventing Lebanese politicians from agreeing on a President or holding elections? As Ambassador, how will you work with the Lebanese officials to address these issues and end the deadlock?

Answer. We share your concern that Lebanon has been without a president for nearly two years. Lebanese parties that are blocking the formation of a parliamentary quorum are undercutting Lebanon's stability and democratic practices, and must be held to account. The country deserves a functioning government that can meet the needs of the people. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Lebanese Parliament to convene and hold a vote on the President, in accordance with Lebanon's constitution and National Pact.

Question. What are the greatest needs facing Syrian refugees in Lebanon now and what Lebanese institutions are facing the greatest strain from the influx of refugees? As Ambassador, how will you work with the Lebanese government and NGO community to coordinate assistance in a way that best serves both Syrian refugees and the Lebanese communities that are hosting them?

Answer. Lebanon hosts more than one million registered Syrian refugees, making it the country with the highest per capita concentration of refugees in the world. In addition, there may be up to another 500,000 non-registered Syrians, along with large pre-existing Palestinian and Iraqi refugee populations.

The influx of refugees has presented severe challenges to Lebanon's already weak public infrastructure and services, including overcrowded schools, dilapidated water and wastewater systems, and limited health clinics. Refugees live in Lebanese communities across the country, the majority in rented or previously unoccupied accommodations, including sheds, garages and other substandard housing. As the number of refugees has grown, social tensions—especially in host communities—have also increased. Politicians across the political spectrum have voiced concerns about the destabilizing effects and the economic cost of hosting such a large number of refugees.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will advocate for continued U.S. support for the urgent needs of refugees and the communities that host them. Thanks to the generous support of Congress, we are providing U.S. humanitarian assistance through U.N. agencies and NGOs for urgently needed food, shelter, water, health care, education, and protection for refugees. If confirmed, I will continue addressing the extraordinary needs in Lebanese communities by working on private sector job creation, education, and water and wastewater services.

We encourage the Lebanese government to follow through on its commitments to expand legal residency for Syrian refugees and allow access to education and work opportunities for both Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese, with the support of international donors. These commitments were announced at the February 4 London "Supporting Syria and the Region" Conference. Expanding education and work opportunities to refugees is also a central goal of the President's Summit on Refugees that he will host on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly in September.

Question. How will you work with both the administration and the Lebanese government to ensure that both the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces have the tools they need to protect Lebanon?

Answer. Our Embassy in Beirut meets regularly with LAF and ISF partners to assess and address their foreign assistance needs. Our support for the Lebanese military is critical to combatting ISIL and other extremists that threaten the region, and U.S. interests in the region. It is also a key institution of Lebanese statehood and essential to extending the Lebanese state's authority throughout the country's territory. The Lebanese people, across sectarian lines and in numerous polls, regard the Lebanese Armed Forces as the one of the most credible and effective institutions of the state and want it to assume full responsibility for protection of the state. We must also continue our efforts to prepare Lebanon's national police, the Internal Security Forces (ISF), to fulfill their mandate to help build safe, secure communities and extend the rule of law to each of them. Without a strong ISF and LAF, Lebanon's existence as an independent and democratic state will be jeopardized, increasing the risk of instability in Lebanon and the region. That is a risk we cannot afford to take.

In supporting the ISF, the State Department considers all training and equipment requests through the lens of U.S. Department of State policies, priorities, funding levels, and the ISF's needs. The State Department has been responsive to ISF needs, while encouraging sustainable programming. We work closely with the ISF and other international donors to support the ISF's strategic planning process, as well as to provide training to the ISF and other Government of Lebanon partners on long-term planning, end use monitoring, internal inspections, and assessments so the ISF can both marshal its own resources and maximize foreign assistance.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE RICHARD'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Please briefly describe your vision for taking on a new role as the U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon.

Answer. The Middle East is undergoing a period of unprecedented instability. The roots of this instability are deep and systemic: weak political legitimacy, ineffective institutions, fragile economies, and religious sectarianism. This volatile landscape poses serious threats to U.S. national security and to the security and stability of our friends and allies in the region. If confirmed, my role as ambassador will be to lead our embassy's team to advance U.S. interests in Lebanon. Functioning democratic government, strong institutions, including security institutions, and an economic and business environment that is tied to the global economy are all required for Lebanon's stability and success. If confirmed, I will work to improve Lebanon's position in these core areas.

Additionally, the safety and security all Americans in Lebanon, as well as our Locally Employed Staff, is my highest priority. I will draw from insights I have gained during 30 years in the Foreign Service, including service in some our most challenging posts overseas. If confirmed, I intend to outline clear objectives, actively seek out alternate points of view, and ensure my team has the right resources to accomplish the mission.

Question. How do you feel your past experience, as well as your current position as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs have prepared you to take on this new role?

Answer. I have had the privilege of serving our country in some our most challenging posts overseas, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Yemen. Over the course of my 30 years in the Foreign Service, I have gained valuable insights into how much the world wants and needs U.S. leadership. Throughout my career in government, I have adopted a "whole of mission" approach. Advancing U.S. interests overseas means benefiting from the talents, resources, and insights of all U.S. government agencies operating overseas. In my current role as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State responsible for coordinating U.S. assistance to the Middle East, I oversee a team of 105 people and a budget of several billions of dollars in aid to the region. I have worked intensively over the past three years to ensure that U.S. priorities are well thought out and clearly enunciated, and that our foreign assistance resources are properly aligned against those priorities. My current job has given me experience bringing together multiple agencies and bureaus to accomplish shared U.S. objectives across the Middle East.

Question. Since legislators have pushed back an already overdue parliamentary election to 2017, what prospects do you see for the resolution of the presidential vacuum in the coming year?

Answer. We share your concern that Lebanon has been without a president for nearly two years. Lebanon deserves a functioning government that can meet the needs of the people. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Lebanese Parliament to convene and hold a vote on the President, in accordance with Lebanon's constitution and National Pact. Lebanese parties that are blocking the formation of a parliamentary quorum are undercutting Lebanon's stability and democratic practices, and must be held to account.

Question. Municipal elections are coming up in May of 2016. Do you anticipate that these elections will cause local political unrest? If so, what do you recommend Lebanon do to mitigate any outbreaks of violence? What, if anything, is the U.S. doing to assist Lebanon in this task?

Answer. Our Charge d'Affaires in Beirut, Ambassador Richard Jones, met with Lebanese Interior Minister Machnouk on January 29, 2016, to discuss security for the municipal elections, among other important issues. Along with our partners in the international community, we have publicly called on Lebanese leaders to hold municipal elections on schedule. The municipal elections are an important part of Lebanese democracy.

Question. If confirmed, what role do you intend to play in facilitating dialogue and promoting reconciliation among Lebanese factions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will build on my predecessors' work to promote dialogue among the range of Lebanese leaders and with civil society. The United States must stand firmly behind the voices of moderation who share our vision for a Lebanon that is sovereign, independent, free from foreign entanglements, and prosperous.

Question. How do you view Hezbollah's political role in Lebanon at present? Its security role? In your opinion, has the Syrian intervention weakened or strengthened Hezbollah? In what ways?

Answer. Hizballah is a terrorist organization with a single, unified chain of command. We do not distinguish between the group's so-called military and social/political wings. Supporting Lebanon's legitimate state institutions—as well as the voices of moderation that share our interest in a sovereign, independent, and free Lebanon— is the best way to counter Hizballah's influence.

On the security front, Hizballah has continued to build up its arms cache in Lebanon with help from Iran, a flagrant violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701 and other international commitments. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701 calls upon Lebanon to disarm Lebanon's militias—a goal we support through our training and equipping of the Lebanese military as the sole legitimate defender of Lebanon. We are focused on promoting Lebanon's stability and sovereignty by building up legitimate state institutions and countering extremism. Our support to the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces supports the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1680, and 1701. Working closely with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in southern Lebanon, the Lebanese military has helped contain tensions along the "Blue Line" with Israel.

Hizballah's intervention in Syria to prop up the Asad regime has weakened the organization in some ways, while strengthening it in others. Since entering the Syria conflict, Hizballah has expended substantial resources (both financial and human resources) in support of Asad's brutal war against his own people, which is in violation of the Lebanese consensus of dissociation from foreign conflicts enshrined in the 2012 Baabda Declaration. While Hizballah fighters have gained battlefield skills, we see evidence this intervention has had a negative impact on the group's standing among its supporters in Lebanon who have suffered tremendous human losses on behalf of Hizballah and its foreign backers.

Hizballah has exploited the threat posed by ISIL, Nusra, and other extremist organizations to Lebanon to falsely justify its intervention in Syria. Such justifications represent a deliberate distortion of Hizballah's involvement in a foreign war against the will of the Lebanese people. Lebanon wants to implement a policy of dissociation from the Syrian conflict, but Hizballah has engaged in the opposite. And its actions, along with those of the Asad regime itself, continue to fuel the growth of violent extremism in Syria and have drawn extremist, terrorist threats to Lebanon. Hizballah's intervention undermines Lebanon's stability. The United States has frequently publicly called out Hizballah for its violation of the Lebanese consensus of dissociation from foreign conflicts. In September 2015, then-Counselor of the State

Department Thomas Shannon highlighted Hizballah's intervention in Syria at the International Support Group for Lebanon ministerial-level meeting on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

Question. The Lebanese government publically opposes support of Bashar al Assad. Yet, Hezbollah has intervened on his behalf. What is your assessment of the influence Hezbollah exercises over the Lebanese government? Does it rise to the level of "undue" influence? What more can the government do to counteract Hezbollah's direct contravention of the Lebanese government's public policy? Can the U.S. help the Lebanese government on this front? If so, how?

Answer. Hizballah has a minority stake in the current Lebanese government. Only 2 of 24 Cabinet Ministers are Hizballah members (the Minister of Industry and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs—neither of which are major posts). In the National Assembly Hizballah controls only 12 of 128 seats and is the fourth largest party. Hizballah's influence in the government does not rise to the level of undue influence. A (Sunni) prime minister and a variety of other parties represented in the current Cabinet and Parliament prevent Hizballah from having undue influence. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage Lebanese leaders to speak out against Hizballah's intervention in Syria to prop up the Asad regime.

Question. President Obama signed into law the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 on December 18, 2015. How do you see this legislation affect Lebanon's economy and financial sector? How might it place new pressure on Hezbollah's finances?

Answer. We are disrupting Hizballah's terrorist capabilities by targeting the group's global financial support infrastructure. Our target is Hizballah—not Lebanon or the Lebanese people. The administration strongly supported the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 (HIFPA). The Congress has given the administration a valuable tool to help dismantle Hizballah's global financial network.

We do not hesitate to use our authority under HIFPA and other sanctions measures to target financial institutions knowingly facilitating significant transactions or engaged in money-laundering activities on behalf of Hizballah. The State Department and Treasury are constantly looking for solid evidence of such activity. Treasury and State have consistently used our authorities to expose and target Hizballah's financial, commercial, and terrorist activities around the world.

The threat of secondary sanctions for those who knowingly facilitate transactions for Hizballah could lead financial institutions and others to distance themselves from Hizballah. While Hizballah does not maintain accounts in its name, supporters and financiers do manage money on behalf of the organization. We have, and will continue to go after such financiers, and the signing of the bill into law and the subsequent reporting requirements could shine a spotlight on Hizballah, their supporters and financiers, and ties to illicit activities.

Question. What have been the practical effects of the withdrawal of Saudi financial support for Lebanon's security forces? What additional costs does this withdrawal create for the United States? How likely is it that Iran will step in to replace this financial support?

Answer. We are currently reviewing the impact of the suspension of the Saudi funds to the Lebanese security forces to identify gaps in current procurement programs, including light attack aircraft (A-29 aircraft, Cessna). Additionally, we are reviewing how to mitigate the impact on programs the Lebanese Armed Forces had planned for and that we agree are priorities, such as close air support helicopters and protected mobility capabilities.

We believe the Lebanese Armed Forces deserves the continued support of the international community. We cannot leave the field open to Hizballah and its patrons. Assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces and the other legitimate state institutions is essential to help diminish the role of Hizballah and its foreign patrons. Our assistance to the Lebanese military also makes a real difference on the ground against ISIL and other extremists.

So far, we have not seen any immediate effects of the Saudi government's announcement on February 19 of a suspension of security assistance to Lebanon. The Saudi announcement will impact future support for the Lebanese Armed Forces, particularly in procurement of U.S. and French equipment. Our assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces will continue. The Lebanese government has in the past rejected Iranian offers to supplant the Saudi role and support the Lebanese Armed Forces and we have little reason to believe this will change.

Question. What are the prospects for Saudi-Iranian rivalry and animosity to destabilize Lebanon in the near term? What actions or steps might trigger a more confrontational approach by actors inside Lebanon? What, if anything, is the U.S. doing to counteract any confrontations? In your opinion, what should the U.S. be doing?

Answer. Lebanon has preserved its stability in the midst of tremendous instability in the region, but we are fully aware that sectarian tensions could flare up with little warning. The Lebanese consensus position of dissociation from foreign conflict enshrined in the 2012 Baabda Declaration has in some ways tamped down sectarian rhetoric in Lebanon.

Regional tensions have certainly had an impact on Lebanon. The Iranian Cultural Center in Beirut was bombed in February 2014, killing at least five and wounding more than 100 people. There have been reports of threats to the Saudi Embassy in Beirut as well. In addition, the November 2015 execution of Shia dissident cleric Nimr-al Nimr by Saudi Arabia caused heightened tensions between Lebanese Sunnis and Shia and some protests at the Saudi Embassy in Beirut. The United States continues to encourage moderation and dialogue between all Lebanese factions. We also continue to support the cross-confessional Lebanese Armed Forces in its efforts to maintain security in the country.

Question. How stable is the security balance along the Lebanon-Israel border? What effect have Russian military operations in Syria had on Israel's ability to secure its northern border?

Answer. Hizballah's ongoing military presence in southern Lebanon presents a serious threat to the Lebanon-Israel border region, as evidenced by Hizballah's attack on an Israel convoy in January 2016. To help protect Israel against this threat, the United States has invested $3 billion in the Iron Dome system and other missile defense programs and systems for Israel. Iron Dome batteries and interceptors have saved an untold number of Israeli lives, particularly during the Gaza conflict in 2014. In FY 2016 Israel will receive an additional $487 million in missile defense support, including $55 million for Iron Dome. After successful joint tests of David's Sling and Arrow 3 in December 2015, in FY 2016 the United States will fund coproduction of these systems for the first time—further deepening our missile defense cooperation with Israel to protect against threats such as Hizballah's rocket and missile arsenal.

Our support to the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces supports the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1680, and 1701. Working closely with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the Lebanese Armed Forces' performance in southern Lebanon has helped contain tensions along the Blue Line with Israel. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701 calls upon Lebanon to disarm Lebanon's militias—a goal we support through our training and equipping of the Lebanese military as the sole legitimate defender of Lebanon.

We note reports that Israeli officials want to coordinate with Russiaregarding the situation in Syria. Like Israel, we do not want to see Hizballah strengthened by its intervention in Syria, or by Russia's actions in Syria.

Question. Please briefly describe the challenges associated with Lebanon's growing refugee population. How do you intend to engage with the refugee population inside Lebanon if confirmed? What outcomes and policies does the administration wish to see the Lebanese government adopt with regard to Syrians present in Lebanon?

Answer. Lebanon hosts more than one million registered Syrian refugees, making it the country with the highest per capita concentration of refugees in the world. In addition, there may be up to another 500,000 non-registered Syrians, along with large pre-existing Palestinian and Iraqi refugee populations.

The influx of refugees has presented severe challenges to Lebanon's already weak public infrastructure and services, including overcrowded schools, dilapidated water and wastewater systems, and limited health clinics. Refugees live in Lebanese communities across the country, the majority in rented or previously unoccupied accommodations, including sheds, garages and other substandard housing. As the number of refugees has grown, social tensions—especially in host communities—have also increased. Politicians across the political spectrum have voiced concerns about the destabilizing effects and the economic cost of hosting such a large number of refugees.

If confirmed as Ambassador, I will advocate for continued U.S. support for the urgent needs of refugees and the communities that host them. Thanks to the generous support of Congress, we are providing U.S. humanitarian assistance through U.N. agencies and NGOs for urgently needed food, shelter, water, health care, education,

and protection for refugees. If confirmed, I will continue addressing the extraordinary needs in Lebanese communities by working on private sector job creation, education, and water and wastewater services.

We encourage the Lebanese government to follow through on its commitments to expand legal residency for Syrian refugees and allow access to education and work opportunities for both Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese, with the support of international donors. These commitments were announced at the February 4 London "Supporting Syria and the Region" Conference. Expanding education and work opportunities to refugees is also a central goal of the President's Summit on Refugees that he will host on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly in September.

Question. Lebanon is a tier 2 country according to the U.S. Department of State's 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report, meaning Lebanon is a "source and destination country for women and children subjected to labor and sex trafficking. . . ." How do you plan to work with the Lebanese government to combat this issue? How has the overarching political paralysis in the country affected the implementation of anti-trafficking efforts or legislative initiatives to extend worker protections?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my strong priorities will be to build on our current efforts and improve the Lebanese government's performance on anti-trafficking measures. Lebanon is both a source and destination country for women and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Lebanon is also a transit country for Eastern European women and children subjected to sex trafficking in other Middle Eastern countries. The Syrian crisis has compounded the challenge, as Syrian refugees are at risk of sex trafficking and forced labor.

Our Embassy in Beirut continues to work with and raise TIP awareness among prosecutors, judges, and law enforcement officials. We have made some progress on this front, but more needs to be done. We have raised the importance of combating TIP as a top U.S. foreign policy priority at the highest levels of the Lebanese government. Unfortunately, Lebanon's ongoing political paralysis prevents the passage of crucial legislative measures to combat TIP, including a National Action Plan and the National Strategy for Combating Trafficking.

If confirmed, I will work to increase our collaboration and programs with the government and NGOs to identify, refer, and protect trafficking victims as well as to improve investigation techniques and victim protection mechanisms among the judiciary, law enforcement officials, and armed forces. We must also continue U.S. efforts to push the government to enact needed legislation, including the National Action Plan and the National Strategy to Combat Trafficking.

Question. In your opinion, does U.S. foreign assistance to Lebanon accurately reflect U.S. priorities in the region? Should the U.S. be providing more military aid? More humanitarian aid?

Answer. U.S. assistance to Lebanon reflects our priorities in the region, including working to counter ISIL and responding to the refugee crisis, both of which are also critical priorities for the Lebanese. For example, with Congress's continued support, the United States is the single largest donor to the Syrian refugee crisis. Given Lebanon's status as the country with the largest number of refugees per capita in the world, the United States has provided nearly $1.1 billion to support the Syrian refugee response in Lebanon since the start of the crisis. In addition to our humanitarian support, we provide significant bilateral economic assistance that advances our partnership with the Lebanese people and also bolsters communities that are hosting refugees through investments in basic and higher education, water infrastructure, and programs that provide economic opportunity. This support has totaled nearly $400 million since FY 2011. Our robust security assistance allows us to partner with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces which are critical to achieving our policy objectives. Since FY 2011, the United States has provided nearly $450 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) to Lebanon, while Lebanon has also benefited from additional military assistance from the Department of Defense. Recognizing that there are critical needs in Lebanon that continue to grow, the administration has requested an increase in both economic and security assistance for FY 2017.

RESPONSES OF STEPHEN MICHAEL SCHWARTZ, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SCHWARTZ'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. For questions 4-7, please augment with: An accounting of the payments to nations per soldier of a U.N. peacekeeper contributing to a PKO mission and any associated table if there are varying circumstances or valuations in such payments. An accounting of U.S. assistance going to each of the AMISOM troop contributing countries at present and in FY2015 in support of their deployments. A list of U.S. security assistance to these same countries apart from that associated with their AMISOM deployments.

Answer. With regard to payments to U.N. peacekeepers, by resolution 68/218, the U.N. General Assembly decided to establish a single rate of reimbursement to countries contributing contingent personnel to United Nations field operations in the amount of $1,332 per person per month as from July 1, 2014, increasing to $1,365 per person per month as from July 1, 2016, and increasing to $1,410 per person per month as from July 1, 2017, in addition to service premiums (e.g., risk and enabling premiums). It should be noted that all AMISOM troop stipends are currently paid on a voluntary basis by the EU through their Africa Peace Facility, and not the U.N.

Attachment 1 provides an accounting of all voluntary assistance provided to AMISOM troop contributing countries (TCCs) in FY 2015 and to date in FY 2016.

Attachment 2 provides an accounting of all military assistance provided to the same TCCs outside of their assistance for AMISOM during the same time period.

[The material referred to above follows:]

FY 2015 and FY 2016 Assistance to AMISOM Troop Contingents (PKO and 2282)

	Uganda Only	Burundi Only	Djibouti	Kenya	Ethiopia	Uganda and Burundi**	Multinational/ Force HQ Training and Support	None***	Total
FY 2016 2282/CTPF****	$79,340,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	$106,290,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$185,630,000.00
FY 2016 GPOI	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
FY 2015 Somalia OCO	$11,119,682.00	$1,650,000.00	$1,136,184.80	$0.00	$0.00	$15,434,461.75	$0.00	$1,357,392.86	$30,697,721.41
FY 2015 GPOI	$2,029,244.00	$0.00	$500,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$1,214,393.00	$0.00	$3,743,637.00
FY 2015 2282/CTPF	$21,618,000.00	$0.00	$9,089,000.00	$76,770,000.00	$23,067,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$130,544,000.00
Total since FY 2011	**$114,106,926.00**	**$1,650,000.00**	**$10,725,184.80**	**$183,060,000.00**	**$23,067,000.00**	**$15,434,461.75**	**$1,214,393.00**	**$1,357,392.86**	**$350,615,358.41**

*Equipment originally procured for Sierra Leone has been transferred to Kenyan troops operating in its former sector.

**Includes advisors working on the ground in Mogadishu and surrounding environs with both UPDF and FDN contingents, as well as resupply flight contract costs servicing the Mogadishu-based contingents.

***Program Management and Oversight costs (Somalia, Nairobi, and DC), as well as State Acquisition Office Surcharges.

****Uganda program notified and approved, Kenya program notified, but not yet approved.

FY 2015 and FY 2016
Non-AMISOM Military Assistance

FY 2015 Actuals

	Burundi	Djibouti	Ethiopia	Kenya	Uganda
FY 2015 FMF	$0	$710	$700	$1,810	$450
FY 2015 IMET	$411	$398	$559	$747	$603
FY 2015 PKO*	$475	$350	$18,261	$240	$0
SGI	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*	*$240*	*$0*
PREACT	*$0*	*$0*	*$2,066*	*$0*	*$0*
GPOI	*$0*	*$0*	*$1,195*	*$0*	*$0*
APRRP	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*
AMEP	*$475*	*$350*	*$0*	*$0*	*$0*
*APRRP PKO***	*$0*	*$0*	*$15,000*	*$0*	*$0*
FY 2015 GSCF (APRRP)**	$0	$0	*$0*	$0	$33,292
Totals	**$886**	**$1,458**	**$19,520**	**$2,797**	**$34,345**

*PKO figures exclude all AMISOM-related figures noted in the other chart - Somalia PKO and GPOI PKO

**Does not include multiple-country program management/shipping funds

All figures in thousands

FY 2016 Request

	Burundi	Djibouti	Ethiopia	Kenya	Uganda
FY 2016 FMF	$0	$700	$700	$1,000	$200
FY 2016 IMET	$425	$400	$570	$800	$520
FY 2016 PKO	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

All figures in thousands

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SCHWARTZ'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. The promotion of human rights and democracy has been a fundamental and prominent part of my career. I was responsible for human rights on my first tour in Ethiopia, and worked aggressively to understand the situation and advocated for important cases and causes, among them the justification for and the

treatment of political prisoners, independence of the labor federation, and an inclusive electoral process. These interventions demonstrated to the Ethiopian public and government that the United States cared about and would speak out about human rights cases.

As the sole desk officer for Sudan from 1996-1998, I incorporated growing concerns about religious freedom and slavery into the mainstream of our policy on Sudan. In Cuba from 1999-2001, I confronted an authoritarian government by developing a wide range of Cuban contacts. A trip to a provincial city revealed hitherto obscure civil society organizations, which provided the United States with new insights into Cuban society as well as vehicles to support civil society.

I have been very involved in reporting on and promoting United States support for credible and peaceful elections in many countries but the two most recent, in Zambia in 2011 and Nigeria in 2015, were the most consequential. Opposition candidates won both elections, empowering the public and holding leaders accountable. In both cases, the winning and losing candidates publicly credited the United States for leveling the playing field to make the race fair and competitive. In Zambia, I directed the Embassy's interagency team, liaised with the leadership of the National Democratic Institute, met regularly with the electoral commissioner, and ensured regular high quality reporting on the electoral process. On Nigeria, as office director, I coordinated the United States government effort from Washington, DC, which included sending a top anti-election violence expert to Nigeria repeatedly, coordinating with the United Kingdom, and supporting Secretary Kerry's key visit to Nigeria before the election.

If confirmed, I look forward to applying the experience gained throughout my career to the very real human rights and democracy challenges facing Somalia.

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

Answer. If confirmed, working with the African Union, the Federal Government of Somalia, and Somali civil society to improve protection of civilians will be central to my engagement. Violence against women and girls, including rape, and forced evictions of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), remains a pervasive problem. If confirmed, I will work with Somali and international counterparts, including the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and humanitarian and development actors to improve protection efforts, ensuring that women can access the vital services they need and perpetrators are held accountable.

Women continue to be marginalized within political processes and underrepresented at all levels of government. If confirmed, I will promote the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in Somalia and will advocate for the participation of women in government and in politics. Specifically, I will support the Federal Government of Somalia's proposed 2016 electoral plan mandating 30 percent of the seats in the Somali parliament to be allocated to women.

IDPs continue to constitute the large majority of the food insecure population in Somalia, and represent nearly 10 percent of the Somali population. The U.N. Humanitarian Country Team is currently drafting a Somalia IDP durable solutions strategy. If confirmed, I will support humanitarian and development planning and ensure that humanitarian assistance and longer-term development action is sustainably addressing the protection issues impacting IDPs.

I am also deeply concerned about the situation of media freedom in Somalia. The country remains one of the most dangerous places to be a journalist. I will regularly discuss protection concerns with Somali journalists themselves, speak out against abuses against journalists, and strongly encourage the Somali government to fully respect freedom of expression. In addition, I will work with Somalia and the United Nations to further implementation of Somalia's action plan to end the use and recruitment of child soldiers and standardize operating procedures for the reception and handover of children separated from armed 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 Somalia in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Key challenges to addressing human rights concerns include continued insecurity in al-Shabaab-controlled portions of the country. This limits not only U.S. government access to much of the country, but also access by international and local partners who could provide information that is vital to addressing human rights

concerns. Improving civilian protection while conflict continues is extremely challenging, but it will be central to my efforts.

Somali women and girls experience systematic marginalization, which makes it difficult to address gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. Women are reluctant to report abuse due to possible reprisals, and police are reluctant to investigate. Improving protection for journalists is challenging due to the continued insecurity and presence of al-Shabaab. For example, in the past four years, Al-Shabaab harassed and threatened numerous reporters and killed 23 Somali journalists. The Government of Somalia and regional authorities continue to arrest, detain, and prosecute journalists as well. Additionally, in regard to child soldiers, the government has taken additional, though limited steps, to implement its action plan with the U.N. In 2015, the federal government reiterated its commitment to eliminating the use of child soldiers among the ranks of the Somali National Army (SNA), and Somalia became signatory to the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, more also needs to be done to improve demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration efforts for children separated from armed 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 Somalia? 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, one of my most important goals will be improving respect for human rights in the country, so that all Somalis have the opportunity to exercise their fundamental freedoms and live their lives without fear. My efforts will include those focused on improving civilian protection, strengthening efforts to address rape, building respect for media freedom, and ensuring that children are not used as soldiers. Human rights organizations and other NGOs are critical to this work, and I look forward to meeting with them.

The Leahy laws are based on a basic principle: a government security apparatus' respect for human rights bolsters its legitimacy and trustworthiness in the eyes of the people it is supposed to protect, and enhances its ability to protect. Moreover, holding violators accountable fortifies the rule of law, which will be key in our efforts to improve governance in Somalia. If confirmed, my staff and I will convey this message diligently and consistently to the Somali government at all levels. The Department vets all assistance to Somali security forces in accordance with the Leahy Law, without exception. If confirmed, I will ensure that our vetting continues to be comprehensive, thorough, and in full compliance with the Leahy laws, and that those who violate human rights are restricted from receiving any training or other assistance until the responsible actors are brought to justice. Furthermore, I will strongly urge the Somali government to hold all violators accountable for their actions.

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

Answer. The ability of citizens to freely exchange information and their views is essential to the development of legitimate, fully functioning democratic governance in Somalia. The detention and prosecution by federal and regional government authorities of journalists critical of authorities has been a problem throughout Somalia. Somaliland authorities also have arrested, detained, and denied a fair trial to those expressing support or working directly for the Mogadishu-based Federal Government of Somalia for political reasons. If confirmed, my staff and I will consistently raise our concerns about these practices with Somali authorities at all levels of government and seek the release of any political prisoners.

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

Answer. If confirmed, these issues will be at the forefront of my engagement with Somali authorities at all levels of government. Human rights, including civil rights and governance, are fundamental to advancing our overarching policy goals in Somalia. Legitimate governance that can provide security and other services to all Somali people, regardless of gender or clan affiliation, is fundamental to achieving lasting peace and stability, and a government's respect for human rights, including civil rights, is in turn inextricably linked to its legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens.

Question. Given the current political environment and the number of obstacles to achieving the Vision 2016 objectives, which of these objectives can the international community realistically expect the Somalis to achieve this year?

Answer. Since the United States formally recognized the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in 2013, Somalia has made significant gains in its political process and emerged from state failure. The United States is working closely with the UN, AU, and other key partners to enable the Somalis to conduct an on-schedule election this year. During the February 23-24 High Level Partnership Forum Ministerial for Somalia, the Somali government affirmed its commitment to pursue elections in 2016, with strong support from the international community. The FGS endorsed an election model on January 27, more representative than the 2012 process by holding country-wide consultations.

Additionally, Somalia's state formation is nearly complete. The reconciliation conference to form the final of four interim administrations for Middle Shabelle and Hiraan is underway, and the government has committed to completing this process by year's end.

Question. If confirmed, upon which objectives will you place the most diplomatic effort and U.S. resources?

Answer. During his historic visit to Mogadishu, Secretary Kerry announced that the Department was beginning the planning process to re-establish formal diplomatic premises in Mogadishu. As a first step, the Department of State launched the transition of its Somalia Unit to U.S. Mission to Somalia, co-located in Embassy Nairobi, on September 8, 2015.

If confirmed, during my tenure it will be my top priority to establish a safe, secure, and functional embassy platform from which Mission Somalia may operate in Mogadishu. The United States has considerable national security interests in Somalia, which necessitates a permanent and fully-functioning diplomatic facility. Somalia's political process and security sector are fragile. Forging the relationships necessary to support Somalia's state-building enterprise will require our diplomats to have a functioning facility, security, and mobility necessary to engage.

Question. Are our international partners providing adequate assistance to address the significant governance challenges in Somalia? Is there a diplomatic role for you, if confirmed, for putting the need for improved governance on the agenda of the Somalis and other donors?

Answer. Through the New Deal Compact for Somalia, the international community has prioritized good governance as a pillar of Somalia's political process. As Somalia's Compact is set to expire this year, the United States is committed to the next phase of international engagement in Somalia, based on a shared set of principles and joint partnership, and will work through the Compact's successor-the Federal Government of Somalia's three-year (2017-2019) National Development Plan (NDP)-to continue to prioritize strengthening Somali governance. As Secretary Kerry said during his May 2015 visit to Mogadishu, "we all have a stake in Somalia's success and the world cannot afford to have places on the map that are essentially ungoverned." The United States has an over-arching interest in helping the people of Somalia build a peaceful nation with a stable democratic government that can provide security and services for its citizens.

If confirmed, I look forward to working alongside the international community and Somali government in support of the NDP. I will work diligently to promote the governance agenda.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to ensure that there is a strong focus on good governance in our U.S. assistance to Somalia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be sure to continue diplomatic support for governance programs to help develop institutional capacity and service delivery, improve transparency, and establish the rule-of-law; stabilization assistance to help with community needs; employment initiatives and education programs, particularly aimed at youth; and food aid and other life-saving assistance to address immediate humanitarian needs.

Additionally, strong and transparent public financial management is key for Somalia's stability and future growth. For this reason, in particular, we are very concerned about allegations of corruption and fiscal mismanagement in Somalia. As the government of Somalia takes steps to ensure that public funds are spent responsibly and transparently, it will earn the trust and confidence of the Somali people and the international community. If confirmed, I will continue our support of the Somali government's efforts to tackle these challenges and to provide significant resources for technical assistance on public financial management and financial governance initiatives.

Question. What portion of the funding for either of those programs has been channeled towards ensuring there are proper accountability structures and institutions in the police and military to investigate allegations of wrongdoing?

Answer. With regard to Danab and the broader Somali military, our efforts to ensure accountability start with our defense institution building (DIB) programs. Building an effective and professional Ministry of Defense is critical to ensuring that there are capable civilian oversight and accountability structures over Danab and the rest of the Somali military. The Department of State has already begun putting in place programming to build the Ministry of Defense through the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) account to fund technical advisory support. We have obligated $1.8 million in FY 2015 PKO OCO funds for this purpose, and are working with our colleagues in the Department of Defense to design and put in place additional DIB programming for FY 2016. The low absorptive capacity of these institutions has forced us to carefully calibrate our programming, and we are also working to ensure our programs are fully coordinated with donor partners working in this area, such as the EU and UK. Nonetheless, DIB and the creation of effective oversight structures remains a high priority for both DOS and DOD.

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has obligated $8.5 million in FY 2012 and FY 2013 International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) assistance to build the capacity of the Criminal Investigative Division (CID) of the Somali Police Force (SPF) to investigate serious crimes. INL has obligated approximately $1.1 million in FY 2013 and FY2014 in INCLE-OCO to provide technical assistance to the SPF on a variety of issues, such as CID structure, organization and training priorities, through a Senior Law enforcement Advisor based in Mogadishu. At this time, there is no functioning internal police accountability structure in Somalia, and allegations of police abuse of power currently fall under the CID to investigate. As such, any increase in the capacity of the CID to investigate crimes, will support increased accountability for police. INL coordinates closely with other donors who are working in the civilian security space, including the EU, UK, UN, and AMISOM.

Question. What will you do, if confirmed as Ambassador, to ensure that we are promoting and supporting accountability for police and military abuses, especially with the units we are training?

Answer. Respect for human rights and protection of civilians is a core component of all peacekeeping and military training conducted by the United States for the security forces operating in Somalia. We have engaged the governments of troop contributing countries regarding the allegations of abuse and misconduct by security forces serving in AMISOM, and continue to provide training to enhance their professionalism. If confirmed, I will continue this ongoing dialogue with Somali and AMISOM government officials to urge greater attention to protection of civilians and respect for human rights. In addition, I will continue to advocate for investigations into and accountability for actions related to abuse or sexual exploitation.

Question. Have either the African Union or troop contributing countries adequately investigated and held accountable those accused? If confirmed, what will be your role in ensuring accountability for abuses carried out by troops funded and supported by the United States?

Answer. The United States takes allegations of human rights abuses against AMISOM extremely seriously, and the Department condemns such acts unequivocally. The United States immediately engaged with the African Union and the Governments of Uganda and Burundi to undertake a credible and transparent investigation into the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse reported by Human Rights Watch in 2014. The United States supported the AU and Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) in conducting a full investigation, and we are aware of at least two trials and convictions by the Ugandan Patriotic Defense Force. We were also deeply concerned about incidents on July 31, 2015, in which AMISOM forces killed civilians in Marka. AMISOM apologized for the deaths and announced the indictment of three soldiers on August 21, 2015.

If confirmed, working with the African Union, Government of Somalia, and Somali civil society to improve protection of civilians will be central to my engagement. I will work to hold the AU accountable to its AMISOM Protection, Human Rights and Gender Working Group that is responsible for monitoring TCC investigations, and developing training modules.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SHWARTZ'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Please briefly describe your vision for taking on a new role as the U.S. Ambassador to Somalia. What are your goals and priorities? What challenges do you foresee?

Answer. If confirmed to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia, I plan to elevate the level and intensity of U.S. engagement with the Somali government, public, and international community; bring greater coordination and direction to U.S. policy and programs; and provide a secure and productive environment for the American and Somali staff working at the U.S. Mission.

My specific priorities are to help fulfill the Secretary's pledge to open a U.S. diplomatic premise in Mogadishu; help Somalia with its state formation, constitutional development, and national elections; and bring greater security to the Somali people by degrading the capability of the terrorist group al-Shabaab while building the capacity of the Somali National Army and the Somali National Police.

Somalia has made tangible progress recovering from its period as a failed state, but this progress is fragile. Efforts by Somali authorities, the United States, and international partners are conducted in an unpredictable and sometimes threatening environment due to attacks by Al-Shabaab. The effectiveness of U.S. engagement is reduced by the lack of a facility allowing us to work continually in Mogadishu.

Question. How do you feel your past experience, as well as your current position as Director of Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Island Affairs at the Department of State have prepared you to take on this new role?

Answer. My career has prepared me well for the significant responsibilities and challenges attendant serving as the U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, I acquired a grass roots understanding of Africa through my service as a Peace Corps Volunteer, followed by three years in the Africa Bureau in Washington, DC, of which six months was spent working in Mali and Chad, two poor fragile Sahelian countries. I also earned a Master's degree in African Studies and worked on a conflict resolution project at the Brookings Institution. Immediately before joining the Foreign Service, from 1990-1991, I was one of the earliest hires at the Citizens Democracy Corps, a non-governmental organization launched by the United States government to facilitate assistance to people and governments in the newly liberated Central and Eastern Europe.

After joining the Foreign Service I spent my first seven years working in or with the Greater Horn of Africa region, which includes Somalia. I worked in Ethiopia from 1992-1994, during Operation Restore Hope. I understand the politics, history, and cultures of East Africa. I have spent six years as a Deputy Chief of Mission, two years of which were leading the embassy as Charge d'Affaires. I believe both missions under my leadership were characterized by high productivity and high morale, a goal I have set for every office or institution that I lead. In Zambia, the Ambassador and I formed an excellent leadership team and, if confirmed, I will try assiduously to apply the experiences gained in Zambia to my new responsibilities. If confirmed, my two most recent assignments in Washington, DC have enabled me to work on a wide range of policy issues, which will enable me to engage more successfully with interagency policymakers and Congress while assigned overseas as the U.S. Ambassador to Somalia.

Question. As Ambassador to Somalia, you will be charged with changing the nature of the bilateral relationship. What are your benchmarks for re-establishing a U.S. embassy in Mogadishu? What are the challenges under the current system for U.S. diplomats and USAID personnel traveling back and forth from Kenya?

Answer. During his visit to Mogadishu, Secretary Kerry announced that the Department was beginning the planning process to re-establish formal diplomatic premises in Mogadishu. As a first step, the Department of State launched the transition of its Somalia Unit to U.S. Mission to Somalia, co-located in Embassy Nairobi, on September 8, 2015. Ensuring that a diplomatic facility in Mogadishu is as secure and efficient a platform as possible is a high priority for the Department. The planning process is moving forward, and the Department is considering its options for facility designations at the Mogadishu International Airport (MIA).

If confirmed, during my tenure it will be my top priority to establish a safe, secure, and functional embassy platform from which Mission Somalia may operate inside of Somalia. To date, Mission Somalia staff maintains a rotational presence in Mogadishu, and travel sporadically to other regional capitals and sites in Somalia, when the security situation permits. The United States has considerable national

security interests in Somalia, which necessitate a permanent and fully-functioning diplomatic facility. Somalia's political process and security sector are fragile. Forging the relationships necessary to support Somalia's state-building enterprise will require our diplomats to have a functioning facility, security, and mobility necessary to engage.

Question. The FY16 Foreign Operations request includes a substantial increase in development assistance for Somalia—what are the priorities for that aid? Would you change any of those prioritizations? How do the State Department, USAID, and DOD ensure sufficient oversight and direction for that support given security restrictions on U.S. government personnel movement within the country?

Answer. The primary goal of U.S. assistance to Somalia is to promote security and support the development of a unified, peaceful Somalia. The increase in U.S. development resources requested in FY 2016 is commensurate with and complementary to security sector and humanitarian investments in Somalia. Somalia's issues require long-term development initiatives that will address the underlying human development, governance, and economic challenges facing a country emerging from more than two decades of conflict.

Increased U.S. development resources will prioritize community stabilization and recovery; consolidation of representative governing institutions and critical state-building processes; the establishment of responsive and legitimate local governance; and the expansion of the delivery of critical basic services. Additional resources will support Somalia's economic recovery by engaging with the recently revived agro-pastoral sector, the return of a vibrant, entrepreneurial diaspora, and the sustainable management of natural resources. I do not see a need for any changes to the FY 2016 development funding priorities at this time.

The State Department and USAID have third party monitoring mechanisms to conduct consistent, on-the-ground performance monitoring and verification visits, and report to technical staff regularly on their findings to enable effective and efficient management of projects in Somalia. The Department of Defense directly implements, monitors, and provides administrative oversight of its training and assistance to AMISOM and Somali forces through U.S. forces on the ground in Somalia, supplemented by frequent visits by the U.S. Defense Attache to Somalia.

Question. What role should the United States play in supporting the Somali electoral process in 2016? How might donors facilitate more transparency to support free and fair elections given widespread allegations of bribery in Somali politics?

Answer. The United States has an over-arching interest in helping the people of Somalia to build a peaceful nation with a stable democratic government that can provide security and services for its citizens. The holding of an electoral process in 2016 that is more inclusive and transparent than the 2012 clan elders selection process will be a key step toward that broader goal. The FGS endorsed an election model on January 27 that offers the prospect of an improved process and a more representative government. During the February 23-24 High Level Partnership Forum Ministerial for Somalia, the Somali government affirmed its commitment to hold elections in 2016 based on this model, with strong support from the international community. We are currently focused on helping the FGS secure the Puntland regional government's support for the model.

The United States is also working closely with the UN, AU, and other key partners to encourage the Somalis to address as soon as possible the remaining issues necessary to implement the January 27 model, including to help ensure that it is more transparent and less susceptible to bribery or manipulation than the 2012 clan elders process. The formation of electoral colleges that are larger and more inclusive than the 2012 process will be particularly important, along with voter education and secure ballot procedures.

Question. What are your expectations for the constitutional review process? If confirmed, how will you engage with groups involved?

Answer. Somalia's constitutional review is behind schedule, having missed a 2015 deadline for holding a referendum on a revised constitution. However, the review process is underway and significant progress has been made on technical aspects of the constitution. Larger political issues, including the delineation of federal relationships and authorities among levels of government, have yet to be tackled. A broad public education campaign and inclusive dialogue process is necessary help ensure the referendum's credibility and legitimacy. The government also needs to develop a plan for how voting on the referendum will take place. We and our international partners are encouraging the Somalis to complete the review process and conduct a public awareness campaign to enable a referendum in 2017.If confirmed, I will engage proactively with government, parliament, and civil society actors, in-

cluding women's groups and minorities, to encourage parties to play an active role and to promote transparency and dialogue throughout the process.

Question. Al Shabaab continues to seek recruits in the United States and issue public threats against American targets. To what extent does Al Shabaab pose a direct threat to U.S. citizens? To U.S. national security?

Answer. Al-Shabaab continues to pose a continuing and imminent threat to U.S. persons and interests in East Africa. It seeks to delegitimize the Federal Government of Somalia by terrorizing and targeting civilians, Somali government officials, African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) forces, and international partners operating in Somalia and elsewhere in the region. Our commitment to assisting the Somali government and people makes us and our partners prime targets of al-Shabaab. We have no credible evidence to suggest that al-Shabaab has the capability to conduct attacks in the United States, but we consider it a threat to U.S. national security given its efforts to destabilize the region through brutal, asymmetric attacks and continued targeting of U.S. persons and interests.

Question. How would you characterize Al Shabaab's relationship with Al Qaeda and affiliates? With the Islamic State? How does the Obama administration assess the impact of Ahmed Godane's death on the organization?

Answer. Al-Shabaab is an affiliate of al-Qaeda, an organization to which it pledged allegiance in 2012 and from which it receives funding, weapons, and other resources via al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula based in Yemen. Al-Shabaab senior leaders appear to remain loyal to al-Qaeda, which has also been known to train al-Shabaab operatives and fighters. We are aware of reports that indicate that ISIL is openly and actively challenging al-Shabaab's affiliation with al-Qaeda through videos posted on social media. At this time, we are not aware of credible evidence to suggest that ISIL has established a branch or affiliate in Somalia. Al-Shabaab senior leaders reportedly view the prospect of ISIL's presence in Somalia as a threat to its influence and ideology in East Africa. We are watching these developments closely with the understanding that the threat environment in Somalia is dynamic.

The death of the former emir Godane in September 2014 dealt a significant blow to al-Shabaab. Godane was one of the architects of al-Shabaab's strategy to expand its operations to the region and target AMISOM troop contributing countries such as Uganda, Kenya, and Djibouti. As in other cases, al-Shabaab chose another emir shortly after Godane's death and continued to conduct attacks within Somalia and elsewhere in the region. The new emir appears intent on continuing Godane's legacy of conducting deadly attacks throughout Somalia and Kenya, and apparently has a strategy to increase pressure on AMISOM. Godane's death created a temporary disruption in al-Shabaab's ability to operate, but the group remains a resilient and potent threat to stability in East Africa.

Question. What are Al Shabaab's primary sources of revenue today? To what extent does diversion of humanitarian aid by Al Shabaab continue to be a problem?

Answer. Since losing control of major seaports such as Kismayo and Baraawe, al-Shabaab no longer has access to vast amounts of charcoal to generate revenue. We are aware of reports indicating that the group continues to benefit indirectly from illicit charcoal trade in southern Somalia, but it is far less than previous estimates that suggested that al-Shabaab received tens of millions of dollars annually from charcoal shipments. Al-Shabaab continues to accumulate revenue from illegal tax collection, checkpoints, and extortion from local communities. The group also benefits from smuggling operations that involve sugar, livestock, and other commodities throughout the region.

While there is always a risk of diversion as long as al-Shabaab remains active, we do not have evidence of substantial diversion of humanitarian resources. USAID and its implementing partners have due diligence procedures in place to carefully track and account for their assistance and to ensure it reaches the intended beneficiaries.

Question. What are your security concerns for your post? How can we be of assistance?

Answer. (SBU) Mogadishu is a dangerous place, and the Department has taken several critical steps needed to enhance our security posture. For example, the facility used for temporarily housing our staff has been erected with enhanced physical security features. The Department has put in place regulations meant to safeguard our diplomats: while in Mogadishu, we remain within the confines of the Mogadishu International Airport (MIA), two Regional Security Officers accompany staff when traveling, Chief of Mission personnel only utilize chartered flights into Somalia and

are not permitted to transit MIA's commercial terminal, and staff are issued security tracking technologies to capture real-time whereabouts.

As MIA is the hub of engagement for the international community in Mogadishu, the Department is identifying resources to help strengthen MIA perimeter and operational security. Bolstering security at MIA will enhance the safety and security of our staff when they are on the ground in Mogadishu. Additional resources to shore-up security, facility, and airport upgrades would provide the Department with an enhanced and more secure platform from which to work at MIA, until conditions permit a fully functional long-term diplomatic facility in the future.

Question. Please describe the respective roles of AFRICOM, State Department security contractors, and AMISOM troop contributing countries in implementing U.S. security assistance to the Somali military.

Answer. Currently, State Department contractors and grantees funded under the Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) account are implementing a range of activities, to include provision of equipment and supplies, stipends, and training for SNA forces. The Danab Advanced Infantry Battalion, which received basic training and equipment through State contract personnel, has been selected to take part in additional advanced training implemented by U.S. military personnel, as well as receive more advanced equipment. This more advanced assistance is funded under Section 2282 of the National Defense Authorization Act. U.S. military personnel are also implementing improvements to the training camp for Danab, which is funded through the PKO account. We expect DoD to continue to play a significant role in implementation of assistance for the SNA, both through Section 2282 and under the PKO account. State and DoD policy and program staff coordinate closely on all security assistance programming for Somalia, both through weekly video teleconferences and bi-monthly in-person synchronization meetings. These meetings are designed to ensure that all parties have full visibility on each other's projects, and that efforts are fully synchronized and complementary.

Question. How is the United States engaging with other donors on security assistance and how is it coordinated and overseen?

Answer. The primary mechanism for U.S. engagement on security sector reform with key partners has been through the New Deal Compact for Somalia. Mission Somalia co-leads the New Deal Working Group on Security (PSG 2), in conjunction with the Governments of Turkey and Somalia. PSG 2 largely focuses on coordinating assistance and support to build a cohesive, unified Somali National Army (SNA). PSG 2 regularly convenes at the technical level to identify key areas of support for donor assistance.

A top security sector priority for the United States has been the integration of clan militias into a national army structure as the state formation began to formalize. The United States works closely with the UK, AMISOM Troop Contributing Countries, Turkey, and recently the UAE, through small group meetings to streamline support to SNA. Additionally, through the Department of Defense's Military Coordination Cell, the United States maintains a five-person staff at MIA to advise and assist AMISOM and SNA; they also engage daily with donor country military liaisons.

During the February 23-24 High Level Partnership Forum-the New Deal's ministerial-level conference-the international community made a strong plea for the FGS to provide an overarching security architecture plan to streamline and coordinate donor assistance to rebuild Somalia security forces. This master plan is a key component that will lay the foundation for Somalia's security services and better coordinate assistance from the international community.

Question. The President has provided a full waiver for Somalia from sanctions under the Child Soldiers Protection Act of 2008. Do you agree with the President's decision? What is the Somali government doing to ensure that its forces do not include child soldiers?

Answer. I agree with the President's determination that it is in the national interest to grant a full waiver of CSPA restrictions to Somalia. The full waiver for Somalia is intended to allow the United States to assist counterterrorism efforts and support the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) as it works to build a more stable and secure future for Somalis.

The FGS has taken limited but continued steps towards implementing its UN-backed child soldier action plan, including the establishment of a dedicated Child Protection Unit (CPU), which is partially funded by the United States. The CPU is operational and conducts training on prevention and participating in screening efforts. If confirmed, I will work with the FGS and the U.N. to urge additional actions to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers and to demobilize, rehabilitate,

and reintegrate children identified in the Somali National Army or associated groups, or children previously associated with al-Shabaab.

Question. In 2014, AMISOM soldiers from Uganda and Burundi were accused of sexually exploiting and abusing Somali women in Mogadishu. What steps have been taken to investigate and discipline those responsible? Has this led to the suspension of U.S. assistance to any units under human rights vetting procedures?

Answer. The United States takes allegations of human rights abuses against AMISOM extremely seriously, and the Department condemns such acts unequivocally wherever they take place. The United States immediately engaged with the African Union and the Governments of Uganda and Burundi to encourage them to undertake a credible and transparent investigation into the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. The United States supported the AU and Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) in conducting a full investigation of those implicated. We have not suspended U.S. assistance to TCCs based on sexual exploitation or abuse allegations. In cases where we have found credible evidence of sexual exploitation or abuse, the units in question had already rotated out of AMISOM and were no longer receiving U.S. assistance.

Question. Human rights groups suggest that civilian casualties due to AMISOM operations have increased recently. Does the State Department consider these allegations to be valid? How does the State Department go about validating or invalidating such reports? How is the AU responding?

Answer. We are deeply concerned regarding reports of civilian casualties. While we would be hesitant to support a generalized statement that civilian casualties have increased recently, and would prefer to comment on specific alleged incidents when discussing validity, there are credible reports of civilian casualties caused by AMISOM. We take all such claims very seriously, and seek to validate them to the best of our ability. Sources used to establish the validity of such reports include NGO reporting, media sources, Somali officials and interlocutors, sensitive internal U.S. government reporting, discussions with African Union leadership, and discussions with our AMISOM partners themselves.

We saw AMISOM take positive steps in regard to accountability in reaction to the killing of civilians by AU forces in the town of Merka on July 31, 2015. AMISOM engaged in an investigatory process that resulted in the indictment of three Ugandan AMISOM personnel for these killings. We will continue to urge the AU and TCCs to investigate all reported civilian deaths, and to hold perpetrators accountable for human rights and international humanitarian law violations.

RESPONSES OF KELLY KEIDERLING-FRANZ, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE ORIENTAL REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KEIDERLING-FRANZ'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. Throughout my career, I have advocated for democratic institutions, for freedom of speech, of opinion, of assembly and of religion, and have defended human rights. During my assignment in recently independent Kyrgyzstan, for example, we organized exchanges to highlight good governance, the workings of a free press, and the relationship between the state and organized religion. In Cuba, we explained U.S. elections and specifically the value of free, responsible media work. In Venezuela, my team and I met regularly with pro-democracy activists, independent media, and human rights workers to understand and give voice to their concerns, and to advocate in favor of the universality of political-civil rights and equal treatment for all people.

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

Answer. Uruguay is one of the most ardent supporters of human rights in the Western Hemisphere. In fact, Uruguay is consistently ranked as the top country in the region for the protection of LGBT, civil, and political rights. Uruguay has held

the top spot in social inclusion for three years running in the Americas Quarterly Social Inclusion Index. Impressive as Uruguay's human rights record is, there is still work to be done. Human trafficking in and through Uruguay continues to be a concern, as is discrimination against Afro-Uruguayans.

If confirmed, I would continue to support the Uruguayan government's efforts to combat human trafficking and racial discrimination. I would encourage the Government of Uruguay to vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict human traffickers; to pass and enact a comprehensive anti-trafficking law; to increase funding for and the provision of protection and specialized services for all victims of trafficking, especially shelters; and to improve data collection on anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. I would engage the Afro-Uruguayan population, seek way to develop civil society structures, and work with the Government of Uruguay to address discrimination.

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 Uruguay in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. I understand there are several obstacles in overcoming human trafficking and discrimination in Uruguay. Although upgraded to Tier 2 from Tier 2 Watch List in the 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report, Uruguay still faces significant national hurdles in curtailing human trafficking and does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The Uruguayan government is making significant efforts to comply with these standards. The lack of accurate data on trafficking investigations, prosecutions, and convictions makes it difficult to assess the government's overall anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. Government funding for victim services, particularly housing, continues to be inadequate. The Government of Uruguay could continue to improve its anti-trafficking efforts through more accurate data collection and the expansion of government funding for and provision of victim services.

Despite the Government of Uruguay's efforts to combat racial intolerance, Afro-Uruguayans continue to face discrimination. Uruguay's Afro-Uruguayan minority, estimated to be eight percent of the population, has historically faced discrimination and is underrepresented in government, academia, and in the middle and upper echelons of the private sector. If confirmed, I would continue to advance U.S. Embassy Montevideo's social inclusion programs, including targeted outreach to the Afro-Uruguayan community and helping the community gain 21st century skills for economic advancement.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs in Uruguay? 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. Creating relationships with leaders in human rights, civil society, and NGOs is necessary for any diplomat to be truly effective. If confirmed, I would engage both U.S. and Uruguayan civil society leaders and make the advancement of human rights and social justice a pillar of our bilateral relationship. I would also commit to applying the Leahy Law to our security assistance and cooperation activities.

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

Answer. Since return to civilian rule in 1984, Uruguay has accomplished one of Latin America's most successful transitions to democracy. Uruguay ranks high in good governance, openness, and the rule of law. Freedom House gave Uruguay a 98 out of a 100 score in their 2016 Freedom in the World Report. Uruguay does not have political prisoners. If confirmed, I would lead the embassy team in working with Uruguay on regional human rights issues, including political prisoners.

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

Answer. Uruguay plays a leadership role in regional and international institutions and has been a vocal advocate for democratic governance in the Western Hemisphere. If confirmed, I would further engage Uruguay to protect human rights in the region and advocate on behalf of democratic governance.

Question. President Vazquez and his administration have shown important leadership on issues of human rights and democracy in the region. He joined President Obama at the Summit of the Americas in a meeting with Cuban activists. And, his administration has expressed its concern about the political, economic, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. What steps will you take to work with President Vazquez and his government on these critically important issues?

Answer. Uruguay willingly plays a leadership role in regional and international institutions and is a vocal advocate for democratic governance in Latin America. Uruguay's former foreign minister, Luis Almagro, is currently Secretary General of the OAS and is outspoken in defending the principles of the Inter-American Democratic Charter and universal human rights in OAS member states, most notably Venezuela. Acting in its current role as President pro tempore of UNASUR, Uruguay negotiated and implemented the sole electoral "accompaniment" mission sanctioned by the Venezuelan government for its December 6 legislative elections. If confirmed, I would continue to work with the Uruguayan government to address issues of human rights and democratic governance throughout the hemisphere.

Question. Now that Uruguay has a temporary seat on the U.N. Security Council, how can the United States better cooperate with Uruguay on these issues?

Answer. In January 2016, Uruguay assumed a non-permanent, two-year seat on the U.N. Security Council for the first time in 50 years. During this term, Uruguay represents the Latin America and Caribbean Group. Uruguay simultaneously became Chair of the UNSC for the month of January.Uruguay's priorities for its 2016-2017 term include peacekeeping issues—particularly protection of civilians (PoC)—conflict prevention, and issues affecting Uruguay's geographic region, like supporting Colombia and Haiti. As UNSC chair, Uruguay has hosted open debates on the PoC theme and on the Middle East. Uruguay continues to play an outsized leadership role in U.N. peacekeeping as the largest contributor of peacekeeping forces in Latin America and host of the regional U.N. peacekeeping conference in May 2015. These priorities coincide with American values and policies and present an opportunity to work with Uruguay on issues of mutual interest. If confirmed, I would work with Uruguay on these and other issues on the global agenda, especially on multilateral efforts to prevent and resolve international conflicts and oversee peacekeeping initiatives.

Question. As you know, Uruguayan contributions to U.N. peacekeeping missions such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti have been of tremendous value within the international community. In your view, how else can the United States and Uruguay continue to cooperate on foreign policy issues of mutual interest?

Answer. The United States appreciates the significant contribution Uruguay makes to global peacekeeping operations. With over 1,400 peacekeepers deployed, Uruguay is the second-largest Latin American contributor to peacekeeping operations. Uruguay's leadership in the region includes joint-deployment agreements with other countries and leadership training at its national peacekeeping school. If confirmed, I hope to work with the Uruguayan government in facilitating U.N. peacekeeping missions.Uruguay also hosted a regional peacekeeping preparatory conference in May 2015 and President Vazquez co-hosted with President Obama a Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping at UNGA in September 2015. If confirmed, I would seek opportunities to advance these global conversations, as well as continue current U.S. efforts to support the Uruguayan military in peacekeeping operations.

Question. Since taking office for a second term, President Vazquez has expressed his desire to continue forging closer relations with the United States by strengthening and building upon the various bilateral cooperation mechanisms that are currently in place. If confirmed, what do you consider to be key priorities to strengthen the bilateral relationship with Uruguay?

Answer. Our bilateral relations with Uruguay are strong and rooted in common values. In recent years, we have made great progress deepening the relationship through cooperation on political, economic, and defense issues, as well as through educational and cultural exchanges. With its strong democratic processes and respect for fundamental freedoms, Uruguay is a model for the region and the world. If confirmed, I would look to strengthen our already robust bilateral relationship with Uruguay.

Peacekeeping operations is one priority of the bilateral relationship. The United States appreciates the significant contribution Uruguay makes to global peacekeeping operations. Uruguay is the second-largest Latin American contributor of peacekeepers to U.N. missions and co-hosted the U.N. Summit on Peacekeeping in

September 2015. If confirmed, I would continue our close cooperation with Uruguay on U.N. mission support for peacekeeping and protection-of-civilians issues.

Bilateral trade with Uruguay is steadily expanding, totaling over $2 billion in 2014, with U.S. exports to Uruguay reaching $1.6 billion. There are approximately 130 U.S. companies operating in Uruguay with more than 20,000 employees. The United States is the fourth largest investor in Uruguay and U.S. investment increased significantly in the past decade to its current $1.3 billion total. If confirmed, I would ensure a level playing field for U.S. corporations conducting business in Uruguay. I will also look to identify new opportunities for trade and investment for U.S. companies in Uruguay.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KEIDERLING-FRANZ'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. El Pais newspaper has reported that radical Islam in Uruguay is a "growing problem." According to news reports there have been threats to the Israeli embassy in Montevideo. There was also a confirmed case of a Jewish individual who was stabbed by an Islamic radical. If confirmed, how would you address this growing problem in Uruguay?

Answer. Uruguayan security services investigated several suspicious packages found in the vicinity of the office building in which the Israeli embassy is located in Montevideo. Uruguayan authorities are also investigating the recent stabbing of a member of Uruguay's Jewish community, including working to determine whether the stabbing was a terrorist attack or a hate crime. These cases are disturbing, merit attention, and are contrary to Uruguay's long-standing tradition of tolerance. If confirmed, I will work with the Uruguayan government to address any instances of violent extremism and hate crimes, including through law enforcement information-sharing and training.

Question. Multiple Senators have requested information concerning the six former Guantanamo Bay detainees who were transferred to Uruguay. Despite repeated briefings the administration has yet to provide the requested information in writing on the specific commitments the Government of Uruguay made concerning the monitoring of the former detainees.

- Please provide all requested information on what specific agreements were made between the United States Government and Government of Uruguay on monitoring the former detainees.
- Also, when will the former Guantanamo Bay detainees be eligible for documents that will allow them to travel outside of Uruguay and beyond Mercosur?

Answer. The Department appreciates Congress's important oversight responsibilities on these transfers and is committed to providing information to enable the Foreign Relations Committee to perform that function. We would be happy to brief you and your staff on any outstanding questions you may have. That said, the Department across two administrations has consistently informed Congress, and represented to U.S. courts, that disclosing these diplomatic assurances would have a chilling effect on foreign governments' willingness to cooperate on detainee transfers.

Accordingly, these sensitive diplomatic communications, containing foreign government information, are kept to a limited Executive branch dissemination. Indeed, foreign governments have noted that disclosure outside of this limited dissemination could endanger future cooperation related to detainee transfers, which would harm cooperative efforts to mitigate any threat posed by transferred detainees.I understand that the Department and Embassy Montevideo are working closely with the Uruguayan government on security and other issues surrounding these detainees. If confirmed, I would continue to work with the Government of Uruguay to ensure the long-term success of these efforts. I would also work with the Department to keep your office informed of developments regarding the detainees.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KEIDERLING-FRANZ'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Please briefly describe your vision for taking on a new role as the U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay. What are your priorities and goals? What challenges do you foresee?

Answer. Our bilateral relations with Uruguay are strong and rooted in common values. In recent years, we have made great progress in deepening the relationship through cooperation on political, economic, law enforcement, and defense issues, as well as through educational and professional exchanges. With its strong democratic processes and respect for fundamental freedoms, Uruguay is a good model for the region and the world.

If confirmed, I would increase economic prosperity for U.S. citizens and Uruguayans through trade and investment, the promotion of renewable energy technologies, educational exchanges, and 21st century skills such as entrepreneurship, English language, and scientific research to provide opportunities for our youth.

If confirmed, I would expand global security in partnership with Uruguay, supporting Uruguayan international peacekeeping operations and our joint law enforcement and rule-of-law goals in fighting drug smuggling and human trafficking, countering violent extremism, stopping illicit financial flows, sharing information on international criminal networks, and working together on cyber issues.

In seeking to defend human rights and advance democratic governance, I would work together with Uruguay to defend international, democratic norms; advocate for universal freedoms; and advance social justice in our hemisphere and globally.

Question. How do you feel your past experience, as well as your current position as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs have prepared you to take on this new role?

As a Foreign Service Officer since 1988, with a sub-specialty in public diplomacy, I have successfully promoted U.S. interests and values on three continents, helped shape decisions and policies in various offices at the State Department, advocated U.S. policies to foreign audiences, built and led diverse embassy teams, and, in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, managed a team of almost 500 people and a budget of almost $600 million. I have served as deputy chief of mission twice, including as charge d'affaires during a complicated time in Venezuela. With previous service in eight embassies, I have experience on a range of foreign policy issues, from defending human rights and explaining the role of the free press, to creating a level playing field for U.S. companies and advocating for environmentally sustainable economic policies.

Question. Uruguay was the first Latin American country to offer full resettlement to Syrian refugees, and they accepted 42 Syrians in late 2014. However, due to the extremely small Muslim population in Uruguay, some say these refugees have struggled to successfully integrate despite receiving housing, healthcare, education, and financial support. If confirmed, would you engage with the refugee population? If so, how? How do you recommend the government improve relations with its refugee population?

Answer. We appreciate Uruguay's commitment to accept five Syrian families, 42 people in total, for resettlement in October 2014. While the Uruguayan government has faced challenges meeting the needs of these families, it pledged to provide these families two years of housing, health and educational assistance, and Spanish courses. Additionally, in 2015, the Embassy supported an International Visitor Leadership Program for Uruguayan officials on the topic of refugee resettlement. If confirmed, I would look for additional ways to support the integration of the refugees into the Uruguayan population and make the case for assistance to support the very large, global population of refugees and displaced persons.

Question. In its 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report, the U.S. State Department rated Uruguay a Tier 2 country, stating that the Uruguayan government "does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking." Do you agree with the State Department's assessment? How would you recommend engaging with the government to influence change on this front?

Answer. Uruguay was ranked Tier 2 in the 2015 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, which means that the Government of Uruguay does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, but it is making significant efforts to do so. The State Department's assessment reflects that while the Government of Uruguay has taken important steps to combat human trafficking, including identifying and assisting an increased number of potential foreign sex trafficking victims and achieving the country's first reported conviction for labor trafficking, much work remains to be done.

If confirmed, I would encourage the Government of Uruguay to vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers; to pass and enact a comprehensive anti-trafficking law; to increase funding for protection and specialized services for all victims of trafficking; and to improve data collection on anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts.

I would also carefully oversee the implementation of a new, three-year State Department counter-trafficking project. This project would create three regional counter-trafficking committees outside the Uruguayan capital. These committees would work to promote political will and boost the commitment to counter trafficking from local governmental authorities—including strengthening the knowledge and skills of key stakeholders on how to screen, identify, refer and assist victims of trafficking. The project would also establish a network among representatives of these committees to coordinate efforts nationally.

Question. Uruguay suffered serious economic crisis between 1999 and 2002 due to spillover economic problems in Argentina and Brazil. Those same nations again are facing economic hardship this year. To what extent does the Uruguayan economy remain vulnerable to regional economic instability? What is your assessment of the Vasquez administration's efforts to address Uruguay's slowing economic growth?

Answer. Since the economic crisis from 1999 until 2002, Uruguay has taken steps to diversify its economy. Uruguay avoided a recession in the wake of the global financial crisis. Strong commodity prices played a large role in Uruguay's economic success, but its economy also benefits from transparency and a strong legal framework.

However, Uruguay remains vulnerable to regional instability as Argentina and Brazil remain major investment and trading partners. Following the 2002 crisis, Uruguay implemented numerous measures to reduce exposure to its neighbors. It greatly improved its debt management, significantly strengthened its banking sector, diversified its exports markets, and expanded its service sector to further diversify the economy.

Uruguay's economy has cooled significantly, with estimated growth of about 1 percent for 2015 and 2016. The IMF expects Uruguay to perform better than its neighbors in the coming year. The Vazquez administration has developed a significant cushion of international reserves and is pursing policies to boost trade and investment, implementing a major public investment plan and trimming government spending. It has also made advancing trade and commercial discussions with Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Mexico a priority, with an eye toward integration with the Pacific Alliance and other trade blocs.

President Vazquez is interested in expanding trade and investment with the United States. Uruguay's strategic geographic location and business-friendly trade regimes, including free trade zones, make it a good distribution center for U.S. exports into the region. Within the framework of the National Export Initiative (NEI), Uruguay can play an important role in assisting and facilitating U.S. exports to the much larger surrounding markets of Argentina and Brazil. Moving forward, Uruguay represents a significant opportunity in diverse areas such as petroleum and natural gas, renewable energy, tourism, education, and other services for U.S. companies.

Question. Do the six men formerly detained at Guantanamo Bay who were granted refugee status by Uruguay pose any threat to the United States or its citizens? Are there any mechanisms in place to monitor the former detainees or prevent their travel outside of Uruguay?

Answer. In 2009-2010, a rigorous interagency process reviewed all reasonably available information concerning the detainees at Guantanamo Bay and determined that some detainees—including the six transferred to Uruguay—should be transferred subject to appropriate security measures. An interagency Task Force assembled large volumes of information from across the government relevant to determining the proper disposition of each detainee. Task Force members examined this information critically, giving careful consideration to the threat posed by the detainees, the reliability of the underlying information, and the interests of national security.

U.S. government officials undertook detailed, specific conversations with Uruguay about the potential threat that each detainee under consideration for transfer to Uruguay may pose after transfer and the measures that Uruguay would take in order to sufficiently mitigate that threat, and to ensure humane treatment. After receiving assurances from the Government of Uruguay, representatives from the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Homeland Security, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence unanimously concurred in the transfer of the six detainees to Uruguay. This decision reflected the best predictive judgment of senior government officials that any threat that may be posed by the detainee could be sufficiently mitigated through feasible and appropriate security measures in Uruguay.

Now that the detainees are in Uruguay, I understand that the Department and Embassy Montevideo work closely with the Uruguayan government on a range of issues surrounding the detainees, including matters related to the security of the United States. If confirmed, I would continue that close cooperation with the Government of Uruguay to ensure the long-term success of these efforts. I would also work with the Department to keep Congress informed of developments regarding the detainees. As has been the Department's practice, we would be happy to brief you and your staff on any outstanding questions you may have.

RESPONSES OF MARK SOBEL, NOMINATED TO BE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE SOBEL'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. The IMF Executive Board recently approved a rule change that appears to allow for exceptional access loans when debt is not sustainable with high probability under the meaning of the original exceptional access program and there is no contagion risk, if the Board finds there is re-profiling of a borrower's debt. The new policy further allows, in "tail event cases," the ability to forgo reprofiling if the risk of contagion is high and other official creditors' terms are sufficiently flexible. Presumably, under the new policy, those creditors might not even be required to make any concessions. For example, the IMF notes that:

> In these rare cases, the IMF could still provide large-scale financing without a debt operation, but would require that its official partners also provide financing on terms sufficiently favorable to backstop debt sustainability and safeguard IMF resources. This could be done through assurances that the terms of the financing provided by other official creditors could be modified in the future if needed.

While flexibility is important, please explain how the new policy for exceptional access lending upholds the intent of the second exceptional access criterion (high probability of debt sustainability), particularly in "tail event" cases. What kinds of "assurances" would be acceptable so as to allow for lending to occur and how would those assurances be enforced?

Answer. In mid-January of this year, the IMF Executive Board adopted Managing Director Lagarde's proposed reforms to the IMF provisions for exceptional access to Fund resources. A key aspect of these reforms was the elimination of the "systemic exemption" by which exceptional access could be provided when there was a high risk of international systemic spillovers despite significant doubts regarding the prospects for debt sustainability. Subsequent to the repeal of the systemic exemption, the United States consented to the 2010 IMF quota and governance reforms, doubling IMF quota resources and confirming our commitment to the IMF.

In putting forward the proposal, the Fund was concerned that requiring a debt restructuring in the case of a country with debt that was not sustainable with a high probability could be highly disruptive to the member and its creditors. In such cases, the Fund indicated it could stand ready to provide exceptional access if the country secured participation from its creditors on terms that would improve its debt sustainability and enhance safeguards for Fund resources through, for example, market borrowing if the country still had market access, debt reprofiling, agreements by creditors to maintain exposures, or the extension of bilateral assistance.

This is a clear departure from the systemic exemption which did not address debt sustainability concerns or provide safeguards for IMF lending. If I am confirmed as Executive Director, I will look closely at any such loans to ensure they do not prolong an unsustainable debt situation in a country and ensure the safety of the U.S. investment in the IMF. I will also work with Treasury to provide Congress timely notification and justification of our position on proposed exceptional access loans consistent with legislation.

As you note, the Management's policy proposal allows the IMF some flexibility, particularly in the case of a tail-risk event. In these rare cases, exceptional access loans could be provided by the IMF only if accompanied by financing from other official creditors. Moreover, financing from these other creditors must be provided on terms sufficient to backstop debt sustainability and safeguard IMF resources.

DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE SOBEL'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. IMF Reform: The United States championed the 2010 IMF quota and governance reforms, but Congress didn't approve them until December of last year. Last year we heard from IMF Managing Director Lagarde that the delay was seriously affecting the IMF.

- Has this had any lingering effect on U.S. leadership in the IMF?
- Can you explain how increasing emerging market representation at the IMF serves U.S. interests?

Answer. Emerging markets are playing an increasingly prominent role in the global economic and financial landscape. Their weight in the global economy has increased substantially to near or over half (depending on the measure), and they have accounted for the bulk of growth in the last decade.

The IMF provides a multilateral framework for the global economy. Regionalism will always exist—the United States trades heavily with Mexico and Canada due to their proximity. But it is clearly in the U.S. interest to bind all countries in the world into the multilateral framework, of which the IMF is at the center, especially as the United States helped to create the Fund and establish its values. In that regard, the Fund has consistently from its inception supported U.S. economic and strategic interests.

We cannot bind countries into the multilateralist framework if the Fund is not modernized to reflect the evolution of the world economy. If we are unable to modernize the Fund and accord emerging markets a stronger voice, they will drift away from multilateralism and instead emphasize regional solutions which could be detrimental to U.S. interests. While there is no dearth of infrastructure needs in the world, we saw such drift to some extent reflected in the creation of the AIIB, Silk Road, and the BRICs Bank.

For the past decade, the United States has consistently supported the emerging markets carrying a greater weight in the IMF. The United States spearheaded the launch of quota and governance reforms in 2006-2008 under the Bush administration, and the Obama administration continued to do so in 2009 at the G20 Pittsburgh Summit and then in finalizing the 2010 reforms. The United States garnered tremendous goodwill in the IMF from the emerging markets for these policies. However, the long delays in implementing the 2010 reforms meant that the United States lost much of this goodwill and created doubts about America's willingness to lead the IMF. The United States is working to earn back this trust. On the positive side, U.S. financial diplomats no longer have to attend international economic and financial meetings with this cloud hanging over their heads, and are able to speak more forthrightly about a positive U.S. agenda. However, this goodwill cannot be regained overnight. Earning it back will require strong and consistent cooperation in the coming years between the Executive and Legislative branches.

Question. EU Financial Crisis and IMF Reforms: Since the beginning of the financial crisis in 2009, eleven European countries have entered into financial assistance programs with the IMF, with commitments over $150 billion.

- How has this affected the IMF's resources and capacity to respond to other crises?
- Where is the IMF confronting its most serious challenges among those countries?
- If confirmed, are there any aspects in particular of the IMF's mandate and/or procedures that you believe merit review and possible reform?

Answer. The Fund's actions in addressing the key European crisis countries, such as Greece, Ireland and Portugal-even as Europe assumed the lion's share of the financing-were indispensable for restoring stability to the global economic and financial system, including preventing potentially serious contagion from reaching U.S. shores.

The Fund's actions did put pressure on the IMF's quota resources, which were substantially drawn down. However, given the expansion of the New Arrangements to Borrow (NAB) decided at the April 2009 G20 London Economic Summit, the IMF was also able to draw down resources from the NAB to readily backstop these commitments. Following Congressional approval of the 2010 IMF quota and governance reforms, IMF quota resources have doubled and the NAB has returned to its role as a an emergency backstop.

Countries such as Ireland and Cyprus are now on the road to recovery, and Cyprus is benefitting from IMF technical assistance as the leaders of the two commu-

nities on the island negotiate a potential reunification of the island. Iceland and Latvia are notable success stories. Hungary is no longer in need of Fund support, as is the case with other Central and Eastern European countries. Spain strengthened its banking system with European funds and IMF technical support. Portugal continues to face large debt and slow growth, but has adopted numerous reforms and is not facing market stresses. Notably, both Ireland and Portugal have made payments ahead of schedule on their exceptional access loans from the Fund.

Obviously, the situation in Greece remains the most challenging, both for Europe and the IMF. Europe and the IMF are seeking to design an economic program for Greece that established a road to sustainability and growth, built on Greek reforms, appropriate conditionality and necessary debt relief from Europe. Working out the scope and magnitude of the policy reforms and debt relief involves trade-offs, which are still being discussed. The United States continues to urge Greece to stay on the path of reform as well as the Europeans and IMF to work closely together in designing a reform path with strong European debt relief, in order to help restore growth and jobs in the Greek economy.

Throughout my career, I have seen first-hand the IMF's strengths. Its ability to act as the world's first and rapid crisis responder is an unparalleled global public good, as is its excellence in designing and supporting country reform programs. The IMF brings together officials from around the world, creating a culture of shared understanding. It fosters multilateral rules of the road. Its technical assistance helps countries build the infrastructure for more robust economic policies. The IMF's surveillance can help prevent crises.

But despite the Fund's strengths, the organization—like any other—has room for improvement, for example, in better analyzing and articulating policies to tackle modest global growth, addressing global rebalancing and exchange rate issues, strengthening its work on crisis prevention and debt sustainability, supporting propoor spending in low income countries, and helping make financial sectors more resilient. In addition, corruption can be extremely corrosive to societies and economies—the Fund should strengthen its engagement, consistent with its mandate, in combating corruption.

Question. China and the IMF: With the yuan set to become part of the SDR basket of currencies, what are the advantages and costs to China of that new status?

Answer. For inclusion in the SDR basket, China needed to meet the criteria of being a large exporter (which it met handily) and a country whose currency was widely used and traded in principal global exchange markets. On the financial criteria, the RMB's international financial role is still very modest, but it is rising off of a low base. As part of the process of entry into the SDR basket, China put forward a number of helpful reforms—it joined the IMF's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS), began to provide data on cross-border financial activities to the Bank for International Settlements and report the currency breakdown of its reserve holdings to the IMF, started weekly T-bill auctions to establish a market-determined interest rate, opened the onshore market to global central banks, and expanded the hours for RMB trading to allow the RMB to be more widely traded worldwide.

As such, China's entry into the SDR basket helped spur financial reform in China. Its entry is reflective of the broader need for reforms to liberalize the Chinese economic and financial system, and shift resources from a heavily driven investment economy, which emphasizes the role of state owned enterprises, to an economy driven by consumers and services. Many of the strongest advocates for economic liberalization in China saw the RMB's entry into the SDR basket as a means of spurring reform.

The financial reforms China undertook to join the SDR basket, as well as the reforms it is implementing more generally, will help integrate China more closely into the global economic and financial system—and its multilateral rules—going forward. Further, these reforms will create pressures for more liberalization and reform, as well as integration into the global economy. These are positive developments. However, as much as one hopes financial liberalization will proceed seamlessly and smoothly, bouts of volatility and spillovers to the rest of the global economy can be expected.

DIRECTOR-DESIGNATE SOBEL'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Please briefly describe your vision for taking on a new role as the U.S. Executive Director to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Answer. Throughout my career, I have seen first-hand the IMF's strengths. Its ability to act as the world's first and rapid economic and financial crisis responder is an unparalleled global public good, as is its excellence in designing and supporting country economic reform programs. The IMF brings together officials from around the world, creating a culture of shared understanding and responsibility. It fosters multilateral rules of the road. Its technical assistance helps countries build the infrastructure for more robust economic policies. The IMF's surveillance can help prevent crises.

But despite the Fund's strengths, the organization—like any other—has room for improvement, for example, in better analyzing and articulating policies to tackle modest global growth, addressing global rebalancing and exchange rate issues, strengthening its work on crisis prevention and debt sustainability, supporting pro-poor spending in low income countries, and helping make financial sectors more resilient. I also believe that the IMF, consistent with its mandate, should aggressively tackle corruption and promote good governance.

I believe firmly in tenaciously defending U.S. interests and in advancing multilateralism, as well as in working pragmatically and collegially, with analytic rigor, and in a non-partisan manner. I also believe in the IMF's mission and that our nation's leadership of the IMF is critical. Those beliefs have guided my career.

If confirmed as U.S. Executive Director, I will work vigorously to continue to strengthen and improve the IMF, consistent with those beliefs. I will dedicate myself to doing my utmost to work with Congress to help forge a stronger consensus in our country in support of the IMF and its critical global role.

Question. How do you feel your current position as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Monetary and Financial Policy has prepared you to take on this new role?

Answer. Throughout my career, I have worked on issues directly or indirectly relating to U.S. participation in the IMF, be it IMF policy and financing issues or country programs. I did so earlier in my career as the Director of the Treasury International Monetary Policy Office and theTransition Economy Office, and as the senior staff member of the U.S. Executive Director's Office at the IMF.

As Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for the International Monetary and Financial Policy, I played a pivotal staff role in overseeing U.S. relations with the IMF. Further, during the 2001 and 2009 transitions, I was designated to be the Acting head of Treasury's International Affairs Department, and in periods where senior officials left government, I also stepped in, frequently representing the United States at critical international gatherings, such as those of the G-7 and G20 Deputies. I was also the principal G-20 financial negotiator on communiques for the United States, both for the White House and Treasury.

These experiences gave me a strong background in understanding the technical functioning of the IMF and how to be a forceful advocate for the United States and effectively advance U.S. interests in the Fund. In all of these capacities, especially as DAS, I have worked in a nonpartisan manner with very senior Republican and Democratic officials, including Secretaries of Treasury. In particular, I worked closely with Secretaries Summers, O'Neill, Snow, Paulson, Geithner and Lew.

Question. What is your assessment of the 2010 IMF reforms? Do these changes adequately address likely future risks, especially as the IMF may be considering large programs from commodity exporters dealing with the decline in oil prices?

Answer. I believe that the 2010 IMF reforms were not only vital for the health and future of the organization, but also reaffirming the U.S. commitment to being a leader in the global financial system. The reforms helped put the Fund's finances on a more permanent footing, while also helping to modernize the institution to better reflect the realities of countries' weights in today's global economy. These reforms will help sustain the legitimacy of the Fund as they will give dynamic emerging markets, in particular, a greater stake and voice in the Fund, which should bind these countries more strongly into the IMF's multilateral framework, thus reducing tendencies to drift into regionalism.

The global economy faces a number of risks, be it from slow global growth, a slowing Chinese economy, the fall in the price of oil and other commodity prices, financial volatility and stresses, as well as inadequate policy responses. These factors may result in added demands for Fund programs and resources in the future.

The Fund's financial footing is strong and should allow it to effectively meet likely challenges facing the global economy.

Question. Do you believe these reforms have benefitted the institution? If so, how? In your opinion, are other reforms needed? If so, which reforms? Please be specific.

Answer. As discussed above in question 3, I do believe that the reforms have benefitted the institution for the reasons put forward.

The Fund is a dynamic organization. It needs to reflect the realities of the global economic and financial system, especially the growing weight of dynamic emerging markets in the international monetary and financial systems. As the world economy evolves, there will be in time a need for further future evolution in the Fund's governance structure. In addition, as noted in question #1, there are a number of policy areas where I believe the Fund should intensify its focus in order to strengthen its performance. These include better analyzing and articulating policies to tackle modest global growth, addressing global rebalancing and exchange rate issues, strengthening its work on crisis prevention and debt sustainability, supporting pro-poor spending in low income countries, and helping make financial sectors more resilient. I also believe that the IMF, consistent with its mandate, should aggressively tackle corruption and promote good governance.

Question. Some analysts argue that the U.S.'s delayed action on the reform package has damaged U.S. leadership in the institution. Do you agree? How can the U.S. maximize its leverage in the IMF?

Answer. The IMF provides a multilateral framework for the global economy that promotes stronger economic policies, supports trade, rejects competitive devaluations, and enhances standards for transparency. Regionalism will always exist—the United States trades heavily with Mexico and Canada due to their proximity. But it is clearly in the U.S. interest to bind all countries in the world into the multilateral framework, of which the IMF is at the center, especially as the United States helped create the Fund and establish its values. In that regard, the Fund has consistently from its inception supported U.S. economic and strategic interests.

As noted in my response to question 4, we cannot bind countries into the multilateralist framework if the Fund is not modernized to reflect the evolution of the world economy. Rather, if we are unable to modernize the Fund and accord emerging markets a stronger voice, they will drift away from multilateralism and instead emphasize regional solutions, with lower standards, which could be detrimental to U.S. interests. While there is no dearth of infrastructure needs in the world, we saw such drift to some extent reflected in the creation of the AIIB, Silk Road, and the BRICs Bank.

The United States has for the past decade consistently supported giving emerging markets greater weight in the IMF. The United States spearheaded the launch of quota and governance reforms in 2006-2008 under the Bush administration, and the Obama administration continued to do so in 2009 at the G20 Pittsburgh Summit and then in finalizing the 2010 reforms. The United States garnered tremendous goodwill in the IMF from the emerging markets for these policies.

However, the long delays in implementing the 2010 reforms meant that we lost much of this goodwill and created doubts about the United States's willingness to lead the IMF. The United States is working to earn back this goodwill. On the positive side, U.S. financial diplomats no longer have to attend international economic and financial meetings with this cloud hanging over their heads, and are able to speak more forthrightly about a positive U.S. agenda. However, this goodwill cannot be regained overnight. Earning it back will require strong and consistent cooperation in the coming years between the Executive and Legislative branches.

Question. Oil prices have fallen by over 70% since mid-2014, straining the public financial sectors of major oil-exporting countries whose budgets depend on oil revenues. In your own words, please describe the IMF's approach to the drop in global oil prices.

Answer. The Fund can play a critical role in helping countries address financial strains through its technical assistance, policy advice (surveillance) and conditional lending programs.

The oil-export countries are not a homogeneous group. For example, some are countries with relatively small populations and large financial buffers; others are lower-income, more populated and more diverse economies. Obviously, the Fund's analysis and responses will need to be tailored to individual country circumstances.

That said, the Fund has pursued several paths:

- It has urged oil exporters—especially those countries with sizable buffers that have relied heavily on oil revenues—to diversify their economies and to develop more robust private sectors, capable of creating jobs for relatively young populations (especially as in the past, much of the demand for job-seekers would have been reflected in rising governmental payrolls).
- It is offering its general macroeconomic policy advice—how to manage fiscal, monetary, and exchange rate policies given country circumstances.

- It has strongly urged countries to take advantage of low oil prices and reduce energy subsidization, which often places costly strains on budgets, while providing targeted support to the neediest to mitigate the impact of reduced subsidization.
- In all countries, but especially in those cases where countries are drawing down heavily on financial buffers (central bank reserves, sovereign wealth funds) to finance budget deficits, the Fund is encouraging comprehensive budgetary reviews to find scope for saving and efficiencies, while protecting social safety nets.
- For countries needing technical support in managing their economies in light of lower oil prices, the IMF is extending its capacity building.
- Of course, if countries need financial support, the Fund stands ready to design economic reform programs, backed by the IMF's resources.

Question. Some oil-exporters, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Russia, have been able to float the market downturn due to sizable buffers in their economies. However, other smaller or less stable nations such as Nigeria, Angola, Algeria, Venezuela, and Iraq face more immediate and difficult financial decisions. Does the IMF's approach to the global oil market downturn differ for nations in different economic circumstances relating to oil prices? If so, how? If not, should the approach differ?

Answer. Oil exporting country circumstances do indeed vary considerably, and the IMF's approach to oilexporters does take into account the individual circumstances of countries, as it should. My response to question 6 addresses these issues.

Question. Some low-income oil exporters had negative experiences with IMF programs since the 1980's and 1990's. Likewise, to date, few oil-exporters have turned to the IMF for financial assistance. Are they now hesitant to turn to the IMF, and does this pose a threat to economic stability in the global economy? Is it problematic if countries like Angola and Nigeria turn to the World Bank for budgetary support, as a way to potentially circumvent an IMF program? Or is the World Bank able to address these types of circumstances?

Answer. So far, low-income oil exporting countries have not turned to the IMF. The reasons may differ per country, but many have chosen to draw down on buffers, implement budgetary measures at home, and/or rely on currency flexibility to act as a shock absorber. There may be concerns about "stigma"—tapping the IMF—but it may also be that countries do not wish to implement the robust reform measures that the IMF might seek as part of a financial program.

The efficacy of budget support depends in part on the health of the macroeconomic environment and proper economic incentives. Budget support should not serve to delay economic reform, though it can provide breathing space to cushion the impact of the adjustment. In these circumstances, strong IMF and World Bank collaboration is essential to ensure that where budget support is being extended, a satisfactory macroeconomic environment is in place. This is an area of core IMF expertise, and the IMF clearly assesses the adequacy of a macroeconomic environment for the efficacy of World Bank assistance.

Question. In January 2016, the IMF's Executive Board removed the "systemic exemption", which allowed approval of large scale loans despite debt sustainability if there was a high risk that not providing financial assistance would have spillover effects. This exemption was effectively replaced by a "reprofiling" of countries' existing debts in order to keep existing creditors on board by extending debt maturities with little loss in market value. Do you feel this is an adequate replacement for addressing global economic emergencies?

Answer. Europe appropriately provided the lion's share of the financing to Greece, Portugal and Ireland, but the use of the systemic exemption was extremely important in 2010. The situations in those countries could have created far greater and more widespread spillover and contagion effects to the global economy, including hurting the U.S. economy at the very time it was coming out of the financial crisis. Hence, exceptional support to quell possible global market pressures was warranted.

By 2012, Europe had begun to build up firewalls to support EU members and guard against the further spreading of the crisis. The United States supported strong debt relief for Greece in 2012, and continues to urge Europe to do so now as well.

Pursuant to the proposal put forward by IMF Management as part of the package eliminating the systemic exemption, there was concern that for a country whose debt was not sustainable with a high probability, requiring a debt restructuring could impose unnecessary costs on the member and its creditors. But the Fund also

did not wish to be in a position in which it would carry a disproportionate financial burden, especially in the case that the country's debt sustainability subsequently deteriorated.

Accordingly, Managing Director Lagarde's proposal required that in cases where debt was not sustainable with a high probability, the country should secure participation from its creditors on terms that would improve its debt sustainability and enhance safeguards for Fund resources. The Fund posited that these goals could be achieved through a number of means, including market borrowing if the country still had market access; debt reprofiling; maintenance of exposure/rollover arrangements; or the extension of official bilateral assistance.

The proposals represent a significant tightening of the IMF's overall lending framework, aimed at reducing the role of discretion in the provision of exceptional access. The United States supported the entirety of the Managing Director's proposals.

Question. Are you concerned about recent "exceptional access" at the IMF in which countries such as Greece and Ireland were able to receive loans significantly in excess of their financial contributions to the IMF? What justifies providing financing programs this large? How would you quantify the credit risk to the IMF of these programs? Does Congress adequately consider this risk when approving U.S. contributions to the Fund?

Answer. My response to question 9 addresses the thinking behind exceptional access in 2010. In terms of the IMF and credit risk, it is worth noting that the Fund's balance sheet is rock solid and our claims on the IMF are fully secure. The Fund has demonstrated a good track record in designing programs, which safeguard the use of the Fund's resources. The Fund is regarded as the world's de facto preferred creditor. When the IMF draws resources from a creditor country to lend to a borrower, the creditor is not exposed to the borrower, but rather to the Fund's balance sheet. In addition to the above factors, the Fund has a capital cushion of over $20 billion, and it also has substantial gold holdings. Both Ireland and Portugal successfully completed their programs and have significantly reduced their outstanding obligations to the IMF through payments ahead of schedule.

Question. As part of the 2010 reforms, the IMF Board of Governors agreed that the representation of emerging and developing economies at the IMF did not reflect their growing importance in the global economy, and 6% of total quotas and voting power will now be shifted to these emerging and developing market economies. Do you feel that an additional 6% in quotas is commensurate with the spirit of the reform? Should emerging and developing economies be responsible for a larger share of quotas, since they make up a large share of those countries receiving IMF assistance? How does this increase in the representation of emerging markets at the IMF serve U.S. interests?

Answer. As I noted in my responses to questions 3 and 4, I believe that the 2010 IMF reforms were vital for the health and future of the organization. The reforms helped put the Fund's finances on a more permanent footing, while also helping to modernize the institution to better reflect the realities of countries' weights in the global economy.

These reforms will help sustain the legitimacy of the Fund. They will give dynamic emerging markets, in particular, a greater stake and voice in the Fund, which should bind these countries more strongly into the IMF's multilateral framework, thus reducing tendencies to drift into regionalism. While there is no dearth of infrastructure needs in the world, we saw such drift to some extent reflected in the creation of the AIIB, Silk Road, and the BRICs Bank.

Going forward, the Fund needs to remain a dynamic organization. It needs to reflect the realities of the global economic and financial system, especially the growing weight of dynamic emerging markets in the international monetary and financial systems. As the world economy evolves, there will be in time a need for further future evolution in the Fund's governance structure.

Question. The 2010 reforms also changed the means by which countries choose IMF Executive Directors, with a new requirement that all Executive Directors be elected rather than appointed. This opens up the possibility that European nations could choose to consolidate their representation on the Executive Board. In your opinion, is this a positive or negative change for Board organization? What would the impact of consolidated representation mean for the IMF Executive Board? Might this threaten U.S. influence on the Board? Could other countries elect to join the United States' representative on the Executive Board and form a group constituency?

Answer. The United States supported the proposal to allow "elected" rather than "appointed" chairs in the IMF, precisely to create greater scope for consolidation of Board chairs—especially in Europe. Virtually all observers agree that Europe is overrepresented in the Fund, both in terms of chairs and shares. With regard to chairs, Europeans now lead eight of the IMF Board's 24 seats.

Greater consolidation of European representation would not threaten U.S. leadership of the organization. The United States remains the Fund's largest shareholder and is able to present its views forcefully in the IMF Board. Europe already plays a critical role in the Fund and will continue to do so.

The United States will retain its single seat. In fact, given the large U.S. share in the Fund, Board seating rules preclude the U.S. from having other countries join the U.S. chair.

Question. One of the IMF's main duties is to monitor the economic and financial policies of its member countries. To what extent has the IMF, as it claims, increased transparency and accountability to both shareholders and loan-recipients?

Answer. When I first worked on the staff of the U.S. Executive Director in the late 1990s, the IMF was a very opaque organization and virtually no documentation was shared outside the IMF. That is no longer the case.

While publication of the bulk of IMF documents is on a "voluntary but presumed" basis, the overwhelming bulk of IMF documents are published. In recent years, more than 90 percent of member countries published the Article IV report, including a comprehensive summary of the Board discussion. Ninety-six percent of countries with an IMF program allowed publication of the program documents, and all exceptional access programs in the last decade have been published.

The IMF also releases policy papers, typically immediately after a board meeting. In 2014, the Executive Board decided to reduce the lag for public access to most board meeting minutes from five to three years, while retaining the five-year lag only for discussions that involve IMF lending or a Policy Support Instrument. The minutes include verbatim transcripts of the board meeting. These trends are discussed in the following IMF report on Transparency, published August 25, 2015—http://www.imf.org/external/pp/longres.aspx?id=4981.

The Fund has also done a better job in recent years in reaching out to the media, civil society, and national parliaments. These are positive developments that the United States strongly encourages.

Question. Some analysts assert that IMF surveillance, especially of advanced economies, is largely meaningless since the IMF has no means of acting on its analysis when a country is not an IMF borrower. Do you agree with this assertion? If so, do you think the IMF should have this power?

Answer. IMF surveillance is one of the core mandates of the Fund. Pursuant to it, the Fund conducts an economic review of each of its members, mainly on an annual basis.

The Fund's surveillance can provide useful analysis and insights and highlight risks to national policymakers on their domestic situations and policy choices, especially bringing to bear the Fund's global perspective and cross-country experiences. Indeed, often other Fund members have faced similar fiscal, monetary policy, and other challenges as the country undergoing a surveillance review, and developed policies to tackle such difficulties which might provide useful background for policymakers in the country being reviewed. Similarly, the surveillance reviews allow national policymakers to exchange views with the Fund and explain the reasoning behind various policies.

While a country undergoing a surveillance review is sovereign and may choose not to follow the Fund's advice for any number of political or economic reasons, the surveillance process is invaluable nevertheless. The Executive Board meeting held to discuss the surveillance review provides additional scrutiny and peer pressure on member countries.

Question. How might the IMF make its surveillance more effective in promoting better economic policies within member countries?

Answer. Despite the Fund's strengths, the IMF has room for improvement. In particular, I believe the Fund's surveillance can be strengthened in terms of better analyzing and articulating policies to tackle modest global growth, addressing global rebalancing and exchange rate issues, strengthening its work on crisis prevention and debt sustainability, supporting pro-poor spending in low income countries, and helping make financial sectors more resilient. I also believe that the IMF can better tackle corruption and promote good governance.

Question. The IMF proceeded with its 2010 bailout of Greece despite major concerns within the Fund over whether this loan would work. The United States supported this program. Does the IMF expect to participate in the third program for Greece, spearheaded by the Europeans?

Answer. Europe and the IMF are now seeking to design and negotiate an economic program for Greece, combining Greek reforms and needed debt relief from Europe. Working out the scope and magnitude of the policy reforms and debt relief involves trade-offs, which are still being discussed by all parties. These discussions are ongoing, and whether and how they will be concluded is not now clear.

Secretary Lew continues to urge Greece to stay on the path of reform, and the Europeans and IMF to work closely together in designing a reform path which both could support. The Secretary has further called for Europe to provide the lion's share of the financing and offer strong debt relief for Greece.

Question. What are your views on China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank? How should the U.S. government engage with China and other emerging donors?

Answer. There is no dearth of infrastructure needs facing the world economy and the AIIB can play a positive role in this regard. However, in doing so, it is critical that the AIIB meet the high quality multilateral standards that have been established in other multilateral development institutions.

There are parallels with how China should engage the IMF and vice versa. The IMF is the world's leading multilateral institution, and the United States helped create the Fund and establish its values. In this regard, the Fund since its inception has supported U.S. economic and strategic interests.

But for China and other emerging donors to feel as if they are part of the multilateral system, they must feel that the system is recognizing their growing role and weight. Otherwise, they may drift toward regionalist solutions, undermining multilateralism and the global institutions. This is one of the main reasons why Congressional passage of the 2010 reforms was so important and welcome.

Question. Members of the IMF have committed to refraining from manipulating their exchange rates to gain an unfair trade advantage. However, the IMF has never publically cited a country for currency manipulation. Some argue this is because the IMF defines currency manipulation inaccurately. Others argue currency manipulation should not be the purview of the IMF. Do you think currency manipulation is a problem? What role do you think the IMF should play in addressing currency manipulation?

Answer. The IMF was created against the backdrop of protectionism and beggar-thy-neighbor currency policies in the 1930s to promote growth and international monetary cooperation and avoid such disastrous policies.

The President has clearly and often stated that no country should be allowed to grow its exports on the basis of a persistently undervalued currency. Much progress has been made through U.S. bilateral diplomacy and through our leadership in multilateral fora such as the G-20 and IMF.

With respect to the Fund, its technical analysis on exchange markets and global imbalances has improved in recent years. For example, its World Economic Outlook has increasingly covered the pattern of global payments developments, and the staff has developed an annual External Sector Report which delves into and assesses exchange rate valuations and underlying policies. External issues are increasingly covered in annual surveillance reports. These are helpful developments.

Nonetheless, the IMF offers its staff and Management an important bully pulpit to speak out publicly and forcefully for currency flexibility and policies to reduce large current account surpluses. The Fund does so, but it could do a far better job in rendering crisp judgments on currency policies and using its voice and influence with far greater force.

RESPONSES OF ADAM H. STERLING, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE SLOVAC REPUBLIC, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE STERLING'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. During my career, I have consistently and ardently promoted human rights and democracy as a pillar of U.S. interests, several times serving in countries

where these basic values were under threat or respect for them was going from bad to worse. I have also maintained professional contacts over the past two decades with representatives of leading international and U.S. human rights organizations, as well as with the Helsinki Commission.

As the Human Rights Officer at one of my first postings, my reporting on a series of election-related abuses led to public expressions of concern from Washington that likely curbed some further abuses. My work won awards from the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor as well as from my Embassy. The attention my work drew to election and other human rights abuses also buoyed the morale of, and perhaps gave a measure of protection to, local democracy and human rights advocates, some of whom praised my actions as evidence that the United States placed a higher priority on human rights than did any other country. My participation in reviewing draft legislation in this country, the preparation of which was not publicized, also enabled international scrutiny of a law that would have curbed religious freedom. My early warning about two such pieces of legislation gave senior officials in Washington and OSCE representatives a chance to weigh in against the legislation, and ultimately have both draft laws withdrawn before a vote in parliament. I have served as an OSCE election observer in two countries and was credited by OSCE in one country with having "saved" a hastily organized observer mission by recruiting several dozen observers on short notice.

As I moved into more senior roles at subsequent postings, I regularly met with dissidents and civil society activists, signaling U.S. interest in both their concerns and their personal welfare. In one country, I hosted meetings for them with visiting senior officials from the Department. I also worked with pro-democracy civil society groups and a U.S.-based democracy NGO to help secure their legal status within the country and freedom to operate without harassment. More broadly, my meetings with activists enriched my human rights and democracy advocacy with host government officials.

In these and other instances, both overseas and in Washington, I have never forgotten that the promotion of human rights and democracy around the world is an unending effort requiring constant attention from every level and branch of our government. It is also one of the singularly most rewarding missions a public servant could have the honor to take part in.

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

Answer. The most pressing human rights issues in Slovakia include corruption; a weak judiciary; and discrimination against ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities, particularly Roma, refugees, Muslims, and the LGBTI community. If confirmed, I will continue our long-standing support to the government of Slovakia on judicial reform, where notable progress has been made in recent years but where significant work remains to be done. We also will continue our vigorous dialogue on human rights and advocate for the rights of all minorities.

Promoting Rule of Law continues to be a major focus of our efforts in Slovakia. Domestic polls show that 90 percent of Slovaks perceive corruption—particularly in public procurement and the use of EU funds—as widespread. The media regularly report on alleged corruption, but almost no high-level officials have been prosecuted since independence. Critics blame political influence over the police and prosecution services for blocking or hampering investigations. Rule of law reform is a long-term, multifaceted, and challenging process. Slovakia has demonstrated recent commitment to reform by adopting an anti-corruption action plan in consultation with the business community's Rule of Law initiative, a second National Action Plan under the Open Government Partnership, and a new judicial ethics code. These measures are steps in the right direction, but we continue to stress the need both for their full implementation and to hold corrupt actors accountable in a court of law. If confirmed, I will continue to work on strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law, reinforcing the point that accountability and transparency are necessary to modern democracy and that corruption is inimical to democratic values and stable governments. We also will continue to support efforts to promote these values, including by providing grants to NGOs and individuals working in the field and bringing in experts to offer training and cooperation to Slovak judges, police, prosecutors, and other officials.

Marginalization of the Romani minority remains among the most pressing human rights concerns in Slovakia, and promoting the human rights of Roma is a top priority for the U.S government. Reports estimate Slovakia's Roma minority to be seven to eight percent of the population (roughly 450,000 people), and many Roma

live in impoverished, isolated settlements where discrimination is high and, in some areas, unemployment nears 100 percent. If confirmed, I will continue to urge Slovakia to improve the socio-economic and security situation of its Roma citizens and to ensure accountability for discrimination or violence directed at them and other minority groups. I will advocate for equal access to education for Romani children and work with partners to eradicate segregation in the education sector in any form. I also will promote Roma inclusion and ensure our Embassy stands firmly against derogatory remarks about the Roma or any other minority in Slovakia.

Under my leadership, the Embassy will continue to play an active role in promoting Roma rights. The Embassy has been supporting the efforts of a Roma NGO to work with school inspectors to develop and implement a new methodology for recognizing illegal segregation in Slovak schools. Additionally, the U.S. government has encouraged the political engagement of the Roma community in Slovakia, and the Embassy has engaged young Roma leaders, including mayors and municipal officials, and has sent them on study tours to the United States. We will continue our support for the community by providing grants to Romani organizations and NGOs and raising public awareness about minority rights and the positive contributions made by Roma to Slovak society.

To date, Slovakia has been largely unaffected by the European migration crisis, as the main refugee routes do not pass through its territory. Nevertheless, the Slovak government has strongly opposed mandatory refugee quotas under an EU-wide refugee distribution system, filing suit against the measure with the European Court of Justice in December 2015, and Slovak officials and politicians across the political spectrum engaged in anti-refugee and anti-Muslim rhetoric ahead of March 5 parliamentary elections. If confirmed, I will continue to stress to Slovak officials that such statements are inconsistent with the values on which our bilateral relations are based, impede practical approaches to the crisis, and play into the hands of far-right extremists who have exploited the crisis to expand their support. I will urge the government to continue the positive steps it has taken on refugees, including additional financial contributions to alleviate the migrant crisis and sending Slovak police to support EU border control missions. Slovakia has temporarily accommodated 500 refugees currently applying for asylum in Austria and recently accepted 200 Iraqi Christian refugees for permanent resettlement.

Slovakia's religious minorities, particularly the Muslim community, continue to face discrimination. Restrictive legal registration procedures for religious dominations—which require at least 20,000 adherents for registration—prevent smaller religious groups, including the Muslim community, from attaining the legal status to perform economic and certain public religious functions. For example, Slovakia's Muslim community, which numbers between two and five thousand individuals, has been unable to legally establish a Mosque in Slovakia, instead relying on smaller prayer rooms. Not being able to register has blocked the Muslim community from legally employing imams. If confirmed, I will continue the Embassy's practice of regularly meeting with government officials and registered and unregistered religious organizations to discuss religious freedom issues, including the treatment of minority religious groups and ways to combat anti-Muslim sentiment. I will also share our successful efforts at integrating religious groups in the United States as a means of promoting the full inclusion of minority religions.

LGBTI rights are human rights, which all nations have a responsibility to respect. The United States is known in Slovakia as a staunch advocate of LGBTI rights and consistently has advocated for the human rights of LGBTI persons. If confirmed, I will ensure that this support continues, via grants to NGOs focused on promoting greater public awareness of LGBTI rights and our Embassy's participation in annual Pride activities.

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 Slovakia in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Obstacles to promoting human rights in Slovakia include weak institutions susceptible to political influence; social prejudice; the growth of far-right movements; and a lack of resources for civil society, NGOs, and activists.

Slovakia's judiciary remains one of its most troubled institutions, hampering anti-corruption efforts and discouraging foreign investment. Public trust in the judiciary stands at about 25 percent, the second-lowest level in the EU. While Slovakia's current legal structure—most of which was updated after Slovakia became an independent state in 1993—is adequate, democracies need an independent, impartial, and accountable judiciary and broader legal system whose first obligation is to uphold the law. Slovakia's self-governing judiciary needs to hold all judges accountable

to certain standards, and we believe that the new enforceable judicial ethics code is a step in the right direction. We also need to see Slovakia hold all corrupt actors, including high-level officials, accountable in a court of law to serve as a credible public example and deterrent. Ultimately, Slovakia will need political will for reform; strong, effective, well managed institutions free from political influence; fearless public servants, including judges, prosecutors, and police investigators; and enhanced public accountability, in which civil society and the media play an important role. Our Embassy will continue to be active in all of these areas if I am confirmed.

Social prejudices are another challenge to reform. For example, there is little public support for efforts to promote Roma inclusion, with even many educated Slovaks claiming, inaccurately, that the government already invests too much money in such efforts. As a result, Slovak political leaders and officials have little incentive to prioritize minority rights. Despite the difficult environment, if confirmed, I will have the Embassy continue its focus on raising public awareness of the universality and importance of minority rights and the success of integration efforts in other countries. We will stress the significant long-term economic costs of a lack of educational and economic opportunities for Roma versus the economic benefits of policies that promote greater inclusion.

The growth of extremist movements is a problem not limited to Slovakia, but a phenomenon we are seeing throughout Europe. Like many in Slovakia, I am concerned by the increasing popularity of far-right extremists in the country. If confirmed, I will ensure we continue to provide the Slovak government with training on how to monitor and combat the spread of extremism and that our Embassy continues to do all it can to counter extremist rhetoric through public messaging and events.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other nongovernmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Slovakia? 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. Our Embassy has well-established relations with human rights activists, civil society representatives, and NGOs in both the United States and Slovakia, and I will work to expand and deepen these key relationships if confirmed.

Our Embassy fully complies with the Leahy laws and, if confirmed, I will continue to uphold our legislative commitment to ensure that no U.S assistance is provided to any unit or individual that has committed a gross violation of human rights. I will continue to support this and similar efforts to ensure that provisions of U.S. security assistance and security cooperation reinforce human rights and accountability. Additionally, the Embassy has leveraged security and defense cooperation to promote human rights, a practice that I will continue if confirmed. For example, in cooperation with the FBI and DOJ experts, the Embassy organized tailor-made training for Slovak investigators and prosecutors dealing with corruption, and more such training is planned for this year. We can also send Slovak police to the International Law Enforcement Academy program in Budapest, where they receive training from U.S. federal law enforcement agencies on topics related to strengthening rule of law, including anti-corruption, ethics, and countering trafficking in persons.

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

Answer. As reported in the annual U.S. State Department Human Rights Report chapter on Slovakia, there are no political prisoners in Slovakia or persons otherwise unjustly targeted by the government of Slovakia. If confirmed, I will ensure full Embassy engagement with the Slovak government on this issue should that situation change.

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

Answer. Our Embassy has long has been engaged on human rights and good governance in Slovakia, and, if confirmed, I will ensure these important efforts will continue and be expanded.

Question. While the Slovak Republic is a member of the EU and NATO and cooperates with the U.S. on a range of security issues, the Slovak Republic is not immune from Russian influence given its status as a transit hub for Russian gas going to Europe and the pervasive nature of Russian propaganda in the country. How would you characterize Slovakia's relations with Russia and the extent of Russian

influence in the country? As U.S. Ambassador to the Slovak Republic, how would you work to counter Russian influence there?

Answer. Slovakia is a valued NATO Ally and EU partner. Slovakia has stood with us in implementing sanctions against Russian aggression in Ukraine, and Slovakia supports our efforts to increase Europe's energy security. I will, if confirmed, work to help build its capacity to act forcefully in concert with us in Europe and beyond. This commitment includes ensuring Slovakia has the resources needed to be less dependent on Russia.

During the Cold War, Russia exercised influence over Slovakia, which Russia argued was a natural outgrowth of linguistic and cultural ties and the Soviet Union's role in ending Nazi occupation of Slovak territory in World War II. A significant number of Slovaks studied in a school system strongly influenced by the Soviet Union or studied in the Soviet Union itself. Today, Russia is Slovakia's fourth most important trade partner, and Slovakia is almost completely dependent on Russia for its oil, natural gas, and nuclear fuel supply.

If confirmed, I will strongly advocate for Slovakia to build a well-resourced military less dependent on Russia. I also will work with my counterparts across the region to reduce Slovakia's dependence on Russian energy sources. The United States is committed to helping advance European energy security through an integrated European energy market and diversification—of fuel types, supply source countries, and delivery routes. Strengthened Slovak energy security would present opportunities to foster increased energy cooperation across the region. We will continue to encourage Slovakia to work within EU structures to promote greater integration within the EU's own internal energy market.If confirmed, I will also focus on promoting and strengthening growing U.S.-Slovakia cultural and trade ties to counter Russian influence. Slovaks tend to hold very positive views of the United States and are proud members of NATO and the EU. Great programs like Summer Work and Travel enable thousands of Slovaks (2,700 in calendar year 2015) to visit the United States and reinforce Slovakia's strong commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration. The Embassy actively works to counter Russian propaganda and disinformation, which is one of its Mission goals. Last year, the Embassy sponsored a public panel discussion of conspiracy theories in the media, many of which are spread by Russian media outlets. The U.S. government narrative in Slovakia focuses on the strengths of America and the transatlantic alliance to inspire confidence in the future, which counters the focus of Russian propaganda on instilling fear and uncertainty.

Question. The Slovak Republic routinely ranks on the bottom of EU countries for institutionalization of the rule of law and corruption. In parliamentary elections last weekend, far-right and extremist parties made unprecedented gains, bringing instability to the domestic political situation as Prime Minister Fico is now seeking to form a coalition government with a larger number of coalition partners. Should the U.S. be concerned about the state of democracy in Slovakia? How should the U.S. respond to help reinforce democratic institutions in the country?

Answer. Slovakia's March 5 parliamentary elections saw eight parties qualify for seats in Parliament, including several previously unrepresented parties. The incumbent ruling party, Smer, which had enjoyed an outright majority in Parliament since 2012, again garnered the most votes. However, several parties rode a wave of anti-establishment sentiment to deny Smer a renewed majority, necessitating a coalition government. The election itself was smooth, with an open and fair campaign, good voter turnout, and all parties quickly accepting the results. The process for forming the new government has been procedurally smooth, with President Kiska dutifully discharging his constitutional responsibilities to guide the process, in the first instance by granting Smer until March 18 to form a coalition majority. Democratic hallmarks such as independent media and respect for the constitutional process have been unchallenged in both the pre- and post-election environment.

That said, the fact that the far-right extremist party LS-NS won eight percent of the popular vote and 14 seats in the new Parliament has caused concern in Slovakia, across Europe, and in the United States. The positions espoused by the party and its leadership stand in direct contrast to the values shared by the United States and the vast majority of Slovak people. I am heartened that President Kiska did not invite LS-NS to join his post-election meeting with all the other parties elected to Parliament and that the other parties have expressed unwillingness to consider a coalition with LS-NS. LS-NS's success reflects the wrong-headed rise in xenophobic rhetoric expressed or tolerated by mainstream parties as well as voter dissatisfaction with corruption and weak public services, which the Slovak government has ignored for too long.

One on the principal reasons for Smer's underperformance in the final stages of the campaign centered around perceptions of endemic government corruption. While

Slovakia has come a long way since independence in terms of strengthening the rule of law, more remains to be done. The country has made progress with the recent adoption of several anti-corruption measures, but implementation is key and high-level prosecutions remain rare. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law, reinforcing that accountability and transparency are necessary to modern democracy and stressing that corruption undermines democratic values and effective, stable government. Our Embassy has been a close partner with government and civil society in encouraging needed reforms, including by providing training opportunities for prosecutors and law enforcement. I plan to continue to build upon these efforts if given the opportunity, as I believe the Slovak people share our goal to strengthen and deepen the rule of law and democracy within the country, and to cement the progress Slovakia made in its first two decades of independence.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE STERLING'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Please briefly describe your vision for taking on a new role as the U.S. Ambassador to Slovakia. What are your top priorities? What challenges do you foresee?

Answer. No U.S. ambassador has a higher priority than the protection of our citizens from ensuring the safety of individual American travelers, to bolstering homeland security through bilateral law enforcement cooperation.

Slovakia is a valued NATO Ally and EU partner. If confirmed, I will work to build Slovakia's capacity—including a resourced military less dependent on Russia—to act in the region and around the globe in concert with the United States and other allies. If confirmed, I will also focus on strengthening bilateral trade and investment, including by increasing opportunities for U.S. companies in the Slovak market and for Slovak companies that want to invest in the United States. I will also promote U.S. exports, fight for transparency and the rule of law as Slovakia improves its business environment, advocate for strong intellectual property rights enforcement, and press for greater energy diversity and efficiency that will further Slovakia's, and Europe's, energy security. Finally, if confirmed, I will emphasize with Slovak leaders and ordinary citizens that our countries' partnership is grounded in our shared democratic values, which include respect for the human rights and dignity of all people, notably including, in the case of Slovakia, its Romani minority and Muslims.

An immediate challenge I will confront will be forging a strong working relationship with the new Slovak government. Slovakia's March 5 parliamentary elections saw eight parties qualify for seats in Parliament, including several previously unrepresented parties. The incumbent ruling party, Smer, which had enjoyed an outright majority in Parliament since 2012, again garnered the most votes. However, several parties rode a wave of anti-establishment sentiment to deny Smer a renewed majority, necessitating a coalition government. Whatever the outcome of the ongoing coalition negotiations, several key ministry positions will change hands and the new coalition's platform may have different priorities than the current government.

If confirmed, I will immediately seek to preserve and build on the current momentum in the bilateral relationship with the new government, in part by establishing strong ties to existing and new leaders to help facilitate more effective communication and build trust.

Question. How do you feel your past experience, as well as your current position as Deputy Chief of Mission with the U.S. Embassy at The Hague, have prepared you to take on this new role?

Answer. I have more than 25 years of experience in the Foreign Service. I am currently leading the U.S. mission in the Netherlands as Charge d'Affaires for the second time after leading our embassy in Azerbaijan for two long periods as Charge d'Affaires. In total, I have served as Charge for over two years of my career. In my capacity as Deputy Chief of Mission at both missions, I was responsible for internal Embassy operations and mentoring new officers. Beyond prior postings in Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America, I have had the privilege to work in Washington, both in the State Department and at the National Security Council, where I was the Director responsible for 17 countries in Central and Eastern Europe, including Slovakia. These experiences have given me both the Washington and the field perspective for what is necessary in modern diplomacy, and what is expected of me by the White House as the President's personal representative.

Question. How would you describe the role and contributions of Slovakia as a NATO ally? While leaders in Poland and Baltic countries have suggested the establishment of NATO bases in their countries as a deterrent to Russian aggression in the region, Slovak Prime Minister Fico has rejected the notion that Slovakia could host a NATO base. What is the U.S. view on his position? Do you believe this has to do with Slovakia's sympathies toward Russia?

Answer. Slovakia is a strong NATO Ally. A member since 2004, Slovakia has shown a strong willingness to support NATO missions within Europe and throughout the world, to include operations in the Balkans, as well as U.N. Missions in Africa and the Levant. Slovakia has sent troops to—and taken casualties in—both Iraq and Afghanistan. Slovakia currently has 36 troops serving in Afghanistan as part of Resolute Support Mission. Slovakia is an active participant in NATO training exercises and has hosted several multinational exercises with its NATO Allies. Slovakia understands burden sharing and has announced its intent to increase defense spending from 1 percent to 1.6 percent of GDP by 2020, with 20 percent of that dedicated to force modernization.

Slovakia has committed to host a NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU). These small headquarters are valuable contributions to NATO's plan to adapt to emerging security concerns in and around Europe. NFIUs facilitate the rapid deployment of Allied forces to the eastern part of the Alliance, support collective defense planning, and assist in coordinating training and exercises.

Question. How would you characterize Slovakia's relations with Russia? Why has Slovakia been skeptical of EU sanctions against Russia over its aggression in Ukraine? How does Slovakia's perception compare to that of its neighbors? What is the extent of Russian influence on the Slovak government? How do the Slovakian people view Russia?

Answer. Slovakia is a valued NATO Ally and EU partner. Slovakia supported the EU consensus to impose and subsequently roll over the sanctions, most recently in January 2016. Slovakia supports U.S. and EU efforts to strengthen Europe's energy security and has played a critical role in strengthening Ukraine's energy security by enabling the reverse flow of natural gas to Ukraine starting in 2014. This step allowed Ukraine to get through the last two winters without any major gas shortages and gain bargaining leverage with Russia over future gas supply and transit contracts.

Russian influence in Slovakia is partly a remnant of the former Czechoslovakia's place in the Warsaw Pact during the Cold War. Russia then exercised influence over Slovakia, which Russia argued was a natural outgrowth of linguistic and cultural ties and the Soviet Union's role in ending Nazi occupation of Slovak territory in World War II. A significant number of Slovaks studied in a school system strongly influenced by the Soviet Union or studied in the Soviet Union itself. Today, Russia is Slovakia's fourth-most-important trade partner, and Slovakia is almost completely dependent on Russia for its oil, natural gas, and nuclear fuel supply.

Question. In your opinion, can the U.S. do anything to mitigate Russian influence with the Slovakian government? With the Slovak people? If so, what specifically?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to help build Slovakia's capacity to act in concert with us in Europe and beyond. This commitment includes ensuring Slovakia has the resources needed to be less dependent on Russia. Specifically, I will strongly advocate for Slovakia to build a well-resourced military less dependent on Russia. I will also work with my counterparts across the region to reduce Slovakia's dependence on Russian energy sources.

Additionally, if confirmed, I will also focus on promoting and strengthening growing U.S.-Slovakia cultural and trade ties to counter Russian influence. Slovaks tend to hold very positive views of the United States and are proud members of NATO and the EU. Great programs like Summer Work and Travel enable thousands of Slovaks (2,700 in calendar year 2015) to visit the United States and reinforce Slovakia's strong commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration. The Embassy actively works to counter Russian propaganda and disinformation, which is one of its Mission goals. Last year, the Embassy sponsored a public panel discussion of conspiracy theories in the media, many of which are spread by Russian media outlets. The U.S. government narrative in Slovakia focuses on the strengths of America and the transatlantic alliance to inspire confidence in the future, which counters the focus of Russian propaganda on instilling fear and uncertainty.

Question. There are differing assessments of corruption inside Slovakia. In your opinion, to what extent is corruption a problem for Slovakia? How does corruption affect life in Slovakia? How can the U.S. government help to reduce the influence of corruption in the country?

Answer. Corruption continues to be a significant problem in Slovakia. Public confidence in the judicial system is among the lowest in the EU, an example of how corruption affects society. Statistics show that most corruption cases prosecuted in Slovakia involve small sums and that high-level prosecutions are rare. Strengthening the rule of law is a long-term, ongoing, and complex challenge. While Slovakia has come a long way since independence, more remains to be done. Our Embassy has been a close partner in developing Slovak institutions and will continue to work hard to strengthen rule of law in Slovakia.

If confirmed, I will work to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law, reinforcing that accountability and transparency are necessary to modern democracy and stressing that corruption undermines democratic values and effective, stable government. Our Embassy has been a close partner with government and civil society in encouraging needed reforms, including by providing training opportunities for prosecutors and law enforcement. I plan to continue building upon these efforts if given the opportunity. The recent Slovak elections clearly showed that the Slovak people place a top priority on fighting corruption in their country, which requires strengthening and deepening the rule of law and democracy in the country.

Question. What can the United States do to help strengthen energy security and increase supply diversification for Slovakia and its neighbors?

Answer. The United States and Slovakia are partnering closely on the issue of energy security, as Slovakia is almost completely dependent on Russia for its oil, natural gas, and nuclear fuel supply. Diversification of energy routes and sources is particularly important for countries like Slovakia that are heavily reliant on single sources of supply. The United States is committed to advancing European energy security through an integrated European energy market and diversification—of fuel types, supply source countries, and delivery routes. One of our highest priorities is maintaining Ukraine, and thus Slovakia, as a gas transit country.

Enhanced Slovak energy security is also an opportunity to foster increased energy cooperation across the region. We continue to encourage Slovakia to work within EU structures to promote greater integration within the EU's own internal energy market. If confirmed, I will work with my counterparts across the region to promote this type of regional collaboration.

Our energy security policy is a pro-Europe policy, not an anti-Russia policy. Russian supplies can and should remain an important source of energy for Europe. But suppliers must follow Europe's rules. We believe comprehensive gas diversification—fuel type, supply source country, and transit route—and adherence to EU rules to ensure a transparent, liquid and competitive market best guarantee energy security for the region's people.

Question. How would you promote the expansion of U.S.-Slovakia trade and investment ties? Do you believe the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership would benefit Slovakia? Why or why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs as well as the U.S. Department of Commerce to ensure the full resources of the U.S. government are used to advocate for U.S. businesses in Slovakia. I will also pursue aggressive U.S. investment and export promotion efforts to maximize the many commercial opportunities in the Slovak market. I will work with my staff to promote joint ventures and other opportunities for Slovak firms seeking to invest in the United States.

As someone who has served for the past six years on the boards of directors for the American Chambers of Commerce (AmCham) in the Netherlands and Azerbaijan, I will continue, if confirmed, as a partner with the AmCham in Slovakia to improve Slovakia's business climate, with a focus on continuing to increase transparency, predictability, stability, and the transfer of best practices from the United States. One way Slovakia can enhance its appeal to U.S. businesses is by better institutionalizing rule of law, particularly anti-corruption efforts. A level playing field would benefit not only U.S. firms, but Slovakia as a whole.

As a market-oriented, export-led economy, Slovakia supports T-TIP. If confirmed, I will work with the Slovak government to promote the expected benefits that T-TIP and increased trade with the United States will bring to Slovakia and the region, particularly during Slovakia's inaugural presidency of the European Council during the second half of this year.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2016

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

Hon. Geeta Pasi, of New York, nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Chad
Hon. Mary Beth Leonard, of Massachusetts, nominated to be Representative of the United States of America to the African Union
Anne S. Casper, of Nevada, nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Burundi

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:40 p.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jeff Flake, presiding.

Present: Senators Flake [presiding] and Markey.

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

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

Today the committee will consider the nominations of three experienced career Foreign Service officers to be U.S. Ambassadors to Chad, the African Union, and Burundi. I was happy to meet each of the nominees in my office earlier. I appreciate their appreciation of the challenges ahead and their willingness to undertake this.

Chad remains an important partner on a number of fronts, especially in the efforts against Boko Haram. Popular protests in the run-up to recent elections and economic stress due in part to low global oil prices highlight internal problems, and the government will need to grapple with these in the months and years to come.

The African Union plays an important role in promoting peace, good governance, and economic development on the continent. As Senator Markey mentioned, we were able to visit that body last year with President Obama. Managing our relationship with the AU will continue to be a vital part of our regional engagement.

Finally, since last year, Burundi's escalating violence and instability has made for a complex situation that requires sustained attention, careful handling by our next Ambassador who will face many challenges in pursuing U.S. objectives.

I thank each of you for your time and sharing your experience and expertise with us here. I want to pass along our thanks to your family. I am sure you will want to introduce family members who are here. Particularly with these assignments, I know often it is a great sacrifice to yourself and your families for you to be able to serve, and it is very much appreciated.

With that, Senator Markey, do you have comments?

STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

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

The three nominees we have here today are highly accomplished Foreign Service officers who have dedicated their lives to the service of our country, sometimes in difficult places and away from loved ones. They understand that America needs to be out there in tough places working for our country and our partners for the mutual benefit of our governments and our people, and for that we are very grateful.

Countries in sub-Saharan Africa have tremendous promise and potential. Unfortunately, some of these countries are doing better at realizing this potential than others.

If confirmed, two of three nominees, the nominee for Ambassador to Burundi, Ms. Anne Casper, and the nominee for Ambassador to Chad, Ambassador Geeta Pasi, will face the difficult task of urging the leaders of those countries away from violence, instability, and corruption and towards democracy, good governance, and accountability.

The third is Ambassador Mary Beth Leonard, who I am proud to note is a fellow native of Massachusetts and a graduate of Doughtery High School in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her task as our representative to the African Union will be to lead our efforts to help strengthen that organization's ability to make Africa a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous place. Accomplishing those goals means working with African governments and regional bodies to make sure that there is democratic space that allows for free expression and non-violent dissent.

You are three wonderful candidates. We welcome you here today.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Markey.

We will now turn to the nominees. Ms. Geeta Pasi recently served as Director of the Office of Career Development and assignments in the State's Bureau of Human Resources. Previous positions included ambassadorship to Djibouti, Director of the Office of East African Affairs, and postings in Cameroon and Ghana.

The second nominee, Mary Beth Leonard, career Foreign Service member of the Department of State faculty advisors with the U.S. Naval War College. Previously she served as U.S. Ambassador to Mali, Director of the Office of West African Affairs. She has also held positions in South Africa, Cameroon, Namibia, and Togo. [Foreign language spoken.]

Senator FLAKE. I just said she is the only one here that speaks Afrikaans, so we will have this meeting in Afrikaans. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. Last but not least, Anne Casper, who currently serves as Senior Advisor in the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Partnership for the State Department's Global Engagement Center. Previous postings included Saudi Arabia, Rwanda, Albania, and Syria.

A highly accomplished group here. We, again, thank you for your willingness to serve.

Ms. Pasi?

STATEMENT OF HON. GEETA PASI, OF NEW YORK, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF CHAD

Ambassador PASI. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. It is an honor for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Chad. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me.

First, Mr. Chairman, please permit me to acknowledge family members here today. My sisters, Usha and Rita, and my niece Minaka have joined me this afternoon.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me to tell you a bit about myself. My career has included challenging assignments around the world and at home. I have served in Africa three times, as you noted, including as Ambassador to Djibouti. In Washington, I served in numerous positions, including as the Afghanistan Desk Officer where I was working on September 11, 2001, and I am proud to be in the Bureau of Human Resources.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to leading Embassy N'Djamena in advancing U.S. interests with our Foreign and Civil Service personnel, military staff, and local employees. Our main interests in Chad are peace and security, good governance, human rights, and economic development. Chad shares borders with Libya, Sudan, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger. Chad is an important partner in the fight against violent extremist groups, including Boko Haram. The United States aims to strengthen the productive partnership we enjoy with Chad. As we advance our mutual interests on the security front, 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 Chad at a moment when Chad's partnership with the United States and our allies is on the ascendancy.

Mr. Chairman, regional threats and instability have contributed to domestic challenges in Chad, including by threatening key trade routes and markets. This has weakened Chad's economy, which has already been impacted by a decline of oil prices globally. International investment in Chad is severely constrained by its geographic isolation, limited infrastructure, human capital challenges, high import duties, and corruption. Chad's human rights record is problematic although there has been some improvement. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Government of Chad on democracy and human rights.

Chad is host to over 380,000 refugees from Sudan, Nigeria, and the Central African Republic and approximately 100,000 internally displaced persons largely in the Lake Chad region. Ongoing insecu-

rity related to Boko Haram has resulted in decreased food production, reduced market activity, and complicated the delivery of humanitarian assistance. As a result, over 100,000 people are food insecure. Internally displaced persons and refugees lack access to food, shelter, and sanitation, and their huge numbers have taxed Chad's limited infrastructure.

If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I will remain focused on using all elements of the USG to support Chad in its efforts to counter the threat of Boko Haram, including closely monitoring Boko Haram's linkages to ISIL under its new name, ISIL West Africa Province. I will encourage the Government of Chad to focus not only on the immediate security threat, but also the root causes of violence in the region.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, my highest priority will be the protection of mission personnel, as well as all Americans living and traveling in Chad and American business interests. Within the next year, the mission will move to a newly constructed embassy compound, meaning that all mission personnel will work in the safest and most secure facilities available. Maintaining this technologically advanced building in Chad will be a challenge, and I am committed to good stewardship of the significant USG investment.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to 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 Chad. It is a duty and responsibility I would be honored to accept. Thank you and I would welcome any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Pasi follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GEETA PASI

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor for me to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Chad. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me. First, Mr. Chairman, please permit me to acknowledge family members here today. My sisters, Usha and Rita, my brother Peter, my sister in law Hallie Lewis, my brother in law Subir Sachdev, and my nieces who have joined me today.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me to tell you about myself. My career has included challenging assignments around the world and at home. I have served in Africa three times, including as Ambassador to Djibouti. In Washington, I served in numerous positions, including as the Afghanistan Desk Officer where I was working on September 11, 2001. I currently serve in the Bureau of Human Resources.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to leading Embassy N'Djamena in advancing U.S. interests with our team of Foreign and Civil Service personnel, military staff, and local employees. Our main interests in Chad are peace and security, good governance, human rights, and economic development. Chad shares borders with Libya, Sudan, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Niger. Chad is an important partner in the fight against violent extremist groups, including Boko Haram. The United States aims to strengthen the productive partnership we enjoy with Chad. As we advance our mutual interests on the security front, 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 Chad, at a moment when Chad's partnership with the United States and its allies is in the ascendancy.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, Chad is committed to regional stability. Chad plays a critical role in the region and is an important partner in combatting violent extremism.

Mr. Chairman, regional threats and instability have contributed to domestic challenges in Chad, including by threatening key trade routes and markets. This has weakened Chad's economy, which has already been impacted by a decline of oil

prices globally. International investment in Chad is severely constrained by its geographic isolation, limited infrastructure, human capital challenges, high import duties, and corruption. Chad's human rights record is problematic although there has been improvement. If confirmed, I will continue to press the Government of Chad on democracy and human rights.

Given its location in a troubled region, Chad is host to over 380,000 refugees—from Sudan, Nigeria and the Central African Republic—and approximately 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDP), largely in the Lake Chad region. Ongoing insecurity related to Boko Haram attacks has led to decreased food production, reduced market activity, and complicated the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Over 100,000 people are food insecure in Boko Haram-affected areas of the country. Boko Haram has repeatedly attacked villages, burned homes, killed village leaders, and targeted both civilians and security forces. IDPs and refugees lack access to food, shelter, sanitation, and hygiene services, and their large numbers have taxed Chad's already limited resources.

If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, I will remain focused on using all elements of the USG to support Chad in its efforts to counter the threat of Boko Haram, including closely monitoring Boko Haram's linkages to ISIL under its new name—ISIL West Africa Province. I will encourage the Government of Chad to focus not only on the immediate security threat, but also the root causes of violence in the region.

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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to 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 Chad: it is a duty and responsibility I would be honored to accept. Thank you and I would welcome any questions you might have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you for being here. Your family members know more about African sanctions than they wanted to know probably. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. Thank you for being here as well.

Ms. Leonard?

STATEMENT OF HON. MARY BETH LEONARD, OF MASSACHUSETTS, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE AFRICAN UNION

Ambassador LEONARD. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, it is a great honor to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the African Union and as the U.S. Representative to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

I joined the Foreign Service 28 years ago nearly to this day in the same class as today's co-panelist, Geeta Pasi, I might add, with a newly minted master's degree in African studies. I remember vividly my excitement that the State Department would agree to send me to live and work in Africa. Sitting here today, after six tours in Africa and two domestic Africa-related tours, my excitement is equally palpable, as I contemplate the prospect that, if confirmed, I will marshal those professional experiences in directing U.S. relations with the African Union. These experiences culminated with the honor of serving as Ambassador in Mali, where the U.S. mission was at the forefront of a closely coordinated multilateral effort to support that country in emerging from multidimensional security and governance crisis.

I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence that the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me with this nomination, and if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members of the committee and your staffs to promote and protect U.S. interests across Africa by strengthening and expanding our ties with the continent's premier multilateral institution.

I am pleased to welcome family members who are with me today, including my sister, Ann Marie Stoica, and niece, Mary Ann Manning, as well as my cousin, Brian Johnson.

Nothing I could say today would underscore the importance of our relationship with the African Union more than President Obama did by his historic visit to Addis Ababa last July. As the first U.S. President to visit the AU, President Obama delivered a strong message on our commitment to Africa. This is a relationship rooted in shared goals, which are reflected in President Obama's 2012 policy directive for sub-Saharan Africa and the AU's Constitutive Act, i.e., their founding document: peace and security; democracy and governance; opportunity and development; and economic growth, trade, and investment. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening our close collaboration in all four areas.

U.S. resource contributions to AU peace and security efforts have included both capacity building and operational support. Capacity building has assisted with AU peacekeeping and conflict early warning work, and operational support has included equipment, training, and logistics planning. The AU and its member states have made substantial progress in being able to step up to their security challenges, but additional work is needed, including in counterterrorism and maritime security.

The realization that international largesse is not without its limits has led to discussions about new partnerships to provide both more reliable support and greater financial responsibility from the AU and its member states in U.N.-authorized peace operations in Africa. If confirmed, I would look forward to next steps as we work together with the AU, the U.N., and others in the international community to bring new proposals to fruition.

The United States and the AU share a commitment to democratic principles, including free and fair elections, peaceful transitions of power, and sound governance. More broadly, we look to the AU as a respected voice on the continent that builds consensus on African issues among member states and stakeholders. I will continue this dialogue if I am confirmed, including frank discussions about how to address situations where democracy and governance are falling short. As President Obama made clear during his AU visit last year, the United States does not believe that governments should change their constitutions to benefit the incumbent in power. Our diplomatic efforts to resolve or prevent such crises are multifaceted and, indeed, multilateral. The African Union has been and will continue to be important partners in this regard.

On the development front, the AU's Agenda 2063 in the words of AU Commission Chairperson Dr. Dlamini Zuma encapsulates the aspirations of Africa's people for themselves and for their continent." From PEPFAR to the President's Power Africa initiative, the United States has been at the forefront of helping Africa and Africans realize those aspirations. We need to help Africans build

sustainable livelihoods and better opportunities, particularly for this continent's strikingly young population. Congress' 2015 renewal of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act for another 10 years will enable more African entrepreneurs and exporters to build their businesses via stronger and more open trade relationships with the United States, another area I look forward to supporting, if confirmed.

Mr. Chairman, baie dankie, and I thank both members for the opportunity to appear before you and look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Leonard follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARY BETH LEONARD,

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, and members of the committee, it is a great honor to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the African Union and as the U.S. Representative to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). I joined the Foreign Service 28 years ago nearly to this day—in the same class as today's co-panelist Geeta Pasi, I might add—with a newly minted Master's Degree in African studies. I remember vividly my excitement that the State Department would agree to send me to live and work in Africa. Sitting here today, after six tours in Africa and two domestic Africa-related tours, my excitement is equally palpable as I contemplate the prospect that, if confirmed, I will marshall those professional experiences in directing U.S. relations with the African Union. These experiences culminated with the honor of serving as Ambassador in Mali, where the U.S. mission was at the forefront of a closely coordinated multilateral effort to support that country in emerging from a multidimensional security and governance crisis. I am deeply grateful for the trust and confidence that the President and Secretary Kerry have shown in me with this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the members of this committee and your staffs to promote and protect U.S. interests across Africa by strengthening and expanding our ties with the continent's premier multilateral institution.

I am pleased to welcome family members who are with me today including my sister Ann Marie Stoica and niece Mary Ann Manning.

Nothing I could say today would underscore the importance of our relationship with the African Union more than President Obama did by his historic visit to Addis Ababa last July. As the first U.S. President to visit the AU, President Obama delivered a strong message on our commitment to Africa—to democracy, to opportunity, to prosperity, and to the promotion of and respect for human rights for all people. This is a relationship rooted in shared goals, which are reflected in President Obama's 2012 Policy Directive for sub-Saharan Africa and the AU's Constitutive Act (the AU's founding document): Peace and Security; Democracy and Governance; Opportunity and Development; and Economic Growth, Trade, and Investment. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening our close collaboration in all four areas.

U.S. resource contributions to AU peace and security efforts have included both capacity building and operational support. Capacity building has assisted with AU peacekeeping and conflict early warning work and operational support has included equipment, training, and logistics planning. Most recently, U.S. support has enabled AU efforts to counter the Lord's Resistance Army, support the AU Mission in Somalia, and bolster the Lake Chad Basin Commission's efforts to counter Boko Haram. The AU and its member states have made substantial progress in being able to step up to their security challenges but additional work is needed, including in counterterrorism and maritime security. The realization that international largesse is not without its limits has led to discussions about new partnerships to provide both more reliable support and greater financial responsibility from the AU and its member states in UN-authorized peace operations in Africa. We welcomed the AU's appointment this January of Dr. Donald Kaberuka as the AU High Representative for the Peace Fund, highlighting the AU's commitment to this issue. If confirmed, I would look forward to next steps as we work together with the AU, the UN, and others in the international community to bring new proposals to fruition.

The United States and the AU share a commitment to democratic principles, including free and fair elections, peaceful transitions of power, and sound governance. More broadly, we look to the AU as a respected voice on the continent that builds

consensus on African issues among member states and stakeholders. I will continue this dialogue if I am confirmed, including frank discussions about how to address situations where democracy and governance are falling short. As President Obama made clear during his AU visit last year, the United States does not believe that governments should change their constitutions to benefit the incumbent in power. Our diplomatic efforts to resolve or prevent such crises are multi-faceted, and indeed multilateral; the African Union, along with sub-regional African organizations such as the East African Community, has been and will continue to be important partners in this regard.

On the development front, the AU's "Agenda 2063" in the words of AU Commission Chairperson Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, "encapsulates the aspirations of Africa's people for themselves and for their continent." From PEPFAR to the President's Power Africa initiative, the United States has been at the forefront of helping Africa and Africans realize those aspirations. We need to help Africans build sustainable livelihoods and better opportunities, particularly for this continent's strikingly young population. Congress' 2015 renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act for another ten years will enable more African entrepreneurs and exporters to build their businesses via stronger and more open trade relationships with the United States, another area I look forward to supporting, if confirmed.

I cannot close without a word about the global response to the Ebola crisis, where our U.S. military and medical personnel worked alongside counterparts from Africa, Europe, China, and elsewhere to treat the ill and build institutional resilience in the Ebola-affected countries. We could not have succeeded without the critical contributions of the African Union, which deployed medical personnel and helped to coordinate a very effective response. If confirmed, it would be my honor to continue to pursue our efforts to support the nascent Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, partially modeled on our own CDC, as framed in the April 2015 memorandum of cooperation signed by Secretary Kerry and Chairperson Dlamini Zuma.

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 FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Casper?

STATEMENT OF ANNE S. CASPER, OF NEVADA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI

Ms. CASPER. Chairman Flake, Ranking Member Markey, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Burundi. I am extremely grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Burundi and help Burundians achieve the bright future they deserve.

Accompanying me here today is my husband, Karl Deringer, who has served in U.S. missions overseas as a nurse and in 2012 won the Secretary of State's award for volunteerism in Africa. I would also like to mention my mother Ilene Casper who taught me the value of education, my brother Larry, an assistant U.S. attorney, and my late father, Charles Casper, a self-made man and proud veteran who modeled service to our country and a father who pushed his daughter to follow her dreams.

Mr. Chairman, Burundi has been a friend of the United States since its founding as a republic in 1962. Roughly the size of New Hampshire and located in the heart of Africa, Burundi is home to 10 million citizens.

After decades of ethnic conflict, political violence, one-party rule, and a civil war that killed over 300,000 people, the signing of the Arusha Agreement in 2000 established a framework for peaceful political competition and ushered in a decade of hope. However,

events over the past year have led Burundi away from the spirit and promise of Arusha.

Since April 2015, when the Burundi Government signaled its intent to disregard term limits in violation of the Arusha Agreement, over 400 people have been killed and 260,000 have fled to neighboring countries. Targeted violence, assassinations, sexual and gender-based violence, and retaliatory attacks have continued with impunity, further threatening Burundi's fragile peace. Mr. Chairman, this killing must stop. Ending this crisis and restoring stability to Burundi requires leadership and it requires courage. Peace that binds all parties is essential for a return to a positive trajectory in Burundi.

The United States remains seized with resolving this crisis through direct engagement. We are pressing all sides to stop the violence and commit to participating in the East African Community-led dialogue process, which most recently convened last month. Additionally, the United States is supporting the deployment and important work of U.N. and African Union human rights monitors and continues to engage the U.N., AU, and regional partners on contingency planning.

Mr. Chairman, young people make up over half of all Burundian citizens, and they are seeking education and jobs in ever greater numbers. Given the dearth of opportunity, however, they are particularly vulnerable to recruitment into militias. The U.S. Government runs programs with local partners to develop opportunities for young people, strengthen conflict resolution, monitor for hate speech, and promote peaceful messaging. If I am confirmed, embassy staff and I will continue to reach out broadly to strengthen these efforts and expand opportunities.

Mr. Chairman, Burundi's fragile economy continues to deteriorate, increasing Burundians' health and nutritional challenges. The U.S. Government provides $50 million annually in USAID-funded assistance programs, primarily to the health sector. We have also contributed $86 million in humanitarian assistance for refugees and others affected by the current crisis. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that this assistance remains effective.

I also would note that Burundi has made important contributions to peacekeeping, particularly countering Al Shabaab in Somalia.

Finally, our mission in Bujumbura has performed admirably under very difficult circumstances over the past year. I look forward, if confirmed, to working with every one of our embassy staff, American and locally engaged alike. Ensuring the continued safety of American citizens residing in Burundi and the security of our staff are my highest priorities.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will bring the collective experiences of my 23 years in the Foreign Service to advance U.S. interests. I will also help Burundi's people restore their nation and their lives so that they export products, not people, and so that when the world thinks of Burundi and the center of Africa, we will not dwell on their fears but we will share with Burundians the promise of their hopes.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Casper follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANNE S. CASPER

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Burundi. I am extremely grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and other interested Members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Burundi and help Burundians achieve the bright future they deserve.

Accompanying me here today is my husband, Karl Deringer, who has served in U.S. missions overseas as a nurse and in 2012 won the Secretary of State's award for volunteerism in Africa. I would not be here today without his support. I would also like to mention my mother, Ilene Casper, who taught me the value of education, my brother Larry, an assistant U.S. attorney, and my late father, Charles Casper, a self-made man and proud veteran who modeled service to our country and a father who pushed his daughter to follow her dreams.

Mr. Chairman, Burundi has been a friend of the United States since its founding as a republic in 1962. Roughly the size of New Hampshire and located in the heart of Africa, Burundi is home to over 10 million citizens.

After decades of ethnic conflict, political violence, one-party rule, and a civil war that killed over 300,000 people in Burundi, the signing of the Arusha Agreement in 2000 established a framework for peaceful political competition and ushered in a decade of hope. However, events over the past year have led Burundi away from the spirit and promise of Arusha.

Since April 2015, when the Burundi government signaled its intent to disregard term limits in violation of the Arusha Agreement, over 400 people have been killed and 260,000 have fled to neighboring countries. Targeted violence, assassination, sexual and gender-based violence and retaliatory attacks have continued with impunity, further threatening Burundi's fragile peace. Mr. Chairman, this killing must stop. Ending this crisis and restoring stability to Burundi requires leadership and it requires courage. Peace that binds all parties is essential for a return to a positive trajectory in Burundi.

The United States remains seized with resolving this crisis though direct engagement. We are pressing all sides to stop the violence and commit to participating in the East African Community-led dialogue process, which most recently convened last month. Additionally, the United States is supporting the deployment and important work of U.N. and African Union (AU) human rights monitors, and continues to engage the UN, AU, and regional partners on contingency planning.

Mr. Chairman, young people make up over half of all Burundian citizens and they are seeking education and jobs in ever greater numbers. Given the dearth of opportunity, however, they are particularly vulnerable to recruitment into militias. The U.S. government runs programs with local partners to develop opportunities for young people, strengthen conflict resolution, monitor for hate speech and promote peaceful messaging. If I am confirmed, Embassy staff and I will continue to reach out broadly to strengthen these efforts and expand opportunities. Mr. Chairman, Burundi's fragile economy continues to deteriorate, increasing Burundians' health and nutritional challenges. The U.S. government provides $50 million annually in USAID-funded assistance programs, primarily to the health sector. We have also contributed $86 million in humanitarian assistance for refugees affected by the current crisis. If confirmed, I will work to ensure this assistance remains effective.

I would also note that Burundi has made important contributions to peacekeeping, particularly countering Al Shabaab in Somalia.Finally, our Mission in Bujumbura has performed admirably under very difficult circumstances over the past year. I look forward, if confirmed, to working with every one of our Embassy staff, American and locally employed alike.

Ensuring the continued safety of American citizens residing in Burundi and the security of our staff are my highest priorities.Here in Washington, just the other day, I saw a high-value, single-source coffee for sale, from Burundi. Its quality, and pledge that a good price had been paid to the farmer, reminded me of Burundi's promising prospects.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will bring the collective experiences of my 23 years in the Foreign Service to advance U.S. interests; I will also help Burundi's people restore their nation and their lives so that they export products, not people, and so that when the world thinks of Burundi and the center of Africa, we will not dwell on their fears, but share with Burundians the promise of their hopes.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, all of you.

Ambassador Pasi, with regard to Chad, you mentioned protecting U.S. business interests as a top priority. What U.S. business interests are there in Chad right now?

Ambassador PASI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have U.S. business interest that is limited to the oil investment, the oil sector. Exxon Mobil and some partners are there. They run the pipeline from Chad to Cameroon. With the decline in oil prices, however, the associated companies in the oil industry have largely reduced their holdings or actually left Chad. So the actual American business presence is fairly small.

Senator FLAKE. And in terms of the future, likely investment likely in the oil and gas industry?

Ambassador PASI. I think the oil and gas sector, obviously, depends on the price of the oil and gas around the world. If it does increase, Chad will have more promise in terms of partners. There are Canadian firms also in the oil sector, as well as Chinese companies and others.

There are a few other sectors. Most Chadians are actually engaged in agriculture. They raise cotton. They export vegetables. We provide assistance to help them do a better job with that.

Senator FLAKE. Talk about USAID assistance with regard to development in agriculture.

Ambassador PASI. Yes. So USAID is engaged in a number of regional projects in Chad. We do not have a USAID presence in Chad. We have one representative but not a standard USAID office as we do in many other countries. But we have regional programs, and one is a seed program to provide more resilient seeds to Chadians so that crops are more effective in that drought-affected country. Second, there is a cotton collective program for the surrounding countries, those that raise cotton, to promote the sale of cotton. So they are mostly regionally based agricultural activities from USAID, in addition to the Countering Violent Extremism programs that we have there.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Leonard, the last panel—you heard them talk about sanctions. One of the panelists talked about U.N. sanctions really only being effective if they get AU support first. The African countries can come together. What do you see as part of your role there in this regard. For example, if we want to impose sanctions on the DRC, U.N. sanctions, your role in getting African countries through the AU to support these kind of actions?

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

I listened to the exchange of the previous panelists with great interest, and I noted not only their interest in the tool of sanctions but their generally shared conviction that sanctions as a tool works best when it is accompanied by a very broad strategy and shared strategy.

And I think that what is particularly interesting about our relationship with the African Union is the ability to help build regional consensus on the founding goals that are so near and dear to our own goals in Africa, mainly democracy and governance in the context of the conversation that you just had. And I have quoted the President's words in my statement about his attachment to that issue, and whatever the merits of an individual discussion, clearly

if a government—it is destabilizing insofar as political opponents are being attacked or aspirations are not met. And so, therefore, this question of democracy and governance is very much at the heart of peace and stability goals that are dear to the African Union, as well as democracy and governance.

So if I am confirmed, I would very much see my role as helping to forge that consensus. The places where international efforts have been very successful in Africa have been when the United Nations, the African Union, and international partners worked closely together to a shared goal. My previous posting in Mali was a very good example of that, one which did not include the particular tool of sanctions, but I think the larger point remains and I would look forward to interacting with the African Union on those issues.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ms. Casper, the government in Burundi has resisted efforts to force them or encourage them to engage in peace talks with other entities and in regional peace talks as well. What can we do to encourage them to move in that direction? What do you see your role being?

Ms. CASPER. Thank you, Senator. A very important question.

Having the Burundian Government engage in peace talks, along with all parties in the crisis is critical to moving forward Burundi in the spirit and fashion that it needs to go. Our Special Envoy Perriello succeeded last month in getting a range of actors to the table under the leadership of the East African Community and former Tanzania President Mkaba, and that is an important step that has been taken and one that we will continue to build on.

If I am confirmed, I will work directly with the government, the highest levels of government, to continue to press them to engage, as well as all actors that need to come to the table.

Senator FLAKE. Good. That is obviously important. We do not want this conflict to escalate. So you have got an important role there. So thank you.

Senator Markey?

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

Ms. Casper, if I can come back to you and just follow up where the chairman was going in terms of this Burundi problem state, which it really has become.

Last year, the president decided just to run for reelection, forget the constitution, and to ultimately just begin to set a real trend, which we are seeing in Congo and my fear is in Kenya and other countries in terms of just disregarding the constitution. The United States and the EU then imposed sanctions. My question to you is, how important was it that the United States and the EU imposed sanctions on Burundi from your perspective?

Ms. CASPER. Thank you, Senator.

First of all, let me say how important I thought that the discussion we had in the last hour about sanctions was. Sanctions are part in Burundi of a broader strategy that is ongoing, and that I think is a critical piece of this. So sanctions are one piece, but it is really part of a broader package.

In the Burundi case, in particular, sanctions have made clear that we, the U.S. Government, are committed to holding people who have engaged in human rights abuses and who are threat-

ening peace and security in Burundi, that they are accountable. It is also important that we have implemented those sanctions impartially so that there are people on all sides of the spectrum who have been sanctioned, and it is based purely on the abuses that they have committed.

As I noted, it is part of a broader strategy, including bringing people to the table, including the direct outreach that has occurred not just by the U.S. Government but also by our regional partners, the African Union, the U.N., and others.

And finally, I would say I think it is important that people know generally that our sanctions are targeted against specific people, that they do not penalize the population in general, and that the United States Government stands for the people of Burundi, not for any particular group. And really, our main goal is to bring them back, help them come back to the spirit of Arusha, the spirit of compromise, and the spirit of peace.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Ms. Leonard, the AU has been very slow to put pressure on President Kabila to adhere to the DRC constitution, and the chairman and I and Senator Coons—we were at the AU when President Obama spoke very forcefully about the need to have an adherence to the constitutions of the countries of Africa with regard to elections.

The AU has expressed support, very dismayingly, to President Kabila's, quote, national dialogue, which I think is just widely seen as just a stall tactic. And so from my perspective, how do you explain the hesitancy of the AU to just cut right through this national dialogue and get right down to the bottom line, which is that he is trying to avoid having an election and he wants to perpetuate himself in office? So analyze the AU for us and why they are not stepping up.

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

I think that anyone who looks at the current events in Africa today and who understands the spirit of international coordination or regional coordination on peace and security matters as involving questions of prevention, as well as solving problems, looks at developments in the Congo and sees that that particular attention is very much required there now.

I think it is often the case that the African Union has several subregional organizations within them, and while it is often true that your close neighbors are best able to diagnose and deal with problems, it also creates certain sensitivities for neighbors as well.

The idea of dialogue is not something as a diplomat that I am going to object to. I do think it would be useful, for example, to expand those discussions very much in the spirit of my previous answer to the question that the world solves the problems best when the African Union and, for example, the United Nations are working together to pressure sides in a useful direction, in a positive direction, and one that does not raise the near-term prospect of dealing with later instability. And that would be very much the spirit of my interactions with the African Union, if I am confirmed.

Senator MARKEY. Great.

Ambassador Pasi, we had a hearing last month where we were talking about Africa, and I raised specifically a question about the

sale of American combat aircraft to Nigeria with arched eyebrows almost at the ceiling when I did so. But I could have just as easily been talking about our security partnership with Chad, another partner in our fight against Boko Haram.

Can you talk to us a little bit about what you think the appropriate balance is between governments that are just authoritarian, such as we see in Chad, and our partnership with them and the aid which we provide them which sometimes sends the wrong message to I think the people in their own country and to the rest of the region?

Ambassador PASI. Thank you, Mr. Senator. It is a question I have thought a lot about. I was Ambassador to Djibouti where we also provided a huge amount of military assistance. We have a base there. Chad is, of course, very different. We do not have a military base, but we provide security assistance to Chad in order to help them combat Boko Haram, a threat to the region and now with their affiliation with ISIL, a threat that goes far beyond West Africa and in fact might reach other regions of the world.

It is a challenging problem. I am very proud that the U.S. Government, when we give assistance, whether it is from DOD, the State Department, or whichever agency it comes from, includes human rights and other kinds of training for those we are training. The human rights training, of course, helps soldiers and others, police, understand the basic requirements if they are going to be using U.S. assistance wherever they are going.

We do need to provide military hardware or Chad will not be able to do the job that we have asked them to do, that they need to do. And I think we have to be careful about what we are giving, the messages that accompany it, and if confirmed, it will be a priority for me to reinforce hopefully with the U.S. military that is providing so much assistance in Chad, training and other kinds of assistance, that while we are providing for your security, the goal is to have a better democracy in Chad and in the region.

Senator MARKEY. Can you just expand just a little bit? Because I think it is important for these words to be heard. Boko Haram has changed its name.

Ambassador PASI. Yes.

Senator MARKEY. And it has changed its name to—I heard you say it—ISIL West Africa Province in your verbal testimony. What is the significance of that name change? What does that mean from the perspective of regional security and a U.S. perspective of this metastasizing ISIL threat in the region?

Ambassador PASI. Yes. Thank you, Senator.

I think it is a very significant change. Boko Haram, in fact, just attacked a small town, a city, in Niger, and Chad has immediately dispatched 2,000 troops. So the name change, I think, shows that they want to affiliate themselves with something much bigger, much broader, an organization that has a reach into Europe and beyond. And I think it goes to show how a group that once was thought of as just a threat to one country or a small group has become the deadliest terrorist organization on the planet, killing thousands and thousands and thousands with relatively limited technology at their behest.

Chad is, of course, very focused on regional security, and Boko Haram has tremendously threatened its economy, its trade routes, its ability with a limited economy that is very challenged to thrive. I think we are very lucky to have partners in Africa like Chad who are willing to be at the tip of the spear in dealing with this group, but I believe given its location, surrounded by many, many difficult countries, including Libya, that Chad will have many challenges to come. And we will be working even more closely with them on security as we move forward.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Well, we appreciate your being here and for having this confirmation hearing. We appreciate the family for being here as well.

The hearing record will remain open until Friday. Again, if you get questions from other members who are not here, if you could please answer them as quickly as possible, it would be appreciated.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve and thank you to the family members for being here and for enduring the hearing before as well. So we appreciate it. Thanks for your service.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:20 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF HON. GRETA PASI, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF CHAD, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PASI'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER 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. Promoting human rights and democracy has been a theme throughout my career. As a political officer in Ghana in the mid-1990s (1995-1997), I led U.S. efforts to promote political dialogue, including hosting political salon meetings that allowed political party representatives from dozens of parties to engage in meaningful dialogue in a neutral environment. This ensured that no parties would be marginalized in the pre-election period. U.S. engagement with all parties sent a powerful signal to the country and the government.

Then, while serving in Dhaka as Deputy Chief of Mission and Charge (2006-2009), I led our efforts to convince the Caretaker Government (CTG) to first set and then adhere to a schedule for restoring democracy through free, fair and credible elections. At the same time, we advocated forcefully that the CTG should be held to high standards in respecting human rights during the state of emergency. The CTG implemented changes that benefited society and led to an elected government on the timetable agreed upon by the international community.

Finally, as ambassador to Djibouti from 2011-2014, I collaborated with ambassadors from like-minded countries to engage with the opposition and coordinated on messaging to press the Government of Djibouti on democracy and governance concerns. Our collective efforts led to a dialogue with the opposition and their inclusion in political discussions.

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

Answer. The most significant human rights problems Chad faces are security force abuse, poor prison conditions, and discrimination and violence against women and children. Other human rights abuses of concern include arbitrary killings by se-

curity forces and use of torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, and infringement on freedoms of expression and assembly.

If confirmed, the most important steps I will take to promote human rights and democracy will be to seek opportunities to bolster the capacity of civil society and increase civic space and encourage the Government of Chad (GOC) to protect and defend the human rights of all citizens; as well as emphasize building and strengthening institutional capacity. I will press GOC interlocutors on the need for security forces to abide by international standards for human rights in its efforts to combat Boko Haram, strengthen civilian forces role in providing citizen security, investigate allegations of abuse, and hold human rights violators accountable. I will encourage the GOC to focus not only on addressing the immediate security threat posed by Boko Haram, but also the root causes of violence in the region. I will continue to support and push to expand USG programs to provide human rights training for Chadian security forces deemed eligible under the Leahy Law, International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) to provide Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and management training for Chad's prison officials, and Anti-Terrorism Training funded programs on rule of law for law enforcement agencies.

I will also urge passage of the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) legislation, which remains pending, and seek continued anti-trafficking training for judicial sector personnel to increase protection for victims. Finally, I will also seek opportunities to engage and support Chadian civil society organizations in order to help guarantee increased civic and political space in Chad, including engagement with organizations that promote the protection of women and children, such as the House of the Woman which offers skills training to victims of domestic violence.

In addition to supporting the promotion of human rights and democracy, by supporting these activities I hope to help foster greater transparency in government and elevation of citizen awareness and peaceful participation in formulating public policy.

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 Chad in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. If confirmed, I am prepared to take on an ambitious agenda when it comes to human rights, but I am also prepared for obstacles and possible resistance. We noted with concern reports of abuse and targeting of opposition supporters following April's presidential election. It will be necessary to continue impressing upon the GOC the importance of upholding freedoms of expression and assembly and inclusion of all citizens in the political process, while simultaneously continuing to demonstrate our support for civil society.

Within the confines of existing U.S. government resources, if confirmed, I will press the GOC to improve detention conditions in the prison system to address gross overcrowding and physical abuse. I will also ask other donors to collaborate with us toward this end. The recent addition of a regional legal advisor in N'Djamena will enable the Mission to begin looking at the systematic improvements to the judicial system and to provide an American subject matter expert to engage on these issues with the GOC.

With assistance from UNICEF, Chad is engaged in a program to combat TIP and improve protection of women and children. Chad's current financial difficulties, due to low oil prices and reduced livestock and agricultural exports, have reduced governmental ability to sustain programs. We will continue to encourage Chad to carry out programs in place and will continue to include training on TIP in security and law enforcement training the USG provides.

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 Chad? 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 highly committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local NGOs in Chad and will maintain an ongoing dialogue with the government, civil society organizations and international organizations in order to increase civic and political space in Chad. Uppermost in my mind will be promoting inclusivity and engaging with groups that traditionally have been marginalized such as the LGBT community.

Embassy N'Djamena has a Leahy committee which actively coordinates responses for Leahy vetting for any Chadian security forces requesting to receive U.S. govern-

ment-funded training. The Government of Chad is proud to include human rights training in its security force training programs, and I will urge the Government to continue pursuing training for eligible units.

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

Answer. If confirmed, my Embassy team and I will continue to actively engage with the Government of Chad at all levels to successfully redress cases of any political prisoners or persons unjustly targeted by the Government.

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

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, protecting human rights, supporting the rights of civil society, and emphasizing the vital importance of good governance will be high priorities for the entire Mission and be interwoven into all aspects of our efforts in Chad.

Good Governance

The countries of the Lake Chad Basin have acknowledged the need for a comprehensive plan to defeat Boko Haram, including providing civil administration and economic opportunities to prevent radicalization. While Chad does not have the same interreligious tensions as Nigeria, the existence of marginalized and underdeveloped communities could pose a challenge to national stability.

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to engage the Chadian government regarding the need for inclusive governance? What programs to support democracy and governance do we currently have in Chad? Please specify dollar amounts and accounts. What do you see as the greatest opportunity for the U.S. to support improvements in democratic practices and institutions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Chad to fully permit all political parties and civil society organizations to exercise their rights of assembly and free speech as well as its respect of the legal, civil, and human rights of all its citizens, and allow, encourage, and support Chadian citizens who exercise their constitutional rights peacefully. While there was no bilateral democracy and governance funding in Chad in FY 2015, we obligated a total of $426,174 in FY 2014 ESF to support regional Trans Saharan Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) activities in Chad, including, for example, to provide work skills training to students in Koranic schools.

Refugees

As you referenced in your testimony, Chad is host to more than 380,000 refugees from Nigeria, Sudan, and the Central African Republic. Many of these individuals are living in remote areas in which host populations face enormous economic challenges.

Question. Are sufficient resources available to meet the needs of the Sudanese and Central African refugees in Chad? If not, if confirmed, how will you work with Chadian and United Nations officials to ensure that they are?

Answer. The international donor community has been responding on a sustained basis to the humanitarian crisis that started when Sudanese refugees began crossing into eastern Chad from Darfur over a decade ago. Humanitarian assistance continues to be required to assist the GOC to respond to recurrent crises while also strengthening the long-term capacity of vulnerable populations to cope with these events. However, donor fatigue and a record number of needs elsewhere in the world have reduced international assistance.

If confirmed, I will promote programs to increase self-sufficiency of refugee populations. I will support ongoing discussions between the UN, the GOC, and local authorities to further expand refugee access to arable land. Furthermore, I will urge donors to fund agricultural extension services to refugees who farm and also urge additional funding for education and training programs for refugees. To date in FY 2016, the Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) has provided $21.3 million to international organizations to address humanitarian needs in the Lake Chad Basin.

Regional Coordination

Coordination mechanisms have proliferated in the Sahel as a result of the Boko Haram violence and the subsequent regional humanitarian crisis. The U.N. has appointed a regional humanitarian coordinator and the United States has a coordinator for counter-Boko Haram operations.

Question. If confirmed, what do you see as your role within the context of the Lake Chad Basin coordination mechanism?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage closely with the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to help ensure that these organizations are supporting efforts by the Lake Chad Basin countries (Chad, Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon) and Benin to work together to defeat Boko Haram. I believe the MNJTF, which is headquartered in N'Djamena, has an important, constructive role to fill in defeating Boko Haram. Specifically, the MNJTF can provide a venue for planning and coordination of security operations against Boko Haram, intelligence sharing, and oversight of security operations to ensure they are conducted in accordance with international human rights standards. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE)-Lake Chad Basin and the U.S. Department of State Senior Coordinator on Boko Haram to promote effective U.S. support to the MNJTF and its member states.

In addition, if confirmed, I will coordinate counterterrorism (CT) and countering violent extremism (CVE) policies and programs through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP). Specifically, I will ensure all U.S. funded CT and CVE programs in and affecting Chad are coordinated through existing TSCTP synchronization processes—closely involving my development and defense colleagues at Post, in Germany, in Washington, and in the Sahel and Maghreb regions. These coordination efforts through TSCTP will also help us design and implement CT and CVE investments complementary to our French, EU, and other foreign colleagues' related efforts.

Question. What mechanism exists for international regional coordination on humanitarian and counterterrorism issues across the Sahel and Maghreb?

Answer. One mechanism for coordination of counterterrorism efforts across the Sahel is continued partnership with the French. The French government has placed its headquarters for all military operations in the Sahel and Maghreb in N'Djamena. This French military effort is named OPERATION BARKHANE. Through the Defense Attache Office and other military components under AFRICOM's purview, we are supporting French operations across the Sahel in shared initiatives to combat trans-regional terrorism. Many of these initiatives involve combined intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance efforts, to share more intelligence on nefarious actors, as well as training anti-terrorism units.

In addition to the security benefits noted above, the MNJTF, in close coordination with the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), has been developing a Civil-Military capability to address the humanitarian aspects of the Boko Haram conflict. The United States has also been providing assistance to this effort via our representatives to the Center for Coordination and Liaison (CCL).

The Sahel countries have also developed the G5 Sahel initiative to encourage greater coordination on regional issues such as terrorism and humanitarian relief. N'Djamena hosted a summit of the G5 Sahel in November 2015 and Chad, as the current president, continues to be a key partner in the group. Additionally, given the G5's mandate to coordinate and monitor regional cooperation, it would be an appropriate African forum to assume the responsibility of counterterrorism coordination in the Sahel.

International regional coordination on humanitarian issues falls to U.N. agencies such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) and the World Food Program. For example, in response to the crisis in the Lake Chad basin, OCHA has issued appeals and provides periodic sitreps on the status of assistance programs in that subregion. The U.N. World Food Program similarly coordinates food aid to the region and has a regional emergency operation for the Lake Chad basin towards which USAID committed $4.0 million in FY 2015 and $5.1 million in FY 2016.

Question. What will be your role, if confirmed, in participating in interagency coordination efforts for the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership?

Answer. If confirmed, my role in participating in interagency efforts for the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) will be to advocate for an appropriate mix of 3D (diplomacy, defense, and development) resources to respond to the specific needs of Chad and to ensure that these resources are programmed to have maximum impact.

U.S. Embassy N'Djamena currently participates in the TSCTP through several offices. The Democracy and Development Office works with TSCTP on development projects. Additionally, the Regional Security Office has been extremely active in maximizing use of the TSCTP Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) Program to provide training for Chadian police and security forces and the Department of Defense's Of-

fice of Security Cooperation has provided, via the TSCTP, vehicles, as well as medical, communications and Personal Protective equipment to Chadian military forces engaged in fighting Boko Haram. If confirmed as Ambassador, I will ensure that U.S. Embassy N'Djamena continues to maximize the impact of the support provided by the TSCTP, that we encourage Chadian participation in TSCTP efforts and that we continue to maintain open and continuous dialogue on the impacts of TSCTP efforts in Chad as well as the future direction of the partnership.

RESPONSES OF MARY BETH LEONARD, NOMINATED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE AFRICAN UNION, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

REPRESENTATIVE-DESIGNATE LEONARD'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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 have had the privilege of addressing human rights concerns throughout my Foreign Service career, from my very first tour following the trial of a Cameroonian opposition figure. In Mali, I received the Diplomacy for Human Rights prize in 2013, awarded each year to one U.S. ambassador for notable achievement in promoting democracy and human rights. My actions there included speaking out early and forcefully for a rapid return to elected governance after the 2012 coup; forestalling potential violations by engaging leaders from groups with records of violations in previous political eras to make clear both U.S. disapproval and dispel any notion that inter-communal violence was consistent with any concept of Malian patriotism; seeking accountability for crimes and excesses by the military junta; and calling out mistreatment of journalists. For example, when Mali's elected government bravely investigated the disappearance, and presumed murder, of 21 Malian troops who were loyal to Mali's deposed president, I encouraged my team to find a mechanism to support this investigation by identifying and funding forensic expertise and exhorting the Government of Mali (GOM) to ensure the security of judicial authorities involved in the investigatory process and trial. These efforts supported Mali's newly elected government's decision to arrest and prosecute coup d'etat leader Captain Sanogo and other junta members.

A free press is another important guarantor of human rights. Once lauded by Freedom House as having the most liberal press environment on the continent, Mali suffered multiple incidents after the coup in which journalists were intimidated, beaten and detained without charge. I became the first to denounce the March 6, 2013, arrest of local editor Boukary Daou, who was tortured after his newspaper printed a letter criticizing coup leader Sanogo. Within hours of his disappearance, I spearheaded efforts to coordinate a diplomatic community effort to press the GOM to respect human rights, free speech, and freedom of the press, and called out in public events for his release. Mr. Daou credits this activism with helping secure his freedom, and linked the end of his physical mistreatment in detention to his jailors' acknowledgment of my public expressions of interest and concern.

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

Answer. Groups that perpetrate violent extremism are among the most serious threats to human rights in Africa. In Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, deadly attacks and abductions by Boko Haram continued to terrorize thousands of civilians. Nigerian security forces' heavy-handed tactics and abuses of civilians, including extrajudicial killings, contributed to the mutation of Boko Haram into an insurgency.

Further democratic consolidation in Africa is also dependent on rights-respecting security forces that answer to civilian governments and protect, rather than target, citizens. This is, unfortunately, a persistent challenge across the continent, and one that we raise regularly with our government counterparts as part of our efforts to build strong democracies and meaningful security partnerships. In countries where security forces have questionable human rights records, citizens require access to justice, in order to hold both states and other citizens accountable for breaches of the law.

As part of our promotion of real and inclusive democracy, we remain concerned by the threats to freedom of speech and the press, as well as the right to assemble. These rights are universal, and they are written into many African constitutions. Unfortunately, not all governments regularly abide by what those constitutions say. Many of these governments seek to close space for political opposition and civil society, as well as restrict media access, well before election day. These governments often control the flow of information through state-owned media, restrict or close down access to the internet, and harass and arrest journalists. Impunity and lack of investigation by officials when journalists are killed create an environment of intimidation and fear for the media. These same governments also limit freedom of assembly and expression—they intimidate civil society activists, and arrest or "disappear" members of the opposition, often under the guise of promoting state security.

The AU explicitly allows for the right to take up member country issues relating to war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. Promoting democracy and human rights are the first of four pillars of U.S. policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa. As Ambassador, I would work with the AU in order to counter violent extremism and promote inclusive democratic processes across the continent. We do this by supporting and empowering reformers and institutions of government at all levels to promote the rule of law, strengthen checks on executive power, and incorporate responsive governance practices. Accountability, access to justice, and an independent media are all necessary conditions for long term stability and development. Ensuring that elections and institutions are as inclusive as possible, including ethnic, religious, and other minorities as well as other disadvantaged groups is a key element in our strategy. We also support those leaders who abide by their constitutions to step down after their time in office, respecting term limits and allowing for the peaceful transition of power. If confirmed, I would continue to pursue these themes as they arise, encouraging the AU to build on its record of defending these important principles.

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 at the African Union (AU) in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. As with all multilateral organizations, the AU can only be as strong and effective as its member states allow it to be. Individual countries' interests will not always align with the broader interests of the union as outlined in its Constitutive Act, creating potential frictions.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with human rights NGOs in the context of your responsibilities at the AU? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure any U.S. security assistance and security cooperation we may provide in support of AU institutions or efforts reinforces human rights?

Answer. Yes. These organizations and the work that they do are essential to strengthening human rights adherence and meeting U.S. objectives in Africa. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAU actively seeks their input and applies their expertise in the development of U.S. security assistance and cooperation. If confirmed, I will ensure that all U.S. bilateral assistance in support of African Union institutions is in compliance with U.S. law and encourage AU institutions to reinforce human rights and rule of law.

Question. If confirmed, will you and your embassy team actively engage with AU leadership to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted across the continent?

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes. I am pleased that many human rights and non-governmental organizations maintain Addis Ababa—or regionally-based missions, and/or are themselves accredited as observers to the AU, helping to contribute to an environment of awareness and activism for these important issues.

Question. Despite the existence of an AU Convention on Preventing and Combatting Corruption and the initiative of certain leaders to address the issue domestically, corruption remains a key challenge to economic development and good governance in many places across the continent.

♦ What do you see as the most destabilizing form(s) of corruption on the continent [i.e. grand vs petty]?

Answer. At a fundamental level, all forms of corruption, including petty and grand corruption, hamper a society's ability to achieve stability and prosperity. While the impacts of grand corruption result in spectacular amounts of resources being misappropriated, petty corruption robs citizens of funds needed to feed families, pay for school and medical fees, and save for the future. To separate petty from grand corruption is to draw an artificial line between activities that have the same effects: destabilization, a lack of confidence in public leaders, ineffective institutions and robbing countries of precious resources necessary to propel themselves forward economically and protect their citizens. Our fight against corruption must be a whole-problem approach, and we need to ensure we deliver a strong message of zero tolerance to all corrupt officials regardless of station or duty.

Question. What is the AU's role in combatting corruption and how does it compare with that of the regional economic communities? What do you see as the main obstacles to the AU fulfilling this role [i.e.: lack of political will, technical capacity, few connections to civil society, some combination]?

Answer. The African Union's role in combatting corruption is in its powerful forum that draws together all African leaders in one place to talk about problems, including corruption, that face the continent as a whole. It is a place where the countries of Africa can collectively formulate and establish principles and standards by which all members can hold each other accountable.

The ability of the AU to convene all 54 members of the African continent complements the work of the regional economic communities, which also work to collectively address the effects of corruption in their specific communities. The AU provides an opportunity for the whole membership to take ideas borne out of the regionally focused economic communities and find ways to adapt policies to suit the needs of the differing members of the AU.

The AU, much like the African continent, faces a combination of challenges in combating corruption. They include a shrinking civil society space, lack of strong civil society participation, and lack of political will. Civil society does not have the ability to bring cases before the African Court in a majority of the AU member states, and in places where corruption exists, ruling parties have a vested interest to keep it that way. The African Peer Review Mechanism, a policy group for self-assessment for good governance and reinforcement of best practices, is underutilized by its members. There are also some within both the rank and file and leadership of the AU who do not want to raise the profile of the fight against corruption.

Question. If confirmed, how will you use your office to encourage tangible progress and further coordination on anti-corruption efforts?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for the implementation of the standards and principles that the AU has already set forth as a baseline for combating corruption on the African continent which are outlined in AU Convention against Corruption, and encouraging AU members who have not joined the AU Convention against Corruption to join. I will engage with the members of the AU who have a genuine interest in battling corruption and impunity to break ranks with those who are interested in maintaining the status quo, and encourage members to enforce standards.

I will also focus on discrete efforts to mainstream anti-corruption into AU Peace and Security Commission activities; especially ensuring adequate safeguards are in place to mitigate leakage in AU PKO operations.

RESPONSES OF ANNE S. CASPER, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE CASPER'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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 have promoted human rights and democracy throughout my 23-year Foreign Service career. For example, as Public Affairs Counselor Bangkok (2006-2009) and in coordination with Embassy Rangoon, I led regional efforts to strengthen the Burmese people's understanding of democratic processes, counter regime cen-

sorship, and provide global attention to Burma's plight, contributing to Burma's recent democratic transition.

As Deputy Chief of Mission Kigali (2009-2012), during a period I was serving as Charge d'affaires, I led our Embassy's successful efforts to secure the timely release of an American arrested by the Rwandan government for his writings on the 1994 genocide, a case that received global attention from free speech activists.

As Consul General in Jeddah (2012-14), my commitment to strengthen non-governmental organization capacity, including groups expanding opportunities for women and young people, contributed to the development of a nascent civil society in Saudi Arabia's Western province.

If confirmed as Ambassador to Burundi, I will make human rights and democracy one of my top priorities and will ensure that our staff at Post do the same.

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 crisis began in April 2015, over 540 people have been killed and more than 260,000 have fled to neighboring countries. Reports of human rights violations and abuses include extrajudicial and retaliatory killings, arbitrary detentions, disappearances, trafficking in persons, sexual violence against women and girls, and torture. Civil society and media representatives have fled the country due to harassment and limits on the exercise of freedoms of association and expression. I will work, if confirmed, to establish strong relationships at the highest levels of Burundi's government and with influential interlocutors on all sides of the conflict. The Embassy will continue to support human rights monitoring and documentation by the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the African Union (AU); it will also continue to monitor for hate speech and support conflict prevention and resolution activities for at-risk youth. The Embassy will also continue to promote accountability for perpetrators of unlawful violence, violations, and abuse. These activities and engagement are intended to lay the groundwork to dissuade violence and impunity and lead to a more peaceful atmosphere in which meaningful dialogue among Burundians can ensue.

Answer. 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?

Potential obstacles include the fact that the government has not yet fulfilled the commitments it made to the U.N. Secretary General and AU Heads of State delegation earlier this year regarding the release of detainees, the unfettered ability of media and civil society to operate, and the full deployment of AU human rights monitors and security experts.

Additionally, many interlocutors in civil society, the media, and local human rights organizations with whom an Ambassador would normally engage have fled. Finally, ongoing violence by the government and opposition groups, continuing recruitment of youth into militias, the rapid decline of Burundi's economy, and significant problems with corruption present challenges related to 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 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. If confirmed, I am committed to meeting with individuals and organizations in the United States and Burundi who can play a positive role in advancing human rights, peace and security in Burundi. Likewise, under my leadership, Embassy Bujumbura will continue to engage closely with civil society partners, the East African Community (EAC), the AU, the UN, and like-minded foreign missions in supporting these goals for the benefit of all Burundians.

Under my leadership, Embassy Bujumbura will continue its role in carefully and thoroughly vetting the limited number of Burundian military officers that the United States currently trains. This is particularly important given allegations of sexual exploitation and abuses against Burundian peacekeepers in Somalia and the Central African Republic as well as allegations that Burundi's security forces committed various human rights violations at home. Should political and security conditions permit a return to broader training, I will act in accordance with our law and policy, including the Leahy law, to ensure that future assistance does not go to security force units if we have credible information of gross violations of human rights.

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. Yes. If I am confirmed, Embassy Bujumbura will continue pressing the government to respect the rights of political prisoners, as well as members of civil society, media, and peaceful opposition who may be unjustly targeted.

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

Answer. Yes. Promoting human and civil rights as well as good governance will continue to be at the core of Embassy Bujumbura's work. For example, the Embassy's continued institutional support for the National Independent Human Rights Commission in Burundi helps this Commission facilitate citizens' ability to file complaints about human rights violations. In addition, I will engage directly with the Burundian government on issues related to its compliance with its human rights obligations and commitments and help strengthen its democratic institutions.

Question. The United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) transferred $2.26 million to the African Union Commission just over a month ago to fund 32 AU human rights monitors deployed to Burundi since last July. What is the status of the deployment of the full complement of human rights monitors and military experts approved by the African Union? Will you have a role as Ambassador in advocating for their deployment?

Answer. The deployment of the full complement of the AU's 100 human rights observers and 100 security experts, of which 35 are currently on the ground, has been delayed. The Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and the Burundian government on these observers and experts has yet to be signed and the government has declined, thus far, the entry of additional monitors into Burundi. If confirmed, I will raise this issue with the government, in close coordination with the AU.

Question. Do the monitors have full and unfettered freedom of movement throughout Burundi? What if any will be your role in helping secure agreement for such access if confirmed?

Answer. The AU observers, along with OHCHR observers, have access to some prisons and are able to conduct interviews privately with detainees, including at centers controlled by the Burundian National Intelligence Service. However, we understand that once on site, observers often confront limitations and obstacles including the sudden removal of prisoners from their cells just before the observers arrive. If I am confirmed, our Embassy will continue to press the Burundian government for unfettered access for both of these monitoring groups so that they can fulfill their critical missions, as intended and mandated.

Question. How might your experience as a high ranking diplomat in Rwanda affect your dealings with the Nkurunziza government and regional leaders?

Answer. My previous experience in the Great Lakes region sensitized me to the importance of listening to and engaging with a broad array of stakeholders, especially when historical narratives differ. It also convinced me that East African Community member states must continue working cooperatively to advance peace, prosperity, and long-term stability in the region. If confirmed, I will bring to my engagement with Burundi's government the commitment to understand their perspective and to work constructively together to ensure that every Burundian has the opportunity for a productive and secure future. I will also work closely with my U.S. counterparts in neighboring missions to advance these goals.

Question. What funds are currently available for governing justly and democratically in Burundi? Please specify accounts and levels. If confirmed, what types of democracy and governance programs will you be recommending for Burundi given its closed political space?

Answer. There is multi-year funding for USAID programs to support democracy and governance in Burundi. Embassy Bujumbura is slated to receive $1.25 million in Economic Support Fund (ESF) resources in FY 2016. With this funding, Embassy Bujumbura intends to continue strengthening citizens' active participation in economic, political, governing and other critical processes aimed at creating a more peaceful, democratic, and pluralistic society. The Embassy will also continue to support civil society organizations, particularly those focused on youth empowerment, in order to increase constructive community participation and build resilience to violence. FY 2016 funding will also support civil society activities to mobilize and engage youth around social cohesion and livelihood initiatives, breaking down socioeconomic barriers and enhancing conflict resolution skills.

It is critical, particularly in Burundi's challenging current environment, that the United States continues to support Burundi's independent media and journalists, youth leaders from diverse backgrounds, civil society groups and human rights defenders. If confirmed, I will work to ensure continued implementation of programs that demonstrate promise, and explore additional ways to strengthen credible local actors' peacebuilding efforts.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2016

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

Anne Hall, of Maine, nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania
Hon. Marie L. Yovanovitch, of Connecticut, nominated to be Ambassador to Ukraine
Hon. Geoffrey R. Pyatt, of California, nominated to be Ambassador to the Hellenic Republic of Greece
Hon. Douglas Allan Silliman, of Texas, nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq
Hon. Peter Michael McKinley, Virgina, nominated to be Ambassador to the Federative Republic of Brazil
Lawrence Robert Silverman, of Massachusetts, nominated to be Ambassador to the State of Kuait
Carol Z. Perez, of Virginia, nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Chile

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:34 p.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bob Corker, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Corker, Johnson, Gardner, Cardin, Menendez, Murphy, Kaine, and Markey.

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

The CHAIRMAN. I want to apologize to our outstanding Foreign Service people that we are a few minutes late. We had something we were all doing together just a moment ago. We had a couple folks come in late, by we are thankful that people like you want to serve our Nation in the way that you do.

Today's hearing is going to be very brief, out of no disrespect. I know many of you have prepared extensively, and we apologize. You are probably not going to need a lot of the preparation, but we thank you so much for your service. We had the opportunity to meet with many of you individually and we thank you for that. And we look forward to a very successful hearing.

And with that, I will turn to Senator Cardin.

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

Senator CARDIN. And, Mr. Chairman, I met with several of the nominees, and I warned them do not be offended if we do not ask you a lot of questions today.

I was commenting to the chairman I do not think we have had a more qualified group of nominees come before our committee, people who have performed more public service than the seven that are appearing here today. And I thank them all for their public service. These are career diplomats who have served in some of the most difficult places in the world and have served with great distinction. We thank each of you and we thank your families particularly because we know this is a family sacrifice, a family commitment, and we thank you for that.

I just want to make an observation. If my math is correct, the seven nominees here have served in about 25 different important positions as ambassadors, DCMs, or deputy secretaries. That is an impressive list. But just as impressively, if you are going to have to translate this transcript into all the languages they can speak, we are going to have to use 11 different translations, including Portuguese, Mandarin, Arabic, and Russian. So this is a group of people who are well accomplished. They have done great things in very difficult positions and are now willing to take on some very, very key responsibilities, and we look forward to their service. And we look forward to this hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. I know that is widely felt throughout the committee. I have a long opening statement, but we have got something on the back end of this that is pressing us.

So without doing that, I would say to each of you when you give testimony, if you would like to introduce family members, whatever, we would welcome that. We thank them for their commitment to our Nation and their support of you, and we appreciate them also being here.

So with that, I guess Durbin and Collins——

Senator CARDIN. Senator Collins.

The CHAIRMAN. We filibustered for just a moment.

Senator COLLINS. I am so sorry.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you for being here. I know you have had something else relative to gun control, but we thank you for being here.

STATEMENT OF HON. SUSAN COLLINS,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MAINE

Senator COLLINS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Senator Cardin, members of the committee.

First of all, let me express my deep appreciation for your delaying the start of this hearing and my sincere apologies for being late. We all have had those kinds of days and this is one of those for me.

It is my pleasure to introduce the President's nominee to be our next Ambassador to Lithuania, Anne Hall, a career member of the Foreign Service. She not only has a distinguished career in the Foreign Service with the expertise in the Baltic States, but she also has strong ties to the great State of Maine.

Earlier this month, Anne and I discussed her qualifications for this position and the current challenges facing Lithuania, including Russian meddling in the Baltic States. I am impressed both by Anne's extensive experience in the region and her clear-eyed view of the challenges facing this relatively small but critically important NATO ally. I am certain that Anne would do an excellent job representing the United States in Lithuania as she has done throughout her career in the Foreign Service.

Now let me tell you just a bit about Anne's background. She grew up in Orono, Maine and graduated from the University of Maine where she studied international relations. She is now officially a resident of Blue Hill, Maine and spends time there between her oversea tours in Europe, Asia, and South America.

Anne's father was chairman of the geology department and a vice president of the University of Maine. His experiences in geological mapping in Maine, Antarctica, India, Africa, and Eastern Europe inspired Anne to become an exchange student to Chile at age 16 and later to join the Foreign Service.

Anne has extensive experience in the Baltics. She served as the State Department's Office of Nordic and Baltic Affairs in that office from 2001 to 2003. This was a critical time for the region as the U.S. worked to support the Baltic countries' entry into NATO and the European Union, both of which they joined in 2004.

Then she served as Consul General in Krakow, Poland from 2006 to 2009, Deputy Chief of Mission in Lithuania from 2010 to 2013, and Director of the Office of Central European Affairs from 2013 to 2014. These experiences have prepared her to lead our mission in Lithuania and strengthen our already close partnership with this country.

Mr. Chairman, I am often called upon to introduce nominees, and I have to say that I cannot think of someone who has a background that is better tailored to the position for which she has been nominated than Anne Hall. And it is a great pleasure to be here today before this distinguished committee.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you very much for taking the time to be here. As we mentioned before you got here, we are impressed with all of our candidates and thank them for their service.

I know you have other business and you are welcome to go do other business is you wish. Thank you.

So with that, Ms. Hall, why do you not go ahead and begin. I know that you are going to summarize in about 3 minutes, and any written comments that you would like to be a part of the record, without objection——

Ms. HALL. I will try to make it less even.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you so much.

STATEMENT OF ANNE HALL, OF MAINE, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

Ms. HALL. Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, it is indeed a privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania. I am honored by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look

forward to working with you and your colleagues to build on our already close strategic partnership with Lithuania.

With your permission, I would like to acknowledge my mother Rose Anne who is here today from Maine, my father Brad who is watching this in Maine.

The CHAIRMAN. If you all would identify yourselves. Thank you.

Ms. HALL. I am forever thankful to them for their constant support over the years.

I am also delighted to have my sister Sue, her husband Scott, and my niece Emma who aspires to joining the Foreign Service some day, here today from Colorado.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, it would truly be an honor for me to return to Lithuania where I served as Deputy Chief of Mission until 2013.

The United States has long enjoyed a close partnership with Lithuania, founded on the bedrock of the United States' refusal to recognize the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union. Today we take inspiration from our close cultural ties and shared democratic values, and together we promote security and prosperities for our peoples and around the world.

Lithuania is one of our closest NATO allies. It has warmly welcomed U.S. and NATO reassurance measures, especially the presence of American troops on its soil. Lithuania also has committed to spending 2 percent of GDP on defense by 2018, reaching 1.5 percent this year.

Long a staunch and vocal supporter of Ukraine, Lithuania works to maintain a strict sanctions regime on Russia and full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Outside of Europe, Lithuania supports development of the Afghan National Security Forces and contributes to the counter-ISIL coalition. It has donated humanitarian assistance to Iraqi victims of ISIL and is preparing to deploy police trainers to Iraq.

Over the past few years, Lithuania has reduced its dependence on Russian gas from 100 percent to just about 5 percent today, becoming a model for others seeking to enhance their own energy security.

And Lithuanian policymakers and the private sector welcome American trade and investment and support the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which they see as an opportunity for economic growth, as well as a second anchor in the security partnership.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will seek to deepen our ties across the board from people-to-people exchanges and entrepreneurship to trade, investment, and innovation, energy security, and promotion of our shared democratic values. The success of our efforts in all of these areas ultimately rests on the strong friendship between Lithuanians and Americans. If confirmed, I will make public outreach throughout the country for myself and my embassy team a high priority.

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

[The prepared statement of Ms. Hall follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANNE HALL

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Lithuania. I am humbled and honored by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee, your staffs, and your Congressional colleagues to build on the already deep and productive partnership between the United States and Lithuania.

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to acknowledge some family members who are here today, as well as some who were unable to attend. I am deeply grateful to my mother, Rose Anne, who is here today, and my father, Brad, who will watch this later from Maine, for inspiring me to explore the wider world and supporting me at every step along the way. I am also delighted that my sister Sue, her husband Scott, and my niece, Emma, were able to come from Colorado to be here today.

For 29 years I have cherished the privilege of serving my country as a career diplomat in Europe, Asia, and South America. I believe my experience in our Office of Nordic and Baltic Affairs at a critical time as we supported the Baltic states' entry into NATO and the European Union, my service as Consul General in Krakow and Deputy Chief of Mission in Lithuania, and more recently as Director of our Office of Central European Affairs, equip me well to lead our mission in Lithuania.

The United States has long enjoyed a close relationship with Lithuania. It is a relationship built on the bedrock of America's steadfast refusal to recognize the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union and the partnership of the United States with an independent Lithuania in addressing today's global challenges to democracy and security.

Since its re-independence in 1990, Lithuania has taken on increasingly prominent roles in transatlantic and global institutions to meet these challenges—roles that would have been unimaginable just 26 years ago. Since joining NATO and the EU in 2004, Lithuania has chaired the Community of Democracies and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and in 2013 became the first post-Soviet state to hold the Presidency of the European Union. In that capacity it championed democratic principles in other countries of the former Soviet Union and hosted the Eastern Partnership Summit that became an antecedent to the Maidan protests in Ukraine. During Lithuania's 2014-2015 tenure on the U.N. Security Council, it actively partnered with the United States to promote peace, combat terrorism, and advance human rights on a global scale.

Lithuania has long been a staunch and outspoken supporter of Ukraine. Since 2014, it has worked with us to maintain a strong sanctions regime on Russia and press for full implementation of the Minsk Agreements. Lithuania has provided generous help to Ukraine in the form of advisors, development aid, and military training and supplies as it assists the Ukrainian government on the path of improved security, transparency, and rule of law. In addition, Lithuania strongly supports the Euro-Atlantic integration of Georgia and Moldova.

In Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea and aggression in Ukraine, Lithuania sees a threat to its own hard-won independence. Lithuania has warmly welcomed U.S. and NATO reassurance measures, especially the presence of American troops on its soil. Lithuania also has committed to meeting the NATO defense spending benchmark of two percent of GDP by 2018, reaching 1.5 percent this year. The government is using these funds to improve Lithuania's defense capabilities, investing in modern equipment and enhancing NATO interoperability.

A committed ally outside of Europe as well, in Afghanistan Lithuania led a Provincial Reconstruction Team, and its Special Operations Forces served alongside ours without caveat until 2015. Lithuania now provides support for the development of the Afghan National Security Forces and contributes to the Counter-ISIL Coalition. It has donated humanitarian aid to Iraqi victims of ISIL and is preparing to deploy police trainers to Iraq. If confirmed, I will continue our close cooperation in addressing global security challenges.

The strength of any country depends on its economic prosperity as well as its security, and Lithuania's economy has shown both resilience and growth. After a 15 percent drop in GDP in 2009, Lithuania's economy rebounded to become one of the fastest growing in the EU. When Lithuania's primary export market—Russia, contracted last year, Lithuania succeeded in finding alternative markets for its exports. Its GDP now is predicted to grow by 2.6 percent this year. Over the past few years, Lithuania has made impressive progress in diversifying its energy sources, bolstering its own energy security as well as that of the Baltic region. It launched a floating LNG terminal in January, 2015, decreasing its dependence on Russian gas

from 100 percent to approximately five percent today. In close cooperation with the EU it is building gas and electricity links to its European neighbors; and it is creating a competitive regional energy market. Lithuania is rapidly becoming a regional energy hub and a model for others seeking to enhance their energy security.

Against this backdrop of growth and development, Lithuanian policymakers and the private sector support the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP). They see it as an opportunity for economic growth as well as a second anchor in the transatlantic security relationship. The United States is Lithuania's seventh largest trading partner, with more than $1.5 billion in total bilateral trade in 2015. If confirmed, I will encourage Lithuania's continued support for T-TIP and work to expand our trade and commercial ties, including support for innovation and entrepreneurship. Lithuania has made great strides over the past twenty years in building a vibrant democracy. It has developed strategic plans and passed legislation to fight corruption, combat human trafficking, and reduce domestic violence. It is working to fully integrate linguistic minorities into Lithuanian society and strengthen respect for religious and ethnic diversity. Our Embassy in Vilnius has vigorously supported these efforts, and if confirmed, I will continue this vital support.

Finally, the success of our efforts in all of the areas I have touched upon today ultimately rests on the strong friendship between Lithuanians and Americans. If confirmed, I will make public outreach throughout the country a high priority, promoting increased exchanges and business, educational, professional, and cultural connections.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you for your enthusiasm and willingness to do this.

And with that, the Honorable Marie Yovanovitch, who is on her way to Ukraine.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARIE L. YOVANOVITCH, OF CONNECTICUT, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO UKRAINE

Ambassador YOVANOVITCH. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of this committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and the Congress to continue our strong support for the Ukrainian people, Ukraine's reform agenda, and its sovereignty and territorial integrity. These steps are critical to advancing our shared goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

And with your permission, I would like to introduce my dear friend, Jennifer Parmaley, and my wonderful mother who is sitting here, Nadia.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand Nadia is on her way to Ukraine also. Is that correct? [Laughter.]

Ambassador YOVANOVITCH. And I know that my father is also with us in spirit as well.

Like so many in Europe in the 1940's, including those in the Ukrainian American community, my parents survived poverty, war, and displacement. They finally arrived in the United States with me in tow in search of freedom, accountability, and opportunity, the very values that Ukrainians demanded in the revolution of dignity.

If confirmed, I look forward to returning to Embassy Kyiv and continuing the work of my friend, Ambassador Geoff Pyatt, in helping Ukrainians make the dream they fought for a reality.

Ukraine has made more progress on reforms in the last 2 years than it did in its first 23 years of independence. And I am opti-

mistic about Ukraine's reform trajectory, given recent and important achievements such as judicial reform.

However, Ukraine still has much to do, including IMF conditionality, fighting corruption, reforming key sectors, and breaking the hold of the oligarchs.

I want to thank Congress for its commitment to Ukraine demonstrated by approving over $1.3 billion in assistance since 2014. This includes $600 million to help Ukraine reform its security sector, better secure its borders, and defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Ukraine has made good faith efforts to implement the Minsk agreements, but the Russians and the separatists continue to fuel the conflict. We need sustained security to further unlock the political aspects of Minsk. This means Russia and the separatists must stop their attacks. Implementation of the Minsk agreements is the best way to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine, and we will continue to support the efforts of our Normandy format partners and the Trilateral Contact Group.

We have been very clear with Moscow that sanctions will continue until Russia fully implements its Minsk commitments, and I would like to thank you for the recent letter to the European Council urging sanctions rollover and we got some goods new on that today as well from the Europeans.

Finally, we do not and we will never recognize Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea. Our Crimea-related sanctions will remain in place until the peninsula is returned to Ukraine.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you. I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Yovanovitch follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR MASHA YOVANOVITCH

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of this committee. It is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today as President Obama'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 support for the Ukrainian people, enhance our already deep bilateral relationship, support Ukraine's reform agenda, and protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity. These steps will be critical to advancing our shared goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

I'd like to introduce my mother, who is 88 years young, and has been a constant source of support and inspiration. I wish my father could have been here today also; he would have been so moved. Like so many, including those in the Ukrainian American community, my parents' lives were changed forever by Communist and Nazi regimes. They survived poverty, war and displacement, and finally arrived in the United States, with me in tow, in search of freedom, opportunity, dignity and accountability. The very values that Ukrainians demanded in the 2014 Revolution of Dignity.

If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the work of my friend and colleague Ambassador Geoff Pyatt in helping Ukrainians make the dream they fought for a reality. I bring 30 years of experience at the State Department and have worked throughout the region, including in Russia as a political officer, Ukraine as Deputy Chief of Mission, and Kyrgyzstan and Armenia as Ambassador. In addition, I served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, where I covered bilateral and multilateral issues affecting our relations with Europe.

Ukraine has made more important progress on reforms in the last two years than it did in its first 23 years of independence. And I am especially optimistic about Ukraine's reform trajectory this year, given several key achievements since the reformation of the coalition and government in April. Ukraine overwhelmingly ap-

proved constitutional amendments to strengthen judicial independence; raised energy tariffs to 100% of market rates ahead of the IMF's schedule; and replaced a Prosecutor General who had lost the trust of civil society with one who has committed to reforming the PGO. Many of you, no doubt, met with the Prime Minister and cabinet ministers who were here in Washington last week and received a first-hand account of the progress Ukraine is making. These reform achievements are all the more impressive given that they have come in the face of Russian aggression. The best defense against Russian aggression is a successful Ukraine.

But of course, much work remains to be done. Ukraine still has to implement difficult changes such as: taking further steps to root out corruption; advancing energy sector reform; recapitalizing and reforming the banking system; working to improve the business climate by levelling the playing field; improving accountability and civilian control in the defense sector; reforming the PGO and justice sector; and breaking the hold of oligarchs over Ukrainian politics and business. Ukraine must also continue to adhere to IMF conditions and ensure that the $17.5 billion program continues.

I want to thank Congress for its commitment and support by providing assistance to Ukraine. It has been critical to making real changes in the lives of Ukrainians and delivering on the promise of the Maidan. With strong bipartisan support, the United States has provided over $1.3 billion in assistance since 2014, including over $112 million in humanitarian assistance, as well as three $1 billion loan guarantees, the third of which we expect to disburse later this year. We continue to support Ukrainian civil society and independent media, which help Ukrainian citizens hold their government accountable to its reform pledges.

Just as we stand firmly behind the Ukrainian people in their efforts to transform their nation, we stand with Ukraine as it seeks to reform its military, stop further Russian aggression, bring the conflict in the Donbas to a peaceful conclusion via the Minsk agreements, and end the occupation of Crimea.

Thanks to Congress' support, we have been able to devote over $600 million to helping Ukraine undertake needed security reforms, better monitor and secure its borders, deploy its forces more safely and effectively, and defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We have trained over 1,700 Ukrainian conventional forces and National Guard personnel and 120 Special Operations Forces (SOF). We have provided counter-artillery and counter-mortar radars, night and thermal vision devices, over 3000 secure radios, 130 Humvees, over 100 armored civilian SUVs, and tens of thousands of medical kits to help Ukrainian troops successfully resist advances and save lives.

The conflict in the East has exacted a heavy toll on Ukraine, resulting in an estimated 10,000 Ukrainians killed and 2.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons. As President Obama has stated, the United States will continue to work for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, until which time sanctions on Russia will continue. We are working with the Normandy powers of France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine, as well as the OSCE, to make this a reality and restore peace to eastern Ukraine.

Ukraine has lived up to many Minsk commitments already. But Russia and the separatists have not. Violence has spiked in the past two months to reach levels we have not seen since August 2015. Russia and the separatists must end their attacks—they continue to commit the majority of ceasefire violations—and withdraw banned heavy weapons, while providing the OSCE full, unfettered access throughout the conflict zone and guaranteeing monitors' safety. A sustained improvement in security will allow Ukraine to pass a Donbas election law, hold local elections in portions of eastern Ukraine, and implement special status and amnesty. These steps should lead to Russia's withdrawal from Ukraine and restoration of Ukrainian control over its side of the international border.

Finally, as President Obama has stated clearly, we do not and will not recognize Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea. We are working with the Government of Ukraine as well as our partners and allies to highlight Russian abuses targeting Crimean Tatars and others opposed to Russia's illegal occupation as well as ensure that the costs to Russia continue, including through sanctions, until Crimea is returned to Ukraine.

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 very much. And we look forward to at some point in the future a report card on how our next witness has actually done in Ukraine. Our next panel, the Honorable Geoffrey Pyatt, who has distinguished himself by his service in

Ukraine, is nominated to be Ambassador to Greece, and we look forward to your testimony and thank you for your service.

STATEMENT OF HON. GEOFFREY R. PYATT, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO GREECE

Ambassador PYATT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to begin by thanking you and Ranking Member Cardin for your warm remarks about the career Foreign Service in your opening remarks, and on that I speak, I think, for all of the members of our service. Deeply appreciated.

I am, of course, honored to appear before you today as nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to Greece, the birthplace of democracy.

I would like to begin by acknowledging somebody who is not here today. That is my wife Mary who is back in Kyiv finishing up the school year. Some of you have met Mary over the course of your visits, and I think you can appreciate the key supporting role that she has played during a historic period in Ukrainian and European history.

Mary and I have had the pleasure of visiting Greece as tourists, and while it is striking to visit sites like the Acropolis, you also get a feel for the difficult challenges that Greece has overcome as it tackles the most severe economic crisis of its post-war history.

More recently we have witnessed Greece's struggles play out on the front pages, over a million migrants flowing across Greece's borders, difficult bailout negotiations with European creditors and the IMF, but I believe and I know this administration believes that what happens in Greece matters not just for Greece but for the region, for NATO, for the European Union, and for the United States.

Having just secured a deal with European creditors, Greece can breathe a small sigh of relief that this summer will not be as tumultuous as the last, but the road ahead is far from easy. My friend and colleague, Ambassador Pearce has done great work to promote Greece's entrepreneurial spirit and U.S. investment, and if confirmed, I commit myself to continuing and supporting those efforts.

We also benefit from a strong bilateral defense relationship with Greece. Particularly noteworthy has been our longstanding military presence in Souda Bay, which I should point out is the only place between Norfolk and Dubai where an aircraft carrier can up pierside and replenish. Greece has also been a steady NATO ally since 1952, and in fact, a U.S. ship arrived just last week to contribute to the NATO reconnaissance, surveillance, and monitoring activity in the Aegean, which brings me to the topic of the migration and refugee crisis.

As millions fled violence and persecution, Greece became a door into greater Europe for those seeking peace and a better future. Despite their own financial hardships, the Greek people have shown tremendous compassion to these migrants and refugees, including over 50,000 who remain in Greece. As a country, we have done what we can to support the Greek Government, including nearly $44 million in humanitarian aid since the start of the crisis.

And finally, on energy, as I have seen from my time in Ukraine, energy diversification is critical for the future of Europe. Just last

month, Prime Minister Tsipras inaugurated the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline, and a Greece-Bulgaria interconnector is also in the works. These projects will inject millions into the economy, put thousands to work, and make Europe more energy secure.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, if confirmed, I will dedicate myself to ensuring we bolster the U.S.-Greek relationship and will represent the United States to the best of my ability. I welcome you to Athens to continue the vital congressional partnership that I have enjoyed so greatly during my time in Kyiv.

And in that regard, I am especially grateful to have Senator Durbin here who has been one of the stalwart supporters of my mission. Thank you again.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Pyatt follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF GEOFFREY PYATT

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Cardin for the honor of appearing before you. I would like to begin by acknowledging someone who could not be here with me today—that is my wife Mary, who is back in Ukraine finishing up the school year as a teacher. Many of you have met Mary in the course of your visits to Kyiv, and can appreciate the key supporting role she has played during a truly historic period in Ukrainian and European history. I would also of course like to express my gratitude to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have expressed in me through this nomination.

I am particularly honored to appear before you as the nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to Greece—the birthplace of democracy. I have had the pleasure of visiting Greece as a tourist, and while it's striking to visit sites such as the Acropolis, where the idea of representative government first came to life, one also gets a feel for the difficult challenges Greece has overcome along the way. Today, Greece continues along this path even as it tackles the most severe economic crisis in its post-war history, and the recent wave of irregular migration puts further strain on Greece's limited resources. But I believe, and I know this administration believes, that what happens in Greece matters—not just for Greece, but for the region, NATO, the European Union, and the United States. Greece's success will support a stronger, brighter future for all of us, and my goal—if confirmed—will be to pursue that future.

One of the things I have learned over the past three years is that events sometimes unfold differently from what one expresses in a confirmation statement, and with that in mind I will try to keep this one short and to the point. As Ambassador to Ukraine, I have also learned to respect even more the role that this committee can play in the expression and implementation of American foreign policy. I am deeply grateful for the attention that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee has devoted to Ukraine over the past three years and the many Congressional visits that have helped shine a spotlight on our policy—starting with Senators Murphy and McCain's historic visit in December 2013 at the peak of the Maidan and the separate, important visits by Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and Senators Johnson and Shaheen before, during, and after the 2014 presidential elections that reaffirmed Ukrainian democracy. It is no exaggeration to say that Ukraine would not be where it is today, and would not have been able to resist Russian aggression so effectively, without your consistent Congressional support. With that experience in mind, I assure you that if confirmed as Ambassador to Greece, I will continue the pattern of intensive engagement with the Foreign Relations Committee that has been so essential to my effectiveness in Kyiv.

The success of U.S. policy in Greece hinges on the effectiveness of the U.S. partnership with the European Union. We have witnessed Greece's struggles play out on the front pages over the past year -over one million migrants flowing across Greece's borders and a resulting spotlight on border security concerns, continued economic hardship, and difficult bailout negotiations with European creditors and the IMF. The successful resolution of these issues is critical to the long-term stability of Europe broadly, and Greece's success in many ways is a linchpin to broader European prosperity. For this reason, we depend on the strength of our own partnership with the EU to move forward policy objectives that will support a stronger Greece in the long-term.

The economy is the first thing that comes to mind when we talk about Greece. Having just secured a deal with its European creditors, Greece can breathe a small sigh of relief that this summer will not be as tumultuous as last summer. But the road ahead is far from easy, as the country continues to grapple with unemployment hovering near 25 percent and youth unemployment twice that. Greece has undergone years of budget cuts and tax hikes and must meet ambitious fiscal targets in the months and years to come under its bailout agreement. We need to support Greece's efforts to promote economic growth policies and to attract investment, because fiscal discipline and economic reforms are only part of the puzzle. But there are bright spots too—Greece has a tremendously entrepreneurial spirit. My friend and colleague Ambassador Pearce and his team have done great work to promote start-ups and small businesses, such as this year's initiative to send nearly 30 Greek entrepreneurs to pitch their businesses to investors at the South by Southwest festival in Austin, Texas. If confirmed, I commit myself to supporting these efforts and seeking new ways to help stimulate our economic partnership.

We also benefit from a strong bilateral defense relationship with Greece. Particularly noteworthy has been our long-standing military presence at Naval Support Activity Souda Bay on the island of Crete, from which we conduct around 5,000 flights and hundreds of ship visits annually. As the only place between Norfolk and Dubai where an aircraft carrier can pull up pier-side and replenish, and with Greece being the closest European ally to the seamline between EUCOM, CENTCOM, and AFRICOM, Souda Bay's strategic location has made it an important location for these combatant and strategic commands. Greece has been a steady NATO Ally since 1952, and has participated in missions in Korea, the Balkans, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. Through NATO we have reinforced our bilateral defense relationship, and in fact, a U.S. ship arrived just last week to contribute to the NATO reconnaissance, surveillance, and monitoring activity in the Aegean Sea. NATO ships—including our own—are currently sharing information with the Greek and Turkish Coast Guards, as well as the EU's border agency FRONTEX to prevent illegal migrant crossings from Turkey to Greece.

This brings me to the topic of the migration and refugee crisis, which has absorbed so many resources in Greece. As millions have fled violence and persecution in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere, Greece became a door into greater Europe for those seeking peace and a better future. Despite their own financial hardships, the Greek people have shown tremendous compassion. We've heard story after story about individual Greeks doing what they can to help people who are vulnerable—providing food and shelter when they needed it most.

Over 50,000 migrants and refugees remain in Greece today. The Greek government is working hard to improve living conditions, more quickly process asylum claims, and coordinate with EU partners and Turkey to implement the March 18 EU-Turkey Migration deal. It hasn't been perfect, but Greece is doing its best alongside the EU, working with NGOs and international organizations. We would like to see even more such cooperation, particularly with UNHCR, which has the experience and expertise to help the Greeks. While Greece's differences with Turkey will not be resolved overnight, Greece has demonstrated effective side-by-side cooperation with Turkey to manage the migration crisis in the Aegean, the front line of the crisis. That daily migration flows from Turkey to Greece have dropped from some 7000 per day in September and October of last year to less than 100 today is a testament to this cooperation. We have also done what we can to support the Greek government, including the State Department's contribution of nearly $44 million in humanitarian aid since the start of the crisis. We have worked with our DoD colleagues to provide humanitarian assistance items such as beds, blankets, and sanitary items to equip refugees camps. And our Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are working in close concert with the Greek public health authorities as they seek to ensure the public health and that of the migrant population is effectively safeguarded.

The migration crisis highlighted concerns regarding border security and counterterrorism, but has also given way to opportunities for improving cooperation and coordination on these very important issues. Our bilateral cooperation through agencies like DHS and the FBI is excellent, and we've forged strong partnerships that allow us to counter security threats as a team. Right now, we are working with the Greek government to upgrade its border screening capabilities, and if confirmed, I will continue these efforts to strengthen our security partnership.

Let me conclude with a word on energy. Just last month, Greek Prime Minister Tsipras inaugurated the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline, or TAP, at a ceremony in northern Greece. TAP is the final link in the Southern Gas Corridor, a multi-stage project that will bring gas from Azerbaijan to other parts of Europe via Georgia, Turkey, Greece, Albania, and Italy. A complementary project, the GreeceBulgaria Intercon-

nector, would help liberate Bulgaria from its total dependence on Russian gas. These projects will inject millions of dollars into the economy, put thousands of Greeks to work, and make Europe more energy secure. As I have seen from my time in Ukraine, energy diversification is critical for the future of Europe, and I am committed to furthering our efforts to support infrastructure projects such as TAP.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, clearly Greece is an important partner and strategic ally on a range of diverse issues. If confirmed, I will dedicate my time in Athens to ensuring we bolster the Greek-U.S. relationship across the board. I will lead our U.S. government team and represent the United States to the best of my ability, and as I mentioned at the top, I would welcome you to Athens to continue the great Congressional partnership I have enjoyed during my time in Kyiv. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we look forward to you continuing similar types of efforts that you have been displaying in Ukraine in Greece. I know we have some similar issues there, some that are dissimilar.

Senator Durbin is a very wise Senator. He wanted to see how well you propose before he introduced you. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. And so he is now here to do that. Senator Durbin, thank you for being with us.

STATEMENT OF HON. DICK DURBIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS

Senator DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and Senator Cardin, Senator Menendez. And it is true. I withheld my introduction to see how well he did.

The CHAIRMAN. He did very well.

Senator DURBIN. And Ambassador Pyatt did extraordinarily well.

I will ask that my statement be made a part of the record because I know you have other witnesses prepared to testify.

Just a few words. Geoffrey Pyatt is not a son of Illinois, but I would gladly claim him any day. There was a time in my life when I thought I one day wanted to be in the Foreign Service. I got diverted into another business.

But I will say this. He is my ideal of a person in our diplomatic corps who can tackle the most challenging assignments and do them with aplomb, with integrity, and effectiveness. He proved it in Ukraine. Many of us have been there over and over. Time and again, he gave us timely briefings on what was happening in that country torn by revolution, as well as invasion by the Russians. I cannot think of a person who could have done it better.

I can recall one particular instance where I asked him as a personal favor if he would give me a call on a Sunday afternoon on a speaker phone to a section of Chicago known as Ukrainian Village where 500 people after church on a Sunday had gathered for a last-minute briefing on what was happening in their beloved homeland of Ukraine. He did it willingly and did it professionally.

Now we are sending him to a new challenge in Greece, not only their internal domestic challenge, but also the external forces which are at work with the immigration. He is the man for the job. I am honored to endorse his efforts to become the next Ambassador to Greece.

I would ask that my statement be made part of the record and apologize for my tardiness.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Senator Durbin follows:]

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD FROM SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to introduce one of our nation's finest diplomats, Geoff Pyatt. I don't often ask for the opportunity to make such introductions, and Geoff isn't even from the great state of Illinois.

But he is exceptional.

You see, he served the last three years representing the United States during a major foreign policy crisis in Europe—one that saw a democratic revolution in Ukraine and then Russia break all norms of established international behavior by forcibly seizing sovereign territory of one of its neighbors.

And he did this with distinction and aplomb.

What also struck me about Geoff was not only his tireless diplomatic skill amid these crises, but that he always, and I mean always, had time to talk with us in the Senate about what was happening and how we could help. When visiting Ukraine on multiple occasions, he always, at all hours and on any day, had time to meet with us.

I think only once in the last three years—and only one time—did Geoff have a scheduling conflict—and that was for his son's graduation from college.

He clearly made the right decision.

I think Geoff's proud State Department career is well known—almost thirty years serving with distinction in Asia, Europe and Latin America.

What I'd like to note instead here today is what he did in recent years in Ukraine.

He worked tirelessly with a fragile yet determined new Ukrainian government to reform its nation while keeping Russia from overrunning the entire nation.

He built strong trusting relations with his Ukrainian and European counterparts that strengthened ties between Ukraine and Europe and that helped maintain EU sanctions against Russia.

And he helped advocate for and direct significant US assistance to help Ukraine succeed.

We of course have many challenges ahead in Ukraine, but I can say without question Ambassador Pyatt's service there made a critical impact in the many achievements of recent years and helped leave Ukraine in a stronger position to succeed.

But let me also say something a bit more personal about what kind of diplomat we have here with Ambassador Pyatt.

As some of you may know, Chicago is home to the Ukrainian Village neighborhood. When events were both euphoric around the Maidan and tense with Russia threatening the entire nation, residents of this community were understandably concerned.

Just after the Russian invasion of Crimea, I hosted a town hall in the Ukrainian Village and Ambassador Pyatt was gracious enough to join by speakerphone from Kiev—on a Sunday no less. I think he thought he might be speaking to a small conference room of interested folks..but it was to hundreds of anxious attendees.

I cannot tell you have valuable and appreciated that was by the Ukrainian Americans at that event who were hungry for timely and credible information at a time of such uncertainty and peril in Ukraine.

Geoff graciously returned to Chicago last March and spoke further on events in Ukraine.

I was recently in Greece where I joined Senators Shaheen, Warren, and Klobuchar in seeing first hand the refugee crisis on the island of Lesbos. The heartbreaking scenes of families coming across the perilous waters in cheap rubber rafts with children's lifejackets were deeply moving—as was the generosity and humanity shown by the Greek people amid their own economic challenges.

If confirmed, the people of the United States and Greece will without a doubt be well served by Ambassador Pyatt. A great American ally such as Greece deserves a great diplomat such as Ambassador Pyatt and, as such, I wholeheartedly endorse his nomination and hope the committee will do so as well.

Let me close by saying that at a time when government and public service is often cynically undermined and denigrated, Ambassador Pyatt reminds us just how many dedicated people are serving around the world advancing America's key interests and trying to improve the lives of others.

The CHAIRMAN. We just thank you for taking the time to be here and speaking so well of someone we respect deeply.

With that, I am going to defer. Our staff had an opportunity to very intensely meet with all of the nominees, and I had a chance to meet with many of them individually. So I am going to defer.

I know Senator Cardin did also, but I am going to defer to you and Senator Menendez.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And once again, we underscore the fact that the nominees that are before us are all experienced career diplomats that have demonstrated their dedication to our country and to foreign service, and we are very proud that they are willing to continue in difficult roles.

And as you know, there are questions that are asked for the record, and I will be asking questions and getting your response to help you deal with an area that is particularly important to me, and that is good governance and anti-corruption and now our committee and the Members of the Senate can help you in your mission to raise attention to these fundamental issues.

That is going to be particularly important in Ukraine, a country that we have invested a great deal. Clearly, the factor of concern in Ukraine is Russia and their aggression and what they continue to do in their violations of the Minsk agreements, and it goes on and on and on. But Ukraine must also deal with its institutional issues and its commitment to fight corruption at every level, and that is going to be critical to their long-term stability. So we will be trying to help in every way we can.

I want to ask all three of you a similar question. And, Ambassador Pyatt, it is relative to your current assignment more so than Greece, and that is Russia's penetration into Lithuania, penetration into Ukraine and its ability to try to influence through propaganda public opinion to cause problems for the stability of these countries. We have seen this in the Baltic countries. We have seen it in Ukraine. And I would just like your observations as to what our role should be in providing accurate information as to what is happening and Russia's involvement in what is happening in so many countries in Europe.

Ms. Hall, if we can start with you.

Ms. HALL. Thank you, Ranking Member Cardin, for raising this important issue.

Lithuania, as its Baltic neighbors, has dealt with a degree of Russian disinformation and propaganda for a long time. The Russians never really stopped targeting the Baltics, but certainly the sophistication and the scale of the disinformation and propaganda aimed at the Baltics has increased exponentially since 2014, and now Russia has a slick and sophisticated media operation that certainly targets Russian speakers, but it can have an insidiously damaging effect to society at large.

We are working with Lithuanians to train journalists in investigative reporting and fact-based reporting. And our embassy in Vilnius is actually overseeing a program for mid-career journalists from all over the Baltics. We include Russian language speakers in those programs. Lithuania is running Radio Free Europe programming, as well as Radio Liberty programming. And the Lithuanian ministry of foreign affairs and ministry of defense operate strategic communications teams with which we coordinate.

Finally, we are at the embassy supporting Lithuanian Government efforts to reach out to their ethnic communities. The ethnic Russian speaking community in Lithuania is about 6 percent of the population, the Polish community about 7 percent. And I would say

in that regard in a country the size of Lithuania, there is nothing like the personal touch, and I have given speeches and reached out to Lithuanian audiences all over the country in Lithuanian, and if confirmed, I would make it a very high priority for myself and my team to reach out throughout the country to Lithuanians, as well as Russian language speakers and Polish speakers.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Ambassador Yovanovitch?

Ambassador YOVANOVITCH. I think our efforts are along three lines. One is to make sure that we get our story out, and much like the work that is being done today by the embassy in Lithuania, I think many of those similar efforts are taking place in Kyiv.

We also put a premium on identifying and analyzing and countering the stories that Russia sometimes puts out that are false, and that is an important line of effort as well.

And finally—and in some ways this is really the most important thing that we can do is building capacity, whether it is in Ukraine or other countries that face this threat, building capacity within the journalistic community, within civil society so that they themselves can get their own good news out and they themselves can counter the Russian propaganda efforts. We have a number of programs, but in the interest of brevity, I will stop here.

Senator CARDIN. Ambassador Pyatt, what has been our most effective tool that you have found in trying to counter the Russian propaganda?

Ambassador PYATT. The truth. I would just make the point I think the one thing I have learned about these issues over 3 years is that the Russian effort is really not about winning an argument. They have weaponized information and used information as part of their military campaign against Ukraine, and you can see that, for instance—I remember vividly in the spring of 2014 when these GRU and FSB teams first started to move into Ukrainian territory in the Donbas. One of the first things they did was pulled down all the Ukrainian television content. So I think I have always said Ukraine's strongest counter to that is success at the reform effort that you alluded to in your remarks.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. If I could just add to that. We spoke briefly yesterday. I think every one of us has walked down the Maidan and witnessed what occurred there. And I think also just the will of the people themselves for change is the number one weapon against Russia.

So, anyway, we are glad of your work there. We thank you for that and look forward to the same taking place in Greece.

Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank all of you for your service to our country.

Let me start with you, Ambassador Pyatt. I was there in Ukraine when the Russians were invading. I was free to call it an invasion, which it was. And I must say if every ambassador was like you, I would have the highest of regards for the State Department and the Foreign Service. You did an extraordinary job. You were honest and forthright in all of your answers, and you did not use the diplo-

matic speak that sometimes I hear. So I really appreciate your incredible service most recently in Ukraine and beyond.

And I appreciate your opening statement as it relates to Greece because I think sometimes there is a view in the Department that is a little different. Greece has been an extraordinary ally throughout, one of the handful of countries to be with the United States in every 20th century conflict. And the access to Souda Bay is just essential for us. So I appreciate those opening statements.

I want to ask you. We see Greece's central bank governor has publicly called for more debt relief and more realistic budget targets, essentially saying that the agreement Greece has made with its creditors is seriously flawed. That seems to be a lot closer to the position of IMF Director Lagarde and far from where Germany is. Lagarde and the IMF have the best view, I think, on this, which is that Greece needs immediate debt relief and more realistic budget targets.

What role do you see—I mean, this is a European context. I gather that. But with such an important security and other relationship with Greece that we have and a NATO ally, what role do you see the United States playing and yourself as Ambassador to Greece in this regard?

Ambassador PYATT. Thank you, Senator Menendez, both for your comments about my work in Ukraine but also for the important question.

I would make a first point regarding Germany. You know, I have learned in the past 3 years in Kyiv how extraordinarily important the partnership between the United States and Germany is to a variety of U.S. interests in Europe. I have a very strong German counterpart who I consult with as closely as any counterpart in Kyiv today. Chancellor Merkel I think deserves a lot of credit for the leadership that she has exercised, including on the important sanctions role over a decision that happened today.

That said, we have a difference of perspective with Germany on the question of Greece's long-term financial trajectory. I have spent some time with our treasury experts who have been clear in our view that over the long term, there needs to be some form of official debt relief in order to put Greece on a sustainable growth trajectory.

I think it is important also to recognize the very courageous steps that Prime Minister Tspiras has taken already to reform that economy. Lots of work still to be done. It is important that today you have—Juncker is in Athens as I understand. You have a disbursement of over 7 billion euros in additional funding from the EU. So this will be at the very top of my list, if confirmed, as I get to Athens. And my undertaking will be to work as closely as possible with the Greek authorities but also continue the active dialogue with German counterparts that I have enjoyed over 3 years in Kyiv.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Ambassador Yovanovitch, last time we had the chance to engage, I was at the hearing of your former nomination, and you did excellently well except that you were hamstrung by a State Department position on the Armenian genocide. So I appreciate the service that you had, and today will be a lot easier than that hearing was.

But I do want to ask you as a follow-on to the good work that Ambassador Pyatt did—you know, I read the EU's High Representative's Mogherini signaling a broader review of policy later this year. She recently told the German newspaper, quote, EU governance should make a substantive political evaluation on the degree of implementation of the Minsk Agreement and how the way forward toward solving the conflict in Ukraine looks.

Now, many believe that is unlikely that the Kremlin or the separatists will implement every aspect of Minsk II, and some believe the EU is warning Kyiv more than Moscow about implementation of Minsk.

I am concerned that while we certainly have obligations we want to see Kyiv perform in both its transparency and its continuous work on corruption and a whole host of other issues, that there is also an obligation by the separatists and Russia in this regard. And so I am concerned that that is a message of weakening.

What position will you be taking on behalf of the United States upon your confirmation in Kyiv?

Ambassador YOVANOVITCH. Well, I absolutely agree with you, Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right. We can stop the answer there. [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. I am just kidding.

Ambassador YOVANOVITCH. Clearly, you are correct that Russia and the separatists have obligations as well. Ukraine does, and Ukraine has met many of its Minsk Agreement commitments. The Russians and the separatists have not. And I think the first thing that has to happen is a ceasefire, a true and enduring ceasefire. And we are not seeing that. We are, in fact, seeing a spike in military activity in the region, and that is of great concern.

With regard to the Minsk agreements, we believe that this is the only way at this point to move forward. This is the agreement that is on the table that the parties have agreed to. And the Normandy Four countries, France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine, are meeting periodically, and we are pressing forward with our diplomacy to support those efforts.

Senator MENENDEZ. I now close, Mr. Chairman. I just hope we do not get to the point that it is a unilateral obligation that the Ukrainians are expected, as we do, to live up to their responsibilities, but the other entities that are involved, the ones who created this process in the first place, have to be kept to those standards as well.

And I look forward to supporting all of these nominees.

The CHAIRMAN. I could not agree more. 35 Ukrainians were killed last month. The weaponry that is being utilized against them no doubt is Russian weaponry being utilized by Russians with the separatists. And I do hope that we will keep the balance that Senator Menendez mentioned.

I think that in our push to hope that Ukraine will deal appropriately with corruption, sometimes it sounds like we are pushing them harder than we are the Russians, but no doubt many people are dying in order to keep Ukraine free and they are dying because of Russian support against them. And I appreciate very much you bringing that point up.

Senator Murphy?

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

Congratulations to all three of you on your nominations. Thank you for being here today.

I want to make three quick points about Ambassador Pyatt's historic tenure as our Ambassador to Kyiv. I had the honor of joining him three different times with Senator McCain, the first of which will be hard to ever forget, sitting through a 70-minute soliloquy from then President Yanukovych on the eve of his ouster on the largest day of the demonstrations. I know you are going to serve us just as well in Greece.

My first point is to commend the chairman on his push to move nominations as quickly as possible through this committee to floor. If we remember, Ambassador Pyatt was nominated just prior to the crisis beginning in Ukraine and had we not then, under Senator Menendez's leadership, moved your nomination quickly to the floor, we would have been left without a leader, without the head of our delegation. And I think the story would have played out very differently. And so at the time, it did not seem critical that we get somebody on the ground in Kyiv, but it turned out that it was very important that Senator Menendez moved quickly to get you in place. And I think it is another reminder of why our work to get ambassadors on the ground, even in places that do not seem mission-critical at the time, is important.

Second, I just think that they are going to use your tenure to teach diplomatic crisis management. I think that the situation on the ground in Ukraine would be fundamentally different if it was not for the decisions that you made and, agreeing with Senator Menendez, your ability to communicate with Congress. We were able to pass, again with the leadership of the three men sitting next to me, emergency support from this Congress in part because we trusted that you were going to tell us the whole story and the full story. So I want to make those three quick points.

And then I just want to ask you, as you head to Greece, about the tools at your disposal and at our disposal to help countries like Greece who are on the fringes, on the edge of the sanctions conversation to stick with us. We are grateful that we have rolled over sanctions once again, but until Russia has left Crimea and eastern Ukraine, we cannot relent. And you are going to be going to a country that has some misgivings about automatic renewal. What are the tools at our disposal to try to keep not just the Greeks with us on course, but others that may be starting to fray?

Ambassador PYATT. Thank you, Senator Murphy, both for your comments and for your strong partnership throughout my tenure.

I would say on the question you pose, I mean, the most important thing for us to remember is why were these sanctions imposed. These sanctions were imposed first in response to the invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea, and following that, in a brutal violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity with the movement of Russian troops, equipment, and weapons onto sovereign Ukrainian territory, which has now produced more than 10,000 casualties.

Chancellor Merkel has been at the forefront in making the point that the only argument for the relaxation of those sanctions is the reversal of the violation of Ukrainian territorial integrity that occa-

sioned the sanctions. And I think we simply have to keep bringing the debate back to that topic. It is important. And I am sure Ambassador Yovanovitch will talk about the obligations that Ukraine undertook as part of the Minsk Agreement. But the fact is the vast majority of steps that have been taken thus far have been on Ukraine's side of the ledger, and it is Russia which has not yet changed strategic direction and has not complied with its obligations under Minsk.

And so the EU took an important decision today with a 6-month rollover, and in the event that 6 months from now the situation remains as it is today, I will look forward, if confirmed, to making the case to my Greek hosts as to why it is very important for Greece to stand by the policy it has followed thus far of upholding the EU consensus.

Senator MURPHY. Ambassador Yovanovitch, let me just drill down on the line of questioning from Senator Menendez. I worry sometimes that we are asking the Ukrainians to make economic reforms in the middle of an invasion that are simply unrealistic, given the very fact that the Russians are occupying territory and attacking along the front lines in order to create an economic crisis that Ukraine cannot dig itself out from under. I do not doubt that we want to press them on these reforms, that we want them to get better on anti-corruption reforms. But I sometimes think that it is patently ridiculous that we are asking them to do something that is impossible in the face of an invasion.

So how do we pace our press for economic reforms, given the fact that so long as the Russians are there, they are essentially making it nearly impossible for them to enact many of the things that we want them to do?

Ambassador YOVANOVITCH. Thank you for the question. It is a really important question. How do you balance those two issues, security and the overwhelming urgency of defending Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and then the push for economic reform, economic growth.

And the bottom line is that Ukraine has to do both, and it also needs to work on strengthening its democratic institutions as well. And it is hard to do all three, but the three are actually I think mutually reinforcing. So if you work on transparency issues, that helps with the economic piece and it helps with regard to the military and some of the practices in the armed forces. It helps with regard to attracting investment to Ukraine. So it is mutually reinforcing. It is very difficult. No question about it. And as you pointed out, the steps Ukraine takes need to be paced, but they cannot afford basically not to keep on pushing forward.

And what has amazed me, coming back to this portfolio after a number of years—I was DCM in the early 2000s—is how much progress Ukraine has actually made in the last 2 years when it was under threat, as you point out. And yet, they have been able to do things like do judicial reform, macro-stabilization, push out a new public procurement program, and other really important reform programs.

So I am sensitive to the question that you are posing, and I do not have a super good answer as to exactly what is the road map, but I think it is important that Ukraine attack these issues.

Senator MURPHY. I think there are many of us in this Congress who believe that security comes first and worry that pacing out those other reforms too quickly ultimately undermines security. But I understand the balance.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

With that, I know a lot of attention has been paid to Ambassador Pyatt because he has been in a country that has been through such turmoil and he has risen to the occasion. As a matter of fact, as I listened to all the complimentary remarks, I think you ought to reconsider going to Greece and maybe think about retiring. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Hopefully you will not mess it up in Greece. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. But I do want to thank all three of you for being here, and we hope that the countries you are going to do not generate as much interest. I know Ukraine is, so we will continue with you. But we thank you for your willingness to serve.

We would ask you—there will be questions that will come in before the close of business on Thursday—if you could promptly answer those so we can move you through the process quickly, we would appreciate it.

Thank you again for your service and for the family members who are with you.

And with that, we will move to the second panel. Thank you very much. If the second panel would come on up. [Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. We will now move to the second panel. First we have the Honorable Douglas Silliman to be the Ambassador to Iraq. Ambassador Silliman has been in a neighboring country that we have seen him many times in. He currently serves as U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait, has served with distinction. We appreciate his willingness to move to Iraq.

Also on this panel is the Honorable Michael McKinley who is nominated to be Ambassador to Brazil. Ambassador McKinley currently serves as U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan. I want to thank him for the impactful meeting that we had with President Ghani and Abdullah recently, and I really think it had a huge impact. And I want to thank you for your incredible service there.

Mr. Lawrence Silverman is moving out of the main office to the field—I am sure he is thankful about that—to be Ambassador to Kuwait. He currently serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the State Department. We thank you for your service, sir.

And lastly, we have Ms. Carol Perez to be Ambassador to Chile. Ms. Perez currently serves as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Human Resources at the State Department. We thank you also.

If you could give your testimony in about 3 minutes, any written testimony will be entered into the record, without objection. And why do you not just go in the order that you were introduced? Again, thank you for being here.

And I am going to have to step out unfortunately. Senator Cardin has graciously agreed to chair the rest of the meeting, and I thank him for that.

STATEMENT OF HON. DOUGLAS ALAN SILLIMAN, OF TEXAS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next American Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq, and I am grateful to the President and the Secretary for the confidence that they have shown in me.

And, Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I will submit my longer testimony for the record.

I want to begin by thanking my wife Catherine and my two sons for having endured the sacrifices of a 30-year career in the Middle East. They are in Kuwait and are not able to be with us here today, but I know that I could not be here today if it was not for their love and support.

If confirmed, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, I will continue to work to defeat Da'esh. Backed by U.S. and coalition airstrikes, training and equipment Iraqi forces have recaptured about 50 percent of the area Da'esh once controlled. We are pleased by the Iraqi's military progress in liberating the City of Fallujah.

We are also encouraged that with U.S. support, including a new $20 million announced today, the Iraqi Government, the United Nations, and NGOs are addressing the needs of civilians displaced by the fighting. Prime Minister Abadi is taking measures to ensure that those who have committed crimes against fleeing civilians are brought to justice.

If confirmed, I will have no higher priority than protecting the safety and security of the United States and of Americans in Iraq. I will work with Iraqi leaders to promote political reconciliation and regional integration. And I will encourage economic reform to develop and spread Iraq's wealth among all of its citizens.

The Kurdistan regional government remains a key political, economic, and military partner. If confirmed, I will work to expand our cooperation with Erbil and strengthen our outstanding relationship.

If confirmed, I will promote religious freedom, the protection of minority communities, and the fight against trafficking in persons. And while Iraq has made some progress, I will engage the highest levels of the government to seek greater attention on these issues.

Ranking Member Cardin, as you know from your hearings and visits to the region, Iraq is a challenging country. If confirmed, I look forward to your continued support and encourage you and your staff to come visit us to see the important work of the United States in Iraq.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Silliman follows:]

Prepared Statement Douglas A. Silliman

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for their confidence in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with the members of this committee to advance U.S. national security interests in Iraq.

I would like to recognize my wife Catherine and our sons for their steadfast support throughout my career. They are all in Kuwait and could not be here with me today, but I certainly would not be here were it not for them.

I would also like to thank my friend and colleague Ambassador Stuart Jones who has very ably led our Embassy in Baghdad for the last two years. The progress we have made against Da'esh is in large part because of his leadership and hard work. I would also like to express my gratitude to the men and women serving the Unites States in Iraq: the staff of Embassy Baghdad, our Consulates in Erbil and Basrah, and of course, those men and women serving in uniform who are bravely working to help the Iraqis defeat Da'esh.

If confirmed, I hope to support these great Americans as Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq.

If confirmed, my goals will be clear, even if sometimes the tasks required to accomplish them will be difficult. I will continue the fight to defeat Da'esh. I will seek to enhance the safety and security of the United States and of Americans in Iraq, including the staff of the U.S. Mission, deployed military personnel, and private American citizens living and working across Iraq.

I will seek the political reconciliation and regional integration needed for Iraqis to live with each other and their neighbors in peace and prosperity. I will encourage economic reform and development that can spread the benefits of Iraq's great wealth to all its population, and seek to reduce the corruption and mismanagement that bleeds Iraq's resources from the many to the few.

I will work to further all of America's national interests in Iraq and the region, including continuing our strong partnership with the Kurdistan Regional Government; fighting Trafficking in Persons; promoting human rights; supporting Iraq's ethnic and religious minority communities and its underserved and displaced populations.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, I am not blind to the realities of Iraq, but I believe I can approach these tasks with the knowledge and experience built up over my 32 years in the Foreign Service. I have already served two years in Iraq, first as Embassy Baghdad's Minister Counselor for Political Affairs, then as Deputy Chief of Mission. I have served nine years in countries that border Iraq: four as Political Counselor at Embassy Amman, three as Deputy Chief of Mission at Embassy Ankara, and, most recently, two years as Ambassador to Kuwait. I have spent most of the rest of my career in the Middle East or South Asia, or working on the Middle East in Washington.

As this committee knows well from your hearings and visits to the region, Iraq presents challenges. I do not believe that those challenges are insurmountable, but they are certainly hard. But Iraq also offers opportunities—on regional security, economic opportunity and human rights—that I hope to take advantage of as well.

Please permit me to address each of my key goals in turn.

If confirmed, my primary responsibility will be to do everything possible to protect the United States from threats emanating from Iraq. I will continue to support the robust security measures at Embassy Baghdad, Consulate General Erbil and Consulate General Basrah that protect our employees where they live and work. I will work to ensure that the best security information and advice available to me is also available to military commanders and force protection personnel. And I will seek to build the relationships within the Iraqi government to strengthen its commitment to protecting all Americans from harm.

If confirmed, I will continue to help the Iraqi Government combat Da'esh. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Abadi, Iraq invited U.S. forces to lead an international coalition to support local security forces in the fight against Da'esh. Since the fall of 2014, with our help, the Iraqi Security Forces, including Iraqi Peshmerga and Popular Mobilization Forces, have driven Da'esh back. Backed by U.S. and Coalition air strikes, training, and equipment, Iraqi forces have recaptured approximately 50 percent of the area Da'esh had seized, including the Mosul Dam, Tikrit, Sinjar, Bayji, Ramadi, Hit, and most recently, Rutbah. These victories prove that with U.S. and Coalition support, Iraqi security forces can defeat Da'esh and other insurgent groups. The Iraqi government is grateful for our assistance and wants our continued engagement.

Right now, we are supporting the Iraqis as they seek to retake Fallujah and begin to pressure Mosul. In Fallujah, our Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance assets along with Coalition air strikes are supporting the Iraqi offensive, and the Iraqi military, with the support of the Popular Mobilization Forces, has made great progress. With our Coalition partners and the United Nations, we are helping the Iraqis as they prepare to hold and stabilize the city as well as care for those displaced by the conflict. We are disturbed by allegations of abuse by some of the forces trying to liberate Fallujah against civilians fleeing the fighting. We are, however,

encouraged that Prime Minister Abadi has formed a committee to investigate these allegations, and the investigation has already led to reported arrests of alleged perpetrators.

If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to focus on executing a successful Mosul campaign that simultaneously respects the rights of those both fleeing and unable to flee the fighting. The Iraqis understand how important and how hard this fight will be, and that is why we will work closely with the Iraqis to ensure the necessary political and military plans are prepared just as we will assist the security forces taking part in the operation. Equally critical, we will partner with the Iraqi government to address humanitarian and stabilization challenges attendant to the Mosul campaign to ensure gains are sustained. We have seen what the Iraqi Security Forces can do with our help in Ramadi, Tikrit, and elsewhere. I am confident we will see the same success in Mosul.

If confirmed, I will press for political reconciliation and improved Iraqi relations in the region and around the world. Security assistance can only take Iraq so far: reconciliation will be needed to heal the country. We believe that the most effective approach to reconciliation is to start at the local level, building confidence in local security forces and improving access to basic services. When people feel safe in their homes and can provide their families with the essentials, trust can develop between the people and their government. On security, we have emphasized the importance of involving locally-recruited forces in operations to liberate and hold territory freed from Da'esh, and we have supported the efforts of the Iraqi government to enroll, arm, and train volunteers in Anbar and Ninewa—including tens of thousands of Sunnis. These forces have been critical to victories in Ramadi and Hit and will play a significant role in the Mosul campaign. We are also working with the Iraqis to reconstitute local police forces, so that when hostilities subside, citizens will have capable police forces drawn from their communities.

For all of their troubles and difficulties, Iraqis want a real voice in governance and are committed to a democratic process. Power has transitioned peacefully between national and provincial governments following elections since 2003 and elections have been largely open and fair, both remarkable achievements in the Middle East. The political upheaval and protests we have seen in Baghdad over the past few months are in part the public manifestations of a people hungry for reform, improved government services, and economic growth. There are also spoilers in both the political arena and among the protesters. Spoilers who seek to further their self-interest by disrupting the political process and committing violent acts. We strongly support the rights of the people to assemble peacefully and protest, but we must also condemn the destructive actions of some protesters in the storming of Parliament on April 30 and a brief second breach of the International Zone on May 20. Prime Minister Abadi has shown his willingness to address the people's demands for change, and we support him in these efforts. But we see also self-interested parties undermining the efforts for reform.

If confirmed, I will urge the restraint, compromise, and unity that are all fundamental to solving Iraq's many daunting problems. Prime Minister Abadi is a valuable partner and a strong ally. Yet our support for a strong, stable, democratic, and unified Iraq is broader than our relationship with any one leader and we seek a partnership with the lawfully-chosen government based on mutual respect and shared objectives. I will continue the work of my predecessor and keep open lines of communication with Iraqis of all political, ideological, and ethnic backgrounds, excluding only those with known links to terrorism.

Looking outside Iraq's borders, further integration of Iraq with its neighbors in the region and the broader international community will yield political, economic, and security dividends. One of the achievements I am most proud of from my time in Kuwait—along with Ambassador Jones on the other side of the border—was helping the Iraqis and Kuwaitis expand an already strong bilateral relationship. Kuwait's economic and humanitarian support for Iraq have been vital, including $4.6 billion in delayed compensation payments and $210 million pledged and delivered humanitarian assistance. Saudi Arabia's generous $500 million humanitarian contribution in 2014 and the reopening of its embassy in Baghdad in 2015 were important signals of solidarity against Da'esh. UAE and Qatar have both pledged or provided stabilization support and humanitarian assistance. These were welcome steps, but there is great need for more. The Government of Iraq has been clear that it seeks improved and constructive relations with all its neighbors. If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to encourage the Government of Iraq to expand its engagement with the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, and the broader Arab world.

We must also acknowledge the relationship between Iraq and Iran. These countries share a long border, a long history, and a complex relationship, including significant economic ties. We must continue to work within this framework as the fight against Da'esh pushes forward, and ensure that Iran respects Iraqi sovereignty and does not enflame sectarian tensions.

If confirmed, I will press economic reform and development, while continuing our efforts to ensure Iraq has the resources needed for its fight against Da'esh. The global collapse of oil prices has devastated Iraq's revenue, triggering an acute fiscal crisis. Corruption, a bloated public sector, and an over-reliance on oil revenue have exacerbated these problems and highlighted the deep need for Iraq to reform, decentralize, and diversify.

If confirmed, I will seek to enhance our economic and commercial engagement with Iraq. Iraq has the fifth largest proven conventional oil reserves in the world and the second largest in OPEC. Helping the Iraqis to get these resources to market is critical, and Iraqis want the help of American companies. It will also be important to help Iraq to diversify its economy, decentralize economic decision-making and put in place reforms to encourage the development of a viable private sector. This means that decision making must devolve to localities and provinces. While economic reforms are important, a top priority for our mission in Iraq will be to strengthen our commercial ties and promote U.S. companies, products, and services. I will work to ensure that our companies are competing on an even playing field. I will work tirelessly to promote U.S. exports and ensure that government tenders, such as the recent tender for nearly 100,000 tons of rice awarded to U.S. growers, give our companies full and fair consideration.

And this may not be as hard as it now appears. The Iraqi economy grew at 7 percent annually before the arrival of Da'esh, and Iraq can regain an upward trajectory with wiser management and a real effort to reduce corruption. Here too, we see a desire on the part of Iraqis for continued U.S. and international engagement to strengthen the private sector in order to spur economic growth for all Iraqis.

If confirmed, I will promote the other crucial U.S. national interests in Iraq. It is important for me to highlight that the Kurdistan Regional Government remains a key and trusted political, economic, and military partner. Erbil, like Baghdad, also faces a daunting slate of economic issues. The Kurdish Parliament has not met since October of last year, and the Kurdistan Regional Government's fiscal crisis is also dire. Like Baghdad, the KRG faces economic strain from low oil prices as well as an unprecedented humanitarian emergency. To help alleviate some of these issues, the Department of Defense recently announced up to $480 million in stipend and logistical support for the Peshmerga, and we were all happy to see the central government in Baghdad commit to share some of its security assistance with the KRG. While these measures will provide immediate relief, the KRG needs to take more permanent reform measures. Like Baghdad, the KRG also has too many employees and too much corruption. Our USAID colleagues are on the ground, providing advisory support as the KRG undertakes structural economic reform and support for the private sector. If confirmed, I will work to expand our cooperation with Erbil and protect the outstanding relationship we have developed over years of close cooperation.

I want to stress that while Mosul Dam remains a top concern, Iraq has come a long way in taking responsibility for the issue. Our goal is to prevent a catastrophe from taking place, but if it does occur, we have plans in place to evacuate our people and deal with the humanitarian crisis likely to be caused by the massive flooding. We continue to engage the international community on this issue because a dam breach would literally and figuratively change the landscape of Iraq during our fight against Da'esh.

It will also be a priority to uphold our long-standing commitment to the promotion and protection of religious freedom and ethnic minorities. We are focused on the dire situation of all Iraqi communities, including Christians, Shabak, Yezidis, Kaka'i, Sabean-Mandeans, Turkmen, Shia, Sunni, and members of other groups, who have suffered at the hands of Da'esh. We see the first priority in this effort as assisting Iraqi Security Forces, including Peshmerga, in defeating Da'esh. This is essential to the protection of human rights and religious diversity in the region. The U.S. response to Da'esh atrocities, however, involves more than military action. We will be supporting efforts to collect, document, preserve, and analyze the evidence of atrocities, including through forensic evidence in mass graves, and we will do all we can to see that the perpetrators are held accountable. On April 8, Secretary Kerry announced an additional $155 million in humanitarian assistance to help vulnerable Iraqis inside Iraq and across the region. That brings the total to $778 million since FY 2014. We continue to work with the Government of Iraq to make sure its institu-

tions are more representative and inclusive, and to promote security and freedom for religious minorities in Iraq, including areas liberated from Da'esh.

Once security is established, we will continue to support Iraqi-led local efforts to establish the conditions that will allow for the safe and voluntary return of displaced citizens. Working with the U.N. Development Program, the United States and 18 international partners have funded a stabilization mechanism that emphasizes quick projects that help restore basic services like water and electricity, reopen schools and health clinics, and provide grants to businesses trying to reopen. Our support has helped contribute to stabilization efforts that have allowed nearly 700,000 displaced Iraqis—including 95 percent of the families from the Sunni city of Tikrit—return to their homes, and we are seeing the same effort underway in Ramadi. To make the stabilization efforts more sustainable, we have provided technical assistance to the effort, championed by the Prime Minister, to decentralize federal authority over many government services. Empowering local governments with responsibility over these services gives communities a greater stake in their governance and has the potential to improve service delivery. The implications of decentralization go far beyond liberated areas—greater local authority will improve governance throughout Iraq.

Finally, I will press forward the Department's efforts to combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP), which has been a longstanding personal commitment. Iraq has taken notable steps to fight trafficking, despite the fact that its abilities to do so were severely hindered by extreme security challenges and budget constraints.

The Government of Iraq as targeted both labor and sex traffickers. It sharply increased its investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases, resulting in 119 prosecutions in 2015 compared to 39 in 2014. The GOI assigned more police officers to TIP enforcement in every province. The government's inter-ministerial anti-TIP committee met throughout the year, provided anti-TIP and shelter management training, and lobbied to pass bylaws to improve implementation of the anti-TIP law. The government also provided training to military officers on child soldier issues. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement and, if confirmed, I will engage with Iraqis at the highest levels to press for greater attention and effort to this issue.

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, if confirmed, I look forward to your continued support and invite you to come see the good work that American civilian and military personnel are doing to further U.S. interests in Iraq. I thank you for the opportunity to testify, and look forward to answering your questions.

Senator CARDIN [presiding]. Thank you for your testimony.

Ambassador Mckinley?

STATEMENT OF HON. PETER MICHAEL McKINLEY, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, it is my distinct honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Brazil. I deeply appreciate the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in nominating me for consideration by the Senate.

I am also profoundly thankful for the support across my career of my wife Fatima and our three children, Claire, Peter, and Sarah who could not be with us today.

Having spent part of my youth in Brazil and having served as U.S. Ambassador to Peru and Colombia, I am well aware of Brazil's importance to the United States and to the region. If I am confirmed, I pledge to work with you and your Senate colleagues to continue developing our vibrant relationship with Brazil.

Brazil and the United States have a rich history of collaboration. Our engagement is firmly rooted in shared democratic values. We are collaborating to facilitate trade, encourage investment, create jobs. We are deepening our defense and security cooperation. We are standing together in defense of human rights.

If I am confirmed, I will do my utmost to continue advancing on all these fronts. Job number one will remain to ensure the continued safety and security of U.S. citizens in Brazil. Our mission to Brazil is currently working to support the Brazilian Government's efforts to stage a safe and successful 2016 Summer Olympics and Paralympics, which more than 100,000 Americans are expected to attend.

Another key focus would be to continue developing our commercial ties with Brazil. Annual two-way trade and investment between our countries reached $100 billion in recent years, but we can increase it even more. And if confirmed, I will dedicate my efforts to advancing our leaders' vision of doubling trade within 10 years.

If confirmed, I would also seek opportunities for our two countries to continue to partner in exchanging information about our experiences promoting transparency and accountability and confidence in the rule of law.

Finally, if confirmed, I would work to secure support for our regional, global, and multilateral priorities. Whether we are seeking to promote respect for democracy in the hemisphere, defend freedom of expression, build global peacekeeping capacity, combat global health threats like zika, or confront climate change, we can accomplish more when we work together with Brazil than we can on our own.

Ranking Member, thank you once again for your consideration of my nomination. And it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to have spoken earlier today, and I remain open to and welcome any questions you may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador McKinley follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF P. MICHAEL MCKINLEY

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, it is my distinct honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next United States Ambassador to Brazil. I deeply appreciate the confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in me by sending my name to the Senate for consideration. I am also profoundly thankful for the support of my family, particularly my wife Fatima and my children Claire, Peter, and Sarah.

Having spent part of my youth in Brazil, and having had the good fortune to serve as U.S. Ambassador first to Peru and then to Colombia, I am well aware of Brazil's importance to the United States and to the region. If I am confirmed, I pledge to work with you and your Senate colleagues to continue developing our vibrant relationship with Brazil.

Brazil and the United States have a rich history of collaboration. The United States was the first nation to recognize Brazil's independence in 1822, and our troops fought side-by-side as part of the Allied effort during the Second World War.

Today, the United States and Brazil are pursuing a comprehensive agenda with a breadth and depth that befits the size of our countries and the diversity of our peoples.

Our engagement is firmly rooted in our shared democratic values and determination to promote peace and prosperity for all our citizens. We are collaborating to facilitate trade, encourage investment, and create jobs. We are deepening our defense and security cooperation to promote peace and stability in the region and across the globe. We are standing together in defense of human rights. Our citizens are traveling between our two countries in impressive numbers, and our extensive people-to-people contacts are producing advancements in science, technology, and innovation.

If I am confirmed, I will do my utmost to continue advancing on all these fronts. Job number one would be to ensure the continued safety and security of U.S. citizens in Brazil. Our Mission to Brazil has established an excellent foundation by

working to support the Brazilian government's efforts to stage a safe and successful 2016 Summer Olympics and Paralympics, which more than 100,000 Americans are expected to attend. If I am confirmed, I will build upon this foundation so that U.S. citizens who choose to travel, work, and live in Brazil in the future may do so safely and securely.

Another key focus of mine would be to continue developing our commercial ties with Brazil. Annual two-way trade in goods and services between our countries is already considerable, having reached $100 billion in recent years, but we can increase it even more. If confirmed, I will dedicate my efforts to advancing our leaders' vision of doubling trade within ten years. The United States is already the number one source for foreign direct investment (FDI) in Brazil, with over $70 billion in FDI stock, and Brazilian direct investment in the United States already supports over 70,000 jobs in the United States, but again, we can do even more.If confirmed, I will work with Brazil to lower trade barriers and spur additional growth in our trade and investment relationship.

If confirmed, I will also support Brazil's ongoing efforts to promote transparency and confidence in the rule of law. As Secretary Kerry has made clear, rooting out corruption, reducing impunity, and promoting good governance need to be among our top priorities in the hemisphere, and Brazil shares that view. Strong, transparent, and independent Brazilian institutions benefit us all. For this reason, I would seek opportunities for our two countries to continue to partner in by exchanging information about our experiences promoting transparency and accountability.

In addition, if confirmed, I would work to secure Brazil's support for our regional, global, and multilateral priorities. Whether we are seeking to promote respect for democracy in the hemisphere, defend freedom of expression, build global peacekeeping capacity, combat global health threats like Zika, or confront climate change, we can accomplish more when we work together with Brazil than we can on our own.

In conclusion, and if confirmed, I will faithfully execute my duties as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil and dedicate all my energies to deepening the robust partnership between the two largest democracies and economies in the Americas.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you once for your consideration of my nomination. It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak with you today. I welcome your questions.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for your testimony.

Mr. Silverman?

STATEMENT OF LAWRENCE ROBERT SILVERMAN, OF MASSACHUSETTS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE STATE OF KUWAIT

Mr. SILVERMAN. Ranking Member Cardin, I am honored to appear before you today and gratified by the trust that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown by nominating me to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the State of Kuwait.

I would like to thank my family for their support. My wife Vicki, a former Foreign Service officer herself, my daughter Lina and my son David are here with me today.

If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and others in Congress to enhance a close, mutually beneficial bilateral relationship that helps us cope with regional conflicts, combat terrorism, promote commerce, and human trafficking, on which we are making some progress in Kuwait. And I would have no higher priority than protecting the safety and security of all Americans in Kuwait.

In my office, I keep a reminder of Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait over 25 years ago, a license plate he issued to pretend that Kuwait was a province of Iraq. It is also a reminder to me of our soldiers' bravery in ending that occupation.

Today, Kuwait is a key member of our counter-Da'esh coalition. It hosts the headquarters of the combined joint task force and is

a world leader in aid to the Syrian refugees. Kuwait has also provided invaluable help to stabilize Iraq economically and is hosting the Yemen negotiations.

Da'esh's June 2015 bombing of the Imam Sadiq Mosque in Kuwait City increased Kuwaiti resolve to combat terrorism and stop terrorist financing. We believe more can be done, and we are helping build Kuwait's capacity in this regard.

Kuwaitis are major investors in the United States economy, creating jobs for Americans. There are opportunities for American business and technical assistance in oil, petrochemical, and renewable energy technology, and Kuwait's investment in power generation, health care, and other areas present enormous opportunities for American business.

In the region, Kuwait stands out for its relatively open political environment. There is a relatively free press and the elected parliament is independent. But there is room for improvement.

Five generations of Kuwaitis have studied in the United States. If confirmed, I will prioritize our engagement with these generations.

Ranking Member Cardin, I believe my experience working on regional conflicts and counterterrorism and promoting commerce and American values would help me advance U.S. interests in Kuwait. If confirmed, I would look forward to welcoming you in Kuwait to enhance our valuable relationship.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Silverman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LAWRENCE R. SILVERMAN

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you, and gratified by the trust President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown by nominating me to serve as U.S. ambassador to the State of Kuwait. If you will permit me, I would also like to thank my family for their support throughout my career. My wife Vicki, a former Foreign Service Officer herself, my daughter, Lina, and my son, David, are here with me today.

I would also like to acknowledge the exemplary service of my colleague, Doug Silliman, as the U.S. ambassador to Kuwait. Some of our best and brightest in the Foreign Service have served as Ambassador to Kuwait. I have learned from them and hope to build upon the strong U.S.-Kuwait bonds they have forged.

If confirmed, I will work closely with this committee and others in the Congress to sustain and enhance our close, productive and mutually beneficial relationship with Kuwait. For the past 25 years, Kuwait has prospered under the security and stability afforded by our relationship, and the United States has been able to work closely with Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council partners in addressing threats to our interests because of that same relationship. Today, our partnership serves as a cornerstone of U.S. national security interests in the region and helps us find solutions to destabilizing regional conflicts, combat extremism and terrorism, promote commerce, advance cooperation on global issues such as eliminating human trafficking—on which we are making some progress in Kuwait. Moreover, we are working to further strengthen the investment and education ties between our countries.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will have no higher priority than protecting the safety and security of all Americans in Kuwait—those in our Mission, deployed military personnel and the large number of private Americans.

From the beginning of the campaign to defeat Da'esh, Kuwait has been a key member of the coalition we have led. It has provided strategic access and logistical support to coalition forces deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, and is a member of the Coalition's Small Group, in recognition of its significant role across several lines of effort in this campaign. Indeed, Kuwait has been a leader amongst the GCC countries in providing humanitarian assistance to the millions of

individuals displaced by conflicts across the region, and we look forward to Kuwait continuing this vital support.

Almost exactly one year ago, Kuwait was a direct victim of Da'esh's terrorism. The June 2015 bombing of the Imam Sadiq Mosque resulted in 27 deaths and 227 injured. None of us can reverse what happened that day or in other terrorist acts and bring back the lives lost, but we can redouble our efforts to prevent further attacks. Kuwait has drawn exactly that lesson from the tragedy at the mosque, increasing its resolve to combat terrorism, including steps to stop money laundering and terrorist financing. With our help, it is building its capacity for such efforts and has successfully prosecuted several Kuwaiti nationals and expatriate residents on terrorist financing charges. We look forward to further cooperation to stop terrorist financing, especially as there is more than we believe Kuwait can do in this regard.

Since its liberation by a U.S.-led coalition in 1991, Kuwait has been a uniquely close defense partner, generously hosting a major U.S. military presence, including the regional headquarters of U.S. Army Central (ARCENT) and the headquarters of the Combined Joint Task Force for operations in Iraq and Syria. Kuwait is committed to advancing cooperative defense efforts. If confirmed, I promise to lead my team in doing all we can not only to maintain this unique and strategically important defense relationship, but also to help it further evolve so as to meet present day challenges. I will also do all I can to support our men and women in uniform serving there.

I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the sacrifice of U.S. soldiers who helped liberate Kuwait in Operation Desert Storm in 1991. I arrived at my first posting in the Foreign Service, Amman, Jordan, one week after Saddam Hussein invaded and occupied Kuwait, and met people fleeing that invasion near the Jordan-Iraq border. In my office, I keep on the wall a reminder of that occupation—a license plate the Saddam regime issued to pretend that Kuwait was a province of Iraq—and of the bravery of our soldiers in ending that occupation. While U.S.-Kuwait bonds were forged in war now over a quarter century ago, we are working every day to forge further bonds in peacetime. Even more significantly, under the leadership of Amir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Kuwait has prioritized improved ties with the Iraqi people, supporting their efforts to defeat Daesh. Kuwait has provided practical help to stabilize Iraq, previously postponing billions of required reparations payments by Iraq for the occupation of Kuwait and , pledging an additional $200 million in assistance to help Iraqis internally displaced by violence in their own country. We welcome this support, which reflects the important strategic recognition that the security of Kuwait and our GCC partners is linked, in part, to Iraq's success in defeating Daesh.

Our relationship with Kuwait is much broader than security, and so are the mutual benefits. This will be reflected in the inaugural U.S.-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue, which we look forward to hosting in July. Kuwaitis are major investors in every sector of the American economy, from real estate to IPOs, and we want to see our economic ties grow. Separately, Kuwait has committed to participate in a a new ministerial-level economic dialogue that the President and GCC leaders announced at the U.S.-GCC Summit in April. It will focus on U steps Kuwait and other GCC partners can take to diversify their economies, increase economic cooperation, and also support reforms that could make available additional resources for Kuwait to help meet the economic and social aspirations of their young people and all of their citizens.

And regionally, Kuwait has been a staunch supporter of our mutual interests. It has been at the forefront of supporting Iraq and its government, and of welcoming the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, while remaining concerned about Iran's activities destabilizing the region.

Today, Kuwait is hosting the UN-mediated Yemen negotiations. The Amir has personally urged the parties to reach a peaceful solution to the conflict. The Kuwaitis have also been a world leader in humanitarian assistance for the Syrian crisis, pledging $1.4 billion through the United Nations, hosting three pledging conferences, and co-hosting a fourth this past February. As Secretary Kerry has said, ″We appreciate the strong partnership in trying to deal with the troubles of the region.″

In the all-important energy field, Kuwait is the world's eighth largest oil producer, the fourth largest in OPEC. Our Mission in Kuwait is promoting U.S. technical assistance to the oil and petrochemical industry. There are commercial opportunities for American renewable energy technology leaders, as Kuwait seeks to generate 15 percent of electricity production from renewable energy by 2030.

Commercial ties between our countries expanded by over 42 percent between 2009 and 2015—to $7.5 billion. U.S. exports to Kuwait grew by 29 percent, making Kuwait our fifth largest export market in the Middle East-North Africa region. Ku-

wait's multi-billion dollar investment in major power generation, transportation, oil and gas, and health care infrastructure projects presents American contracting firms and vendors with enormous business opportunities. As one example, our Embassy in Kuwait just hosted the largest U.S. trade delegation ever to Kuwait, focused on health care.

Within the region, Kuwait stands out for its relatively open political environment, vibrant civil society, and tradition of constitutional participatory governance. There is a relatively free press, and the parliament is freely-elected and independent. Women are represented in the Cabinet; their participation in the public sector reached 54 percent in 2015. There is, however, room for improvement, and we will continue to encourage democratic, economic and social development.

The U.S.-Kuwaiti relationship is between peoples as well as governments. We want to continue investing in those ties. Five generations of Kuwaitis have studied in the U.S., and the number of those studying here has grown to 9,000. With a quarter of the population under the age of 25, our educational opportunities are a vital part of sharing American principles. If confirmed, I will prioritize our engagement with this new generation to ensure that our bilateral ties continue to remain strong into the future.

For me, if confirmed, this assignment would represent coming full circle since my first tour in Jordan, where I saw the effects of the occupation of Kuwait. I believe my experience working on regional conflicts and counter-terrorism, and the promotion of commercial relations of American values, would help me to effectively protect and advance U.S. interests as Chief of Mission in Kuwait. I have made a concerted effort to offer advice to and encourage the development of the skills of those with whom I have had the privilege of serving. I have also been fortunate to have mentors who emphasized that each Mission—including all the agencies represented—must function as a team for us to succeed in advancing U.S. interests.

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, members of the committee, if confirmed I look forward to the opportunity to welcome you and your staff in Kuwait to continue building our important relationship. Thank you very much again for this opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to responding to your questions.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for your testimony.

Ms. Perez?

STATEMENT OF CAROL Z. PEREZ, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE

Ms. PEREZ. Thank you, Ranking Member Cardin. It is an honor and a privilege to appear today to seek your confirmation as Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Chile.

I am humbled by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in putting forward my nomination.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the members of my family: my mom and dad, Irene and John Zelis, who are at home in Chicago; and my husband Al; son Michael; daughter Caroline and her husband Jacob; and my daughter Marisa, who are here with me today. They stood by my side as I proudly represented the United States overseas and in Washington.

I would be proud to lead our U.S. mission in Santiago, which has representatives from more than a dozen Federal agencies and terrific locally employed staff, many of whom are U.S. citizens.

Chile is one of our closest hemispheric allies. Shared values and mutual interests anchor our bilateral and regional cooperation in almost every sector. It is a nation that supports free markets, human rights, rule of law, and respect for the environment. It is a contributor to global peacekeeping missions and supports shared priorities in security and military cooperation.

Our bilateral trade has quadrupled to almost $28 billion per year since our Free Trade Agreement went into effect in 2004. Supporting U.S. businesses in Chile and Chilean businesses investing

in the United States will increase economic opportunity and prosperity for both countries.

Our cooperation in the sciences and on the environment is second to none. U.S. and Chilean scientists collaborate to uncover the mysteries of outer space, conserve our oceans, and advance scientific research in seismology and clean energy.

Our people-to-people relationships are robust and wide-ranging. 50,000 Americans live in Chile, and in 2015, a record 220,000 Americans visited there.

Our shared focus on education, entrepreneurship, opportunities for women and children, and collaborative research projects make the United States and Chile natural allies, able to take on global challenges together.

Ranking Member Cardin, if confirmed, I will work with you, your colleagues, and all U.S. stakeholders to advance the interests of the United States and to deepen the bonds between our two countries. I would work every day to ensure the safety and security of our embassy staff and all American citizens. This will always be my number one priority.

Thank you, and I would be pleased to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Perez follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CAROL PEREZ

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor and a privilege to appear today to seek your confirmation as the next Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Chile. I am humbled by the trust and confidence President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in putting forward my nomination for this position.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the members of my family—my mom and dad, Irene and John Zelis, who are at home in Chicago, and my husband Al, my son Michael, daughter Caroline and her husband Jacob, and my daughter Marisa, who are here with me today. They stood by my side as I proudly represented the United States overseas and in Washington.

For over 28 years, I have had the privilege to advance U.S. interests and values by leading interagency colleagues committed to serving our country. I advocated on behalf of U.S. businesses interested in entering Europe's energy markets, led efforts to counter violent extremism, and supported business, cultural and educational exchanges during my tenure as Consul General in Milan and in Barcelona.

I worked to advance the rule of law and combat corruption in Haiti, Ukraine and the South China Sea during my tenure as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. In my current position as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources, I have led efforts to ensure our diverse 73,000 plus workforce is prepared to meet global challenges and advance U.S. foreign policy interests.

I am prepared to take the next step and serve as Ambassador—and would be very proud to lead our U.S. Mission in Santiago, which has representatives from more than a dozen federal agencies, and terrific locally employed staff, many of whom are U.S. citizens.

Chile is one of our closest hemispheric allies. Shared values and mutual interests anchor our bilateral and regional cooperation in almost every sector. Chile stands as a testament to the transformational possibilities of democratic governance and inclusive economic policies. It is a nation that supports free markets, human rights, rule of law and respect for the environment. It is a contributor to global peacekeeping missions and supports shared priorities in security and military cooperation.

Chile is a valued trading partner. Our bilateral trade has quadrupled to almost $28 billion per year since our Free Trade Agreement went into effect. Supporting U.S. businesses in Chile and Chilean businesses investing in the United States will increase economic opportunity and prosperity for both countries. This economic cooperation is a win-win.

Our cooperation in the sciences and on the environment is second to none. Indeed, U.S. and Chilean scientists are collaborating to uncover the mysteries of outer-space, conserve our oceans, and advance scientific research in seismology, and clean energy.

Our people to people relationships are robust and wide-ranging. 50,000 Americans live in Chile, and in 2015, a record 220,000 Americans visited there. The number of Chileans studying in the United States has grown by 40 percent in the last five years to over 2,500. And Chile has one of the largest Fulbright programs in the Hemisphere.

Our shared focus on education, entrepreneurship, opportunities for women and girls, and collaborative research projects makes the United States and Chile natural allies able to take on global challenges together

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work with you, your colleagues, and all U.S. stakeholders to advance the interests of the United States and to deepen the bonds between our two countries. I would work every day to ensure the safety and security of our embassy staff and all American citizens. This will always be my number one priority.

Thank you and I would be pleased to answer your questions.

Senator CARDIN. Well, once again, we do thank all four of you for being here today and your willingness to continue in public service. As I said earlier, we also thank your families.

As I mentioned a little bit earlier, I will be asking questions for the record in regards to human rights and your commitment to keep this committee informed on the challenges that you face in each of your countries and where we could be helpful in advancing international human rights values.

Mr. Silverman, I would like to get your input here. Kuwait is a very important strategic country for the United States, and at times, the State Department can put the strategic importance of the relationship ahead of advancement on human rights. Kuwait has been designated by the State Department Trafficking in Persons report for 2015 tier 3, the worst level, for the eighth year in a row. They passed a law, but there has been no demonstrated significant effort to prosecute or convict trafficking offenders.

So can you just assure me that this will be a priority of your mission—trafficking in persons is modern day slavery. We have international commitments on this. Kuwait must do better—that you will use your office to make sure that the host country is aware of these concerns and our willingness to work with them to improve their record?

Mr. SILVERMAN. Thank you very much, Senator.

I, indeed, have made this a priority throughout my career in the others countries that I served in trying to combat trafficking in persons, and it will be a top priority for me in Kuwait.

I will say, Ranking Member, that over the last year, we have maybe belatedly seen progress in the area, including prosecutions. So now we have a number of prosecutions just within the last year. We set ourselves roughly 11 goals, areas where we thought Kuwait needed to improve between last year and this year, and we think they have improved in nine of those areas. But prosecutions are extremely important. They have now begun, and we will certainly encourage them to continue because they send an enormously important signal beyond taking those people out of commission as traffickers, running slavery rings, the message that it sends that this should not be allowed. And if I am confirmed, I will certainly make this a top priority, my constant and the mission's constant engagement with the Kuwaiti authorities.

Senator CARDIN. I thank you for that. It is just important that we underscore this. I have done that on my visits to different countries, and I know that our missions are targeted with the assessments, their recommendations, but it is helpful the more engagement you have with Kuwait on this issue.

Mr. Silliman, one of our challenges in Iraq has been establishing an effective unitary federal state. It is fundamental to our long-term success. And we have conflicting problems with whether we provide direct funds to the Kurds, whether we work through a central government, the protection of the Sunni areas and the involvement of the Shiite militia. How do you see unfolding the U.S. objective of establishing—not just the U.S. objective—I hope it is the Iraqi objective—of a functioning federal state that can protect all of the ethnic communities?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Senator Cardin, thank you very much.

It is a very important issue that Prime Minister Abadi himself has addressed when he took office by seeking to find a functional federalism in the Iraqi Government, which is to say an effective central government that is able to carry out the functions of a central government, but decentralization of a lot of decision-making to provincial authorities, governors and provincial councils, to deal with more of the day-to-day issues that are more easily dealt with closer to the people that the government serves.

So I think, Senator, our goal is to do both of these things at the same time, to increase the efficiency of the government in Baghdad for the things that it must do, distributing oil revenue, figuring out how to defend the country, but continuing Prime Minister Abadi's desire to decentralize decision-making for a number of ministries and giving the authority directly to the people elected to serve the people in their own provinces.

Senator CARDIN. I think that is the right blueprint. It is going to take a lot of attention, and there are going to be a lot of bumps along the way. So we have invested a great deal in Iraq, and clearly we have seen some military success on reclaiming territory. But we know if we do not have the ability to hold on through good governance these areas, we are just going to see a repeat of what has happened in the past. So it has got to be a focus of our priority in the mission. I thank you for your answer on that.

Ms. Perez, Chile, of course, is a partner of the United States. We have a free trade agreement, and yet they are on the watch list on trade issues. Their intellectual property protection has been unacceptable to us. How do you see your role in dealing with the concerns that we have had with Chile in the enforcement of our free trade agreements?

Ms. PEREZ. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

I do agree that our trade relationship with Chile has been very strong. As I mentioned, it has quadrupled since 2004, and it is almost $28 billion a year now.

I believe we have an opportunity. Chile is a TPP country, and all the TPP countries do understand that they need to make the agreement commitments a reality before this will go into effect. And so I think that using this will allow us to move forward on the regulatory changes that need to take place to protect IPR, both under the FTA and under TPP. And if confirmed, I look forward to work-

ing with highest levels of the Chilean Government to have political will to make sure that those changes do move forward.

Senator CARDIN. Well, I would ask you to keep us informed on that issue. Of course, the Trans-Pacific Partnership is under consideration. It is not expected to come up for at least a few months. And I agree with you. We are looking at a country like Chile that we have an agreement with as to what steps they are taking in order to protect intellectual property, other issues involved. But in Chile's case, that seems to be one of the dominant issues. So we appreciate you reporting back to us as to how that is progressing in your conversations.

Ms. PEREZ. Absolutely, Senator.

Senator CARDIN. Ambassador McKinley, you and I just talked earlier today, but I want to just underscore a point that we talked about that I think is important on the record. And that is, we know the problems in Brazil today. They are well understood. It is a democratic country using its institutions dealing with an impeachment of its leader, with a temporary or acting president at the present time. Our relationship with Brazil has gotten stronger, I think we all would agree, in the last year or 2.

So how do you see your role, working with the realities in Brazil today, an economy that has been challenged and a political system that is dealing with a serious corruption issue? How do we use the current circumstances and continue to be able to build a stronger tie with Brazil?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Well, the crisis of the past 2 years has actually required us to respond to a working relationship with Brazil on a host of levels because we do historically have extremely close ties working on economic issues, security issues, on advancement of human rights concerns. And the foundation for what we are dealing with now was set last June when President Rousseff and President Obama met here in Washington and agreed on a host of bilateral dialogues, which are continuing with the interim administration.

These dialogues provide an extraordinarily strong foundation to deal with our trade concerns, to deal with our concerns about international telecommunications, Internet governance, energy security, climate cooperation, law enforcement cooperation, countering terrorism, and dealing with a variety of people-to-people exchanges that are extremely important to both nations.

So regardless of the current political situation, Brazil is facing a difficult moment. It is a mature democracy. It is the second largest economy in the hemisphere, one of the 10 largest in the world. And we are confident that the country has both the maturity and the strength to come through the current crisis and for us to continue developing a very firm relationship between us.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And good to have these witnesses here. Congratulations on your nominations. I look forward to supporting these nominations.

Maybe I will just kind of start with Ambassador Silliman. You were a very gracious host to us when we were in Kuwait last year, arriving just within a few hours after the bombing of the Shia

mosque in Kuwait. And one of the things that was so impressive to us—the CODEL that I was with—was how the royal family decided, look, the right thing to do is to open up the largest Sunni mosque in Kuwait and invite the family members of those who lost their lives into a Sunni mosque and to have the community come and pay their respects to them. And that was a very powerful thing, and it was good that we were able to go and to be part of that.

And now you are going to move into this new country that has its own sectarian challenges. Senator Cardin asked you about this. I am curious about the pace of reforms in the sectarian issues and divides within Iraq also. My surmise has been that some of the battlefield success against ISIL can have a positive and energizing effect in terms of people feeling good about the government. But I would just like to ask you your perception of the degree to which the Abadi government is reaching out to create an Iraq that is more inclusive of all. That has been such a huge problem under the previous prime minister. I am curious about your thoughts now.

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Well, Senator Kaine, thank you for the question.

I think you are exactly right. It has been clear now to Iraqis that they are much more effective in fighting Da'esh together than they are separately, and it has helped the development of a much more tight military structure.

However, we also believe that it is going to be very important to engage in what we call bottom-up reconciliation, which is essentially forming local security forces to help the military take territory back from Da'esh, compose local police forces to hold the territory after Da'esh, reinsertion of elected local governments and insertion of some money to get the power going, the water going, schools open, and hospitals working to build again the confidence of local populations in their local governments and in the ability of Baghdad to manage the funds.

Key to this is going to be, as I mentioned to Senator Cardin, decentralization of authority from Baghdad to the provinces. Prime Minister Abadi thankfully has done this and has already pushed three of seven ministries that have been asked to decentralize out to the provinces. We think this is a very good sign that will help functional federalism and integration of the various sects in Baghdad, in Iraq in a positive way in the future.

Senator KAINE. When we were with you last year in Kuwait, we went to Iraq immediately after, and one of the concerns we had, after our time in Erbil, was that the relationship between the Kurdish government and the central government at that time was pretty low. There were big disputes about oil revenue allocation and kind of an unwritten contract and how do we interpret it and a lot of suspicion and hostility. We had just come out of an NDAA proceeding here where there was an effort promoted by the Kurds to have a basically separate arming relationship with the United States rather than going through the central government.

My perception about reports from Iraq in the last maybe 4 months or so is that President Barzani and the current prime minister had had a little bit of a rapprochement without necessarily solving the oil revenue allocation issues. There seemed to be a

tighter relationship, and this was maybe 3 or 4 months ago. Is that your perception today, or is this still kind of a day-by-day issue in terms of the relationship between the Kurds and the central government?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Yes, Senator Kaine. In fact, I think it helps prove your initial point that the fight against Da'esh was one of the initial reasons that Prime Minister Abadi and President Barzani spoke, and there has been much more military cooperation between the Peshmerga and Iraqi security forces. But in general, this has broadened to a more positive relationship. If confirmed, Senator, I am hoping that I can work with both the Erbil and Baghdad to improve this relationship and to deal with things like a final oil agreement.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

Ambassador McKinley, welcome back to the western hemisphere. I know that this is like your passion. You have taken a number of other posts, but to come back in Brazil, you know, they just thought they would give you an easy little post back in your neighborhood. It is great to have you going there.

What a challenging time. I mean, I think of the challenges we deal with here, and then I think about corruption and economic challenges and then impeachment and the Olympics and zika. I mean, if you wrote it, people would say it is too unbelievable. It has to be fictional. But that is the truth that you are dealing with.

The one thing I really wanted to ask about is sort of on the corruption side. There was a "Washington Post" report recently about testimony about I guess one of the former directors of Petrobras that really implicates a whole range of Brazilian officials, including the interim president, in some pretty massive corruption. What do you think the appetite or likelihood will be in terms of those that are in governing positions to tackle the question of what, if anything, can the U.S. do to be of assistance in that?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Well, frankly, what has been extraordinary, Senator, about the last 2 years is just how transparent the process of addressing the corruption scandals has been in Brazil. They have been dealing with rule of law, a strong constitutional process, civil society, an extraordinarily active media that has covered every aspect of this, police, federal investigators, court systems that are allowed to do their work largely unimpeded, the issues being discussed in the heart of government openly by politicians, and significant actors across the range of Brazilian society being brought to account. And so if you look at the process as it has evolved, it actually demonstrates the underlying strength of Brazilian democracy and the ability of that democracy to respond to the demands of its people for more transparent and accountable government.

Going forward, obviously, I am not in a position—I do not think anyone is—to predict what a next set of revelations will be, but on the basis of the track record thus far, it is a very strong example of a society taking the corrective measures to set itself back on course. And Brazil over these past 20 years has been a country that has transformed itself, becoming not, as I have already mentioned one, of the largest economies in the world, but created a new middle class adding 50 million to the middle class, creating world-

beating companies that compete globally, and becoming a much more active partner for the United States and the broader international community on transnational concerns. So not withstanding the current crisis, there seems to be a very strong foundation for being able to carry forward not just the bilateral relationship but to be optimistic about Brazil's future.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Chair, I am over, but I have one question for each. Could I continue or would Senator Markey want to come in?

Senator CARDIN. It looks like you may continue.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I just want to ask kind of picking up on the way I intro'ed it with Ambassador Silliman on Kuwait. I mean, we were there very briefly, and I had been there once before. But I was impressed in this time of tragedy that there was an effort to really stop it from being a sectarian point of division, but to pull together. What are the issues, kind of current status of civil society issues and human rights issues, in Kuwait that you will be kind of paying the most attention to in your post, should you be confirmed?

Mr. SILVERMAN. Thank you, Senator, for the question. The ranking member raised the question about trafficking in persons, which is very high up on our agenda. And I would like to give credit to Ambassador Silliman and his staff for all the work that they have done in this regard.

Freedom of expression remains an issue that has had some ups and downs in Kuwait, but something that we are very much promoting and we are working with civil society as well. We have the role of women. Of course, there were female members of parliament in the past. There is a female member of the cabinet. But the parliament is often boisterous and we are really looking to promote across the board of those freedom of expression and freedom of speech issues.

Senator KAINE. Thank you.

And then, Ms. Perez, I have followed the fortunes of Chile for a very long time but have never visited. An issue that I am kind of interested in now is the role that Chile plays regionally sort of beyond its borders in terms of leadership with a lot of challenges in neighboring countries. Talk a little bit about the role that Chile plays in regional organizations. I think they are doing a number of things well. They have their own challenges certainly. They are doing a number of things well. Are they playing a good role in trying to export good practices elsewhere?

Ms. PEREZ. Thank you. Senator, as you noted, Chile is really a success story for the hemisphere, and after the Pinochet era, they have really become a beacon in the area. And they do a lot of really good work, and I think we have the opportunity to do much more.

So, for example, they took over the presidency of the Pacific Alliance July 1st. One of the things that President Bachelet has said is that she would like to reach out to MERCOSUR to try to reengage with that alliance, which I think would be a good thing both for the Pacific Alliance and for MERCOSUR.

They have been very vocally recently on Venezuela starting with the statements in the OAS on May 20th, which the Chilean foreign minister wrote himself and then had that statement co-signed by

the Argentines and the Uruguayans. And they have been with the United States asking for an active dialogue.

They also are working with us in Central America, and they support various kinds of civil society and governmental reforms in places like El Salvador and Guatemala. And in Honduras, they have actually worked with both police and judicial systems on rule of law.

Senator KAINE. Excellent.

Ms. PEREZ. So I really think there is an awful lot that is being done now, and I do think that there are opportunities for the future. And if confirmed, I look forward to the opportunities to see how we might continue to work together and partner. Again, I think they have a lot to offer, and sometimes it is good to hear from somebody in the region about what they might do and to model the kinds of successes that they have had.

Senator KAINE. Yes. I would venture to say that Chile speaking out about need for reforms in Venezuela is in some ways a much more powerful thing than even us speaking out. And I know there have been frustrations expressed on this committee before about other nations in the Americas kind of going sad a voce when it comes to critiques of Venezuela, but having regions in the region do is it powerful. And I am glad to hear what you say.

And with that, thank you, Mr. Chair.

Senator CARDIN. Senator Markey?

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

Ambassador Silliman, we are now nearly a month into the Iraqi ground offensive to defeat ISIS in Fallujah. During the first 3 weeks, Iraqi forces appeared to be bogged down by obstacles and bombs that ISIS planted on routes into the city. But this week, the Iraqi counterterrorism service entered the city center, and reports say that ISIS fighters are mostly withdrawing without a fight. This appears to be a tactical success, but I am concerned about whether Iraq's government is repeating patterns that could lead to strategic failure.

On June 9, Dan de Luce and Henry Johnson wrote in Foreign Policy" magazine that the battle plan for Fallujah would follow what, quote, American officials call the Tikrit Rules in informal agreements that Iranian-backed Shiite militias will not enter Sunni cities reclaimed from the Islamic State as the condition under which the U.S. will support Iraqi forces by bombing ISIS targets from the air. But time and again, it has appeared that the Iraqi Government cannot or will not uphold their end of this bargain.

Since its liberation—Tikrit itself—Shia militia within the city have menaced Sunni civilians while ISIS continues to launch attacks from the outskirts.

In Ramadi, the city center was largely destroyed to push ISIS out, but fighting continues outside the city.

During the current operation in Fallujah, Shia militias are located outside the city center, apparently in technical compliance with the so-called Tikrit Rules, but they are in an ideal position to launch shells into the city and to intercept people trying to escape the violence. At the end of May, they were even visited by Iranian General Soleimani.

Over the past month, we have heard very credible reports of indiscriminate shelling and that Shiite militia and Iraqi police have detained, tortured, and killed Sunni civilians who were detained while trying to flee to safety.

Ambassador Silliman, what is your perspective on the so-called Tikrit Rules that appear to ban Shia militias from entering city centers during an offensive, but allow them to take up positions where they can attack Sunni civilians?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Senator Markey, thank you very much for the question.

If you look at what has been happening in the past few weeks in Fallujah, you see both good and bad. There has been, in fact, a tactical military victory, and it appears that the Da'esh forces have now been sequestered in one or two neighborhoods on the outskirts of Fallujah.

We were very concerned, Senator, by the same reports that saw about atrocities taking place against civilians who were fleeing the fighting in Fallujah. But we think that Prime Minister Abadi and the Iraqis have done a relatively good job of reacting to that.

Senator MARKEY. So are we pushing Abadi to back these Shia away, and is Abadi doing that?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Well, we are pushing Abadi to condemn the abuses, and Abadi has formed a high level commission headed by the deputy governor of Anbar Province to investigate some of the abuses. And there have already been arrests based on this investigation in a very short time.

One other issue that we have——

Senator MARKEY. He has arrested Shia leaders?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Yes, sir. He has arrested people who were individually alleged to have committed abuses following the fighting in Fallujah.

Senator MARKEY. So are you convinced that Abadi is putting in place then a set of judicial procedures that are going to give confidence to the Sunni majority in Tikrit or these other cities that in fact there is a process that will protect their rights?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. The answer is we have been pressing him to do so. It appears that he has actually reacted in a very positive way. As I said, having as the chair of the committee looking into the investigation, the deputy governor of the province where that occurred is a very important message to the Sunni population that the investigation will be serious. It is in the very early stages now, but we will continue to press this investigation. And as I said, I believe that the prime minister understands why it is necessary for him to reduce sectarian tensions and to bring all the communities of Iraq——

Senator MARKEY. Do you think that the 2005 constitution provides a framework to give actual protections that are credible to the Yazidis, to the Kurds, to the Christians, to the Sunnis, and that they can credibly rely upon those provisions in order to give them protections given the last 11-year history in that country?

Ambassador SILLIMAN. Well, Senator, one of my priorities, if confirmed, will be to continue the American press to help minority communities across Iraq. We have provided more than $100 million worth of assistance since 2008 to help minority communities.

We also believe that the decentralization of decision-making to the provinces will go a long way to providing communities themselves the ability to make the decisions to—their own development decisions and their own security decisions. This is an initiative that we have supported but has been done by Prime Minister Abadi.

We are in the early stages of all of this, and we will continue and I will continue, if confirmed, to press this to its natural conclusion.

Senator MARKEY. Now, Mosul is going to be a much more difficult military proposition than Tikrit or Fallujah or Ramadi. And a lot of it is going to be dependent upon whether or not the Sunnis in that city actually believe that they are going to be given their rights and that they then have sufficient reason to go against ISIS in that city.

And so I cannot tell you how important this is going to be from a political perspective. That is what we are. We are politicians here. That is the one thing we do know, that constituencies know very quickly whether or not you are on their side or you are not on their side. Mr. Silverman comes from Massachusetts, so he knows that we understand politics that way.

So I urge you very strongly to send that message very clearly.

And if I may, I just have one final question, if it is possible.

Ambassador McKinley, I wanted to ask you about the state of Brazil's health care system. We all saw the call by some pretty prominent health experts to cancel the Olympics in Rio because in their view Brazilian authorities would not be able to manage the threat of zika. Just 7 weeks before Rio, set to host the Olympics, Rio's state governor said that the state government may not be able to provide basic services. And then Brazil's new health minister, Ricardo Barros, said that the country in the future may be unable to uphold all the rights guaranteed by the constitution, such as universal access to health care given fiscal constraints.

This is of concern to many of us here today, not only for the millions of Brazilians who are facing a failing health system in the midst of a real public health crisis caused by zika and the brain disorders which it is linked to, but also for us here in the United States as zika becomes a real danger to the United States.

So my question to you is, is Brazil's health care system in store for a collapse or a major shakeup? How able is the government to deal with the satiation given the current political crisis and the deepest recession in generations? How does universal health care compare to other social spending priorities of Brazilians, and are they investing enough right now in zika prevention in order to protect not only their own citizens but those of the rest of the region and in fact the hemisphere?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. That is a broad question, Senator, and thank you for it. But if I could take in turn the issues you have raised.

Brazil, in fact, over the last 20 years has developed a system of health care for the broader population, a population of 200 million people, which is the envy of the developing world. And the question now in the context, as you rightly point out, of a major fiscal crisis, what the future holds not just for health services but other services inside the country.

The immediate concern is how they respond to the zika crisis. And the fact of the matter is that since it came on the scene, the government has mobilized on a very significant level in terms of hundreds of thousands of health workers throughout the country, security personnel as well to address everything from awareness campaigns to controlling the mosquito vector, to expanding international cooperation particularly with the United States in exploring how to develop new vaccines, how to deal with the analysis and diagnosis of zika, the Guillain-Barre syndrome, the microcephaly cases that have appeared. The cooperation with CDC is ongoing with HHS. But Brazil historically has also led in response to other crises, particularly HIV/AIDS, and has the infrastructure, the medical knowledge, know-how to respond forcefully to what is happening now.

Senator MARKEY. Do you think Brazil will have the resources in place to be able to protect its population during the Olympics and beyond?

Ambassador MCKINLEY. Yes, I do. And in fact, the views both of CDC, the World Health Organization—today there was an article by the head of the Global Health Institute at Harvard—all believe that the risk of infection from zika during the Olympics is extraordinarily small. And we are entering the winter period when the mosquito vector is much less of a threat.

But more importantly are the proactive steps that are being taken: the $300 million the Brazilian Government has committed to addressing zika, the mobilization of health services, the coordination with CDC on developing vaccines, carrying out trial studies on case control in different Brazilian states. There is a very significant effort underway to address this. But for the concern of the athletes and American citizens who will be visiting Brazil, as I said, CDC, WHO have made clear that at this time they do not believe that should be a major concern except for women who are pregnant.

Senator MARKEY. So thank you and thank each of you for your service to our country. You will all be excellent representatives.

And thank you, Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. I appreciate the responses that all the witnesses have made to the questions and to the information our committee has requested.

As Chairman Corker indicated, the record will stay open till the close of business on Thursday for questions that members may have. We ask that you respond to them promptly so that the committee can complete its work in a timely way.

I want to underscore the point that Senator Murphy made earlier about Senator Corker and the leadership of this committee moving nominations as promptly as we can to the floor. We know that there is a shortened calendar this year. So your cooperation will certainly help us a great deal.

Again, thank you all very much.

The committee will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:04 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF ANNE HALL, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HALL'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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?

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

Answer. I am pleased to highlight my efforts to promote human rights and democracy during my career, focusing on my accomplishments over the last ten years.

During my 2006-2009 tenure as Consul General in Krakow, I broadened our outreach on tolerance and Holocaust legacy issues. Our "Bridges to the East" program brought dozens of Ukrainian journalists to Poland over a three-year period for capacity building programs on democracy and human rights, with an emphasis on tolerance. I also helped the founder of the Raphael Lemkin Center for Genocide Prevention to secure its initial location in space provided by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

While I served as Deputy Chief of Mission and Charge d'Affaires in Vilnius (2010-2013), our engagement with civil society strengthened the hand of Lithuanian human rights NGOs through the establishment of an umbrella organization called the Human Rights Coalition. The coalition included the Lithuanian Gay League, the Jewish Community of Lithuania, the Human Rights Monitoring Institution, and organizations dedicated to women's rights. Together, these NGOs were able to promote democratic values and human rights more forcefully and effectively in Lithuania than they could on their own.

During my tenure as DCM, Embassy Vilnius also contributed significantly to the passage of legislation criminalizing domestic violence in Lithuania. Through a series of roundtables and meetings, we provided the venue for stakeholders to join forces to press for the legislation. We also provided training for police and prosecutors to ensure their support for the new law. Civil society members told us that U.S. Embassy efforts were key to passage of this important legislation.

The Embassy engaged equally deeply on Holocaust legacy issues in Lithuania. In 2010, Embassy Vilnius became the first U.S. embassy to receive a grant from the International Task Force on Holocaust Education to develop a three-year "train-the-trainers" program on Holocaust studies. We also worked closely with the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Community of Lithuania, and members of parliament to facilitate the passage of ground-breaking legislation to compensate the Jewish victims of the Holocaust in Lithuania.

Lithuania has made significant progress in institutionalizing and prioritizing human rights. Achievements in recent years include passage of legislation to deinstitutionalize childcare for orphans, reduce domestic violence, and restitute Jewish communal property. Lithuania has also developed strategic plans to reduce corruption and fight human trafficking.

Work remains to be done to increase tolerance toward minorities and to improve aspects of the justice system and children's welfare. Intolerance includes anti-Semitism as well as prejudice against LGBTI persons and ethnic minorities. Roma, in particular, continue to experience poor living conditions and face social exclusion and discrimination. In the justice system, conditions are substandard in a number of prison and detention facilities, and lengthy pretrial detention is a problem. The continuing practice of institutionalized child care is often detrimental to the children's health and makes them more vulnerable to delinquency, trafficking, and prostitution.

If confirmed, I will press the government to enact meaningful reforms that address these human rights issues, and I will work to foster dialogue between government and civil society to implement those reforms. I will also work to connect Lithuanian reformers with U.S. practitioners who can share their 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 Lithuania in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. The primary obstacles to addressing human rights issues in Lithuania are insufficient government coordination and financial assistance for NGOs. There is frequently a lack of coordination between the national government and the municipalities, which are the chief executors of key reforms. NGOs and civil society groups also often cite a shortage of government funding, and Lithuania lacks a developed culture of philanthropy. As such, civil society organizations depend on a shrinking pool of assistance from foreign governments and international organizations. If confirmed, I will work with civil society to identify creative new funding mechanisms to promote bottom-up change.

If confirmed, I will also continue the work of Embassy Vilnius in pressing the Lithuanian government to address these challenges to protecting human rights, as the Embassy has successfully done to improve government coordination in the fight against human trafficking.

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 Lithuania? 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. Embassy Vilnius has actively engaged with civil society in promoting the full spectrum of human rights issues in Lithuania. The Embassy's small grants program has funded a variety of projects to build civil society capacity, raise awareness of the need to protect human rights, and encourage change. If confirmed, I will continue our strong support of human rights and civil society groups to advance those rights that need greater protection.

Thankfully, in Lithuania's brief history of restored independence, there have been no gross or systematic abuses of human rights that have warranted assistance restrictions for units of the security forces subject to the Leahy Law. If confirmed, I will continue to reinforce the importance of promoting accountability in the security forces by encouraging the host government to bring perpetrators to justice when there is credible information that a gross violation of human rights has been committed. My commitment to upholding our legal requirement under the Leahy Law and to the core belief that assisting foreign governments to strengthen accountability mechanisms and respect for human rights, will help promote our goal for a Europe that is whole, free and at peace.

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

Answer. Defending human rights is a pillar of U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I will look forward to continuing our embassy's active engagement with the Lithuanian government to promote our shared values of human rights as an important driver of democracy and a key ingredient of a thriving society.

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

Answer. Lithuania is a liberal democracy and EU member state with no political prisoners. If this situation were to deteriorate, my embassy team and I would quickly and assertively engage the Lithuanian government, civil society, and likeminded embassies to address the situation and achieve an outcome befitting Lithuania's legacy as a resilient, liberal democracy.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HALL'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. In March 2016 before the Senate Armed Services Committee General Philip Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Commander of U.S. European Command stated that "Russia has chosen to be an adversary and poses a long-term existential threat to the United States and to our European allies and partners." Do you agree with General Breedlove's assessment that Russia poses a "long-term existential threat" to the U.S. and its allies, including Lithuania?

Answer. At this time, our bilateral relationship with Russia, as well as Russia's relationship with our European allies, has suffered due to Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine, its occupation of Crimea, and its destabilizing behavior and rhetoric. We have repeatedly conveyed our concerns about Russian aggression to Rus-

sian officials, and we will not return to "business as usual" with Russia as long as it continues to undermine European security and international norms and principles. In coordination with our NATO Allies, including Lithuania, we are responding effectively to this challenge. We continue to increase the capability, readiness, and responsiveness of NATO forces to address any threat and deter further destabilizing activities.

Russia's significant strategic nuclear capabilities have long posed a threat to the United States and its allies and those capabilities will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. That is why it is so important that we develop effective channels of communication and arms control mechanisms to provide transparency and predictability and to avoid miscalculation. It is also why we continue to invest in a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. While we have downgraded our bilateral relationship with Russia due to its continued aggression in Ukraine and elsewhere in Europe, the New START treaty and its implementation mechanisms have been key to ensuring a measure of stability at the strategic level.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE HALL'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. In 2015, Lithuania supported an EU proposal to re-settle 120,000 refugees and migrants currently in Italy and Greece to the other member states. Lithuania agreed to accept 1,105 refugees, mainly from Syria—a process which has been slow to actualize. What are your views on the agreement to accept this number of refugees? Do you have any thoughts on how we can find a remedy for the delay? How do we contend with the lack of popularity from the Labor Party and the Order & Justice Party within the coalition government?

Answer. In 2016, Lithuania pledged to accept 921 relocated asylum seekers from Greece and Italy and to resettle 70 refugees from Turkey as part of the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan, updating its previous commitments under the EU resettlement and relocation mechanisms approved in 2015.

To date, Lithuania has relocated 21 asylum seekers from Greece and resettled five Syrian refugees from Turkey. Currently, Lithuania is not a major destination or transit country for migrants. Authorities say it is difficult to find asylum seekers who want to relocate to Lithuania.

On June 10, 2016, the leaders of Lithuania's ruling coalition parties, including the Labor Party and the Order and Justice Party, signed a non-binding political agreement underlining that while Lithuania will meet its current resettlement/relocation commitment with the EU, Lithuania must not agree to additional mandatory refugee resettlement quotas. The agreement reflects opinion polls which show that the Lithuanian public is divided in attitudes toward immigration.

In addition to agreeing to accept approximately 1,000 asylum seekers and refugees under the 2016 EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan, Lithuania has also contributed 25 escort officers to Greece and €5.2 million to the Turkey Refugee Facility. These funds follow other forms of assistance as follows:

- In 2015,€100,000 to the EU regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis; €150,000 to the Migrants and Refugees Fund of the Council of Europe Development Bank; €50,000 to the U.N. Global Food Program for Syria; and €60,000 to the U.N. Refugee Agency.
- In 2016, a humanitarian aid shipment worth €61,000 to Greece for refugees; and a pledge to allocate €70,000 in humanitarian aid through the U.N. to support Syrian refugees.

The United States commends the commitment the EU and its member states have demonstrated in seeking a comprehensive and coordinated response to the influx of migrants and refugees from Syria and other nations. Lithuania's commitment to fulfill its obligations under the EU relocation and resettlement mechanisms is an important step in addressing this challenge facing our European partners.

If confirmed, I will encourage Lithuania to continue to support a coordinated EU response that focuses on saving lives, providing timely humanitarian assistance, ensuring the human rights of all migrants are respected, promoting orderly and humane migration policies, and ensuring that proper screening and registration procedures are in place to facilitate appropriate assistance and provide protection to those in need.

Question. With the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), the United States has provided an augmented force presence, increased exercises, and pre-positioned assets in order to bolster security within the Baltic States. In June 2015, U.S. Sec-

retary of Defense Ashton Carter announced that the U.S. would pre-position equipment (i.e. Abrams tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and self-propelled howitzers) in the Baltic and Central European countries in order to support the activities of rotational forces. In your opinion, is this enough to ensure Lithuania's security? If not, what more would you like to see, particularly in Lithuania, in terms of the adequate number of NATO troops and type of equipment?

Answer. Since March 2014, the United States has taken action, both bilaterally and through NATO, to reassure Allies, including Lithuania, of our solemn commitment to their security and territorial integrity as members of the NATO Alliance.

The United States has used the $1.06 billion in FY 2015 European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) funding that Congress appropriated to increase the number of exercises, training sessions, deployments, and broader security assistance to our European Allies and partners, including Lithuania. All 28 NATO Allies have been participating in NATO's assurance measures.

We hope to enhance our presence in the coming year to transition from assurance measures to active and sustained deterrence, which is why President Obama has requested $3.4 billion to fund ERI in FY 2017. These funds will be used to deploy an additional rotational Armored Brigade Combat Team to Central and Eastern Europe; the prepositioning of combat equipment; and additional trainings and exercises in Europe.

I believe that with the measures we are taking, we are already on the right path to upholding our Article 5 commitments to Lithuania and the broader NATO Alliance.

Question. On June 22nd, the commander of U.S. ground forces in Europe, General Ben Hodges, stated that "Russia could take over Baltic States faster than we would be able to defend them" and that Russia could "conquer the capitals of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia within 36 to 60 hours." Do you agree with this assessment? If so, what actions, military and economic, should Lithuania take now to prepare for this possible type of action from Russia?

Answer. I believe that all of the measures the United States and NATO Allies have committed to taking assist in strengthening our deterrence and defense posture in the region and demonstrate our ironclad commitment to Article 5.

I would also like to point out the measures that Lithuania itself has been undertaking to enhance its national defense capabilities for both conventional and hybrid warfare.

Lithuania has pledged to meet the NATO defense spending benchmark of two percent of GDP by 2018, reaching 1.5 percent this year. The government is using its increased defense budget to invest in modern equipment and improve NATO interoperability. Among its defense acquisitions are anti-tank and anti-aircraft systems, infantry fighting vehicles, self-propelled howitzers, precision and sniper weapons, and air-space surveillance.

The Lithuanian government has also introduced a series of security reforms to reintroduce limited conscription (discontinued in 2008), to define legal authorities that subsume the country's security institutions under the authority of the Ministry of Defense (MOD) during marshal law or declaration of war, and to establish a national cyber security authority and strategy.

If confirmed, I will encourage Lithuania to continue down this path, increasing its value as a NATO ally as it enhances its ability to deter aggression and defend itself.

Question. Litgrid, the operator of Lithuania's electricity systems, has been constructing the LitPol link connection with Poland and the undersea NordBalt cable connection with Sweden in order to integrate the country's power grid into the wider European electricity market? What is the status of these two projects? How would you advise President Grybauskaite to deal with interference from Russian naval vessels that seek to prevent Lithuania's energy independence?

Answer. LitPol Link and NordBalt, two EU co-financed electricity interconnectors with Lithuania, have come on line this year. For the first time Lithuania is directly plugged into the EU power grid: LitPol Link connects Lithuania to the Continental Europe electricity grid in Poland; NordBalt, to the Nordic power network in Sweden. These interconnectors are projected to reduce Lithuania's dependence on Russian electricity from 70 percent to less than 25 percent, and to lower the price of electricity by 12 percent.

In the spring of 2015, the governments of Sweden and Lithuania conveyed their concerns to Russian authorities regarding several incidents in which the installation of NordBalt was interrupted by Russian warships under the guise of protecting their

military exercise zones in the Baltic Sea. By June 2015, such interruptions had stopped, and NordBalt came on line as scheduled earlier this year.

Question. In your view, what are the United States' strategic interests in Lithuania? How are NATO and the U.S. ensuring Lithuania's security?

Answer. The primary U.S. interests our embassy has been working to advance in Lithuania are the following:

- Keeping Lithuania a strong provider of security. Lithuania is a good friend and NATO Ally. It works with us closely on a range of regional and global issues of paramount importance to U.S. national security. We welcome Lithuania's commitment to increase defense spending to the NATO benchmark of 2 percent of GDP by 2018, and we are working together to modernize Lithuania's defense capabilities and enhance NATO interoperability. Accordingly, Lithuania has supported the implementation of NATO's Readiness Action Plan to respond to security challenges 360 degrees around Alliance territory. Lithuania is also contributing to other operations key to U.S. security, such as the Counter-Da'esh Coalition and the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. Additionally, the United States has taken action, both bilaterally and through NATO, to reassure Allies, including Lithuania, of our solemn commitment to their security and territorial integrity as members of the NATO Alliance. One example of how this is being done includes that the United States has used the $1.06 billion in FY 2015 European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) funding to increase the number of exercises, training sessions, deployments, and broader security assistance to our European Allies and partners, including Lithuania. All 28 NATO Allies have been participating in NATO's assurance measures.
- Forging stronger bilateral economic ties. To advance the President's National Export Initiative as well as assist in maintaining the economic resilience of our NATO Ally, we promote export and investment opportunities for U.S. companies in Lithuania, encourage Lithuania's support for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), and work to advance innovation and entrepreneurship ties between Lithuania and the United States. We have also promoted increasing transparency in government tenders, the protection of intellectual property rights, and flexibility in the labor code.
- Promoting democratic values abroad and in Lithuania. Since 2010, Lithuania has taken on increasingly prominent roles in transatlantic and international organizations (the Community of Democracies, the OSCE, the EU, and the U.N. Security Council), a trajectory we have supported, especially with regard to Lithuania's use of its leadership to advance democratic reforms in the former Soviet states and beyond. We also support the efforts of Lithuania's young democracy to advance human rights at home. We promote tolerance, accountability, and inclusive domestic policies in our dialogue with the government and civil society, highlighting the need to confront ethnic, religious, and other forms of intolerance in our outreach programs.

If confirmed, I will continue the good work of our embassy in advancingU.S. security, economic, and democratic interests with Lithuania both locally and on a global scale.

Question. How do you assess the various ways Russia could threaten or put pressure on Lithuania: energy dependence, "information warfare," attempts to influence Lithuania's ethnic Russian minority or other elements of the political system, cyber attacks, and military activities including airspace incursions and the proximity of forces in Kaliningrad? Which of these pose the most serious threats to Lithuania's security and independence?

Answer. We view Russia's use of disinformation, energy as a political tool, incursions into Baltic airspace, and increased snap exercises along Lithuania's borders with concern. In response to these actions, we have engaged with Lithuania to enhance the strength of its military defense, including in concert with NATO Allies, build the media literacy of its population, and advance the diversification of its energy supply.

Allies have demonstrated solidarity in supporting the assurance measures of NATO's Readiness Action Plan and have pledged to correct a long-term decline in defense investment. The United States has contributed bilaterally through ERI to the initiatives of Allies, particularly the Baltic States, to secure and safeguard their own defense. This support complements national efforts by Lithuania.

With a well-funded and sophisticated propaganda machine, Russia has portrayed the West, NATO, and the United States as adversaries of the Russian people. The United States has taken a comprehensive approach to addressing Russian disinformation by working closely with our Baltic partners to build societal resil-

ience, support a robust independent media, and provide an alternative narrative by building closer ties between Americans and Baltic citizens of all stripes.

Although ethnic Russian Lithuanians make up only six percent of Lithuania's population, Russian speakers account for 15 percent. We have supported the Lithuanian government's efforts to reach out to this linguistic community to overcome societal tensions and feelings of marginalization. Our embassy in Vilnius also conducts extensive outreach to Russian speakers in Lithuania, engaging students, journalists, and other members of this group to share U.S. perspectives.

Europe's dependence on Russian energy remains one of its greatest vulnerabilities to political and economic coercion. The United States has been supporting EU efforts to advance the diversification of energy sources and routes in the entire Baltic region to reduce vulnerability to Russia's use of energy as a political tool. Over the past few years, Lithuania has made impressive progress in this area. It launched a self-financed LNG terminal in January 2015, decreasing its dependence on Russian gas from 100 percent to approximately five percent today. It also inaugurated two EU-financed electricity links to its European neighbors early this year, which are projected to reduce Lithuania's dependence on Russian electricity from 70 percent to less than 25 percent. As such, Lithuania is a model for others seeking to enhance their security of energy supply.

Question. What do you think are the aims of Russian policy toward Lithuania and the other Baltic countries?

Answer. We can only infer what Russia's current policy is toward the Baltic states from the recent actions it has undertaken towards them. Russia's use of hybrid warfare in the Baltic region, along with its attempted annexation of Crimea and aggression in Eastern Ukraine, has sown anxiety among Lithuania's populace, many of whom perceive such behavior as a threat to the country's hard-won independence.

Question. How would you, as ambassador, promote the expansion of U.S.-Lithuania trade and investment ties? How does Lithuania view the prospective Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) under negotiation between the United States and the EU?

Answer. Lithuania is a strong advocate of transatlantic economic ties. Polling shows high public support for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) at approximately 78 percent. Policymakers and the private sector have realized that TTIP not only promises economic benefits but is also of strategic importance as a second anchor to the transatlantic security relationship.

Lithuania's economy is one of the fastest growing in the European Union with GDP predicted to grow 2.6 percent this year. In spite of this growth in GDP, unemployment stands at close to 8 percent. Lithuania is grappling with an emigration "brain drain," mostly to the UK, Scandinavia, and Ireland. An estimated one million Lithuanians have departed the country since independence in 1991.

To staunch this population loss, Lithuania is already doing many of the right things to increase trade and investment. Lithuania offers investors a diversified economy, EU rules and norms, a well-educated multilingual workforce, comparatively low wages, advanced IT infrastructure, and a stable democratic government. The country joined the Eurozone in January 2015 and is ranked 20th in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings. To further improve its investment climate, the Lithuanian parliament recently passed a new labor code that increases flexibility in hiring practices.

In 2015, the United States was Lithuania's 7th largest trading partner, with more than $1.5 billion in total trade. Well-known U.S. firms such as Western Union and ThermoFisher have established a presence in Lithuania. To expand opportunities for Lithuania's talented youth (whether of Polish, Russian, or Lithuanian descent) that will also benefit U.S. companies, Embassy Vilnius has been fostering collaboration between the tech sectors in Lithuania and the United States. The embassy has sponsored speakers on innovation and entrepreneurship and connected Lithuanian entrepreneurs with SelectUSA. Embassy Vilnius is also supporting the efforts of the American-Lithuanian Business Council and the Baltic-American Freedom Foundation to launch a Lithuanian American Innovation Award to recognize a Lithuanian innovator for his/her collaborative work with a U.S. academic or business interest.

If confirmed, I will continue Embassy Vilnius' efforts to encourage innovation-focused networking and partnerships among U.S. and Lithuanian business, industry, and educational institutions both within Lithuania and in the United States.

RESPONSES OF HON. MARIE L. YOVANOVITCH, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO UKRAINE, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE YOVANOVITCH'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. Throughout my career I have actively promoted human rights and democracy. For example, as U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, I actively encouraged reform and worked to expand the capacity of civil society and the media through programming, public events, and private advocacy. A speech I gave on the need to continue democratic reforms in Armenia in March 2011 catalyzed a public conversation on a sensitive subject and continues to be a reference point today. Our advocacy for an imprisoned whistleblower not only reversed her conviction, but activated a government investigation into the wrongdoing that she had exposed. After a number of individuals were arrested following contentious 2008 presidential elections, we pressed for due process, transparent investigations, and an improved electoral process. For my work regarding these political prisoners, the State Department awarded me the Diplomacy for Human Rights Award, which is presented to a U.S. Chief of Mission who has demonstrated extraordinary commitment to defending human rights and advancing democratic principles of government in his or her host country. If confirmed, I look forward to continue promoting human rights and democracy as Ambassador to Ukraine.

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. Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine and Russia's occupation of Crimea are the root causes of the most pressing issues in Ukraine, including human rights issues. Pressuring Russia and the separatists to implement the Minsk agreements in full and to end the occupation of Crimea is the best way to restore peace in Ukraine and improve respect for human rights in these regions.In eastern Ukraine, separatists, supported by Russian military and civilian officials, continue to control parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions by force of arms, as self-proclaimed "people's republics." Separatists systematically engaged in abductions, physical ill-treatment, and unlawful detention. Separatists also have restricted humanitarian aid. Rule of law has been severely undermined in separatist-held territories. Separatists act with complete impunity, and residents are reluctant to turn to local authorities for fear of reprisals.

In Russian-occupied Crimea, the human rights situation has deteriorated dramatically, with mounting repression and harassment of individuals from minority communities, particularly Crimean Tatars, those of non-Russian-Orthodox Christian faiths, independent journalists, and those who oppose Russia's occupation. Occupation authorities have systematically denied individuals their fundamental freedoms of speech, assembly, association, and religious expression. Local residents have been detained, interrogated, and, in many cases, been subjected to forced disappearances. NGOs and independent media have been driven out of the peninsula. Russian occupation authorities have also banned the Mejlis, the legislative body of the Crimean Tatars.

To a much lesser extent, there are also reports of abductions, torture, and unlawful detention by Ukrainian government forces, as well as government-imposed restrictions on freedom of movement. Ukraine faces other human rights issues such as the abuse of persons in custody, in particular beatings and alleged torture of detainees and prisoners, harsh conditions in prisons and detention facilities, and harassment against LGBTI persons.

While Ukraine has made more reform progress in the wake of the Revolution of Dignity than in all previous years since the restoration of Ukrainian independence, many challenges still remain. Corruption, especially in the judicial system, remains a serious concern and erodes citizens' trust in their government. Ukraine's media sphere, though vibrant and diverse, is still beset by non-transparent ownership structures and oligarchic influence. In the face of Russian propaganda, we have encouraged the Ukrainian government to ensure respect for freedom of expression and the media.

If confirmed, I will continue to press for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements and for Russia to end its occupation of Crimea. Until Ukraine regains

full control of its territory as lawful sovereign nation, we must continue to highlight Russia's and the separatists' abuses and push for international access to the territories under their control.

At the same time, I will press the Government of Ukraine to ensure a prompt, thorough, and transparent investigation and appropriate prosecution of all persons responsible for alleged incidents of abuses perpetrated by its forces. I will also raise such human rights issues as prison conditions and violence and discrimination against LGBTI persons with the highest levels of the Ukrainian government in order to seek justice for those abused and to improve the lives of others who face discrimination. I will also work closely with Ukraine's vibrant civil society and independent media sectors to strengthen these critical pillars of democratic governance that help citizens hold their government accountable.

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. Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine and Russia's occupation of Crimea represent the most significant obstacles to advancing human rights in Ukraine. The United States and the international community must maintain pressure on Russia to end its aggression in eastern Ukraine and its occupation of Crimea, which will enable Kyiv to better address human rights issues in its territory.

In territories under Kyiv's control, Ukraine continues to suffer from corruption and deficiencies in the administration of justice. Human rights groups and the United Nations noted there were few investigations into human rights abuses committed by security forces, and corruption in the Prosecutor General's Office and the judiciary was of particular concern. Breaking the hold of oligarchs over Ukrainian politics and business is also a key part in transforming Ukraine.

The departure of Ukraine's previous Prosecutor General and the passage of legislation to reform the judiciary signal progress in combating corruption. The new Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko has already made arrests of former high level officials for corruption, which must be followed with credible and transparent investigations and prosecutions. More remains to be done, however; and we continue to press the new government for real, credible, and transparent investigations into human rights abuses.Questions for the Record Submitted to

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. I am committed to meeting with human rights activists, members of civil society, other non-governmental organizations, and religious and ethnic groups, including Crimean Tatars, in the United States and in Ukraine. These institutions and organizations have proven to play a key role in advancing human rights in countries where I have served and throughout the world.

If confirmed, I will ensure Embassy Kyiv continues to work proactively to implement the Leahy Law. We will continue to vet Ukrainian units receiving U.S. security assistance according to the Leahy Law, in addition to providing training on the protections of human rights and international law. If confirmed, I will continue to reinforce the importance of promoting accountability in the security forces by encouraging the Ukrainian government to bring perpetrators to justice, when there is credible information exists that a gross violation of human rights has been committed.

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. If confirmed, my Embassy team and I will remain committed to promoting the human rights of all individuals. The current Ukrainian government has not engaged in unjustly detaining individuals on politically-motivated grounds; however, I will continue to engage with Ukrainian leaders to ensure that all individuals are treated equally under the law.

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

Answer. Defending human rights, including the freedom of expression, is a pillar of U.S. foreign policy. I plan to consistently engage with Ukrainian officials at the

highest level to promote our shared values of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, and the freedoms of speech, assembly, and association.

Question. As U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, how will you push the Ukrainians to make greater progress on anti-corruption reforms? Would you advocate for the U.S. to use tools, such as indictments in U.S. courts, to pursue corrupt figures in Ukraine?

Answer. The Ukrainian government is implementing an ambitious anti-corruption and rule of law reform agenda. Although Kyiv has made tremendous progress, much more must be done. Our highest priorities are improving the effectiveness of the operations of the new anti-corruption institutions, reform of the prosecutorial and judicial system, and police reform.New anti-corruption institutions are up and running and continue to receive our support. With U.S. government financial support and technical assistance, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) was established with a special anti-corruption prosecutor and is currently conducting investigations. The PGO's new Inspector General Unit is also now functioning with a regulation in place that was drafted with U.S. government assistance, and we are hopeful that the prosecutorial reform process will be rejuvenated now that a new Prosecutor General has been appointed.

The constitutional amendments required to bolster judicial independence have been adopted, opening the door for judicial reform. The most visible and celebrated reform has been the establishment of the U.S. government-supported new patrol police that replaced the notoriously corrupt traffic police in all oblasts. Government transparency will be enhanced by new laws on e-procurement, public officials' asset disclosures, and openness on media companies' ownership.

All of these reforms indicate a strong political will on behalf of the Government of Ukraine to make greater progress, and our programs will continue to support anti-corruption measures in almost every sector where we are involved, whether it is transparency in education management, budgeting methods in public finance, the new public procurement system, or specifically strengthening the National Agency for Prevention of Corruption. There is much yet to be done, especially in the customs, taxation, energy, and justice sectors, and we will be there providing financial support, expertise, and encouragement in all these areas. These reforms are critical to Ukraine's future and have been valiantly fought for by ordinary Ukrainians. If confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to press for and provide assistance to support further anti-corruption reforms.

If corrupt individuals in Ukraine are alleged to have committed crimes over which the United States can exercise jurisdiction, then the appropriate U.S. authorities can investigate those allegations and, depending on the outcome of those investigations, initiate prosecutions. However, if confirmed as Ambassador, I will make it a priority to work with Ukraine to help Ukraine develop a judicial system that is capable of credibly investigating and prosecuting corrupt individuals.

Question. How will you work with the Ukrainians to advocate for greater progress deinstitutionalizing this marginalized community?

Answer. Persons with developmental disabilities belong in families and should be a part of the fabric of Ukrainian society. The approximately 82,000-200,000 children institutionalized in state-run orphanages, many of whom have a developmental disability, are especially vulnerable to trafficking. If confirmed, I will be committed to helping to identify ways to integrate this vulnerable population into Ukrainian society and combat their being made victims of trafficking. My efforts will include meeting with NGOs working with persons with developmental disabilities and highlighting these issues with the appropriate authorities in the Government of Ukraine. I will also look for opportunities to share the U.S. experience of de-institutionalizing persons with developmental disabilities and transitioning them into the community as well as identifying creative solutions to help the developmentally disabled in Ukraine.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE YOVANOVITCH'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. In February, Ukrainian activist, Roman Sohn wrote that Minsk-2 is essentially a "farce" because "while Russia does nothing to implement the agreement, the U.S. and EU are forcing Minsk-2 down the throat of Kyiv and that Putin knows that it is much easier for the West to put pressure on Ukraine to accept bad terms than to forge a consensus on keeping the pressure, including sanctions, on Russia." Do you share Mr. Sohn's views?

Answer. We believe the Minsk agreements are the only way to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine peacefully. We are working closely with the Normandy partners to support their efforts to accelerate the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Ukraine has made a good faith effort to implement its Minsk commitments. We believe that it is unrealistic to expect Ukraine to pass the remaining political aspects of Minsk while combined Russian separatist forces continue to attack Ukrainian positions, intimidate or shoot at SMM monitors, refuse to provide the OSCE full, unfettered access to separatist-controlled areas, and shoot down the organization's UAVs.

We continue to press Russia to stop the violence, as it has shown in the past it is capable of doing, and to stop providing the separatists with the arms, training, and command-and-control support that fuel the conflict. We have also pushed to maintain transatlantic unity on sanctions. We and our partners must continue to be clear with Moscow that our sanctions on Russia will remain in place until it fully implements its Minsk commitments.

Question. As Ambassador, would you support the provision of lethal assistance to the Government of Ukraine?

Answer. I would not rule out sending lethal weapons to Ukraine and strongly support our ongoing efforts to strengthen and build the capacity of Ukraine's forces. We continue to believe that there is no military resolution to the crisis, but Ukraine has the right to defend itself. We remain committed to supporting full implementation of the Minsk agreements, and our diplomatic efforts focus on supporting discussions in the Normandy format and in the Trilateral Contact Group to expedite their full implementation.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE YOVANOVITCH'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR SHAHEEN

Question. Ambassador Yovanovitch, as Ukraine rightly takes steps to ensure that corrupt officials from the Yanukovych-era are held to account for their crimes against the Ukrainian people, are you satisfied that sufficient due process protections remain in place for these prosecutions?

Answer. Ukraine has a legal system of due process protections that, unfortunately, have not always been implemented in a credible, transparent, and consistent manner.

In our assistance, we have made it a priority to help support Ukraine in legally holding any corrupt officials to account for their crimes, while safeguarding each suspect's due process rights. For example, in our assistance to help Ukraine set up new bodies like the National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU), we have insisted that they reinforce due process protections. Our backing for these anti-corruption bodies will help Ukraine apply Western standards to due process protections when applied to any such prosecutions.

If confirmed, I will continue to press the need for Ukraine to safeguard basic human rights, including transparency and the right of due process for all of its citizens.

RESPONSES OF GEOFFREY R. PYATT, NOMINATED TO BE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR TO GREECE TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PAYATT'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. Human rights have been a central aspect of my Foreign Service career going back nearly 25 years to when I was a political officer in Delhi and wrote the Human Rights Report for India. In my opinion, the most important impact of my actions came in the winter of 2013-2014, when Ukrainians struggled to build their democracy and rose up against former president Viktor Yanukovych. From the morning of December 20, 2013, after students who had been beaten on the Maidan fled to St. Michael's Monastery, I made it a priority to ensure that the U.S govern-

ment was seen as standing with the Ukrainian people in defense of freedom of speech and their right to make their own sovereign choices about the future.

During the events on the Maidan, I spoke out forcefully and consistently for a non-violent resolution of the crisis in a way that upheld Ukrainian democracy. After the revolution, I led the U.S. government effort to ensure democratic elections for President and the Rada and to ensure Ukraine moved towards European standards of democracy, rule of law, and anti-corruption. These actions have given rise to the best chance since independence in 1991 to build a Ukraine that lives up to European rules and norms and is embedded in European institutions. Now the work lies with the Ukrainian people to capitalize on this opportunity, but I am proud of the role the United States has played in giving Ukraine the chance it deserves to be fully part of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. If confirmed, I look forward to continue promoting human rights and democracy as Ambassador to Greece.

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

Answer. Despite their own financial hardships, the Greek people have shown tremendous generosity and compassion toward the hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees who have entered Greece since the start of the migration crisis. However, the most significant human rights issues in Greece this year were related to the at times overcrowded and poor conditions facing the greatly increased numbers of migrants and asylum seekers who arrived in the country in an unprecedented wave of migration. This included occasional lack of sufficient food, potable water, and adequate shelter at some reception and registration sites. Other human rights problems reported during the year included some limitations on access to the asylum application process along with inadequate capacity to provide legal aid and social support for asylum seekers and refugees.

More than one million migrants and refugees have entered Greece since January 2015, and more than 57,000 migrants and refugees remain in Greece. The Greek government has taken important steps to respond to the needs of the migrant and refugee population, including access to services and asylum protection; however, demand has overwhelmed Greek capacity. The Greek government is working to increase resources to process asylum claims more quickly. EU member states have also provided much-needed assistance by deploying border guards, asylum experts, and interpreters to facilitate the processing of asylum claims. The March 18 EU-Turkey agreement on migration set out specific action items to discourage the use of smuggling networks and facilitate returns of irregular migrants from the EU to Turkey. A vital part of the March 18 EU-Turkey statement is safeguarding that those in need of international protection receive it. To that end, we press Greece, EU member states, and Turkey to ensure access to asylum procedures. We are also encouraged by language in the Joint Action Plan affirming that all refugees deserve access to protection and that the agreement will be implemented in full accordance with EU and international law.

If confirmed, promoting human rights in Greece will be one of my top priorities. The State Department has been engaged at all levels of the Greek government, with international partners such as UNHCR, and with other EU member states to work toward this comprehensive and coordinated approach to managing the migration and refugee crisis in Europe. This includes the nearly $44 million in humanitarian aid the State Department has provided throughout Europe in FY 2016. If confirmed, I will look to continue and bolster this excellent cooperation. By doing so, I hope we can help migrants and refugees in Greece not only receive international protection in the short term, but also help improve their access to the work and educational opportunities that are vital over the long term.Questions for the Record Submitted to

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 Greece in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Perhaps the greatest obstacle to addressing the human rights challenges posed by the migration and refugee crisis in Greece is the sheer scope and scale of the problem. More than one million migrants and refugees entered Greece between January 2015 and March 2016, and more than 57,000 migrants and refugees currently remain in Greece. Approximately 79 percent of those who have arrived after the EU-Turkey agreement took effect on March 20 have applied for asylum. Processing the significant influx of new asylum cases would be a challenge for any gov-

ernment, and Greek asylum officers are reportedly working around the clock to process the extraordinary caseload. EU member states have pledged support but they, too, have limited numbers of asylum experts, interpreters, and other specialists they can contribute.

The numbers of new arrivals have dropped precipitously since March 20, and in May were less than 50 per day compared with a daily average of 870 in the first half of March. This means the process is slightly more manageable than it was earlier this year, which has given the Greek government some space to improve the quality of accommodation facilities throughout the country. Greece has made efforts to relocate migrants and refugees from informal sites to established facilities, is constructing new facilities, and is also working to upgrade existing facilities that do not meet international standards.If confirmed, I will work to promote improved conditions for migrants and refugees in Greece and seek opportunities where we can encourage better coordination and cooperation with international organizations such as UNHCR. Despite years of budget cuts, the Greek government has demonstrated time and again its tremendous compassion and willingness to seek solutions to tough problems, and I believe we will be able to make progress on human rights concerns.

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 Greece? 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 NGOs both in the United States and in Greece if confirmed as the next Ambassador to Greece. Throughout my career I have made it a priority to engage with civil society organizations on a range of issues, and my time in Greece will be no different. The U.S. Embassy in Athens has benefitted from tremendous partnerships with a range of Greek NGO actors, including many that work with minority and underrepresented populations. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to promote the important work they do to advocate for the rights of minority groups including religious minorities, women, abused or neglected children, and the LGBTI population.

I am also committed to upholding the Leahy Law and ensuring that all recipients of U.S. assistance have been properly vetted according to the law. Greece has an excellent record as confirmed by previous vetting. Specific to the vetting of military personnel, the Office of Defense Cooperation in Athens frequently visits training sites and has observed that soldiers are properly trained on human rights interests. If confirmed, I will ensure we have the proper procedures in place at U.S. Embassy Athens to vet all training candidates and encourage continued site visits to report on observations from the field. If human rights concerns arise, I will act immediately to respond.Questions for the Record Submitted to

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to promote values of freedom of speech and assembly, which are actively defended in Greece. There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees in Greece last year, and such targeting by the Greek government is not a pervasive problem. There have been some reports of the prosecution of public officials for political purposes and the harassment of journalists; however, there were no reports of censorship or content restrictions in 2015. If confirmed, I will ensure the embassy team continues to monitor political persecution closely and bring to my attention any cases of unjust targeting so that we may respond accordingly.

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

Answer. Engaging with the Greek government on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance will be a top priority should I be confirmed. I also know that these are priorities for Greece, and that we have a willing partner in promoting our shared values of respect and tolerance. Greece has taken important steps this past year to prevent discrimination, including the passage of a law adopted last December to establish a National Council against Racism and Xenophobia. This law also stiffened penalties for individuals convicted of crimes motivated on these grounds. Also in December, the Greek government adopted legislation providing same-sex cohabitating couples the right to enter into civil union partnerships. And in October, the Greek government hosted a conference on religious tolerance and cultural pluralism in the Middle East, a clear effort on behalf of the foreign ministry to promote a culture of tolerance and acceptance. These examples all illustrate concrete actions

Greece has taken to promote human rights, civil rights, and governance. If confirmed, I will commit to furthering these efforts through our ongoing bilateral engagements.

Question. Russian President Putin was in Greece last month to meet with Prime Minister Tsipras. Reports surfaced that Putin offered to increase investment in the country if Greece were to vote against extending the EU's Russia sanctions. PM Tsipras has already repeatedly voiced reservations about the sanctions. How would you characterize Greece's relations with Russia? Would PM Tsipras break ranks with the EU and dissent to renewing sanctions against Russia? As U.S. Ambassador to Greece, how would you work to counter Russian influence there?

Answer. Greece has a long history of close ties with Russia, in part due to their affinity as predominately Orthodox nations. The two countries maintain regular high-level engagement. Russian President Putin visited Greece in May to celebrate the Greek-Russian Year of Friendship and 1,000 years of Russian Orthodoxy in Greece. Putin's visit resulted in several bilateral agreements for cooperation in the fields of tourism, transport, renewable energy, shipbuilding, mining, petroleum trading, and pharmaceuticals, reflecting the two countries' close work on developing commercial and tourism ties.

Notwithstanding the ties between Greece and Russia, we have observed Greece definitively turn toward the West on security and energy issues, most recently demonstrated by the groundbreaking of the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) in Greece, which will bring gas from Azerbaijan to other parts of Europe. The Tsipras government has stressed the importance it places on Western investment at the same time it seeks investment from other countries such as Russia and China. While Russia has shown interest in expanding its energy and economic ties to Greece and its military presence in the Mediterranean, the Greek government has made important strategic decisions to support energy projects such as TAP, which will reduce European dependence on Russian gas. Nevertheless, the Greek government has continued to signal support for a "multi-dimensional" energy policy that includes the construction of new routes through Greece for Russian gas. It is important that we remain vigilant about Russian avenues to exercise influence and project power in the region.

Despite concerns over the economic impact of sanctions on Greece's fragile economy, particularly its agricultural and tourism sectors, Greece has never broken EU consensus on Russian sanctions over Ukraine, and has repeatedly confirmed its support for Ukraine and its concern for the more than 150,000 Ukrainian citizens of ethnic Greek origin residing near Mariupol. We have no reason to believe that Greece will diverge from its position in support of EU consensus. Having spent the past three years working to counter Russian aggression in Kyiv, I am intimately familiar with the strategies and tactics used by Russia to wield influence, including Russian use of misinformation as a weapon. The best response to countering Russian influence is to tell the truth. If confirmed, I will continue to speak out and ensure the Greek people are hearing the truth about both Russian and U.S. activities in the region.

Question. According to the UN, there are now more than 56,000 refugees and migrants in Greece, many living in very poor conditions, including around 8,000 who have essentially become stranded on Greek islands. At the same time, the Norwegian Refugee Council decided to suspend its programs for Syrian refugees on the Greek island of Chios due to the institution of "detention-like conditions" since the EU-Turkey agreement was signed. The medical aid organization Doctors Without Borders announced that it would no longer accept funding from EU institutions and EU member states in protest over the conditions that have been created by EU-Turkey agreement.

- How is the U.S. supporting Greece's efforts to manage the refugee and migrant flow and to fairly and effectively cope with asylum claims? Is the condition of Greek holding and processing facilities an issue that has been raised by the Embassy? At what level?
- What U.S. assistance and/or assets are being utilized bilaterally in this regard?
- What more can the United States do, and what plans are in place, for the United States to help improve the protection of refugees and asylum seekers and humanitarian conditions in Greece?

Answer. The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) has contributed nearly $44 million to the U.N. High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) to support provision of emergency assistance throughout Europe, including Greece. Of this, $2 million supports the International Federation for the Red Cross/Red Crescent in Greece, and $500,000 is for the U.N. Population

Fund activities in Greece to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. In addition, we have provided small grants to organizations such as Doctors of the World and local Greek NGOs working with migrants and refugees in Greece.

The Department of Defense donated essential humanitarian supplies for migrants and refugees in Greece on behalf of the U.S. government in April 2016. EUCOM provided $150,000 worth of beds, sleeping bags, blankets, pillows, diapers, and other necessities to the Hellenic Republic First Reception Service for distribution at accommodation sites across Greece. Additional excess materials are being shipped from EUCOM logistical sites, specifically Camp Darby in Pisa, Italy.

In April, a team of public health experts from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) visited Greece to conduct a rapid needs assessment of the current public health situation. The CDC's top recommendation out of that trip was to start a vaccination campaign—something the Greek government has already begun following the visit. If confirmed, I will continue working closely with the Greek authorities on what more we can do.

A U.S. Naval vessel is also now participating in the NATO Aegean activity to help stem the flow of "illegal trafficking and illegal migration" by working with our Allies to provide reconnaissance, surveillance, and monitoring information about migrant vessels to the Greek and Turkish Coast Guards, as well as the EU's FRONTEX border agency. We will continue to look for ways to do more. If confirmed, I will seek ways to bolster our assistance.

On the issue of registration facilities on the Aegean islands, we are also concerned about the welfare of migrants and refugees and want to be sure that they have access to asylum screening and are treated with dignity, and that their rights are respected. In practical terms, Greece has followed its own legal requirements not to detain migrants arriving at hotspots on the Aegean islands for more than 25 days. Greek authorities often detain migrants for fewer than 25 days, as asylum seekers generally are allowed to leave the hotspot registration facilities once all identification and registration procedures are completed. However, under the terms of the March 18 EU-Turkey agreement, migrants are not permitted to leave the island, pending the examination of their asylum applications. Greece has also made efforts to identify vulnerable individuals such as minors and pregnant women to ensure they receive appropriate care and assistance. If confirmed, I will continue to support Greece's efforts to improve these processes.

We laud the work of organizations such as Doctors Without Borders, and their dedication to helping those in need. We also share the desire to eliminate the deadly smuggling of desperate people across the Aegean Sea. Far too many innocent lives have been lost to line the pockets of criminals who profit from the desperation of vulnerable people. We expect all nations to uphold their international obligations and to not send individuals with legitimate protection needs back to their countries of origin, and to conduct any returns of individuals who do not qualify for international protection safely, humanely and with dignity. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to urge the European Union, its member states—including Greece—and Turkey to continue to work together to address concerns raised by humanitarian groups to ensure proper refugee protection safeguards consistent with international obligations and commitments. We also urge the European Union and its member states to swiftly implement assistance measures to which member states have already agreed. This includes the relocation of asylum-seekers already in frontline European States, resettling more refugees from first countries of asylum into Europe, and providing increased humanitarian assistance to refugees in Turkey.

Both the Department and the U.S. Embassy in Athens regularly engage with the Greek government and international and non-profit organizations at all levels on issues related to migration, including the welfare of migrants and refugees. If confirmed, I commit to doing the same to ensure the dignity and rights of all individuals are upheld.

If confirmed, I will also continue to seek ways to improve the protection of refugees and asylum seekers and humanitarian conditions in Greece and around the world. President Obama is hosting a Leaders' Summit on Refugees during UNGA 71 high-level week to focus on this global refugee crisis. The United States is organizing this Summit with a global approach because we believe that Greece and other European countries should not have to shoulder the burden of this crisis alone. The United States is undertaking a vigorous, sustained diplomatic effort over the coming months to drive new and significant contributions from a broader universe of countries in three critical areas: 1) increased funding for U.N. humanitarian agencies and appeals, 2) greater opportunities for resettlement and other legal channels for humanitarian admissions, 3) facilitating refugee inclusion and self-reliance

through opportunities for education and lawful employment. We believe this summit will mobilize significant new resources to address the challenges of migration.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PAYATT'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Ambassador Pyatt, thank you for your service as Ambassador to Ukraine during a difficult time in Ukraine's history. Can you tell us whether the Ukrainian Government's perceptions of our commitment to Ukraine's security have suffered at all due to our refusal to provide the Ukrainian Government with the lethal assistance it has repeatedly requested, yes or no?

Answer. Ukraine is appreciative of our assistance and has made significant progress toward increasing its defense capacity and reforming its defense sector, thanks in part to our security assistance. In response to the crisis, we have committed over $600 million in training and equipment to help Ukraine's forces enhance their capabilities to monitor and secure their borders, operate more safely and effectively, and defend Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Our security assistance has saved lives while helping to build Ukraine's long-term defense capacity.

Through the Joint Multi-National Training Group Ukraine, we are building Ukraine's institutional training capacity, reforming its doctrine, improving command and control, and hardening its defenses. The United States and Allies have trained over 1,700 Ukrainian Conventional force and National Guard personnel. We have trained 120 Special Operations Forces (SOF), who are now re-deployed in operations. We are currently training an additional conventional battalion of 630 personnel.

We have provided counter-artillery and counter-mortar radars, over 3,000 secure radios, 130 Humvees, and over 100 armored civilian SUVs, a mobile field clinic, and tens of thousands of medical kits and other life-saving equipment. Our radars have helped Ukrainian forces confirm that the Russia-led separatists are firing from urban areas in blatant disregard for civilians. The Ukrainians, showing restraint aided by our radars, have exercised extreme care with their retaliatory fire in an effort to limit civilian casualties.

Ukraine has been grateful for the assistance we have provided and taken many steps to implement changes to its defense structure at the recommendation of the United States and international advisers. Most recently, President Poroshenko signed the Strategic Defense Bulletin, a landmark document which will guide an overhaul of Ukraine's defense institutions, marking a transition to a western interoperable, civilian-controlled, and accountable defense establishment.

We appreciate Congressional support for Ukraine, and we will continue to work closely with Ukraine to identify requirements for security assistance.

Ukrainians often tell me they feel they have no stronger partner than the United States; among the many memories ?I will carry from my service here, one of the most cherished is of the hundreds of random Ukrainians who have come up to me on the street to say thank you for what the American people have done to help Ukraine defend its sovereign choice for the future.

Question. Greece is a route for individuals trying to reach Iraq and Syria as well as a transit point for individuals returning home from the battlefield. The leader of the November 13 Paris attacks used Greece several times to enter Europe and two of the suicide bombers at the Stade de France passed through Greece as Syrian refugees. Are we confident that Greek authorities can accurately screen for dangerous actors with a potentially overwhelming number of refugees?

Answer. Greece became the main entry point on an illegal migration route into the EU last year due to its long coast line and proximity to the Middle East. Greek authorities share our concern that terrorists—including potentially foreign terrorist fighters—could use this migration route to transit Europe. With that said, we have a long history of law enforcement and anti-terrorism cooperation with Greece and are working closely with the Greek government to combat terrorism in all its forms.

While there are several areas where Greece could further improve border security efforts, Greek authorities have demonstrated a strong commitment to improving screening of refugees and migrants and have already taken significant strides to do so. For example, as of September 2015, the Greek government registered and screened against EU and international databases only eight percent of migrants and refugees entering Greece. By February, however, that number had increased to 80

percent and is now nearly 100 percent. Greece has also demonstrated success in investigating and prosecuting human smugglers.

Our counterterrorism partnership is strong, and we have ongoing bilateral efforts with Greece to improve border security. In the wake of the November terrorist attacks in Paris, the White House announced on November 30, 2015, that the United States was prepared to deploy teams of technical experts to help some European countries, if desired, enhance border security, information sharing, and other counterterrorism capabilities to counter the threat from foreign terrorist fighters. In February, an interagency team of U.S. subject matter experts visited Athens to consult on shared counterterrorism priorities and work with Greek officials to find ways to improve border security, building on existing partnerships between our two countries. Follow-up dialogue and specialized training efforts continue as a result of this engagement, including terrorism finance training and training on methods to improve border and aviation security and identify potential threats. Together, we are now working cooperatively to protect against vulnerabilities from foreign fighters and other security threats.

We are also currently working with DHS to conduct regional training in Greece later this year. The program will include other countries such as Turkey, Serbia, Macedonia, and Croatia, and will provide training on migrant screening and migrant smuggling investigation. In addition, we are hoping to support regional training to combat migrant-smuggling by sea, to assist in the development of national training curricula and train-the-trainer workshops, and to support other regional capacity-building that may be implemented by international organizations such as INTERPOL.

The Department of Defense is also working to help Greece build its capabilities to conduct counterterrorism operations by providing approximately $4.5 million in 2282 funding to support a specialized unit of the Hellenic Coast Guard. This agency is also the lead Greek entity focused on counter-smuggling operations.

Finally, our coordination efforts with Greece to upgrade its border security capabilities under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) will also bolster Greece's ability to detect terrorists and share terrorist and law enforcement information with the United States and European partners. U.S. law requires DHS to conduct periodic re-evaluation of VWP countries. Greece underwent a thorough re-evaluation in 2015. This review evaluated the effect that the country's continued designation has on the law enforcement, immigration enforcement, and security interests of the United States, which includes a thorough assessment of counterterrorism and terrorism threats within the country. DHS, in consultation with State, determined that Greece's participation in VWP would not compromise the law enforcement, immigration, and security interests of the United States. Currently, DHS and the Hellenic National Police are actively working to develop a partnership to bolster Greece's vetting of refugees to further enhance the screening process. DHS continues to monitor Greece, as well as other program countries.

The Greek government has made tremendous efforts to improve border security, and we are confident of Greece's commitment to protecting against terrorists transiting its borders. If confirmed, assuring the safety and security of American citizens will be my top priority and I will make every effort to ensure our bilateral cooperation with Greece on border security and counterterrorism is as productive as possible.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PAYATT'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Mr. Pyatt, Greece has had seven different governments since 2009, with three having collapsed. Although Prime Minister Tsipras was reelected decisively in September of 2015, the Greek Parliament remains fragile and fragmented. As the U.S. Ambassador, how do you plan to work with different factions in Parliament?

Answer. Greece's political environment has evolved significantly since 2009 in large part due to the economic crisis and resulting political challenges faced by the Greek government. After several decades of one-party governments, Greece has seen a shift to two or three-party coalition governments and increased volatility in political leadership.

If confirmed, I will seek to work with all parties toward the common goal of achieving long-term economic and political stability for Greece. I will work with political leaders across the spectrum to get a full understanding of the issues and use this broad base to shape our bilateral policies with Greece. Most importantly, I will

work with whichever political party or coalition government is in office to ensure our strong bilateral relationship continues regardless of political persuasion.

Question. In your testimony, you say that the success of U.S. policy in Greece hinges on its partnership with the EU. However, many speculate that if Greece is not able to live up to its promises and obligations under the third financial assistance package agreed to in August 2015, that the EU may consider kicking Greece out of the Eurozone. What impact would that have on U.S. interests in Greece? In the region? As Ambassador, how would you assist Greece in staying on track with these reforms?

Answer. The United States has a strong partnership with Greece, and the administration has said consistently that Greece belongs within Europe's monetary union as Athens implements reforms to restore financial stability and economic competitiveness. European leaders have repeatedly said they will take whatever steps are necessary to maintain the integrity of monetary union and safeguard financial stability in the euro area. European leaders have also made clear that they want Greece to remain in the euro area, while respecting its commitments to reform. We remain confident in euro area member states' efforts to implement economic and financial sector reforms and move towards greater integration, and we will continue to engage closely with European partners on integration efforts.

We have followed developments closely throughout the duration of Greece's bailout program and will continue to do so. We remain in close contact with European leaders and the IMF on the measures necessary to secure Greece's economic recovery. We have a great stake in the outcome, not just for the sake of our friends and partners in Greece, but for the sake of the entire eurozone, the U.S. economy, and the world economy. Greece's economic success affects Europe's economy, and what happens to Europe's economy is very important to the United States. Europe is our largest economic partner and we share close financial, trade, and other linkages. A protracted stagnation in Europe with weak business and consumer demand adversely affects the U.S. economy.

Greek authorities are making progress on far-reaching reforms, including pension reforms, privatization efforts, tax reforms, and others. Greece successfully recapitalized its banks at the end of last year and has gradually loosened capital controls imposed last summer, though some restrictions remain in place. European leaders recognize the efforts that Greece has made to date and understand the need to continue to provide partnership and support to Greece as its reforms continue. Looking forward, Greece must now focus on reform implementation. If confirmed, I will urge the Greek government to continue taking steps to do so. In return for implementing those reforms, it will be important for Greece and its creditors to reach agreement on how to ensure debt sustainability over the long term, allowing Greece to return to healthy economic growth. If confirmed, working toward these goals will be my top economic priority.

Question. A large part of stabilizing Greece's economy hinges on its ability to keep the flow of migrants to a minimum, making the deal struck with Turkey in March of this year immensely important. In your opinion, do you think the deal will hold? What events could endanger the deal? How do you see this deal fitting into U.S.-Greek relations in the coming years?

Answer. More than one million migrants and refugees entered Greece between January 2015 and March 2016, and more than 57,000 migrants and refugees currently remain in Greece. Several factors have contributed to a decrease in the number of new arrivals of migrants and refugees in Greece, including a combination of unilateral border closures throughout Europe, NATO presence in the Aegean, and implementation of the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan. Arrivals in May averaged fewer than 50 per day, compared to an average of 870 daily in the first half of March.

Specifically on the EU-Turkey agreement, we believe that all parties are committed to seeing its success and are working toward a common goal of stemming the flow of irregular migration while also improving legal mechanisms for those who need international protection to be able to access it. We expect all nations to uphold their international obligations and commitments not to send individuals with legitimate protection needs back to their countries of origin, and to conduct any returns of individuals who do not qualify for international protection safely, humanely, and with dignity.We also urge the European Union, its member states, and Turkey to continue to work together to swiftly implement assistance measures to which member states have already agreed. This includes the relocation of asylum-seekers already in frontline European States, resettling more refugees from first countries of

asylum into Europe, providing increased humanitarian assistance to refugees, and deploying asylum experts and interpreters to hotspots in Greece and Italy.

We recognize there are several factors that could ultimately affect implementation of the commitments made under the agreement, including legislative requirements, resource limitations, and potentially shifting political dynamics. However, thus far we have observed the parties demonstrate a willingness and effort to uphold their commitments. For example, Greece passed legislation on April 1 to support implementation of the agreement, EU member states have deployed border guards to Greece to provide surge capacity for processing asylum claims, and Turkey has received hundreds of migrants returned under the deal. These are concrete actions that illustrate the willingness of stakeholders to contribute to a comprehensive and coordinated solution.

We believe the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan is an important step in responding to the unprecedented flow of refugees and migrants in the region. The United States has also done what it can to support regional partners in addressing the challenge. Total U.S. humanitarian assistance contributions worldwide were more than $6 billion last year, including funding from the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and the U. S. Agency for International Development. Of this, nearly $44 million in humanitarian aid in FY 2016 supported activities throughout Europe.

In Greece, we have worked with our Department of Defense colleagues to provide humanitarian assistance items such as beds, blankets, and sanitary items to help equip accommodation facilities. Additionally, our Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are working in close concert with the Greek public health authorities as they seek to ensure the public health and that of the migrant population is effectively safeguarded. We have worked closely with the Greek government, European partners, and international organizations such as UNHCR to closely coordinate these efforts so that they may be complementary but not duplicative. If confirmed, I will seek to continue this robust cooperation.

Question. Despite the deal to stem the flow of migrants, Greece's relations with Turkey have been strained for some time. Does this tension affect U.S. interests in the region? If so how? If confirmed, how would you go about providing assistance or advice to the Greek government in this matter?

Answer. We are encouraged by regular, high-level bilateral engagements between Greece and Turkey, and Greece has acknowledged publicly that relations with Turkey have improved in recent years. Greek Prime Minister Tsipras visited Turkey three times in the past year and regularly engages his Turkish counterparts on key issues such as Cyprus, refugees and migration, and increasing economic ties. Greece and Turkey held their most recent meeting of the High Level Cooperation Council (HLCC) in Izmir in March. At this summit, Prime Minister Tsipras and then-Prime Minister Davutoglu reaffirmed the need for bilateral cooperation on the refugee and migration crisis and reached a bilateral deal for accelerated readmission of migrants from Greece to Turkey.

We believe these visits and joint efforts to address issues of mutual concern—such as refugees and migration—indicate the potential for bilateral relations between Greece and Turkey to continue to improve. We recognize that a tension-free Aegean can be achieved only through constructive engagement between Greece and Turkey and applaud the efforts of the Greek and Turkish governments to improve their relationship. We have conveyed to both Greece and Turkey our strong support for a stable Aegean, which is in their national interests as well. Greece and Turkey have long-established diplomatic channels for addressing tensions in the region, and all NATO members, including Greece and Turkey, are committed to working out any differences peacefully and through dialogue. That is in both countries' best interests, and in the best interests of the United States, as well. If confirmed, I will encourage this dialogue and positive steps by Greece and Turkey to resolve their differences bilaterally.

Question. Prior to being nominated for this ambassadorial position, you served as the U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine. What lessons learned from your time in Ukraine do you feel will be applicable to the post in Greece, should you be confirmed?

Answer. My time as U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine taught me the importance of empowering a dedicated interagency team and molding a common vision for the U.S. mission. With perseverance and hard work, the U.S. interagency team in Ukraine was able to work effectively together, allowing us to achieve our mission goals. If confirmed, I will apply these leadership skills to help the U.S. mission in Greece move forward on our policy priorities and pursue a common vision in our relations with Greece.

I also learned in Ukraine how much of an impact on-the-ground, people-to-people diplomacy can make. I made it a priority to engage directly with host-country citizens on a daily basis, which gave our mission a much clearer understanding of what was going on in the country—and which allowed us to show Ukrainians the everyday, "real people" face of the United States. Our holiday YouTube videos were a perfect example of outreach that set our mission apart from those of other countries and left a positive impression among average Ukrainians. If confirmed as Ambassador to Greece, I will continue these efforts to harness the power of people-to-people diplomacy.

Finally, I came to appreciate how European finance, businesses, politics, and society, are all interconnected—and how they interact and evolve at a very rapid pace. As U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, I learned how to think about our policy and mission goals in this environment of interconnectedness. From our multilateral coordination efforts to stabilize Ukraine's macroeconomic environment to our intense support, in coordination with our EU allies, for Ukraine's politically brave reforms, our success was contingent upon our ability to adapt to this continuously changing European environment. If confirmed, I will bring this lesson to bear as U.S. Ambassador to Greece.

RESPONSES OF DOUGLAS ALLAN SILLIMAN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGATE SILLIMAN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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 have advocated for human rights and proper labor conditions throughout my career. In my most recent assignment as Ambassador to Kuwait, I have, with cabinet-level officials, pressed the fight against trafficking in persons, advocated for enforcement of fair labor standards, encouraged the proper treatment of stateless people and raised other human rights issues. The Embassy and I have met with critics of the government and worked closely with human rights groups and other NGOs.

One key example of this work is related to trafficking in persons. During my tenure as Ambassador in Kuwait, my Embassy and I have repeatedly pressed the Kuwaiti government to address its poor record on trafficking in persons. In large part, as a result of our intense engagement at all levels of government, the Kuwaiti Parliament passed a contract labor law regulating and centralizing the recruitment of foreign workers (and closing hundreds of small labor recruiting agencies that had been the source of trafficking in the past), enacted Kuwait's first-ever law regulating household workers, opened a government shelter for trafficked women, stood up a new Anti-Human Trafficking Department in the Ministry of Interior, established a Human Rights Office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and conducted its first prosecutions under the two new laws. I am proud of this record of accomplishment, working in cooperation with Kuwaiti government officials who shared our view on the need to end trafficking in persons in Kuwait.

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

Answer. The most pressing human rights issue in Iraq is, without a doubt, Da'esh. This reprehensible organization has committed innumerable violations of human rights against Iraq's diverse ethnic and religious communities. Foremost among these is the genocide it has perpetrated against Iraq's religious minorities, but its list of crimes also includes-though is not limited to-executing Muslims of different sects, LGBTI individuals, teachers, and aid workers; enslaving women and girls and forcing them into marriages; and employing child soldiers. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Iraqi government in the fight against Da'esh to ensure that its flagrant and disgusting human rights abuses come to an end. Beyond Da'esh, trafficking in persons remains a problem in Iraq. Iraq has taken considerable steps to combat this-especially in light of the ongoing fight against Da'esh-but much remains to be done. If confirmed, I will bring the same zeal in fighting this heinous crime as I brought to Kuwait, and will engage the Government of Iraq at the highest levels to draw greater attention to this issue.

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 Iraq in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Ultimately, the end of Da'esh and its human rights abuses cannot be achieved through military means alone. Defeating Da'esh and preventing its return requires the Government of Iraq foster a more inclusive political environment, emphasizing a respect for the rights of all Iraqis and a commitment to their safety and well-being. To this end, we must continue to support security and stabilization programs in areas liberated from Da'esh. Advocating for the speedy reintegration of minorities into liberated communities will also be critical, as the political participation of all of Iraq's communities will be essential to building a functioning, representative government and forging a stable, unified Iraq. Continuing the battle against trafficking in persons is made substantially more difficult by the continuing fight against Da'esh and the concurrent need to enhance the capabilities of the Iraqi justice system. Ensuring that Iraqi police and prosecutors are adequately resourced to recognize, investigate, and prosecute trafficking cases will be integral to further advancements in this arena.

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 Iraq? 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, meeting with civil society organizations will be a priority, both in the United States and in Iraq, especially those promoting human rights. Civil society groups provide valuable insight into a variety of issues in ways that our embassies simply cannot replicate. Working with civil society organizations is essential to effectively achieving our goals.

I will also ensure that the Leahy Law continues to be implemented to its fullest extent. Iraq is one of the largest recipients of American military assistance, and along with such aid comes the responsibility to ensure that U.S. equipment and training are not used to commit or support human rights abuses. During my tenure, Embassy Baghdad will continue to provide human rights training to the Iraqi Armed Forces.

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

Answer. If confirmed, engaging with Iraq to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted will be a priority for me. Fair and equal treatment under the law is essential in any country, but especially in Iraq given the potential for unfair treatment to enflame sectarian tensions during this critical time. In the short term, I will advocate for respecting the rights of Internally Displaced People fleeing Iraqi cities as they are liberated from Da'esh, including the establishment of transparent and humane processes for security screening of military-aged males. I will couple this with increased emphasis on adherence to Prime Minister Abadi's 2014 executive order on enforcing the rights of detainees, which prohibits arrests made without warrants or outside the confines of the Iraqi criminal code.

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

Answer. Yes, the current situation in Iraq requires that our bilateral dialogue address these subjects. Widespread respect for human rights and the promotion of good governance are essential to fostering a post-Da'esh environment in which Iraq's numerous communities flourish and prosper. If confirmed, my short-term engagements on these issues will include advocating for humane treatment of those fleeing the fighting, seeking accountability for security forces that are alleged to have committed human rights abuses, and encouraging the government to guarantee equal protection and access to services for all of its citizens, regardless of their ethnicity or religion.

Question. When Secretary Kerry announced that ISIL had committed genocide against Yezidis and Christians, he committed the U.S. to supporting efforts to collect, document, and analyze evidence as well as efforts to hold perpetrators accountable. What specific actions has the State Department taken since March in that regard and what more will you do as Ambassador to ensure ISIL perpetrators are prosecuted?

Answer. The Department's policy has not changed in light of the Secretary's statement, which reconfirmed the direction of our policy. We are undertaking a number of efforts to promote accountability for Da'esh's depraved acts and to secure the peace, good governance, and respect for human rights that Iraqi citizens deserve. Our Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) is funding a $3 million program that has begun securing mass grave sites around Mount Sinjar, and is providing technical training in northern Iraq to Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) staff on mass grave exhumation. Our partner NGOs will also provide analysis support once evidence is collected.

Another project we are funding collects narratives from Iraqi citizens that may be used in a variety of transitional justice processes. Further, we have responded, and will continue to respond, with emergency and other programmatic assistance, with military force to degrade and ultimately defeat Da'esh, and by taking active measures to address atrocities in Iraq. We have also provided humanitarian aid to support survivors of the conflict, including survivors of atrocities perpetrated by Da'esh.

The U.S. government is also working with the Government of Iraq (GOI) to put in place strong governance, human rights protections, and security structures so that Da'esh and similar groups cannot take hold in the region again. If confirmed, I will communicate to the GOI and KRG that we are closely following the progress of their investigations and prosecutions and encourage them to continue such work in a credible way that meets due process standards. Ending impunity for crimes and providing justice to survivors is an important part of long term stability and reconciliation, and assists in creating the conditions on the ground in which minorities will feel more secure in returning to their homes. I will also support implementation of additional State Department programming focused on criminal accountability and broader transitional justice, and seek to work in tandem with the justice efforts of our Coalition partners.

Question. In your testimony, you discussed justice for Sunnis who are alleged victims of atrocities at the hands of Shia militia, and noted that Prime Minister Abadi has committed to setting up a commission to investigate these allegations. Given these crimes and those of ISIL, does Iraq have the investigative and judicial capacity to take this on? What is your assessment and what specific work will you do with the government to ensure they have the capacity and technical skills to investigate and prosecute these complex crimes?

Answer. The Government of Iraq has shown its willingness to investigate and prosecute captured Da'esh fighters and members of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) accused of crimes. Prime Minister Abadi's recent investigations into PMF abuses have resulted in the arrest of several PMF militiamen who are expected to face trial in the near future. The Kurdistan Regional Government is in the process of amending its criminal code to give it the ability to prosecute perpetrators of genocide within the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, and legislation is currently before the Kurdish parliament to create a mixed court system consisting of Kurdish and international lawyers to carry out these prosecutions. While high-level members of Da'esh could under certain circumstances be prosecuted in international jurisdictions for their atrocities, it will likely be the national court systems in Iraq that try the vast majority of Da'esh's perpetrators. We have heard concerns related to detention of suspects, as well as questions about provision of due process at trial. We take these reports seriously, and will look into them and work to support the Government of Iraq (GOI) in carrying out fair and credible justice processes. As areas become liberated, the out-flow of thousands of people will naturally create a strain on the capacity of the Iraqi justice system as it strives to ensure that the rights of innocent civilians, particularly Sunnis, are respected, while at the same time identifying potential perpetrators of atrocities. If confirmed, I will urge the Government of Iraq to continue to improve its provincial and national criminal justice institutions and investigative capacity, and make every effort to bring the resources of the United States government to bear in this endeavor.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SILLIMAN'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. As you know, Iraq faces significant challenges in recovering its economy as it fights to defeat ISIS and build a cohesive civil society. One bright spot for Iraq, however, is that oil exports, which provide roughly 90% of public sector revenue in Iraq, rose in 2016 to 4.5 million barrels per day. Domestic oil production also rose in 2016 to 3.8 million barrels per day. In your opinion, how can the U.S. assist the

Iraqi government in continuing to foster this growth? What steps would you take as ambassador to assist with growth in the oil sector?

Answer. We are encouraged by Iraq's continued growth in oil production and exports, which is an outcome of the open and competitive bid rounds in 2009. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) on confidence-building measures, particularly in resolving oil and gas disputes, pushing the Iraqis to implement their IMF and World Bank programs, and supporting the "debottlenecking" of Iraq's southern oil infrastructure.

Predictions of low oil prices over the medium term mean that each barrel of oil exported is likely to continue earning lower prices than in recent years, making it crucial that Iraq maintain and, ideally, increase production. The State Department has co-led energy discussions with the Iraqi government to "debottleneck" oil infrastructure since 2012. Based on these discussions, the Iraqi government has contracted with the Department of Energy to focus its national labs' expert staff on identifying vulnerabilities in Iraq's oil infrastructure, resulting in detailed recommendations on how to make the infrastructure more resilient to threats. In addition, a USAID program seeks to increase exports by removing bottlenecks that limit the amount of oil that can be exported and enhancing the resilience of Iraq's oil infrastructure to maximize the number of days Iraq's export facilities are up and running.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) on confidence-building measures to maximize cooperation between the two entities. Only through cooperation will the KRG and the government in Baghdad receive the full benefit of the oil they produce, as well as attract foreign infrastructure investment.

I will also work with the Iraqis to implement their IMF and World Bank programs, which recognize the centrality of oil revenues to the Iraqi government's operations. The IMF required the Iraqi government to settle its arrears with the international oil companies operating in Iraq as a prior action to enter into a Stand-By Arrangement. By successfully completing this prior action, the Government of Iraq ensured the resumption of infrastructure investments to expand production and exports and enhance the resilience of its infrastructure. The 2015 World Bank Development Policy Loan provided funding to assist the Government of Iraq capture natural gas associated with oil production for power generation. The World Bank estimated that utilizing gas for power generation instead of petroleum would result in an additional $520 billion in revenue by 2035, in addition to reducing Iraq's greenhouse gas production.

Question. In your testimony, you highlight the importance of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to the Mosul campaign. However, the KRG may be mounting a political movement for independence from Iraq. How would the KRG's break from Iraq affect the campaign against ISIS? How would it affect U.S. interests in Iraq? As ambassador, how would you go about advising the Iraqi government on this matter?

Answer. The U.S. has long supported a unified Iraq as being in the best interest of all of Iraq's communities, including the Kurds. If confirmed, I will advise the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) that the United States supports a unified, federal, democratic, and secure Iraq. Any change to the structure of the Iraqi state is, however, an internal matter that must be handled in accordance with the Iraqi constitution.

Coordination between Baghdad and Erbil has proven critical in the counter-Da'esh campaign. Baghdad provided the first flights of ammunition to the KRG after the fall of Mosul in 2014. Since then, the Ministry of Defense has included support for the Kurdish Peshmerga in its security assistance plans and budget. Baghdad and Erbil are stronger and more effective when they are united and working together. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that this cooperation continues.

Finally, internal Iraqi politics should not significantly change the U.S. key interests in Iraq. The U.S. will remain steadfast in its support for the people of Iraq in their efforts to defeat Da'esh and achieve political and economic reform.

Question. There have been several votes in Congress on providing direct arms to the KRG instead of through the Government of Iraq. Would you support direct arming of the Kurds? Do you see problems with the current process for providing arms?

Answer. Coordinating U.S. military assistance through the central government is required by both Iraqi and international law and tangibly demonstrates our commitment to a unified, sovereign, and independent Iraq. It is also essential to a durable victory over Da'esh. Any call for preferred treatment for one region of Iraq strength-

ens voices that have been working against the pragmatic reconciliation policies advocated by Prime Minister Abadi, and weakens his ability to hold off Shia political forces that want him to take a more divisive line.

Since Prime Minister Abadi took office, Baghdad has neither prevented nor delayed the delivery of equipment to the Ministry of Peshmerga in Erbil. On the contrary, it has supported a Coalition effort that has provided the Peshmerga with thousands of tons of ammunition and equipment cost-free. The Government of Iraq has also committed to providing the Peshmerga with at least $200 million of support via the FY 2016 Foreign Military Financing loan. We are expediting deliveries to Erbil as quickly as our system allows, as we are doing with our support to all of Iraq's forces. While aircraft carrying weapons and equipment destined for Erbil do stop in Baghdad for inspection, this usually adds only a few hours to the transit time.

Without any special provision of law, we are already able to train and equip Iraqi Kurdish forces and have been doing this successfully for some time. To date, through U.S. and Coalition donations, we have provided the Peshmerga with more than 67 million rounds of rifle ammunition; 41,000 grenades; 115,000 mortar rounds; 63,000 anti-tank rounds; over 38,000 weapons including rifles, anti-tank systems, and heavy caliber machine guns; counter-IED equipment; and more than 150 vehicles, including ambulances and mine resistant vehicles. Additional equipment and ammunition is on the way, including additional protective gear for nuclear, biological, and chemical threats. In addition, thousands of Peshmerga have already received training at the Build Partner Capacity (BPC) sites.

The FY 2015 Iraq Train and Equip Fund (ITEF) budget included funding to train and equip two Peshmerga brigades. This includes dozens of mounted machine guns, 1,200 M-16 rifles and their associated equipment, as well as protective gear for Peshmerga soldiers. An additional $65 million has been provided from ITEF in food, fuel, ammunition, and medical supplies with the first food and fuel shipments arriving in late April and early May.

Defense Secretary Carter announced $415 million in additional funding for support to the Ministry of Peshmerga in support of the fight against Da'esh. This support is for food, fuel, ammunition, and stipends for those Peshmerga directly involved in the fight against Da'esh.

Question. The State Department has noted that only one-third of the $861 million Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan has been funded. Further, State has recently announced plans to hold a "pledging conference" along with Canada, Germany, and Japan, in order to raise funds for another "substantial contribution" to the humanitarian effort. The U.S. has already provided about $800 million to Iraqi rebuilding efforts since. If confirmed, do you see yourself participating in this conference? If so, how would you assist in the negotiations with other states, given that the U.S. contribution has already been incredibly substantial compared to other coalition states?

Answer. The dire humanitarian situation in Iraq illustrates the critical need for the international community to continue to support humanitarian and stabilization efforts. The United States will co-host, with Canada, Germany and Japan, a Pledging Conference in July to raise additional funds to meet those needs. The United States recognizes the overwhelming needs of those displaced from their homes in Iraq and the important role our international donor partners play. Informed resource planning for humanitarian and stabilization efforts is vital. The United States has led-and will continue to lead-the effort to intensify international support and donor contributions on humanitarian assistance, demining, and the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Funding Facilities for Immediate Stabilization (FFIS) and Expanded Stabilization (FFES). These areas reflect critical assistance gaps that must be addressed to bolster effective governance and provision of basic services in areas liberated from Da'esh control, as well as to provide urgently-needed assistance to conflict-affected Iraqis. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with our partners in the Government of Iraq and the international community to further Iraq's stability and defeat Da'esh.

Question. International humanitarian organizations report that of the 3.4 million people displaced in Iraq since 2014, more than half are children. As ambassador, how would you work with the Iraqi government to provide assistance to ensure these children have some sort of basic access to education in order to prevent a generational education gap?

Answer. The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in Iraq, providing more than $778 million since FY 2014 for assistance to Iraqis in need throughout the region. In addition, we announced $20 million in new humani-

tarian assistance for the Iraq response on June 21, 2016. Many of our current humanitarian programs with UNICEF and non-governmental organizations include educational assistance to those displaced, as well as vulnerable host-community members. This includes working with local, provincial, and central government authorities to ensure that children have access to education, either by providing transportation assistance to children living too far away from schools to walk, or by working with authorities to ensure that displaced children are able to take their annual exams so they do not fall behind in school.

If confirmed, I will work within the State Department and USAID to ensure that education remains a priority intervention for the U.S. government to help Iraqi children gain proper access to education.Questions for the Record Submitted to

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RESPONSES OF P. MICHAEL MCKINLEY, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MCKINLEY'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CARDIN

Question. Given widespread public sentiment in Brazil about the importance of transparency and accountability, what steps would you take to show support for these issues?

Answer. In recent years, we have witnessed Brazil's institutions make great strides increasing openness and creating a higher standard of accountability. Brazilian police, prosecutors, and courts are increasingly investigating corruption and bringing those who violate the law to justice.The Brazilian public supports these changes. Surveys show nearly 80 percent of Brazilians believe the groundbreaking "Operation Car Wash" anti-corruption investigation should be allowed to run its course even if it causes temporary economic pain. Both President Rousseff and Acting President Temer have called for anti-corruption investigations to continue unimpeded.

If confirmed, I would urge the Brazilian government to continue taking steps to strengthen Brazil's independent institutions, preserve crucial reforms such as plea bargaining and access to public information, and provide the Brazilian people with the transparent, accountable governance they deserve. I will consult with civil society and business leaders to identify opportunities for the United States and Brazil to share best practices in prosecuting official corruption and promoting government transparency at the subnational and national levels. I will also build upon the Embassy's ongoing efforts to help Brazil build its law enforcement capacity through training for police, prosecutors, and judges. By doing so, I would show the United States supports Brazil's continued progress toward greater transparency and accountability.

Question. Given our size and synergies, it would seem that the U.S.-Brazil economic relationship has not achieved at full potential. What obstacles exist to resolving our trade disputes and increasing our trade flows? Do Mercosur rules and regulations have an impact on the U.S.-Brazil economic relationship? What steps would you take to address any distortions or negative impact that Mercosur may have in U.S. competitiveness?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, deepening our commercial ties with Brazil would be a key focus of mine. Annual two-way trade in goods and services between our countries is already substantial, having reached $100 billion in recent years, but we can increase it even more. If confirmed, I will dedicate my efforts to continue to advance our leaders' vision of doubling trade within ten years, using such fora as the U.S.-Brazil CEO Forum and Commercial Dialogue, and will ensure continuing Embassy support of these strong bilateral cooperative mechanisms that work to lower trade barriers and spur additional growth in our trade and investment relationship.

Global supply chains are changing, and new partnerships are being formed every day based on the latest trade and investment agreements. It is important that Mercosur, and the private sectors within Mercosur countries, are not left behind in the new global marketplace. Foreign Minister Serra emphasized the importance of Brazil's relationship with Argentina in his inaugural speech and his first foreign trip was to Argentina. He also discussed the importance of reinvigorating Mercosur, including through increased openness, and we welcome similar sentiments expressed by the authorities in other members of the trade bloc. We are encouraged by the closer ties Mercosur members are building with members of the Pacific Alliance. We welcome increased trade and investment with Mercosur countries and

would like to increase market access for U.S. goods and services. We have ongoing substantive dialogues on trade and investment issues with each of the original Mercosur members. If I am confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to seek ways to deepen our engagement with the Mercosur countries.

Question. Last year, the Brazilian Congress finally ratified the U.S.-Brazil Defense Cooperation Agreement as well as more recently the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), which allows for greater defense cooperation and sharing of information, technology and hardware. How would you build on the progress deepen the Defense cooperation between our two countries?

Answer. U.S.-Brazil defense cooperation is on an upward trajectory, and, if I am confirmed, I will seize every opportunity to make it even stronger. The Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) and the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) provide an excellent framework for doing so. These agreements are advancing our relationship by strengthening our cooperation on research and development, technology security, and acquisition. They also promote joint exercises and facilitate the sharing of sophisticated capabilities and technologies. If confirmed, I will work closely with relevant Washington agencies, our Embassy team, and the Brazilian government to continue exploring all these issues via bilateral mechanisms such as our Political-Military Dialogue, our Bilateral Working Group, and our Joint Staff Talks. In terms of security assistance, I would support International Military Education and Training Funding (IMET) to be used to expose Brazilian military officers to U.S. training, doctrine, and values. I would also maintain regular conversations with Brazil about how our two countries can help build global peacekeeping capacity, particularly in Lusophone Africa.

If confirmed, I will also focus on promoting robust defense trade between the United States and Brazil. From 2013 to 2015, the Government of Brazil was our second largest defense trade partner in Latin America (after Mexico). During that three-year period, Direct Commercial Sales of defense articles and services to Brazil exceeded $1.3 billion. The U.S. defense industry continues to have great interest in trade to help Brazil modernize its military, enhance its maritime and land border control, and improve its emergency response capabilities. If confirmed, I will therefore look to support industry efforts to launch a bilateral U.S.-Brazil Defense Industry Dialogue to institutionalize engagement between the U.S. and Brazilian private sectors.

Question. What obstacles exist to the U.S. and Brazil pursuing negotiations of a bilateral tax treaty? What steps can the U.S. take to encourage Brazil to simplify and address a range of tax issues impacting bilateral trade and investment?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, I would advocate for a more ambitious trade and investment relationship with Brazil, including on tax issues.In June 2015, the United States welcomed the entry into force of the agreement between the United States and Brazil to implement the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA). The FATCA agreement will improve international tax compliance and combat offshore tax evasion by facilitating an annual automatic exchange, on a reciprocal basis, of specific account holder information that financial institutions in each country will report to their own governments as required under local law.

The United States as well as the both the U.S. and Brazilian business communities have long advocated for the conclusion of a bilateral tax treaty that would provide meaningful tax benefits to cross-border investors, including in the form of significant reductions in withholding taxes, the adoption of transfer pricing rules consistent with the international standard, and robust rules to facilitate the resolution of disputes between the tax authorities. We understand progress on many of these issues would first require legislative changes in Brazil. If confirmed, I would advocate for concrete progress on these tax issues.

Question. Brazil has played a limited role in trying to diffuse the situation in Venezuela. As Ambassador, how would you work with the Brazilian government business leaders, and civil society to engage on the current democratic, economic, social and humanitarian crisis Venezuela?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, I would work closely with the Brazilian government to promote a more active role in calling on the Venezuelan government to engage in meaningful and inclusive dialogue with the political opposition and work towards a Venezuela that is prosperous, governable, and respects human rights and democratic principles.

If I am confirmed, I will engage with the Brazilian government and with Brazilian civil society to convey our concern that the current institutional stalemate in Venezuela is preventing the political dialogue needed to find solutions that address the

challenges Venezuela's citizens face, including shortages of food, water, and medicine. I will emphasize that Brazil, as the largest democracy in Latin America, can play an important role in promoting a democratic and inclusive political process in Venezuela. Indeed, Brazil has already taken action to promote dialogue among Venezuelan government officials and opposition lawmakers. Brazil's decision to co-sponsor Argentina's June 1 OAS resolution and the June 15 joint statement on Venezuela by Ministers and Heads of Delegation at the OAS General Assembly were welcome steps, as was Brazil's offer to donate medicines produced in Brazilian public laboratories to international humanitarian organizations for distribution to the Venezuelan people.

Question. Brazil has established a series of non-trade barriers and other temporary subsides that protect certain domestic industries from competition and there are a number of WTO cases filed against Brazil over discriminatory taxation and charges affecting sectors such as automobiles and information and communication technology. How would you propose to work with Brazil to level the playing field for U.S. companies seeking to export their goods and services to Brazil?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, I would push to promote a level playing field for U.S. businesses and an expanded commercial relationship, consistent with our leaders' vision of doubling trade within the next decade.

In his inaugural speech in May, Brazilian Foreign Minister Serra said, in the short-term, Brazil should focus on removing non-tariff barriers to trade and regulations that obstruct trade. We are working with Brazil in those areas, including standards, trade facilitation, and innovation, through the Commercial Dialogue process.

We are also advancing the trade relationship through a number of other important dialogues, including the U.S.-Brazil Commission on Economic and Trade Relations under the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation (ATEC), the U.S.-Brazil CEO Forum, and the U.S.-Brazil Consultative Committee on Agriculture. In March of this year, for the first-time ever, a meeting of the ATEC was held at the ministerial level. Recognizing the importance of the manufacturing sector as a key driver of economic growth in both countries, the United States and Brazil agreed in principle to establish an ongoing dialogue on policies that promote investment in manufacturing during the ATEC meeting.

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. Throughout my career, I have taken concrete steps to promote democracy and human rights in each of the countries in which I have served. As U.S. Deputy Ambassador to Afghanistan and as U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, I implemented our long-term strategy to help Afghans construct a democratic government that respects human rights. In those two positions, I oversaw a broad array of U.S. assistance programs designed to build the capacity of Afghan security forces and civilian institutions, improve the performance of the Afghan justice system, and promote economic growth, all in the context of increased respect for human rights. More directly, I have personally advocated for the extension of services to abused women and children?. I have also strongly pushed for measures to address corruption. On rule of law, I have secured support for the new Attorney General to allow his office to pursue higher profile legal cases. Although much remains to be done, as a result of this U.S. government assistance, Afghans have made progress toward building a democratic system of governance that is credible, transparent and inclusive.

Earlier, as U.S. Ambassador to Colombia, I led U.S. efforts to support Colombia as it transitioned from conflict towards peace. We worked closely with the Colombian government to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law and protect vulnerable citizens. I also focused directly on programs to provide services to victims of gender-based violence in areas affected by conflict; on the security of journalists facing death threats; on the right of trade union workers; on the promotion of LGBT rights; and on the importance of a more inclusive approach to the Afro-Colombian community. Colombia is now working toward a historic final peace accord, and I am confident this agreement will lead to continued progress on human rights issues.

Similarly, as U.S. Ambassador to Peru, I implemented bilateral programs to support the Peruvian government's anti-narcotics and alternative development efforts, improve governance, and advance social and economic inclusion for all Peruvians. As Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, I played a key role in formulating U.S. policies to promote orderly and humane international migration and to provide protection and assist-

ance to refugees, stateless persons, conflict victims and vulnerable migrants. I also personally successfully advocated for the resumption of the U.S. government resettlement program that had been suspended after the September 11, 2001, attacks and worked to include the security enhancements needed to protect the program and allow us to resume resettling genuine refugees in our country.

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

Answer. The Brazilian government takes seriously its obligation to protect human rights and, although Brazil's constitution and legal framework provide a robust structure for doing so, some areas of concern persist. As the Department of State has reported, Brazilian state police have committed unlawful killings, and conditions in some Brazilian prisons are poor and at times life-threatening. Other problems include corruption, sex trafficking, forced labor, as well as violence and discrimination against women, children, people of African descent, and other vulnerable populations.

Brazil has made great strides on many of these fronts in recent years, but more needs to be done. If confirmed, I will continue to express our concerns regarding human rights abuses and urge the Brazilian government to continue making progress on these important issues. For example, some Brazilian authorities have expressed interest in learning from the U.S. experience with managing a large prison population in a way that respects the human rights of prisoners. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage dialogue between U.S. and Brazilian counterparts to exchange best practices with respect to prison management. In this way, I would hope to advance Brazilian authorities' efforts to ensure prisons and detention centers are safe and humane for all inmates.

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 Brazil in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Brazilian law includes ample protections of human rights, but implementation continues to be inconsistent. Authorities' efforts to enforce the law have at times been insufficient, and there have been frequent delays in bringing violators to justice due to inefficiencies in Brazil's judicial process. Another problem is that statistics on the nature and extent of certain human rights violations are lacking. For instance, while there are serious concerns regarding the use of lethal force by some Brazilian police, there are no official statistics regarding the exact number of people killed nationwide each year in police operations. Reporting suggests, however, that a disproportionate number of these victims are Afro-Brazilian males under 25 years of age. This trend has led to public outcry and intense debate among civil society and within Brazil's Congress.

I believe Brazil shares our perspective on the importance of advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in general. At the same time, I recognize that with Brazil's economy experiencing its worst recession in decades, Brazil is currently facing a difficult fiscal situation, and government resources are limited. If I am confirmed, one of my challenges as Ambassador will therefore be to encourage Brazil to continue to invest the resources needed to strengthen its democratic institutions, expand the role of civil society, and enforce the human rights protections contained in Brazilian law.

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 Brazil? 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 commit to meeting with civil society and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the United States, as well as with local human rights NGOs in Brazil. Our U.S. Mission to Brazil regularly meets with civil society actors and NGOs to discuss bilateral and multilateral human rights issues, and if I am confirmed, I will pledge to do the same.

I would also ensure that U.S. security assistance to Brazil and security cooperation activities with the Brazilian government continue to reinforce human rights, including by actively supporting the Leahy Law. We already enjoy an excellent security relationship with the Brazilian government thanks to our joint efforts to ensure the 2016 Olympics are safe and successful. At the Brazilian government's request, we have been working together in a variety of areas, ranging from airport screening

procedures to managing entry/exit at stadiums to looking at how to prevent serious security incidents in and around major sporting events. This is in addition to ongoing programs and activities by various law enforcement and other agencies in Brazil that have helped bolster Brazilian security capacity. Overall, our training programs and exchanges have benefited over 3,800 Brazilian security officials.

For each of these programs and exchanges, our U.S. Mission to Brazil has taken all necessary steps to ensure compliance with Leahy vetting requirements. When arranging for security assistance and organizing security cooperation activities, the Mission has worked hand in hand with the Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, which has in turn consulted closely with human rights NGOs like Amnesty International. When necessary, the Mission has evaluated Brazilian security forces down to the sub-unit level while clearing candidates for training. If confirmed, I will instruct my Embassy team to maintain the same level of rigor in Leahy vetting so as to ensure the continued momentum in our close security cooperation produces an even greater shared respect for human rights.

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

Answer. As the State Department's Human Rights Report has noted, there have been no reports of political prisoners or detainees in Brazil. Brazil's constitution and law provide for freedom of speech and press, and the Brazilian government has mostly respected these rights. The government places no restrictions on academic freedom or cultural events. Brazilian law provides for the freedoms of assembly and association, and the government generally respects these rights. If confirmed, I will remain in close contact with the Brazilian government about these important issues, and I will emphasize our shared belief that these fundamental freedoms must always be respected.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will dedicate my efforts to continuing to advance the broad and deep bilateral agenda that President Obama and President Rousseff outlined when she visited Washington in June 2015. Human rights, civil rights, and good governance form an integral part of that agenda.As the two largest democracies in the hemisphere, Brazil and the United States are natural partners on issues of human rights. We share democratic values and a determination to defend the rights of our peoples. The United States and Brazil have a longstanding commitment to promoting human rights, diversity, and racial, ethnic and gender equality. In 2010, we signed a MOU for the Advancement of Women, and in 2008, we created a Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality (JAPER). We are co-founding members of the Open Government Partnership, and in 2015, we created a U.S.-Brazil Global Human Rights Working Group to improve our coordination on human rights issues in multilateral fora.

If confirmed, I will work to maintain the positive momentum our two countries have created in terms of addressing issues of human rights and social inclusion. For instance, our U.S. Mission to Brazil has been very engaged in organizing events addressing issues that impact women, refugees, indigenous groups, people of African descent, religious minorities, persons with disabilities, and LGBTI persons. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, I will ensure that these important policy and program engagements continue, and I will work to encourage collaborative action with government and civil society partners to promote human rights, civil rights, and good governance.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MCKINLEY'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Rio De Janeiro will host the 2016 Olympics August 5-21, 2016 and Paralymics September 7-18, 2016. The acting Governor of Rio de Janeiro has declared a state of financial disaster just before the host city celebrates the Olympic Games.

- Does the country have enough resources to follow through on its commitments to protect people attending the Olympics?
- Does the Brazilian government still believe it is safe for people to travel to Rio even though a group of 100 scientists formally wrote to disagree, stating that the Zika situation is too dire?

Answer. The Government of Brazil is fully committed to hosting a safe and successful Games, and is maintaining federal support for the Games. I understand the declaration of fiscal emergency will allow the State of Rio de Janeiro to access funds in advance of the Olympics to pay salaries, pay police overtime, and complete transportation projects.

The Brazilian government has stated that there is a low public health risk related to Zika and the Olympics. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have stated that available evidence does not indicate there would be any meaningful public health impact from altering the schedule for the Games. All travelers to the Olympics should follow the recommendations outlined in the CDC's travel notice.

Question. In November 2015, Brazil's Ministry of Health declared a "public health emergency of national importance" in response to a sharp increase in the number of infants born with microcephaly, a devastating birth defect caused by the Zika virus. Brazil's Ministry of Health has confirmed more than 1,550 cases since October 2015 linked to the rise of Zika infection in the country. What actions has the Brazilian government taken to stop the spread of Zika, to educate and screen pregnant women, and to care for children born with microcephaly?

Answer. Brazil has responded quickly and transparently in its efforts to combat the Zika virus and better understand its relationship to microcephaly, Guillain-Barre Syndrome, and other neurological disorders. Brazil has launched a massive public awareness and vector control campaign, involving over 220,000 Brazilian armed forces and over 300,000 public health workers to conduct education campaigns and vector control measures in high-risk neighborhoods. In March, Brazil announced over $300 million in funding over the next three years to combat the Zika virus. We understand that Brazil is also working at the state and federal levels with the World Bank to reallocate existing program funds towards strengthening surveillance, maternal and child health and rehabilitation, and training for health workers.

Question. The U.S. Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention has been working with Brazil's Ministry of Health since early November 2015 to understand the sudden increase in microcephaly and the impacts of Zika infection during pregnancy. What lessons have been learned from the widespread Zika infections in Brazil?

Answer. There is extensive and high-level engagement between the U.S. government and the Government of Brazil on Zika virus and associated complications. The Brazilian Ministry of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are working in close collaboration on studies exploring the link between Zika virus and microcephaly and Guillain-Barre Syndrome.

The CDC, along with the Brazilian Ministry of Health, launched in February the largest case control study analyzing the link between Zika and microcephaly. CDC scientists have announced there is enough evidence to conclude that Zika virus infection during pregnancy is a cause of microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects and has been linked to problems in infants, including eye defects, hearing loss, and impaired growth. These studies have increased our understanding of who is at risk from Zika infection, in what stages of pregnancy is Zika able to cause neurologic problems, and helped target guidance and prevention to those populations.

Brazilian scientists and the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) are also collaborating on a study on Zika in pregnancy which will provide essential information on microcephaly and the full range of other health problems that Zika virus infection during pregnancy may cause. Other NIH collaborations with Brazilian institutions are developing various Zika vaccines and a potential vaccine for both Zika and dengue fever. The CDC is working with the Brazilian Ministry of Health on better Zika surveillance and innovative ways to control the mosquito vector that spreads the disease. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is also working with Brazil to develop faster, more definitive testing methods for Zika. These efforts have helped Brazil combat Zika, and help U.S. citizens that are exposed to Zika to be rapidly diagnosed and managed appropriately. If confirmed, I will ensure we maintain the highest-level engagement, as our current Ambassador has done, to ensure U.S.-Brazil cooperation on Zika remains robust.

Question. According to the State Department, Brazil is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children exploited in forced labor and sex trafficking. The State Department rates Brazil a "Tier 2" in its 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report, asserting that the Brazilian government "does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking" but "is making significant efforts to do so." Although, the Brazilian government has improved data collection on victim identification, strengthened penalties for child sex traffickers, and contin-

ued awareness-raising efforts, Brazilian statutes prohibits trafficking do not align with international law and Brazil convicts relatively few traffickers given the scale of the problem. If confirmed, what is your plan to work with the Brazilian government to comply with the standards set in the State Department Trafficking in Persons Report?

Answer. If I am confirmed, I will redouble the State Department's calls for Brazil to increase its efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses and impose sentences commensurate with the severity of the offense. I will encourage Brazil's Congress to advance legislation to harmonize the definition of trafficking with the 2000 U.N. Trafficking in Persons Protocol and increase the minimum sentences for anti-trafficking crimes. My understanding is that a draft of this legislation has already been introduced, in 2014.

I will also call on Brazil to continue improving coordination and collaboration between judges and prosecutors in trafficking cases so as to arrive at final convictions more quickly. To ensure victims are identified and cared for, I will urge the Brazilian government to partner with civil society to offer specialized, comprehensive services to victims of sex trafficking and forced labor and to provide officials working at social service centers with sufficient funding and training. I will also voice support for the Brazilian government's ongoing efforts to implement awareness-raising campaigns and other preventive initiatives. In these ways, I will, if confirmed, support Brazil's continued progress toward meeting the standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons, as defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MCKINLEY'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. If confirmed, you may need to interact with Interim President Temer and/or his interim government. How do you see yourself dealing with the challenges of an interim government setting? If political turmoil continues in Brazil, how will that affect U.S. interests in Brazil? In the region? How would an elongated interim government affect your agenda for the coming year?

Answer. I recognize Brazil is facing a challenging political moment, but I am confident Brazil will work through its political challenges democratically and in accordance with constitutional principles. Furthermore, I believe our relationship with Brazil will remain strong and the United States will have ample opportunities to engage with the Brazilian government on our bilateral, regional, and global priorities even as Brazil's domestic political situation plays out.

If I am confirmed, I will seek to work with the Brazilian government to continue implementing the broad, forward-looking agenda President Obama and President Rousseff laid out when she visited Washington in June 2015. Acting President Temer and several of his ministers have expressed interest in building upon the momentum we have established in our bilateral cooperation since that visit. I anticipate our two countries will continue to engage via our some 20 major bilateral dialogues, which address trade and investment, human rights, climate change, internet and information and communications technology, defense, and a host of other topics. For example, we are holding our U.S.-Brazil Commercial Dialogue June 28-29 in Washington, and we are pressing forward with our bilateral cooperation on the 2016 Summer Olympics and fighting the spread of the Zika virus.

Question. While most U.S.-Brazil trade declined last year, the U.S. was able to maintain a merchandise trade surplus with Brazil valued at $4.2 billion. Indeed, the United States remains Brazil's second-largest trade partner, behind China. As ambassador, how would you promote the U.S. merchandise exports to Brazil to ensure that we remain competitive with China in Brazil's market? What other economic sectors do you think have the potential to increase U.S.-Brazil trade?

Answer. If confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Brazil, continuing to develop our commercial ties with Brazil would be a key focus of mine. Annual two-way trade in goods and services between our countries is already considerable, having reached $100 billion in recent years, but we can increase it even more. If confirmed, I will dedicate my efforts to advancing our leaders' vision of doubling trade within ten years, and I will work with Brazil to lower trade barriers and spur additional growth in our trade and investment relationship.

We are advancing the trade relationship through a number of important dialogues, including the U.S.-Brazil Commission on Economic and Trade Relations under the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation, the Commercial Dialogue, and the U.S.-Brazil CEO Forum. In March of this year, for the first-time ever,

a meeting of the U.S.-Brazil Commission on Economic and Trade Relations was held at the ministerial level. Recognizing the importance of the manufacturing sector as a key driver of economic growth in both countries, the United States and Brazil agreed in principle at the ATEC to establish an ongoing dialogue on policies that promote investment in manufacturing.

From manufacturing to energy, retail to high-tech, our firms trade with and invest in Brazil. The United States is Brazil's largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI), with a stock value of $70 billion. The Government of Brazil actively encourages FDI, particularly in the automobile, renewable energy, life sciences, oil and gas, and transportation infrastructure sectors. In his inaugural speech in May, Brazilian Foreign Minister Serra said, in the short-term, Brazil should focus on removing non-tariff barriers to trade and regulations that obstruct trade. We are working with Brazil in those concrete areas, including standards, trade facilitation, and innovation, through the June 28-29 Commercial Dialogue.

Question. With the Olympic Games taking place in Rio this summer, Brazil must gird itself for the possibility of terrorist threats. What steps would you recommend Brazil take to increase security for the Games? Would you recommend increased security for areas that will likely attract Western tourists? What steps would you take to ramp up security at the U.S. Embassy should a terrorist attack occur?

Answer. The Government of Brazil (GOB) is committed to hosting a safe and successful Olympic and Paralympic Games, and we are confident in Brazil's ability to deliver on that commitment. The 2014 Brazil World Cup tournament was a success, and we expect the same outcome for the Olympics and Paralympics. The GOB is deploying a security force of 85,000 for the Rio Olympics, which is more than twice as many as were deployed for the London Olympics. There is an increasing awareness in Brazil of the threat of terrorism, and we are pleased that Brazil passed a new counterterrorism law in March of this year, which defines and criminalizes terrorism and terrorist financing. This legislation has opened up new channels of security cooperation between our two governments.

At the Brazilian government's request, we have been working together in a variety of areas, ranging from airport screening procedures to managing entry/exit at stadiums to looking at how to prevent serious security incidents in and around major sporting events. We have facilitated visits to the United States for Brazilian security personnel to observe our mega event security management and command and control centers during events like the Boston Marathon, a PGA golf tournament, the U.N. General Assembly, and the Super Bowl. We have been able to support a variety of Brazilian requests for subject matter exchanges in areas such as protection of soft targets, drones, suicide bombers, behavioral observation and suspicious activity recognition, and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear explosion response (CBRNE)—over one hundred such trainings in all. Overall, our training programs and exchanges have benefited over 3,800 Brazilian security officials.

The U.S. government is also engaged in extensive contingency planning for various security and/or medical incidents. We have emergency action plans in place that we will follow in these types of situations. We will also have an inter-agency Joint Operations Center in place at U.S. Consulate General Rio de Janeiro that will be able to monitor all security situations and liaise with host government officials.

Question. The Brazilian government has taken a number of positive steps toward investigating the cause of the Zika virus and educating its citizens about the risks of being infected. However, with the Olympic Games coming to Rio, some worry that the steep uptick in visitors could cause infection rates around the world to skyrocket. What steps, if any, is Brazil taking to increase health security and awareness among Brazilian citizens as well as foreign visitors for the Games? Will U.S. health organizations be involved in any kind of awareness campaign? If confirmed, how would you advise the U.S. government propose to help, if at all?

Answer. Brazil is working very hard to protect the health and safety of all of the athletes and spectators attending the Games in Brazil, including through public awareness campaigns and vector control efforts at Olympic sites, and we continue to be supportive of those efforts to protect those who are participating in the Games. The Brazilian Government has also emphasized that the Olympic Games will take place during Rio de Janeiro's winter, when the population of mosquitos is low.

The World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have stated available evidence does not indicate there would be any meaningful public health impact from altering the schedule for the Games. All travelers to the Olympics should follow the recommendations outlined in the CDC's travel notice.

The U.S. government, including the State Department and the Department of Health and Human Services—and its CDC—is coordinating an extensive public relations campaign for travelers to the Olympics. The U.S. government has launched the #USinRio campaign for travelers to the Olympics. As part of this campaign, our Ambassador to Brazil filmed a welcome video and launched a blog (www.usmissionbrazil.org/usinrio). The #USinRio campaign advises U.S. citizens traveling to Brazil to visit travel.state.gov, a one-stop shop containing travel information on security, authorized ticket sellers, and emergency contact information for the embassy, consulates, and consular agencies. State's Olympic and Paralympic Fact Sheet on travel.state.gov contains links to essential resources such as the U.S. Mission to Brazil's Olympics Brochure, the #USinRio smartphone app (which includes information on hospitals, emergency services, links to the CDC for information on Zika and other health issues, and consular information), and the CDC Travel Notice on the Zika virus.

U.S. authorities intend to disseminate our information regarding travel to the Olympics broadly, including by highlighting it on travel.state.gov, through our passport agencies and acceptance facilities, in travel and sports publications, and via official social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The Department has also developed a tri-fold flier for printing and distribution. Uber, Starbucks, McDonald's, and Airbnb representatives have agreed to assist with disseminating the tri-fold flier and contact cards in Brazil.

Question. With increased violence from drug trafficking in the Northern Triangle, what effect has this unrest had on Brazil? What efforts is Brazil taking to increase its borders against violence and drug trafficking? In your opinion, is there anything more the U.S. could do to help?

Answer. Violence related to drug trafficking and gangs in the Northern Triangle has had little direct impact on Brazil, but drug trafficking in general continues to be an issue for Brazil. Brazil is a major transit and destination country for cocaine, and the Brazilian drug trade is controlled by large, violent, and well-organized drug trafficking organizations operating throughout the country.

The Brazilian government recognizes the seriousness of the situation, and it is committed to combating drug trafficking and addressing its growing domestic consumption problem. Brazil continues to implement supply reduction, prevention, and treatment programs under its 2010 National Integrated Plan to Confront Crack and Other Drugs. Brazil is a party to the three U.N. drug conventions, and it also maintains bilateral narcotics control agreements with the United States and every country in South America. Brazil cooperates with programs administered by the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, the Organization of American States' Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, and INTERPOL. The Brazilian military is also piloting an integrated frontier monitoring system on a limited basis. Brazil eventually hopes to expand this system to cover its entire border.

The best way for the United States to support Brazil's efforts is to continue deepening our work with Brazilian security counterparts. In recent years, we have provided significant training support to Brazilian law enforcement. In 2015, the United States provided 26 courses for almost 1,000 officers. If I am confirmed, I will seek opportunities to deepen our bilateral cooperation in this important area and further build Brazil's capacity to combat narcotics trafficking.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE MCKINLEY'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MARKEY

Question. Ambassador McKinley, many experts are concerned that the prevalence of Zika in Brazil at a time when over half a million people are expected to visit Rio for the Summer Olympics could elevate the risk that Zika will spread. Given the current political crisis and the financial situation in Brazil:

How prepared is Brazil to deal with the Zika epidemic, not only during the Olympics but also in the long term?

Answer. Brazil has responded quickly and transparently in its efforts to combat the Zika virus and better understand its relationship to microcephaly, Guillain-Barre Syndrome, and other neurological disorders. Brazil has launched a massive public awareness campaign and is working together with the U.S. government on research and development on vaccines and treatments; further development of diagnostic tests; studies to provide a better understanding of the virus and its clinical outcomes; and improved control of the mosquito vector.

Brazil is also working very hard to protect the health and safety of all of the world-class athletes and spectators attending the Games in Brazil, including through vector control efforts at Olympic sites, and we continue to be supportive of those efforts to protect those who are participating in the Games. The Brazilian government has also emphasized that the Olympic Games will take place during Rio de Janeiro's winter, when the population of mosquitos is low.

The World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have stated that available evidence does not indicate there would be any meaningful public health impact from altering the schedule for the Games. All travelers to the Olympics should follow the recommendations outlined in the CDC's travel notice.

Question. Is Brazil currently investing enough in controlling and preventing Zika? Where will money needed for health sector investments come from as Brazil economy faces the deepest recession in generations?

Answer. Brazil has significantly invested in efforts to control and prevent Zika and associated neurological disorders. In March, Brazil announced over $300 million in funding over the next three years to combat the Zika virus. The government plans to redirect existing resources to meet this goal.

Brazil has launched a massive public awareness and vector control campaign, involving over 220,000 Brazilian armed forces and over 300,000 public health workers to conduct education campaigns and vector control measures in high-risk neighborhoods.

In Brazil's Northeast region, the region hardest hit by the Zika crisis, there have been increased demands for health services due to the Zika crisis. Hospitals are prioritizing care for pregnant women, children, and elderly patients.

Brazil is also working at the state and federal levels with the World Bank to reallocate existing program funds towards strengthening surveillance, maternal and child health and rehabilitation, and training for health workers.

Question. What can you do as Ambassador to help them focus on this? What kind of help can we give them to prevent the further spread of Zika?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure we maintain the highest-level engagement, as our current Ambassador has done, to ensure U.S.-Brazil cooperation on Zika remains robust. In February, the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil launched a Zika Task Force that is facilitating communication, interagency coordination, and follow-on actions, and is attentive to the implications on consular matters, management decisions, public messaging, commercial interests, and political repercussions of the disease.

There is extensive and high-level engagement between the U.S. government and the Government of Brazil on Zika virus and associated complications. The Brazilian Ministry of Health and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Biomedical Advance Development and Research Authority (BARDA), are working in collaboration to analyze, validate, and exchange information about the Zika outbreak, facilitate the development and availability of medical products to respond to Zika, spearhead biomedical research related to Zika, and address medical countermeasure needs for the Zika response.

Brazilian scientists and NIH are also collaborating on a study on Zika in pregnancy which will provide essential information on microcephaly and the full range of other health problems that Zika virus infection during pregnancy may cause. Other NIH and collaborations with Brazilian institutions are developing various Zika vaccines and a potential vaccine for both Zika and dengue fever. BARDA and FDA are providing technical and regulatory assistance to aid Brazil in developing vaccines. The CDC is working with the Brazilian Ministry of Health on better Zika surveillance and innovative ways to control the mosquito vector that spreads the disease. The CDC is also working in close collaboration on studies exploring the link between Zika virus and microcephaly and Guillain-Barre Syndrome.

These efforts have helped Brazil combat Zika, and help U.S. citizens that are exposed to Zika to be rapidly diagnosed and managed appropriately. If confirmed, I would continue and expand our engagement with Brazil to combat the spread of Zika.

RESPONSES OF LAWRENCE SILVERMAN, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO KUAIT, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SILVERMAN'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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 have been directly involved in our efforts to promote respect for human rights in every overseas post in which I have served. In Turkey and as Director of the Turkey desk in Washington, I led the successful diplomatic effort to gain the Turkish government's opening of what we believe was the first women's shelter for victims of trafficking. In Syria, Jordan, Namibia (then under South African rule) and Turkey, I monitored human rights issues and contributed to the human rights reporting, including preparation of the annual Human Rights Report. I have pressed foreign governments on such priorities as freedom of speech and the press, judicial independence, fair and transparent trials, women's and minority communities, proper treatment of detainees and prisoners, and the encouragement of laws against conflict of interest, therefore reducing the potential for corruption. While responsible for our assistance programs in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe, I encouraged and oversaw programs to eliminate discrimination against minorities, monitor elections for fairness, improve labor laws, stop trafficking in persons and supported the development of civil society. I also pressed for the release of detainees in Ukraine and democratic reform in such authoritarian states as Belarus.

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

Answer. Kuwait has made progress in upholding and expanding protections for human rights over the past decade, but more work remains to be done. Women were granted the right to vote in 2005, the private sector labor law was passed in 2010, an Anti-Human Trafficking law was passed in 2013, under which, for the first time, Kuwait convicted eight traffickers in 2015, and most recently, the first domestic worker law was passed in 2015, although it is yet to be implemented. With the passage of legislative reform comes the requirement to properly implement the law, and I believe this is where our assistance and raising these issues can be used to good effect.

First, I believe the plight of domestic workers (numbering over 300,000) must remain a priority. These individuals are subjected to the worst forms of labor abuse and I am encouraged that the government has passed a law providing domestic workers in Kuwait enforceable rights for the first time. U.S. training and expertise to assist the Kuwaiti authorities in the implementation of these laws could improve the plight of these workers.

Promoting women's rights is also a priority. Kuwait has one of the largest female labor participation rates among the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and I believe we could see progress with the empowerment of women in all sectors. However, despite the fact that four women won seats in Parliament following the 2009 elections, there are no women in the current Parliament, and only one woman in the cabinet (holding two ministerial portfolios). Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis are also unable to pass on citizenship to their children. Kuwaitis are having an important conversation within their society on the value and importance of women's rights, and I believe that with continued engagement from the United States, additional progress can be made to increase political participation and representation, and ensure greater equality in both law and practice.

Finally, we need to continue to focus on upholding freedom of expression. Kuwait has one of the most liberal societies in the GCC region. Following protests in 2012 for government reforms, there were increased government restrictions on freedom of expression, and legislation was passed that restricts expression online and in print media, but we are starting to see what we hope will be a reversal of that trend, which provides an opening for us to press local leaders to initiate reforms that safeguard freedom of expression and promotes greater religious tolerance and freedom of conscience.

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 Kuwait in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. There are factors that have constrained democratic development in Kuwait: geo-political events play a major role in Kuwaiti politics and governance, leading authorities to at times slow democratic development. Kuwait has experienced significant social change over the past few years and Kuwaiti society is still absorbing the passage of a number of important laws, such as suffrage laws and more recently, labor reforms. These laws hold both the Kuwaiti government and Kuwaitis accountable to a greater degree than in the past and may meet resistance by some in implementation. These challenges must not hinder progress. I will continue to press for the advancement of democracy, human rights, and the rights of civil society.

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 Kuwait? 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 absolutely committed to meeting with local and international civil society organizations. Civil society activism exists in Kuwait, and I believe the embassy has a critical role to play in fostering an atmosphere in which local NGOs can grow and mature and play an effective role in advocating for positive change. I will ensure continued compliance with the Leahy Law through the application of Leahy vetting for all military and law enforcement personnel who receive training from U.S. military and law enforcement.

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

Answer. Yes. I am prepared to actively engage with the Kuwait government to address such cases. As I stated above, I will continue to push Kuwait to uphold freedom of expression, association, and assembly.

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

Answer. Yes. I believe that all three of these issues must go together in order to create an effective and engaged civil society. Kuwait is on a pathway to make progress in all three of these areas and particularly as it approaches elections in 2017, we must continue to make human rights, civil rights, and governance a central pillar of our bilateral mission.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SILVERMAN'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Last week the New York Times reported that dozens of diplomats and other mid-level officials filed a dissent memo with the State Department's senior leadership calling for military strikes against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. According to the New York Times a draft of the memo stated that "the status quo in Syria will continue to present increasingly dire, if not disastrous, humanitarian, diplomatic, and terrorism-related challenges" and that "it is time for the United States, guided by our strategic interests and moral convictions, lead a global effort to put an end to this conflict once and for all."

♦ Do you know the diplomats and other mid-level officials who signed this dissent memo?

Answer. I know some of them.

Question. Do any of them report to you in your current capacity as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State?

Answer. None of them report directly to me. In my capacity as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, some of them report to people who report to me.

Question. Do you agree with the conclusions of the memo?

Answer. These are extremely tough issues: How to get a successful, cessation of hostilities; how to ensure full, unimpeded humanitarian access to all Syrians in need; and how to bring about a genuine political transition in accordance with the Geneva Communique. We are also working all-day, every day to defeat Da'esh in

Syria, Iraq and elsewhere. That's what we are trying to do, and there are regular, frank discussions about how best to go about it. We are very focused on getting the cessation of hostilities enforced nationwide in an enduring way and getting humanitarian assistance to the still millions of Syrians in need. We do not believe there is a military solution to this conflict, so we are working to bring about a political solution, which includes a transition away from Asad.

Question. If not, what elements of their argument do you disagree with?

Answer. We do not believe that there is a military solution to this conflict. Rather, we are working to bring about a political solution that includes a transition away from Asad.Questions for the Record Submitted to

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AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SILVERMAN'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Kuwaiti officials have publicly stated that they would conform to a Saudi-Russia agreement to freeze oil production at January 2016 existing levels—a move that some producers have said could stabilize world oil process. As U.S. ambassador, how, if at all, would you go about advising the Kuwaiti government about this deal? Would you see yourself having a role in regional discussions should the deal go forward?

Answer. The United States believes that market forces should determine the price of oil. If asked by the Kuwaiti government to provide advice about oil production deals, I would advise that the U.S. government does not take a position on oil prices and that market forces, not governments or organizations, should determine the price of oil. As the Ambassador to Kuwait, I would regularly confer with fellow U.S. ambassadors in the region, U.S. government officials in Washington leading our approach on energy issues, high-level Kuwaiti government officials, and international oil companies doing business in Kuwait.

Question. The US coalition has benefitted greatly from Kuwait's willingness to serve as a base of operations for the coalition against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. As you reference in your testimony, Kuwait has also experienced a terrorist attack at the hands of an ISIS fighter. However, Kuwait has not participated in actual military operations against ISIS with the coalition in Iraq or Syria. They did participate in military operations in Yemen on behalf of the Saudi coalition there. Why do you think Kuwait has chosen to join forces in Yemen against the Houthis, but not to join forces in Iraq and Syria against ISIS? As ambassador, would you encourage the Kuwaiti government to reconsider?

Answer. Kuwait's access, basing, and overflight for Operation Inherent Resolve is critical to the Coalition's ability to conduct operations to defeat ISIL, as is Kuwait's longtime hosting of Army Central Command. In addition to this military support, the Kuwaitis have made important contributions along several lines of effort in the battle against ISIL, including support for Iraqi Prime Minister al-Abadi's government; the contribution of billions in humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria, Iraq, and the neighbors hosting refugees; stabilization of liberated areas in Iraq; the deferral of Iraq's reparation payments; and the countering of ISIL's messaging.

We are encouraging the Kuwaitis to increase their contributions to the campaign, an effort I would continue if confirmed.

Question. Kuwaiti relations with Iran are complicated, however, diplomatically, they are relatively normal. Some speculate that Kuwait's engagement with Iran has allowed Kuwait to position itself to mediate talks between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis. Do you see this engagement with Iran as a positive or a negative for U.S. interests in Kuwait? In the region? Do you think this engagement could lead to more sympathy for the Iranian regime?

Answer. At the Camp David U.S.-GCC Summit in May 2015, President Obama, the Amir of Kuwait, and other GCC leaders all stated that they "oppose and will work together to counter Iran's destabilizing activities in the region" and called on Iran to "take concrete, practical steps to build trust and resolve its differences with neighbors by peaceful means." To this end, we have worked with our GCC partners to accelerate arms transfers and improve their military preparedness, ballistic missile defense, counterterrorism, and cyber capabilities, so that they can face any Iranian aggression from a position of strength.

This April, when they met in Riyadh at the U.S.-GCC summit, the Amir and other GCC leaders discussed with President Obama the challenges posed by Iran's problematic regional activities, and they underscored the importance of an inclusive

approach to de-escalating regional conflicts. Kuwait withdrew its ambassador to Tehran in January, in protest against the attacks on the Saudi Arabian diplomatic mission in Iran; other GCC countries also downgraded or broke diplomatic relations with Iran.

Kuwait has not yet returned its ambassador. Kuwait, like the other GCC countries, has expressed a willingness to engage with Iran in order to resolve regional issues but stresses that Iran must be a good neighbor and cease its interference in domestic internal affairs of other countries. The U.S. has a strong national interest in promoting regional stability, a goal we share with Kuwait. The Kuwaitis remain key partners in our efforts to de-escalate and resolve regional conflicts by peaceful means, including by facilitating the current negotiations on Yemen.

Question. The State department Trafficking in Persons report for 2015 ranked Kuwait as a "Tier 3" country for the eighth year in a row, meaning that the government is not making sufficient efforts to comply with minimum standards of the elimination of trafficking. Though Kuwait passed a new human trafficking law in 2013, it seems that there is little interest in pursuing prosecutions under the law. Why do you think that is? Do you think the U.S. should respond, given the extent of U.S. involvement in the country? If so, how? What would you do, as ambassador, to push them to take steps to improve their rating?

Answer. Trafficking in persons has indeed been a significant problem in Kuwait and remains a serious concern of the U.S., but we are starting to see progress. In 2015, for the first time, Kuwait prosecuted cases under the 2013 human trafficking law. This is an important step to deter as well as punish traffickers, and one that needs to continue.

The establishment of the Anti-Human Trafficking Department within the Ministry of Interior in 2015 was another positive step. Kuwait also passed the first-ever domestic workers law, with enforceable rights, in 2015, although we are still awaiting its implementation. This law will need to be implemented properly, and our ongoing assistance and advocacy on these issues can be used to improve the situation of these workers.

The plight of domestic workers will remain a priority for Embassy Kuwait. If confirmed, I will press for further progress to eliminate human trafficking and enhance respect for domestic workers' rights, and will support U.S. training and expertise to facilitate Kuwait's implementation of these laws.

It would also be useful for Kuwait to address the cultural norms that sometimes enable the abuse of domestic workers. Public awareness campaigns, carried out with the support of International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labor Organization (ILO), local non-governmental organizations, and government labor officials, could change societal perceptions towards this vulnerable workforce, bring about a safer work environment, and substantially reduce trafficking.

Question. Kuwait's political system which incorporates secular and Islamist political factions is widely seen as a model for the region. As U.S. ambassador, would you seek to engage in dialogue with other nations in the region who are struggling to unite secular and religious factions under the umbrella of civil society?

Answer. Kuwait is unique in the region for its tradition of constitutional, participatory governance, as exemplified by its independent parliament. The continuation of democratic development in Kuwait is in the U.S. interest. If I am confirmed as U.S. Ambassador, I will focus on encouraging further progress with respect to democracy in Kuwait. I would maintain our priority on supporting human rights, the growth of civil society, and the protection of freedom of expression. Our Missions to the other countries in the region are engaging with those governments on the development of democracy.

RESPONSES OF CAROL Z. PEREZ, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PEREZ'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. Throughout my career I have supported human rights and promoted democracy. During my tenure in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, I worked to provide rule of law and justice programs that helped

fragile states protect their citizens and ensure accountability for violations of their human rights. In Central America, our programs improved citizen security, reduced drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, and helped reduce the dangerous irregular migration and trafficking of unaccompanied children to the United States. In the Caribbean and Central and Southeast Asia, I engaged with government officials and civil society to improve justice systems, build new, humane prisons and introduce alternatives to incarceration. In Ukraine, I worked to transform the police and justice services, building the capacity of a new generation of rule of law practitioners. In Milan, I facilitated dialogue among Northern Italy's growing immigrant population with the center-right, often xenophobic local and regional governments, promoting inclusion and finding ways to counter violent extremism. If confirmed, I look forward to continue promoting human rights and democracy as Ambassador to Chile.

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. The United States and Chile are bound by shared interests and values, including a commitment to democracy and human rights. If confirmed, I would continue our cooperation in multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, where Chile is a staunch ally in global human rights. In 2014, Chile's leadership at the U.N. Human Rights Council led to the passage of the second-ever U.N. resolution on violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

We applaud the Chilean government's continued efforts to find answers in cases of human rights violations during the Pinochet dictatorship. If confirmed, I will ensure our Embassy continues to support the family members in their search for justice for Boris Weisfeiler, a U.S. citizen who disappeared while hiking in southern Chile in 1985. The victims and families in cases of human rights violations must be able to seek justice, regardless of when those acts were committed.

The Department of State is concerned by the recent wave of attacks on churches of several denominations. If confirmed, I would continue the dialogue about security and religious freedom with the government, civil society, and religious institutions. The attacks on churches and other properties are believed to be committed by a small number of private actors and are taking place within the larger context of an ongoing conflict between the Mapuche indigenous community and the Chilean government. If confirmed, I will also continue our engagement with the Mapuche and other indigenous groups to support their peaceful political participation. Chileans have called on authorities to fully investigate these crimes, and the Chilean government is working to provide security for rural churches in the Araucania region.

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. The United States and Chile maintain an open dialogue on advancing human rights, engaging civil society, and strengthening democracy around the world. If confirmed, I would look forward to continuing that and working with the Chilean government, law enforcement, civil society groups, religious institutions, and the private sector to promote the human rights, particularly of LGBTI persons and other marginalized groups.

The United States and Chile work closely together in multilateral organizations including the Open Government Partnership to promote transparency and access to public services, and the Community of Democracies, where Chile, as a member of the Executive Committee, supports sharing best practices to strengthen the world's democracies. Chile is also a member of the Global Equality Fund, supporting civil society in combatting violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. If confirmed, I would seek to continue the open dialogue with Chile about promoting human rights around the world—leveraging our cooperation in multilateral institutions while also encouraging Chile's leadership on regional issues; for example, ensuring human rights in Venezuela and Cuba. I would also continue to support family members of U.S. citizen victims who continue to seek answers regarding human rights crimes that were committed during the Pinochet era.

Finally, despite Chile's global leadership in advancing LGBTI rights, we remain concerned about reports of three Chileans murdered and dozens injured in homophobic attacks in 2015, and sadly, violent incidents against LGBTI persons continued in 2016. In light of these attacks, many Chileans recognize protections for LGBTI individuals as a clear human rights issue due to the work of Chile's dynamic

civil society. If confirmed, I would work with the Chilean government and civil society to take meaningful steps in advancing the human rights of LGBTI persons at home and around the globe.

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. The United States and Chile share interests, concerns and, most importantly, values, including the importance of civil society engagement in a democracy. If confirmed, I would strengthen our already close working relationship with human rights, civil society, and non-governmental organizations in the United States and Chile.

As a member of the INL FO team, I ensured my offices and our programs completely met Leahy requirements. This included funding officers dedicated to Leahy vetting for our large Colombia, CARSI and Mexico programs. I also was involved in authoring the standard text for the Department's interagency agreements, and for INL's international organization agreements and contracts and grants, all of which require that our partners adhere to the Leahy rules and requirements. Finally, with responsibility for oversight of the INL Air Wing, I ensured my team vetted all foreign national air crews that we trained and/or used for counter narcotic efforts. If confirmed, I will be equally diligent in ensuring that the embassy continues to adhere to the Leahy rules and requirements.

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. There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees in 2015, although some indigenous Mapuche convicted of criminal offenses claimed to be political prisoners. Chile has an independent and impartial judiciary in civil matters that permits individuals to seek civil remedies for human rights violations. However, the civil justice system retains antiquated and inefficient procedures. If confirmed, I would work with the Chilean judicial system to share best practices in modern, efficient judicial practices.

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 continue to work with Chile on human rights, civil rights, the engagement of civil society, and governance. Chile is a model democracy, well-known for its dedication to the principles of transparency, freedom of expression, and an independent judiciary. Chile routinely scores high marks for good governance, openness, and rule-of-law. Chile ranked 23 out of 168 countries on Transparency International's 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index, the second highest in Latin America.

Together, the United States and Chile can continue to take meaningful steps in advancing the human rights of LGBTI persons at home and around the globe. Through the work of Chile's dynamic civil society, many Chileans recognize combating violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity as a clear human rights issue. Chile's Ministry of Foreign Affairs shares this perspective, and said the country's foreign policy is "characterized by support for the promotion and respect of human rights, including LGBTI rights."

Question. What is your assessment of whether the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement is living up to its full potential? Additionally, what efforts will you take to prioritize trade facilitation, including working with key institutions such as OPIC, TDA (Trade and Development Agency) and the Foreign Commercial Service?

Answer. The U.S.-Chile FTA has benefitted both our countries. The United States has long been the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Chile. According to USTR, Chile is our 28th largest goods trading partner with $24 billion in total (two way) goods trade during 2015. The United States had a trade surplus of $6.68 billion in 2015 with Chile. U.S. exports totaled $15.45 billion while imports totaled $8.77 billion. U.S.-Chile trade in goods has quadrupled since our bilateral FTA entered into force in 2004. Over the past several decades, Chile has experienced some of the most robust growth rates in the region and is now by many estimates the wealthiest economy in Latin America-thanks in large part to its embrace of an economic model characterized by openness to trade and investment. TPP provides an important opportunity to advance our commercial relationship and ensures the United States improves our competitive position in the Chilean market.

Reducing trade transaction costs through trade facilitation reforms will assist U.S. exporters and small and medium sized enterprises reach new customers in the developing world. The successful conclusion of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) in 2013 was a major milestone that will help streamline customs procedures, increase customs transparency, and speed the flow of goods across borders. The United States is a strong proponent of this agreement, which according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), could reduce trade costs by almost 12 percent for OECD countries like Chile when fully implemented. If confirmed, I will encourage the government of Chile to expeditiously ratify and implement the TFA.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with OPIC, the Foreign Commercial Service, and the Economic Bureau in the State Department to promote trade and support U.S. companies, including, U.S. renewable energy companies, defense-sector suppliers, and small and medium enterprises. Supporting U.S. businesses in Chile and Chilean businesses investing in the United States will increase economic opportunity and prosperity for both countries.

Question. As the U.S. is deepening its engagement in Central America to advance security, governance, and economic growth, we've been working closely with partners like Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, specifically on issues of police and military training. What is your assessment of current cooperation and how might we strengthen it further going forward?

Answer. The State Department has enhanced its efforts to improve donor coordination in Central America. As noted, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico are key partners in our engagements in the region. We continue to strengthen our partnership through exchanges of ideas and best practices at donor coordination events in Washington and through established mechanisms for programing coordination on the ground in the Northern Triangle countries. We are also actively encouraging new partners to support the efforts of the Northern Triangle governments.

Chile takes an active role in Central American security and development with specific programs focused on capacity building of public administration officials. Chile has also provided training to law enforcement and justice sector personnel and supported food safety projects. We routinely discuss opportunities for collaboration in Central America with our Chilean counterparts at our annual High Level Bilateral Political Consultative Mechanism, most recently in December 2015. If confirmed, I will work closely with USAID and Chile's development agency, AGCID, to coordinate activities in Central America.

Colombia has been a strong partner in building security and law enforcement capacity in Central America through training and joint military exercises. Colombia hosted Northern Triangle ministers of defense and security, as well as U.S. government officials, in mid-June to discuss ways to ensure effective cooperation in security and defense matters.

Question. As the U.S. is working closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to set up in-region refugee processing in Central America, to what degree could we cooperate with Chile to help relocate Central American refugees in South America?

Answer. Chile is working with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and other partners to improve the country's refugee resettlement program and ensure refugees successfully integrate into the country. Chile agreed in 2015 to resettle about 150 Syrian refugees. Chile takes an active role in Central American security and development, and we look forward to continuing our partnership in the region. The State Department asked the Chilean government to consider accepting Central American refugees, and if confirmed, I will work closely with Chilean authorities to follow up on this request and find practical ways for safe humanitarian resettlement of refugees fleeing violence.

Question. Chile has been on the U.S. Trade Representative's "Priority Watch List" for insufficient intellectual property rights protection and enforcement since 2007; why have these concerns still not been addressed adequately despite years of bilateral engagement?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with USTR to do whatever I can to ensure the Chilean government addresses the intellectual property issues identified in the Special 301 Report. Under the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Chile has committed to strengthen its IPR regime, and I will engage at the highest levels to build political will for Chile to make the type of changes required for an improvement in Chile's Special 301 designation.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PEREZ'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. How important is the Trans-Pacific Partnership to Chile?

Answer. Over the past several decades, Chile has experienced some of the most robust growth rates in the region and is now by many estimates the wealthiest economy in Latin America-thanks in large part to its embrace of an economic model characterized by openness to trade and investment. As such, Chile is a natural fit for TPP and a global leader in free trade. Chile is a member of the precursor to TPP (the 2005 "P4" agreement) and has 17 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Chile already has bilateral FTAs in place with all 11 other TPP countries.

Chile recognizes the importance of being a rule-setter in the global trading system, the need to build upon its existing agreements to reflect modern trade issues, and the importance of TPP, which creates rules that will make it easier to participate in regional supply chains and will foster greater regional integration.

Economically, Chile stands to gain under TPP over its existing free trade agreements-particularly with regard to Japan, Malaysia, and Vietnam—through better access for thousands of Chilean products in those markets. Major Chilean business groups praised the agreement, which is expected to help the agricultural sector, small and medium-sized businesses, and the growing services sector. Chile also stands to gain from TPP's accumulation provisions, which will allow the integration of production and supply chains throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Strategically, TPP positions Chile, Peru, and Mexico in leadership roles in a Latin America, which is gradually moving to embrace the benefits of liberalized trade and investment. The agreement will allow the United States and our TPP partners in the Western Hemisphere to build the Americas into a shared, integrated platform for global success.

TPP provides an important opportunity to advance our commercial relationship and ensures the United States improves our competitive position in the Chilean market. The United States has long been the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Chile, where total FDI inflows in 2015 reached nearly $23 billion. U.S.-Chile trade in goods has quadrupled since our bilateral FTA entered into force in 2004.

Question. What is your opinion on the economic reforms enacted by the Bachelet administration?

Do you foresee those reforms having an impact in our bilateral relations?

Answer. Chilean President Bachelet campaigned on a platform of reforms designed to tackle the problem of income inequality and uneven access to services, especially education. She has made good on several of her key priorities, including tax reform.

While Bachelet has been able to enact many of her reforms, the legislation passed is often less ambitious than she might have wanted. At the present time, Bachelet is continuing her efforts to reform the country's pension and education systems, and overhaul the Pinochet-era constitution.

U.S.-Chile cooperation is institutionalized and transcends administrations; our cooperation continues to grow under Bachelet's leadership. If confirmed, I would continue to advocate for U.S. interests to ensure the planned reforms do not unfairly impact U.S. businesses and encourage Chile to maintain openness to trade and investment, a significant factor in its economic development.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE PEREZ'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR PERDUE

Question. Since she took office, President Bachelet's approval ratings have dropped significantly, most likely due to her reform agenda, recent corruption scandals, and a weakening economy. In April 2016, 65% of Chileans disapproved of President Bachelet's performance in office. In addition, the corruption scandals have reinforced public perception in Chile that the power in the country is concentrated within the hands of a few businessmen and political elites. What changes do you foresee in the months ahead that might be taken by the president to reverse her current decline in popularity? How do you plan to work through the current corruption scandals that have been identified? In your opinion, will President Bachelet's anti-corruption bills and efforts to regulate political parties and campaign financing be enough to reverse people's distrust of the government?

Answer. U.S.-Chile cooperation is institutionalized and transcends administrations; our cooperation continues to grow under President Michelle Bachelet's leadership.President Bachelet campaigned on a platform of reforms designed to tackle the problem of income inequality and uneven access to services, especially education. She made good on several of her key priorities, including tax reform.

While President Bachelet has enacted many of her proposed reforms, legislation passed by the parliament to enact the president's goals is often less ambitious than she might have wanted. During her remaining 18 months in office, President Bachelet has said her priorities are to reform the country's pension and education systems and to begin the overhaul of the Pinochet-era constitution. The Bachelet administration hopes its reforms will have a long-lasting impact in reducing inequality, particularly by providing higher quality education at dramatically reduced costs for Chileans.

After more than two decades of solid economic growth culminating in the highest per capita income levels in Latin America, Chile's economy is slowing due primarily to external factors—namely, the fall in global copper prices. Copper accounts for half of Chile's exports and 30 percent of GDP. Fiscal uncertainty and reduced revenue have forced prudence in government spending and limited the scale and pace of some reforms, for example, free higher education.

Chile is a model democracy, well-known for its dedication to the principles of transparency, freedom of expression, and an independent judiciary. It routinely scores high marks for good governance, openness, rule-of-law, and was ranked 23 out of 168 countries on Transparency International's 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index, the second highest in Latin America.

Chilean authorities are investigating some politicians for violating Chile's campaign finance laws, dismissing indicted public officials from office, and passing new laws strengthening anti-corruption measures. Chilean institutions are functioning well to enforce the law and address and reduce cases of suspected corruption, and political actors across the spectrum are working hard to restore trust in the governing class.

Chilean voters will choose in October 2017 whether to continue supporting the center-left's reform agenda, or make way for a center-right coalition government. If confirmed, I look forward to working with President Bachelet and her successor in areas of mutual interest, including supporting free trade, human rights, and rule of law.

Question. In 2015, our budget surplus in Chile was valued at $6.7 billion. We are their second largest trading partner behind China. If the value of the dollar continues to increase, or in the case of another global recession that heavily impacts Chile, how do you see us maintaining or increasing our influence to compete with China in Chilean markets? In your opinion, can Chile sustain such a massive trade imbalance with us?

Answer. We support Chile's efforts to grow its economy, including through trade with other nations. China is an important trading partner for Chile as the leading importer of Chilean copper. But after more than two decades of solid economic growth, culminating in the highest per capita income levels in Latin America, Chile's economy is slowing in large part due to a drop in copper prices. Copper accounts for half of Chile's exports and 30 percent of GDP. While China's trade with Chile is primarily commodities based, the United States and Chile have a diverse trade relationship in which small and medium enterprises participate. Leading U.S. exports and services to Chile consist primarily of high-tech products notably aircraft, machinery, vehicles, and intellectual property.

Chile recognizes the importance of being a rule-setter in the global trading system, the need to build upon its existing agreements to reflect modern trade issues, and the importance of TPP, which creates rules that will make it easier to participate in regional supply chains and will foster greater regional integration.

TPP provides an important opportunity to advance our commercial relationship and ensure the United States improves our competitive position in the Chilean market. The United States has long been the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Chile, where total FDI inflows in 2015 reached nearly $23 billion. U.S.-Chile trade in goods has quadrupled since our bilateral FTA entered into force in 2004.

If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to identify opportunities for U.S. firms to export their goods and services to Chile and to ensure U.S. firms have a level playing field in Chile.

Question. Given the current security issues that afflict the United States today, do you see Chile playing a larger role in international security? Given your previous

experience with law enforcement affairs, how could Chile help in reducing the level of drug trafficking within Central America?

Answer. The United States and Chile have robust, mature military and security cooperation. Chile participates in international security cooperation throughout the region and globally; expanding bilateral security sector cooperation and Chile's role as a partner and role-model is a U.S. priority. Chile has over 400 personnel deployed worldwide, most in the U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Chile deploys with other regional partners, such as El Salvador and Honduras, and provides those countries with specialized training prior to their deployments. For example, Chile trained El Salvador peacekeepers on aviation maintenance training for their deployment to Mali. Chile announced in 2015 a plan to deploy staff officers, helicopters, engineers, and a medical unit to an African peacekeeping mission over a three-year period. In January 2016, Chile deployed four advisors to the U.N. Mission in the Central African Republic as the first phase of this plan.

Chile takes counterterrorism seriously and has an inter-ministerial working group on counter terrorism issues. We commend Chile for their support at the UNSC for a counter-Da'esh resolution. In August 2015, the United States and Chile cosponsored a meeting of UNSC members condemning Da'esh attacks on LGBT persons. If confirmed, I would work closely with Chile in areas where our interests align (refugees, humanitarian relief), and promote continued coordination in multilateral organizations such as the U.N.

Further, Chile takes an active role in Central American security and development, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with Chile in the region. It continues to teach at the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in El Salvador, educating police officers, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice practitioners from Central and South America and the Caribbean. We applaud Chile's International Cooperation Agency for Development, AGCID (Agencia Chilena de Cooperaciθn Internacional para el Desarrollo) for their projects in Central America to strengthen government institutions and improve governance, especially in the Northern Triangle. If confirmed, I would look for ways the United States and Chile could leverage our 2009 and 2014 trilateral cooperation agreements to undertake development projects in Central America and the Caribbean to enhance citizen security. These projects could include an expansion of Chile's role in law enforcement training and rule of law cooperation with Central American partners.

Question. As of 2014, the accumulated stock of U.S. foreign direct investment in Chile was $27.6 billion. The accumulated stock of Chilean foreign investment in the United States was $730 million. A bi-lateral income tax treaty (Treaty Doc. 112-8) would provide certainty on the tax treatment of investors and reduce tax barriers to investment. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee reported the treaty as favorable in February 2016, but it has not yet been considered by the full Senate. In your opinion, does this treaty seem like an effective way to encourage trade between our two countries? Is there anything you would like to add regarding this treaty that may lock in a successful vote from the full Senate body.

Answer. The administration continues to support the double taxation treaty and hopes it moves quickly through the Senate. Without the treaty's passage, U.S. businesses investing in Chile face higher taxes in Chile that will place them at a competitive disadvantage vis-a-vis firms from other countries with bilateral tax treaties in place. The proposed tax treaty with Chile would be the first between the United States and Chile. The Department of Treasury actively pursues opportunities to establish new tax treaty relationships with countries in which U.S. businesses encounter unrelieved double taxation with respect to their investments.

The Departments of State and Treasury are aware of the keen interest of both the business community and the Senate to conclude income tax treaties that provide meaningful benefits to cross-border investors with South American countries. If approved by the Senate, the tax treaty with Chile would be the second U.S. tax treaty in force with a South American country. Thus, the proposed tax treaty with Chile represents a significant inroad into the South American region.

If confirmed, I will support this and other measures to encourage Chilean companies to invest in the United States, reduce the burdens on U.S. businesses investing in Chile, and increase economic cooperation and prosperity for both countries.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 2016

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

Hon. Sung Y. Kim, of California, nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of the Philippines
Rena Bitter, of Texas, nominated to be Ambassador to the Lao People's Democratic Republic
Amala Shirin Lakhdhir, of Connecticut, nominated to be Ambassador to Malaysia

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:41 a.m., in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Cory Gardner presiding.

Present: Senators Gardner [presiding], Rubio, Cardin, and Menendez.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CORY GARDNER, U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO

Senator GARDNER. This hearing will come to order. Let me welcome you all to today's full Senate Foreign Relations—not everyone gives up the gavel that easy. So that is good. [Laughter.]

Senator GARDNER. Let me welcome you all to today's full Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on nominations.

I want to thank Senator Cardin and his staff for their great cooperation in making this happen today. We have a great panel of three well-qualified nominees today to serve in Philippines, Malaysia, and Laos, all nations that are strategically and economically important to U.S. security and economic interests.

I want to thank them and their families as well for their willingness to serve. I have had the opportunity meet and speak with you privately and appreciate your time today, and this is truly a family commitment and sacrifice, and we all greatly appreciate your service to your country and the work that you are doing.

I will reserve my time for questions, and I ask our nominees to keep their opening remarks to no more than 5 minutes.

With that, I turn to Senator Cardin.

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

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for accommodating this hearing.

As you know, we are scheduled to recess this week, and it has been extremely challenging to get hearings scheduled. And I personally want to thank Senator Gardner for going out of his way to arrange for this hearing so that we could get these three nominees through the hearing process of a confirmation before recess, and we appreciate it very, very much.

I think it is, first, all three of you are career, and we thank you for that, for giving your service on behalf of our country. It is critically important to our national security and American interests, and we thank you for your public service.

But as Senator Gardner said, it is a family sacrifice. So we know that your family is part of the service that has been given to our country. So we thank the family members that are here for their understanding and their support for the missions that each of you have done.

I would just make a very brief comment that all three of the countries are very relevant to the matters that have been before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee this week. In the trafficking in persons, I can assure you that you are going to get questions in regards to Malaysia and its failure to get to an acceptable level on dealing with trafficking in persons and what our mission will do in order to further our objective to end modern-day slavery.

In regards to the Philippines, you could not have a more timely follow-up from today's hearings as we talked about the Law of the Sea decision with China. And with Laos, we have the chair of—the country that chairs the ASEAN this year.

So it is three countries that are extremely timely to the hearings we have had this week, but very important to U.S. interests not only in the Asian Pacific, but globally.

I look forward to your testimony and again thank you for your appearance.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

We will now turn to our nominees. Ambassador Sung Kim is our nominee to the Philippines. He is a career member of the Foreign Service and since 2014 serves as Special Representative for North Korea Policy and Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs at Department of State. From 2011 to 2014, he served as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea and from 2008 to 2011 as Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks.

Welcome, Ambassador Kim, and please proceed with your testimony.

STATEMENT OF HON. SUNG Y. KIM, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

Ambassador KIM. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, Senator Menendez, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Philippines.

I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for placing their trust in me, and if confirmed, I look forward to working very closely with this committee to strengthen our already-strong relationship with the Philippines.

I would like to begin by thanking my family and the many friends and colleagues who have been an incredible source of support and inspiration for me throughout my life and career. Some of them are here today.

Unfortunately, my wife, Jae, and our two daughters, Erin and Erica, could not be here today. Erin and Erica apparently have something more important to do. They are busy with summer activities overseas, but they assure me that they are watching C–SPAN for the very first time in their lives. [Laughter.]

Ambassador KIM. They are very proud and excited about the prospect of helping me represent the United States in the Republic of the Philippines.

Mr. Chairman, just a couple of years ago, as you mentioned, I had the privilege of representing our country as the first Korean-American U.S. Ambassador to Korea, and it was incredibly special to return to my country of birth, one of our closest allies, as the U.S. Ambassador. In fact, my mother, my 86-year-old mother, still cries whenever she thinks about that experience.

And now I am thrilled that, if confirmed, I will have the honor of representing our country in the Philippines, our oldest ally in the region and one of our most special partners.

I am also honored to follow the many distinguished diplomats who have served in Manila. One of them was my mentor and friend, Steve Bosworth. As you may know, Ambassador Bosworth sadly passed away earlier this year, but I know that he would be very proud that one of his mentees will have an opportunity to build on what he and our other outstanding Ambassadors accomplished in the Philippines.

The U.S. and the Philippines are longstanding friends, partners, and allies. Indeed, this is a relationship defined and reinforced by deep people-to-people ties. There are over 4 million Filipinos and Filipino Americans in the United States, and more than 220,000 Americans reside in the Philippines. And together, they help build the bonds that unite and strengthen our two countries.

As we mark the 70th anniversary of U.S.-Philippines diplomatic relations, we celebrate our common history of shared sacrifice, values, and interests. We have stood together during World War II to fight tyranny and defend democratic values. And since the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty in 1951, our commitment to the defense of the Philippines has remained ironclad, unwavering, and strong.

Earlier this year, our security partnership entered an exciting new phase with the implementation of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. This important agreement will allow for greater rotational access by U.S. forces in the Philippines. It will also expand the opportunities for bilateral training, and most exciting, it will support the long-term modernization of Philippines Armed Forces.

Our security cooperation with the Philippines also enhances efforts to combat transnational crime and terrorism. The Philippines

Armed Forces, police, and other law enforcement agencies continue to make progress in fighting violent extremists. They arrest and prosecute members of terrorist groups, including Abu Sayyaf group.

We work closely with the Philippines government to ensure that its forces are trained to uphold human rights and the rule of the law in the conduct of their law enforcement operations. If confirmed, I will work closely with Philippines President Duterte and his administration to ensure that our security cooperation remains strong and effective. This includes supporting Philippines efforts to peacefully resolve the South China Sea dispute, and we are also helping the Philippines Armed Forces better monitor the seas off their shores.

The U.S. is among the Philippines' top trading partners, and we have traditionally been the Philippines' largest foreign investor. Annual U.S. goods and services trade with the Philippines total over $25 billion. If confirmed, I will continue our economic engagement to support reform efforts and expand trade and investment to the benefit of both countries.

Beyond security and trade, we are also partnering with the Philippines on climate change and other many important global challenges. Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to leading our great embassy team of over 1,700 Americans and local Filipinos who are working tirelessly to advance the special partnership between our two countries.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Kim follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SUNG KIM

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be United States Ambassador to the Republic of the Philippines. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for placing their confidence in me and if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee to advance our strong relationship with the Philippines.

With the Chairman's permission, I would like to begin by thanking the many friends and colleagues who have played an essential role in my career—some of them are here today. Unfortunately my wife Jae and our two daughters Erin and Erica could not join us today. Erin and Erica are busy with summer activities overseas, but I know they are proud and excited about the prospect of helping me represent the United States in the Philippines. My family, friends, and colleagues have all been a source of tremendous support and inspiration.

Mr. Chairman, just a couple of years ago, I had the privilege of representing our country as the first Korean-American U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. It was incredibly special to return to my country of birth, and one of our closest allies, as the U.S. Ambassador. And now I am thrilled that, if confirmed, I will have the honor of representing our country in the Philippines, our oldest ally in the region and one of our most special partners.

I am also honored to follow the many distinguished diplomats who served in Manila. One of them was my mentor and friend Steve Bosworth. Ambassador Bosworth sadly passed away earlier this year but I know he would be very proud that one of his mentees will have an opportunity to build on what he and our other outstanding ambassadors accomplished. The United States and the Philippines are longstanding friends, partners, and allies. Indeed, this is a relationship defined and reinforced by deep people-to-people ties. There are over four million Filipinos and Filipino Americans in the United States and more than 220,000 Americans residing in the Philippines. And together they help build the bonds that unite and strengthen our two countries.

As we mark the 70th anniversary of formal U.S.-Philippine relations, we celebrate our common history of shared sacrifice, values, and interests. We stood together

during World War II to fight tyranny and defend democratic values. And since the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty in 1951, our commitment to the defense of the Philippines has remained ironclad and unwavering.

Earlier this year, our security partnership entered an exciting new phase with the implementation of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. This important agreement will allow for greater rotational access by U.S. forces in the Philippines. It will expand the opportunities for bilateral training, support the long-term modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and help the United States to rapidly respond to natural disasters.

Our security cooperation with the Philippines also enhances efforts to combat transnational crime and terrorism. The Philippine Armed Forces, police, and other law enforcement agencies are making progress in fighting violent extremists, and continue to arrest and prosecute members of terrorist groups, including the Abu Sayyaf Group. We work closely with the Philippine government to ensure that its forces are trained to uphold human rights and the rule of law in the conduct of their law enforcement operations.

If confirmed, I will work with Philippine President Duterte and his new administration to ensure our security cooperation remains strong and effective. This includes supporting Philippine efforts to peacefully reduce tensions in the South China Sea and help the Philippine Armed Forces better monitor the seas off their shores.

The United States is among the Philippines' top trading partners, and we have traditionally been the country's largest foreign investor. Annual U.S. goods and services trade with the Philippines total well over $20 billion. If confirmed, I will continue our economic engagement to the benefit of both countries through support for reforms that we hope will open the door to more U.S. investment. This includes encouraging the Philippines to reduce restrictions on foreign ownership, enforce intellectual property rights, and make it easier for U.S. firms to participate in public-private partnerships. I will also work with ongoing Millennium Challenge Corporation and USAID efforts to ensure inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Beyond security and trade, we are also partnering with the Philippines on climate change and other important global challenges.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to leading the dedicated Embassy team of Americans and local Filipinos who are working tirelessly to advance the special U.S.-Philippines partnership.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and am pleased to answer your questions.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Ambassador.

Ms. Rena Bitter is our nominee to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, commonly known as Laos. She is a career member of the Foreign Service and since 2013 has served as Consul General at the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Welcome, Ms. Bitter. Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF RENA BITTER, OF TEXAS, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Ms. BITTER. Thank you.

Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Cardin, and Senator Menendez, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the Ambassador to the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

I am deeply honored to be here with you today and grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me.

I am joined by several family members and colleagues, and I am grateful for the support that they have shown me throughout my career and also for the kindness you have shown them here today, Senator. Thank you.

Today, the U.S.-Lao relationship is at its most dynamic in 40 years. Secretary Kerry has visited Laos once already this year, and he will return later this month. President Obama's September trip

will mark the first ever by a sitting U.S. President, and it promises to open new avenues of cooperation and communication in our bilateral relationship. If confirmed, I would look forward to pursuing these opportunities.

I have been privileged to serve my country for 22 years as a Foreign Service officer, most recently as Consul General in Ho Chi Minh City. During my 3 years there, I saw how much progress two very different nations can make when working together on areas of common interest.

If confirmed, I would seek to work with the Lao government and people to find more areas in which our goals align so we can build a broad-based relationship that addresses the challenges of the 21st century.

However, for our path toward a 21st century relationship to remain on firm footing, we must continue our work to put the problems of the 20th century behind us. For more than 30 years, humanitarian cooperation, particularly work to ensure the fullest possible accounting for our missing service personnel and war legacy assistance, particularly the removal of unexploded ordnance, have been at the center of our bilateral relationship.

Thanks to your support and the support of your colleagues in Congress, we have invested almost $100 million in conventional weapons destruction programs since 1993, leading to a reduction in casualties from more than 300 per year to fewer than 50 during the last 3 years. If confirmed, I want to work with you and our partners in Laos to bring the number of casualties down to zero and to close the door on this history for both of our countries.

At the same time, we must find ways to invest in the future. Laos' progress and ability to be a strong partner for the United States and a confident member of ASEAN will depend on improving the well-being and economic status of its people.

Nutrition-related health problems remain prevalent in Laos, with stunting impacting more than 60 percent of children in some areas. Through university partnerships, targeted nutritional projects, and school meal programs, our assistance to our Lao partners has sought to improve the nutritional status of women and children to deliver a healthier, fuller future for the people of Laos.

If confirmed, Lao economic development will also be a priority. With a consistent 7 to 8 percent GDP growth rate over the past decade, Laos has one of the fastest-growing economies in East Asia. To continue and to expand the benefits of this growth, it will be key for Laos, both individually and within the context of ASEAN, to support education and to facilitate the adoption of a rules-based, high-standard regional economic and trade architecture.

If confirmed, I would also seek to prioritize our people-to-people ties. Laos has the third-highest per capita membership in our Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiatives, suggesting that the young people of Laos, its future decision-makers, are interested in learning more about the American people and American values. With 70 percent of the Lao population under the age of 30, these youth outreach programs are truly building bridges to the next generation of Lao leaders.

However, in spite of these partnerships, we continue to have concerns about Laos' human rights records and restriction on civil so-

ciety. Currently, Laos places onerous registration requirements on civil society organizations, leading to the delay or cancellation of many worthwhile projects.

In December 2012, civil society leader Sombath Somphone was abducted at a police checkpoint and subsequently disappeared. The Lao government has yet to complete a full investigation. If confirmed, I would push for transparency in such investigations and encourage the authorities to embrace the vital role that civil society plays in the development of a thriving, prosperous country.

Freedom of religion is also a fundamental right, and if confirmed, I will work with the government to ensure the freedom of the Lao people to worship according to their beliefs.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer your questions, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to advance U.S. interests in Laos and to welcoming you to our embassy in Vientiane.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Bitter follows:]

PREPARED STATEMEMNT OF RENA BITTER

Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Cardin, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Lao People's Democratic Republic. I am deeply honored to be here with you today, and grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for the confidence they have placed in me. I am joined by several family members and colleagues, and I have been blessed with their support throughout my career.

Today, the U.S.–Lao relationship is at its most dynamic in forty years. Secretary Kerry has visited Laos once already this year—only the second visit by a Secretary of State since 1955—and he will return this month for the ASEAN Regional Forum and other key regional meetings, followed in September by President Obama's historic trip for the East Asia Summit, U.S.-ASEAN Summit, and a bilateral visit. President Obama's visit will mark the first ever by a sitting U.S. President and it promises to open new avenues of cooperation and communication in our bilateral relationship. If confirmed, I would look forward to pursuing these opportunities.

I have been privileged to serve my country for 22 years as a Foreign Service Officer across Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia and in Washington. Most recently I served as Consul General in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. During my three years there, I saw how much progress two very different nations can make when working together on areas of common interest. If confirmed, I would seek to work with the Lao government and people to find more areas in which our goals align, so we can build a broad-based relationship that addresses the challenges of the 21st century.

For our path toward a 21st century relationship to remain on firm footing, however, we must continue our work to put the problems of the 20th century behind us. For more than 30 years, humanitarian cooperation—particularly the work to ensure the fullest possible accounting for our missing—and legacy of war assistance, such as the removal of unexploded ordnance, have been at the center of the bilateral relationship. On the unexploded ordnance assistance, thanks to your support and the support of your colleagues in Congress, we have invested almost $100 million in Conventional Weapons Destruction Programs since 1993, with $19.5 million allocated for FY16. This assistance has led to a reduction in casualties from more than 300 per year, to fewer than 50 during the last three years. As Secretary Kerry said when he visited Laos in January, "we can't heal the wounds, but we can and must do more so that others do not suffer the same fate." If confirmed, I want to work with you and our partners in Laos to bring the number of casualties down to zero so we can close the door on this history for both of our countries.

At the same time, we must find ways to invest in the future. Laos' progress and ability to be a strong partner for the United States and a confident member of ASEAN will depend on improving the well-being and economic status of its people. Nutrition-related health problems remain prevalent in Laos, with stunting impact-

ing more than 60 percent of children in some areas. In an effort to tackle comprehensively this serious developmental impediment, last October Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes while visiting Laos signed a Statement of Intent with the Ministry of Health and the Oregon Health and Science University to establish a new Lao-American Nutrition Institute (LANI). LANI will complement the Lao government's nutrition efforts by helping to develop local solutions for this health priority. Further, the USDA McGovern-Dole School Feeding Program will fund $27 million over three years for World Food Program meal projects in schools across Laos, a program that has already dramatically increased school attendance. Finally, USAID recently awarded $5.58 million over three years to Save the Children to improve the nutritional status of women and children in targeted areas. If confirmed, I look forward to seeing these initiatives deliver a healthier, fuller future to the children of Laos.

Lao economic development has also been a priority for the U.S. Department of State and, if confirmed, will be a priority for me as well. With a consistent 7 to 8 percent GDP growth rate over the past decade, Laos has one of the fastest growing economies in East Asia. To continue and expand the benefits of this growth, it will be key for Laos individually and within the context of ASEAN to support education and facilitate the adoption of a rules-based, high-standard regional economic and trade architecture. I hope to continue to cultivate relationships between our two private sectors and to carry on the work that the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane has undertaken to increase trade.

If confirmed, I would also seek to prioritize our people-to-people ties. Laos has the third highest per capita membership in our Young Southeast Asian Leaders' Initiative, suggesting that the young people of Laos—its future decision makers—are interested in learning more about the American people and American values. With 70 percent of the Lao population under 30, these youth outreach programs are truly building a bridge to the future leaders of Laos.

In spite of these partnerships, we continue to have concerns about Laos' human rights record and restrictions on civil society. Currently, Laos places onerous registration requirements on civil society organizations, leading to the delay or cancellation of many worthwhile projects. Civil society leaders have also been subject to efforts to silence or sideline their voices. In December 2012, Sombath Somphone was abducted at a police checkpoint and subsequently disappeared; the Lao government has yet to complete a full investigation. If confirmed, I would push for transparency in such investigations and encourage authorities to embrace the vital role that civil society plays in the development of a thriving, prosperous country. Freedom of religion is a fundamental human right and, if confirmed, I will work with the government to ensure the freedom of the Lao people to worship according to their beliefs.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I'm happy to answer your questions and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to advance U.S. interests in Laos and welcoming you to our Embassy in Vientiane.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you for your testimony.

Our next nominee is—Ms. Kamala Shirin Lakhdhir is our nominee to Malaysia. She is a career member of the Foreign Service and from 2011 to 2015 served as the Executive Assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

Ms. Lakhdhir served as the U.S. Consul General in Belfast, Northern Ireland, from 2009 to 2011 and as the Director of the Office of Maritime Southeast Asia from 2007 to 2009 and as the Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs from 2005 to 2006.

Welcome, Ms. Lakhdhir, and look forward to your comments.

STATEMENT OF KAMALA SHIRIN LAKHDHIR, OF CONNECTICUT, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO MALAYSIA

Ms. LAKHDHIR. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cardin, and Senator Menendez, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia.

I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the trust they have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee.

I would like to thank my State Department mentors and colleagues, some of whom are here today, who have supported, advised, and educated me during my soon-to-be 25 years in the Foreign Service. I am particularly pleased to appear before you today with two good friends and colleagues.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would also like to recognize my brother, who is here today, and my parents, Ann and Noor Lakhdhir, who are watching in Connecticut. My father was born in Bombay, India, in 1925, and came to the United States to attend the University of California-Berkeley through the miracle of a full scholarship.

When he moved to New York a few years later, he met my mother, who was there studying for a master's degree in international relations. I am proud that some of my mother's ancestors arrived in Massachusetts and Connecticut in the 1600s and that my father became an American citizen a month after I was born. My parents' lives, interests, and strong belief in American values inspired me to enter the Foreign Service.

If I am confirmed, the President and the Senate will entrust me with the responsibility to lead an embassy community of more than 120 Americans from 8 U.S. Government agencies, their families, and close to 200 locally employed staff. My foremost commitments will be to the security of the embassy personnel and their families and to the effective pursuit of U.S. national interests.

Malaysia has undergone an extraordinary transformation over the past six decades. Its society, economy, and regional and global influence have developed at an amazing pace. Its foreign policy has evolved from establishing pragmatic relations with neighbors to playing an active leadership role in ASEAN, a body it helped to establish.

At the same time, the governments of the United States and Malaysia have also deepened and broadened our bilateral cooperation, which President Obama and Prime Minister Najib elevated to a comprehensive partnership just over 2 years ago.

The United States and Malaysia have longstanding trade and investment ties. U.S. companies pioneered the electrical and electronics industry in Malaysia in the 1970s, and they remain the largest investor in Malaysia's top-earning export sector.

Bilateral trade continues to grow, exceeding $46 billion in 2015. If Congress approves the Trans-Pacific Partnership, our economic ties to the region and with Malaysia are expected to further increase and diversify.

Malaysia and the United States have also greatly expanded defense and law enforcement cooperation in order to ensure the safety and security of the peoples of both our countries. Malaysia takes very seriously the growing influence of ISIL, as well as the ongoing threat to Malaysian and foreign citizens in Eastern Sabah by the Abu Sayyaf group.

Bilaterally, with Malaysia and through ASEAN, we are working more closely than ever before to counter violent extremist narratives to keep our borders and skies safe and to crack down on

transnational crime. If confirmed, I will also support Malaysia's ongoing efforts to reduce tensions in the South China Sea by building global regional consensus and encouraging a peaceful resolution of disputes.

The United States remains deeply concerned about human rights, the rule of law, transparency, and governance in Malaysia. Freedom of expression is a cornerstone of representative government, and we look to Malaysia's leaders to live up to the highest democratic standards.

If confirmed, I will also be fully dedicated to pressing Malaysia to achieve its commitments to combat trafficking in persons. This includes taking concrete steps to root out forced labor and debt bondage, whether in the domestic, plantation, construction, or manufacturing sectors. This effort is fundamentally a government and law enforcement responsibility, but the Malaysian people and civil society play a critical role.

In the last year, Malaysia passed legislation and regulations that, if enforced, support a victim-focused protection regime. If confirmed, I am committed to pressing for the law's effective implementation.

For the last six decades, the peoples of the United States and Malaysia have formed close bonds across a range of common concerns. If confirmed, my highest aim will be to sustain and expand these ties in civil society, business, education, public health, environmental protection, and rule of law, among others.

In particular, with over 50 percent of the population under the age of 25, I look forward to engaging Malaysian young people to expand their understanding of the United States, highlight our shared values, and work on solutions to common challenges.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am pleased to answer your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lakhdhir follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KAMALA SHIRIN LAKHDHIR

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Kerry for the trust they have placed in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee. I would like to thank my State Department mentors and colleagues, some of whom are here today, who have supported, advised, and educated me during my soon-to-be twenty-five years in the Foreign Service. I am particularly pleased to appear before you today with two good friends and colleagues.

With your permission Mr. Chairman, I would also like to recognize my brother, who is here today, and my parents, Ann and Noor Lakhdhir, who are watching in Connecticut. My father was born in Bombay, India in 1925 and came to the United States to attend the University of California Berkeley through the miracle of a full scholarship. When he moved to New York a few years later, he met my mother, who was there studying for a master's degree in international relations. I'm proud that some of my mother's ancestors arrived in Massachusetts and Connecticut in the 1600s, and that my father became an American citizen a month after I was born. My parents' lives, interests, and strong belief in American values inspired me to enter the Foreign Service.

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amazing pace. Its foreign policy has evolved from establishing pragmatic relations with neighbors to playing an active leadership role in ASEAN, a body it helped to establish.

At the same time, the governments of the United States and Malaysia have also deepened and broadened our bilateral cooperation, which President Obama and Prime Minister Najib elevated to a Comprehensive Partnership just over two years ago. The United States and Malaysia have long-standing trade and investment ties. U.S. companies pioneered the electrical and electronics industry in Malaysia in the 1970s and they remain the largest investors in Malaysia's top earning export sector. Bilateral trade continues to grow, exceeding $46 billion in 2015. If Congress approves the Trans-Pacific Partnership, our economic ties to the region and with Malaysia are expected to further increase and diversify.

Malaysia and the United States have also greatly expanded defense and law enforcement cooperation in order to ensure the safety and security of the peoples of both our countries. Malaysia takes very seriously the growing influence of ISIL, as well as the ongoing threat to Malaysian and foreign citizens in Eastern Sabah by the Abu Sayyaf Group. Bilaterally with Malaysia and through ASEAN, we are working more closely than ever before to counter violent extremist narratives, to keep our borders and skies safe, and to crack down on transnational crime.If confirmed, I will also support Malaysia's ongoing efforts to reduce tensions in the South China Sea by building regional consensus and encouraging a peaceful resolution of disputes.

The United States remains deeply concerned about human rights, the rule of law, transparency, and governance in Malaysia. Freedom of expression is a cornerstone of representative government, and we look to Malaysia's leaders to live up to the highest democratic standards. If confirmed, I will also be fully dedicated to pressing Malaysia to achieve its commitments to combat trafficking in persons. This includes taking concrete steps to root out forced labor and debt bondage, whether in the domestic, plantation, construction, or manufacturing sectors. This effort is fundamentally a government and law enforcement responsibility, but the Malaysian people and civil society play a critical role. In the last year, Malaysia passed legislation and regulations that, if enforced, support a victim-focused protection regime. If confirmed, I am committed to pressing for the law's effective implementation.

Mr. Chairman, for the last six decades, the peoples of the United States and Malaysia have formed close bonds across a range of common concerns. If confirmed, my highest aim will be to sustain and expand these ties in civil society, business, education, public health, environmental protection, and rule of law, among many others. In particular, with over 50 percent of the population under the age of 25, I look forward to engaging Malaysian young people, to expand their understanding of the United States, highlight our shared values, and work on solutions to common challenges that we all face.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am pleased to answer your questions.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Ms. Lakhdhir.

And I will begin with the questions. Ambassador Kim, to you, you just heard Admiral Blair and Dr. Campbell talk about the very good outcome from the tribunal hearing at the tribunal yesterday. But also would like your opinion on how you see your role working with the Duterte administration in the Philippines, what you believe—to implement the decision and what you believe the administration's intentions are in terms of bilateral, possible bilateral negotiations with China in light of this decision.

Ambassador KIM. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me first start by saying I read your and Ranking Member Cardin's statements regarding the decision yesterday, and I found them very compelling. And in fact, I agree with many of the key points that both of you made in those statements.

With regards to my role, I mean, obviously, this will be one of the most important challenges going forward. One of the key issues that I would focus on as Ambassador, if confirmed by your committee.

The Philippines issued what I thought was a straightforward and positive statement regarding the ruling. As you pointed out, Mr. Chairman, this is an important decision, and this is an important moment for all of the claimants involved. And I think the Philippines has made very clear, President Duterte himself included, has made very clear that they are committed to pursuing a peaceful resolution of the dispute. They continue to act responsibly, consistent with international norms and practices in law.

So I think our role and my role should be to support that effort. In fact, I think this decision gives us a real opportunity for the parties to seek a peaceful resolution according to rule of law, and that has been our consistent position, and I look forward to supporting that efforts.

With regards to the possible bilateral negotiation between the Philippines and China, I think we have been very clear that we would support bilateral negotiations that are free from undue pressure and coercion. Now some aspects of the South China dispute cannot be resolved bilaterally, but if the Philippines and China decide that they have a way forward in terms of meaningful, productive bilateral negotiations free from coercion and undue pressure, I think we would support that effort.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, and I will reserve my questions for the other gentleman to use.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. I want to again thank all three of the nominees.

Ambassador Kim, you mentioned the human rights challenges in Philippines. I appreciate you mentioning that. All three of you mentioned the human rights issues.

In the Philippines, several human rights groups are concerned with the potential rise of extrajudicial killings. Can you tell me what steps you think we need to take to reinforce the Philippines' commitment to the basic core human rights commitments?

Ambassador KIM. Thank you very much, Senator.

Human rights has been and will continue to be an important area of cooperation and focus for our relations with the Philippines. We have had concerns about extrajudicial killings, and this is something that I would like to focus on as soon as I arrive in Manila.

Part of our effort to counter any such activity is to make sure that when we cooperate with the Philippines, whether it is the military or law enforcement, that human rights training is an integral part of any such effort. In fact, that has continued for some time. And I think we have seen results of such effort, that there has been an improvement in the way law enforcement agencies and the military conduct their business, but this will continue to be an area of focus for us.

Senator CARDIN. Laos is going to get a presidential visit. That is pretty special. And as you point out, it is historic. How—what recommendations would you make to the President to leverage his visit to Laos to advance the rights, human rights in that country?

They have had a struggle over the years on human rights abusers. The government neither prosecutes nor punishes officials who commit human rights abuses. There is continued increased restric-

tions on civil and political rights, freedom of speech, association, and assembly.

So if you are writing the paper to the administration as to how the President could help advance our respect for human rights in Laos, what would you suggest?

Ms. BITTER. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

It is true, the President's visit does provide an opportunity for high-level engagement, and it is a unique opportunity to advance our ties. In fact, Laos' chairmanship of ASEAN has provided many such opportunities, and throughout these engagements, our leaders have had the opportunity to talk to Laos' leaders about these issues—human rights, religious freedom—and to share with them not just our concerns, but also to explain and express that our concerns are not just our concerns, but they are, frankly, international norms.

Right now, civil society in Laos is quite nascent, and our programming in Laos supports rule of law and supports media training and general education. And going forward, if confirmed, I would do my best to continue to make these points strongly and to encourage the Lao to see civil society and fundamental human rights as a very important part of a thriving and prosperous society.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Malaysia, I am not sure where to begin. I am going to have questions for the record for you to answer. And look, I very much admire your career. Malaysia, to me, is a country of major interest in this committee and the United States Senate. The administration has made overtures for a much closer relationship with Malaysia and are asking for congressional support to support that advancement of a relationship.

And yet on so many issues, their activities are so much contrary to our priorities and our values. I could mention their support and trade with North Korea. I could mention corruption, including reports that it goes up to the highest levels of their government.

But I am going to concentrate on one issue for my verbal questions—the rest I will do for the record—as to what you are going to do in regards to the trafficking issues. It is one of the highest priorities that we have in this country is to end modern-day slavery.

Last year, in mass graves were discovered suspected trafficking victims. Very little—and I am being generous by saying "very little"—I do not think any progress has been made in that country in prosecuting those who are responsible. And the indications are that there are ties to government officials in regards to the trafficking networks, which will require leadership at the governmental level to root out that corruption and hold those people accountable.

Impunity is not an option. The U.S. relationship with Malaysia must be more effective in bringing about change. And quite frankly, as the head of our mission in Malaysia, we look to you to provide that independent information to the United States Congress so that we can take appropriate steps here to protect those who have been victimized.

So would you just reassure me that, if confirmed, you will carry out that important responsibility?

Ms. LAKHDHIR. Senator Cardin, thank you for asking me that question so I have an opportunity to say this publicly.

If I am confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the embassy, the mission, and myself report fairly and fully, robustly, all the facts and all the information that we can develop about trafficking persons in Malaysia, about the migrant communities and the refugee communities, the things that the Malaysian government and civil society are doing and the things that they are not doing.

So that is my commitment. We report to both the State Department. We will also engage with your committee and the committee staff and to convey information fairly and transparently.

At the same time, I am also committed to being very direct and honest with Malaysian government about the concerns that the United States has about the legal requirements, about their living up to the commitments they have now made by changing their law and regulations to be a victim—a regime that puts the victims at the center of protection.

I also appreciate that you are speaking out and other Senators so that we can use that in Malaysia and say that there is a broad concern across the U.S. Government, and that is also very useful in the way we do our diplomacy. So I appreciate that.

Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you for your response. I appreciate it.

Senator GARDNER. Senator Menendez?

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me thank all of our nominees for their service to our country already and your willingness to continue in that service. I appreciate it.

And Ambassador Kim, I thought—I did not know you were still going in for another round. So I am pleased that you are willing to do so, and we are very proud of your work certainly in Korea and beyond.

And I look forward—we have about 130,000 Filipino Americans, incredibly industrious, successful in New Jersey. So when you get situated, on one of your return visits to the United States, I would love to have you engage with them and get an insight as to what is happening in their original homeland. So I look forward to being supportive of you.

I want to focus the bulk of my time with Ms. Lakhdhir only because of where you are being nominated to. I appreciate your previous service as well, and I want to go a little greater into depth what Senator Cardin mentioned.

As you may know, this committee held a hearing yesterday on the Trafficking In Persons 2016 report, and other members of the committee and I have asked, given Malaysia's pervasive human trafficking problem and important business that is pending before the Congress related to Malaysia, that the State Department keep us regularly informed about the Malaysian government's ongoing efforts so we do not have to wait until the release of next year's TIP report to get a sense of what is happening.

So I heard your response to Senator Cardin, and I assume that, if confirmed, you are committed to providing the committee with regular updates on the status of the Malaysian government's efforts to combat trafficking. Is that a correct statement?

Ms. LAKHDHIR. That is correct.

Senator MENENDEZ. And I hope that that is a sense of consultation because I know I would like to tell my friends at the State Department that, for me, speaking as one Senator sitting on this committee for better part of 10 years now, that there is a difference between notification and consultation.

Notification is when you are just telling me what you are doing. Consultation is when you are engaging in a conversation as to some of these critical issue. So I hope that you will engage in—and I would say this to all of our nominees, you know, collectively. I hope that what we will engage in is consultation, not notification. There is a big, fundamental difference.

And consultation, even when we disagree, leads to a better result than notification when we happen to have had no consultation along the way. So I like to say that to all of our nominees when they come before us so they understand at least openly and clearly where at least this Senator is coming from.

In that regard, I would like to know whether or not in any of your previous tours with the State Department, have you been engaged in human trafficking or in the TIP report process?

Ms. LAKHDHIR. So I just would like to start that my first assignment—and this is about what I have seen and the impact that it is on human beings—I served in Saudi Arabia, and I was a consular officer. I mainly took care of American citizen services.

But we were very small at that time, and so I also did non-immigrant visa interviews. And there were many occasions where domestic workers came and were interviewed. And we often would have to very carefully have private interviews just with that individual, and we would ask sometimes very revealing and difficult questions about their situation, and in some cases, it was heartbreaking.

I then went on to serve in Indonesia, which is, of course, a source country, and it is one of the source countries for Malaysia. And so when I—I served as a political officer, the trafficking, the TVPA had not yet been passed, but some of my work as a young political officer, and because I had come out of Saudi Arabia, involved trying to understand what was happening with recruitment agencies and what was happening in terms of many——

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate that, but what I was trying to get at, have you ever been part of the actual TIP process, where you were in country making recommendations or part of team as to what the regional bureau was going to take a view on, what the embassy was going to take a view on in relation to human trafficking in that country?

Ms. LAKHDHIR. I was not. I served in Beijing, but I was not working in this area. My colleagues were, and I was aware of their work.

When I served in Belfast, this was not a concern.

Senator MENENDEZ. When you were working with the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, I assume that in some respects, you were part of the TIP process, or is that a wrong assumption?

Ms. LAKHDHIR. So the Under Secretary had what we call "Special Assistants" for each of the regional bureaus, and they were deeply involved. And I had supervision over them, but I was less directly

engaged in actually decision-making over the TIP process. So to be fair about, I am fully aware of the process. I am aware of how it works in Washington and I had a supervisory role, but I was not directly involved in any of the decision-making.

Senator MENENDEZ. Now there are serious concerns that Malaysia was upgraded to Tier 2 Watch List last year and retained this year based on political considerations and not an objective evaluation of Malaysia's actions. Do you believe that Malaysia earned its Tier 2 Watch List ranking this year, or do you agree with many of the members of this committee that they should have been ranked at Tier 3?

Ms. LAKHDHIR. Senator, I was not involved in this process in the last year. I was somebody waiting to be a nominee, and therefore, I am not allowed nor was it my role to work on Malaysia. So I was not involved in this process, and I am aware of what Secretary Kerry's final decision was because it was a public decision, and I have studied very carefully what our TIP colleagues put forward.

I have met with Ambassador Coppedge and her staff and spoken to them of what their goals are for me when I go to Malaysia. But I cannot—I cannot speak to whether—what the decision-making was for this year.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, may I have one more minute? Thank you.

Let me ask you this then. Will you commit before the committee to pressing the Malaysian government to undertake a full investigation of the mass graves and holding the perpetrators, including any Malaysian government officials, accountable?

Ms. LAKHDHIR. Yes, I commit to directly saying that to the Malaysian government and pursuing it.

Senator MENENDEZ. Because there have been a few prosecutions, but interestingly, none from within the country itself.

Let me ask you this. What progress would you reasonably expect to see over the next year in that investigation? How are we going to judge progress?

Ms. LAKHDHIR. So I would use the law's commitment on investigations, prosecutions, and convictions. And so I would use the law that has been provided in order for how I would present it to the Malaysians and ultimately what the State Department's judgment would be.

Senator MENENDEZ. Last question. You mentioned in your testimony that you are committed to pressing for effective implementation of legal amendments that Malaysia has added to its anti-trafficking law that were passed last year. What would you consider to be effective implementation of those amendments?

I am trying to get a sense here. This is not a "gotcha" question. I am trying to get a sense of standards. You know, what is—we had a significant part of our session yesterday, Mr. Chairman, was the whole question about, well, what is significant versus not? What is meaningful?

Because we can say that you can do anything. You can pass a law, but that does not mean very much, as we all know, unless it is actually implemented. Implementation could be just regulatory passage, but not enforcement. Enforcement depends upon degree.

I am trying to, especially in a country in this sense, that has such a central focus of this committee as it relates to human trafficking, what would you say is that your recommendation to the State Department and to this committee Malaysians have effectively implemented to the amendments? How would you describe that?

Ms. LAKHDHIR. I think it would be putting the victims within the center of the activity that their protection and their identification and protection, they are allowing human trafficking victims to move and work in Malaysia, to providing translation services and preparing them for court cases. These are some of the things that are clearly mentioned in this year's TIP report.

But I think, fundamentally, it is looking at individuals who have been trafficked as victims and as people who are due protection and then using their experiences to prevent future trafficking. So highlighting that these individuals need to be protected, and also their cases speak to how you can prevent in the future.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I thank you for the answer.

I thank the chairman for the courtesy. Needless to say that, if confirmed, this is going to be a central part of what the committee's interest is going to be in Malaysia. Not exclusively, but a significant part. And so we look forward to your aggressive pursuit of these issues.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Senator.

And Ms. Bitter, just to follow up a couple questions from our conversation that we had, the economic development obviously is critical in Laos and what it means to creating a more open political system. I think economic development, additional economic development would add to the openness of the political system there, as it has in other places around the globe.

So what role can U.S. businesses and U.S. business interaction with Laos help build this economic development opportunity and thus a more open political environment?

Ms. BITTER. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chairman.

Yes, Laos is growing quite rapidly, and it has got a very young population. So economic development is very important.

From my experience in Vietnam, I saw quite a bit that private companies and development of the private sector in Vietnam really did create opportunity for a discussion of introduction of U.S. values, U.S. work types, U.S.—just in general more familiarity and people-to-people ties.

In Laos now, their economic development and their level of investment is quite a bit lower, but one thing that is amazing about American companies and one thing that we should all be very proud of is that when American companies come to a country, they invest not just in the country, but in the people. So seeking to create further economic development, further investment by U.S. companies in Laos will certainly increase its capacity and increase its level of development.

And of course, when you increase development, increase investment, there is opportunity for U.S. exports. That is a little bit longer term. But certainly, Laos would benefit from more U.S. companies doing business there, and the United States would certainly benefit as well.

Senator GARDNER. And part of the investment that we can make through Laos through our efforts at the State Department should hopefully open up more opportunities and more space for civil society. Is that something that you see is happening as well?

Ms. BITTER. Civil society is pretty nascent right now in Laos, and certainly, there would be opportunity for U.S. companies to support all kinds of development of civil society organizations. For example, there would be opportunity for companies through their CSR efforts to support women's economic empowerment, for example. That is something that seems very likely, and it certainly happened in Vietnam.

So using that just as an example, I would say that is a way that American companies can certainly help Lao build its capacity and develop.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

And Ms. Lakhdhir, we talked a little bit in the office about radicalization concerns in Malaysia, and how do you assess sort of the quality of the U.S. relationship with Malaysia when it comes to anti-terrorism efforts?

Ms. LAKHDHIR. Thank you, Senator.

And since we met, there have been several additional incidents that are deeply concerning. My understanding from Embassy KL, from the current Ambassador, is that our cooperation with the Malaysians has very much advanced, that Malaysia has become very concerned about the threats, also concerned about the Abu Sayyaf group and the Sulu Sea. And the three countries is Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia just announced their commitment to cooperate more robustly together to try to secure that maritime area.

The Malaysians also are this month opening public diplomacy outreach program with our support to try to change the narratives and support for extremism. So I think they are working very closely with us, and I think we are sharing a lot more information. And Malaysia has also taken action against those who wish to go fight in Syria as foreign fighters. So——

Senator GARDNER. That is one thing that we have to continue to work with Malaysia is to make sure that they are doing everything they can to counter the threat of terrorism within and, of course, their terror financing actions. Are you going to be making that one of your top priorities, if confirmed, to work with Malaysia in terms of terror financing?

Ms. LAKHDHIR. Yes, I would. And we have a number of agencies within the embassy community that has that experience and would work with the Malaysian law enforcement on that.

Senator GARDNER. Well, thank you.

And I know that I have some questions that we will submit for the record as well, in addition to you, Ambassador Kim, some questions as well regarding South China Sea. And I do not know if I can throw one in there on North Korea or not, but maybe I will just for old time's sake. [Laughter.]

Senator GARDNER. But I want to thank all three of you for being here today. Thank you for your family and your commitment to this.

The record will be kept open until the close of business on Friday. We hope that you will respond to those questions promptly, and your comments will be made available in the record.

Senator GARDNER. Anything else I need to address?

With that, the thanks of the committee, thank you for your time today.

[Whereupon, at 12:24 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

REPONSES OF SUNG KIM, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KIM'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. The Philippines, which has made significant efforts, was upgraded to Tier 1 in this year's report despite the report stating that sex trafficking was still a "significant problem." How is this upgrade warranted? Do you have any sense of where the new Philippine administration will be on Trafficking in persons?

Answer. The rankings in the 2016 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report are an assessment of a government's efforts to combat trafficking, not a measure of the problem in each country. The Philippine government has increased its efforts over several years to improve investigation and prosecution of trafficking crimes. During the reporting period, the government convicted 42 traffickers, including five for online child sex trafficking and two for forced labor. Although pervasive corruption undermined efforts, the government convicted two immigration officers and charged five officials allegedly complicit in trafficking.

With an estimated 10 million Filipinos working abroad, and a significant number of these migrant workers subject to sex trafficking and forced labor, the Philippine government has also steadily increased prevention efforts and the provision of services to victims. In an effort to prevent trafficking of migrant workers, the government increased its funding for the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) to facilitate anti-trafficking prevention campaigns. The government also increased the number of shelters and residential care facilities to address the needs of victims.While these efforts have resulted in a greater number of prosecutions, stronger prevention measures, and increased services for victims, the TIP report also provides recommendations for continued improvement. During the course of diplomatic engagements, the Mission will encourage the government of the Philippines officials to implement these recommendations.

Taken in sum, the government of the Philippines' has achieved major successes in combatting TIP and we have no indication that the new administration will not continue this effort moving forward. Finally, the TIP Report is updated on an annual basis and the Mission will continue to diligently document progress, or backsliding, for the preparation of future reports.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KIM'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. The promotion of human rights and democracy has been an important part of my work at the State Department. As Special Representative for North Korea Policy, I coordinate closely with the Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights Issues on all aspects of our efforts to bring attention to the DPRK's deplorable human rights practices.

This includes highlighting these conditions through our annual reports, working with like-minded governments that share our concern at the U.N. and other international organizations to shed light on these issues, and raising awareness through public events and in private meetings. We are also leveraging different U.N. tools to highlight the issue, including by cosponsoring and lobbying for the adoption of strong annual DPRK human rights resolutions at the U.N. General Assembly and

Human Rights Council and by successfully adding the North Korean human rights issue as a standing agenda item for the U.N. Security Council.

Since the release of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry's report on human rights in North Korea in February 2014, we have made progress in our efforts to focus international attention and pressure on North Korea. Our 2016 report earlier this month identifying North Korean officials and entities responsible for or associated with serious human rights abuses or censorship led to the sanctioning of Kim Jong Un and other DPRK officials and entities.

Even before my work on human rights issues in North Korea, the promotion of human rights has been a consistent element of my work with the State Department. In the mid-1990s, I covered human rights as a Political Officer assigned to our Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. I also supported efforts to promote human rights and democracy during assignments with the State Department's Office of Chinese Affairs and in our Embassy in Tokyo. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to work to defend and protect the universal values of human rights that remain so important for the United States.

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

Answer. The Philippines faces a number of pressing human rights issues, including the prevalence of reported extrajudicial killings, violence against human rights activists, killings and harassment of journalists, and the lack of healthcare, education, and other basic services for the country's indigenous peoples.

To address these issues, if confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. government continues to work on improving the administration of justice in the Philippines through programs administered by USAID, the Department of Justice, and the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Through our close cooperation with the Philippine government, if confirmed, I will continue our efforts to support increased transparency and accountability that address human rights violations. I will meet with human rights NGOs, including those from indigenous groups and other minorities, and make sure that the Embassy understands and works to help address their concerns. I will also raise the importance of human rights, particularly due process and the rule of law, in my meetings with Philippine government interlocutors.

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 Philippines in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. A major obstacle to addressing human rights issues in the Philippines is the prevalence of corruption and the failure of the Philippine government to implement anti-corruption laws effectively. The criminal justice system in the Philippines plays a critical role in the protection of human rights; however, it is extremely difficult to hold human rights abusers criminally accountable when the courts are overburdened and weak. Advancing human rights, civil society, and democracy in the Philippines will also be challenging because the Philippine government currently lacks sufficient means to investigate and penalize those who succumb to abuse and corruption. However, if confirmed, you have my commitment that I will to work together with the Philippine government to strengthen the rule of law and due process while at the same time promoting respect for 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 the Philippines? 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 NGOs both in the United States and in the Philippines. The Philippines has a vibrant civil society and our Embassy in Manila regularly meets with civil society groups of all types. If confirmed, I will ensure that engagement continues.

As for the Leahy Law, Embassy Manila has one of the most professional in-country Leahy vetting units in the world. The Embassy has an excellent record of rigorously applying the Leahy Law while providing training to the security forces of the Philippines. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that the Leahy Law is rigorously applied and that U.S. security assistance and security cooperation activities reinforce human rights.

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

Answer.Yes, if confirmed, Embassy team and I will continue to engage with the Government of the Philippines on cases of prisoners or persons claiming to be otherwise unjustly targeted because of their political affiliation. It is worth noting, however, that the Philippine government classifies political prisoners as individuals accused of any crime against national security. Many individuals considered by the government and international NGOs to be "political prisoners" in the Philippines are affiliated with armed insurgent and U.S.-designated terrorist groups such as the Abu Sayyaf Group, Jemaah Islamiyah, and the Communist Party of the Philippines/ New People's Army.

At the same time, I acknowledge the distinction between persons who are wrongfully imprisoned and those who have committed a legitimate crime. If confirmed, I will support the efforts of the Philippine government to uphold this distinction. I also understand that the weak and overburdened justice sector can lead to lengthy pretrial detentions. As Ambassador, I will ensure that the Embassy will continue efforts to assist the Philippine justice sector become more efficient and reduce trial waiting periods.

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

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will engage with the Philippines on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance. Further, I will ensure that the team at our Embassy continues to engage and diligently monitor the human rights situation, including any deterioration in the human rights conditions in the Philippines; the civil rights environment; and governance situation. When appropriate, in meetings with our Philippine counterparts, we will emphasize the importance of human rights, particularly due process and the rule of law.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE KIM'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. North Korea's nuclear and missile programs continue without visible restrictions. Is it time to declare the Obama administration's "strategic patience" nonpolicy a failure?

Answer. In the face of recent DPRK nuclear and missile tests, we have pursued an aggressive sanctions regime and an international campaign to pressure the DPRK government to return to credible negotiations. North Korea has never before been subject to the kind of pressure levied upon it by the recent UNSCR, the recently enacted North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act, and by the recent Executive Order. These actions are not "more of the same"—they represent a major increase in pressure by the international community. This pressure is part of our comprehensive policy toward North Korea—along with a strong defensive military posture, including the recently announced decision to deploy the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in the ROK, rooted in our ironclad alliances with the ROK and Japan to provide deterrence, and principled diplomatic engagement to explore North Korea's readiness for credible negotiations that would lead to the denuclearization of the DPRK. Our priority remains denuclearization, but at the same time, we have worked closely with our allies in the ROK and Japan to enhance our ability to protect against and respond to North Korean actions and provocations, including through the recently announced deployment of a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile defense system.

Question. Given yesterday's ruling of the Tribunal in The Hague, how will the administration reinforce the need for China to drop its outlandish claims in the South China Sea?

Answer. The ruling of the Arbitral Tribunal concerns maritime entitlements and does not speak to maritime boundaries or competing sovereignty claims over land features. We are encouraging all claimants to take advantage of the Arbitral Tribunal's ruling to clarify their maritime claims in accordance with international law, as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention, and to work together to creatively manage and resolve their disputes. Such steps could provide the basis for further discussions aimed at narrowing the geographic scope of the disputes, setting standards for behavior in disputed areas, and ultimately resolving their underlying disagreements free from coercion or the use or threat of force.

Question. What expectations do we have about how the new Philippine Government will respond to the Tribunal's ruling? Do we anticipate they might accept some sort of deal with Beijing to not pursue implementation of the ruling?

Answer. Shortly after the ruling was announced on July 12, the Philippine government welcomed the Arbitral Tribunal's ruling, affirmed its respect for this decision to solve the disputes in the South China Sea, and called on those concerned to exercise restraint and sobriety. The Philippine government's statement also reiterated the Philippines' commitment to the peaceful resolution and management of disputes.It is our expectation that the Philippine government will live up to its commitment to restraint and sobriety. As we have said, the United States urges all parties to exercise restraint and use the Arbitral Tribunal's ruling as a new opportunity to renew efforts to address maritime disputes peacefully.

Question. Will the administration examine the use of appropriate authorities to sanctionChinese companies working on disputed islands?

Answer. We will consider the potential use of all available authorities, as appropriate, to respond to Chinese actions in the South China Sea that threaten U.S. interests. The President has authority under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to impose sanctions to deal with any unusual and extraordinary threat, which has its source in whole or substantial part outside the United States, to the national security, foreign policy, or economy of the United States, if the President declares a national emergency with respect to such a threat. Although there are no current sanctions programs specifically targeting China over the South China Sea, the President has the authority to implement a sanctions response if the President determines it is necessary and appropriate under IEEPA.

Reponses of Rena Bitter, nominated to be Ambassador to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, to Questions from Members of the Committee

ambassador-designate bitter's responses to questions from senator corker

Question. What has the Laotian government committed to in its 2016-2020 plan to combat trafficking in persons? Of these elements, what will your priorities be?

Answer. Lao government officials have acknowledged on multiple occasions that human trafficking remains a problem in Laos. They have also publicly committed to work with civil society, law enforcement, and foreign governments to prevent, protect, assist and properly identify victims.

Laos has taken steps to combat human trafficking. The Lao government passed a new anti-trafficking in persons law, drafted national victim identification guidelines, and completed the 2016-2020 national action plan. Among other items, the plan directs the government to enhance bilateral and multilateral coordination on trafficking issues, as well as cooperation with international organizations and NGOs. It calls for the government to conduct campaigns to raise awareness and establish a trafficking hotline. In addition, it directs the government to strengthen capacity for law enforcement officials to identify victims and prosecute traffickers, including by enhancing coordination among law enforcement agencies and victim service providers. To protect victims, the plan instructs the government to provide shelters and comprehensive services.

If confirmed, I will engage the Lao government and civil society to urge the full implementation of the government's action plan, and I will encourage and assist efforts to address the recommendations set forth in the 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report.

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ambassador-designate bitter's responses to questions from senator 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 have prioritized the promotion of human rights issues throughout my career. As Consular Section Chief in Jordan, my section backed up Embassy Baghdad's at a time when its Iraqi staff was being targeted for their crucial work with American diplomatic and military servicemembers. I worked closely with the Jordanian government to provide routes of escape for many Iraqi locally engaged staff

and their families, before the United States had a refugee program to assist them. During this time period, I also own the Thomas Jefferson Award for my service to American citizens. Additionally, as Director of the State Department's Operations Center, I led the Department's response to multiple humanitarian crises, including those related to the Arab Spring and the triple disaster in Japan.

Most recently as Consul General in Ho Chi Minh City, I worked closely both with civil society groups and individuals to facilitate and highlight U.S. support for fundamental rights with the government of Vietnam. A key component of this support was introducing training programs focusing on rule of law, free expression, labor and media. Our public diplomacy activities consistently spotlighted LGBT rights, women's empowerment, environmental and disability activism.

I met publicly and privately with religious leaders and activists as a way to concretely demonstrate U.S. government support for their rights and raised individual cases and broad principles consistently and directly in my interactions with Vietnamese government officials.

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

Answer. We continue to have concerns about Laos' human rights record, particularly restrictions on civil society, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly. If confirmed, I will continue to raise these issues with the Lao government. Senior U.S. government representatives, including the Secretary of State, have engaged Lao leaders at the highest levels, ensuring that Laos understands our priorities and our values on human rights are those shared by the majority of people worldwide.

In addition, our development assistance always supports our end goal to encourage and facilitate Laos' respect universal human rights. We support programs that strengthen rule of law, access to health and education for Lao women and children, labor rights, media training and environmental protection. I will expand and continue these programs, if confirmed.

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 Laos in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. Laos is a one-party state, and its civil society is nascent and fragile. Due to these limitations, the State Department supports programs that support civil society capacity development, and USAID programs assist persons with disabilities and support improvements in nutrition and health programs, to name just a few examples, to help make civil society stronger. If confirmed, I will be diligent in working to strengthen civil society organizations and furthering efforts to preserve human rights.Question:

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 Laos? 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 fully committed to meeting with human rights, civil society, and other NGOs in the U.S. as well as human rights NGOs in Laos. Additionally, I will continue to support the growth of civil society in Laos. Support from U.S.-based human rights and other non-governmental organizations is critical to helping Laos make improvements on these issues. If confirmed, I will work to ensure all U.S. assistance to Laos is in accordance of the Leahy Law. U.S. security assistance to Laos is currently limited; expanding cooperation in this area depends on further commitments from the Government of Laos to improve its human rights record.

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

Answer. I am deeply concerned by cases such as Sombath Somphone and Kha Yang, as well as the chilling effect these disappearances have throughout Laos. If confirmed, I will press the Lao government to conduct full, thorough, and transparent investigations. This engagement will be through private meetings with key officials in the Lao government as well as through public statements that signals to the citizen of Laos that we have not forgotten about these cases. Those responsible must be held accountable. I will also encourage the Lao to view the justice progress as a part of their wider reputation regarding the rule of law. While these cases are about political activists, the lack of a full investigation casts doubt on the

strength and independence on the judiciary which could have follow on effects for western investors.

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

Answer. Engaging Laos on human rights issues is among the mission's top priorities. Issues that receive particular attention are restrictions on civil society, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. If confirmed, I will continue to raise our concerns with Laos' record at the highest levels.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE BITTER'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Russia is increasing its outreach to Southeast Asia particularly focused on exports of hydrocarbons, energy technology, and weapons. Putin hosted in May the first summit of Southeast Asian nations in Russia. In particular, Russian arms sales to Southeast Asia more than doubled to nearly $5 billion in the five year period through 2015. What are we doing enough to blunt Russia's attempt to buy influence in the region?

Answer. Although Russia's interest in Southeast Asia has increased, Cold War ties between Russia and Laos continue to fade, and there is little indication Russia will be able to buy influence there. Moreover, Laos has experience balancing and managing influence and investment from larger and more powerful countries, and is focused on deepening new relationships with allies such as Japan and Korea, and, increasingly, with the United States and the European Union.

Our efforts to expand our relationship with Laos are based on partnering to build trust, engaging with new generations, and exploring areas of mutual cooperation. Laos understands that it needs a diverse portfolio of friends in order to preserve its independence and move beyond the ranks of the world's least developed countries. We are working to establish the United States as a reliable partner by addressing legacy issues like unexploded ordnance (UXO) and engaging with Laos on health, education, nutrition, and rule of law. We are solidifying our expanding relationship through people-to-people exchanges and visits by senior officials.

REPONSES OF KAMALA SHIRIN LAKDHIR, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO MALAYSIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE LAKDHIR'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORKER

Question. What are your priorities for addressing trafficking in persons and addressing concerns raised by the SFRC?

Answer. The recommendations in the 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report will guide my priorities, if confirmed. The TIP Report narrative for Malaysia and its recommendations represent the best analysis of our TIP experts in Washington and on the ground at our Embassy, and take into account input from a variety of non-governmental groups and individuals who share our serious concerns about trafficking in persons in Malaysia.

Among the current Report's recommendations, I would especially urge Malaysia to fully and effectively implement the 2015 amendments to its anti-trafficking law giving victims greater freedom to live and work outside of shelters. If confirmed, I will stress to Malaysian officials at every level the need to increase the effectiveness of prosecutions, including any complicit government officials. This includes any officials or others involved in the deaths of migrants discovered in horrendous mass graves on the Malaysia-Thai border.

To be successful, Malaysia will need to take a whole-of-government approach to reform. Increasing prosecutions will require improved collaboration by law enforcement, stronger cooperation between law enforcement and prosecutors, timely court procedures, and increased familiarity by judges with the full range of trafficking crimes. At the same time, improved case management and communication with trafficking victims about the status of their cases will be needed to help victims feel safe, understood, and empowered to work with investigators and prosecutors. This includes building prosecutor-victim relationships at least two weeks prior to trial, supporting shelters where victims are counseled, and providing counseling in native languages.

If confirmed, the Embassy team and I will work closely with both government and civil society to identify ways to achieve concrete results. I also look forward to working with this committee as we press Malaysia for progress in these areas.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE LAKDHIR'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. In nearly 25 years working as a diplomat overseas and in Washington, I have worked on a wide range of efforts to support human rights and democracy, a critical component of U.S. diplomacy. My most visible work to support human rights and democracy was as Consul General in Northern Ireland. As the U.S. representative, I promoted implementation of the political settlement enshrined in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. During my time in Belfast, the final step of that Agreement—devolution of policing and justice to the North Ireland authorities—was achieved, but only after protracted and difficult negotiations and U.S. pressure. This was a critical step that, if it had not been achieved, likely would have resulted in the collapse of the Northern Ireland power sharing government.

As Consul General, I also persistently promoted interaction between all communities in Northern Ireland, including immigrant communities. In outreach for Martin Luther King Day, on International Women's Day, in support of LGBTI people, and on numerous other occasions, I strongly emphasized respect for human rights for all citizens.

As the office director for Maritime Southeast Asia in the Department's Bureau for East Asian and Pacific Affairs from 2007-2009, I oversaw U.S. engagement with the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Timor Leste, Singapore, and Brunei. In each of these countries, U.S. diplomacy focused on strengthening democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights. In the Philippines, we closely monitored extrajudicial killings, pressing the Philippine government to investigate and halt these killings as well as to implement protections of human rights as a critical component of U.S.-funded law enforcement and military trainings. In Timor-Leste, we focused on building government institutions and civil society in a fragile new nation during a time that included attempted assassinations of the President and Prime Minister in 2008 and the aftermath of widespread sectarian violence in 2006. In Malaysia, lively national elections resulted in the strongest showing by the opposition since the country's independence, and U.S. policy supported the expansion of civil society and public debate. In Indonesia, our diplomatic efforts aimed to build democratic and transparent government institutions, as well as respect for rule of law and human rights after the then-recent transition from the Suharto era.

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

Answer. The United States is concerned about a number of human rights issues in Malaysia. In particular, there is a need for increased efforts to protect the life and liberty of people crossing the country's borders. The discovery in 2015 of mass graves at camps on the Malaysia-Thailand border illustrates the urgent need for the government to take action. Malaysia has launched investigations, but should act quickly to identify those responsible and bring them to justice, to include any complicit government officials. Working with Malaysia to protect migrants, trafficking victims, and other vulnerable populations will be among my top priorities, if confirmed.

I also plan to underscore in my engagements with Malaysian officials that fairness, transparency, and rule of law are essential to promote confidence in Malaysia's judicial system and democracy. The free exchange of ideas, including in the press and online, is particularly crucial to innovation and success in the global economy, so I would also work with the private sector and other governments to urge Malaysia to ensure its laws, existing and future, fully respect freedom of expression. Finally, I would also continue to raise U.S. concerns about the selective use of the Sedition Act and other laws to stifle dissent.

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 Malaysia in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. It is always challenging to respect the political process and cultural and historical circumstances of any country, while at the same time pressing for governments to abide by international human rights obligations and commitments. I recognize this challenge and, if confirmed, will urge the Malaysian government to fulfill its commitments to protect the human rights of Malaysian citizens, migrants, and all others within its borders. Continued active engagement and partnership with Malaysia across a broad array of mutual interests will provide greater opportunities to address human rights concerns.

Malaysia's Sedition Act is one particular concern. Prime Minister Najib backed away from an earlier promise to repeal the law, and his government instead expanded its scope in late 2014. The United States has repeatedly expressed our concerns about the Sedition Act and other limits on freedom of expression in Malaysia. The U.S. government also proactively sought details of proposed changes to the country's laws regulating the internet, and expressed concerns about their potential restrictions on freedom of expression. We have also emphasized to Malaysians that restrictions on speech and assembly, and a lack of confidence in rule of law and judicial independence could have a negative impact on Malaysia's image as a business-friendly economy. If confirmed, I would continue to press the Malaysian Government on these issues.

Advocating for the rights of LGBTI people is another challenge. Some officials have stated LGBTI rights are incompatible with Malaysian values, but the Embassy continues to impress upon Malaysians that a vibrant, multiethnic democracy depends on protecting the rights of all people and that a society should protect the beliefs of the faithful as well as the rights of LGBTI people. In March, Secretary Kerry celebrated Malaysian transgender activist Nisha Ayub as one of the 2016 International Woman of Courage awardees. If confirmed, I will continue to support capacity-building grants and activities for LGBTI civil society and urge progress in this area.

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 Malaysia? 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 the long-standing practice of meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and in Malaysia. In particular, such meetings are an opportunity to exchange views on how to cooperate on the protection of human rights and dignity of people, as well as to symbolize the U.S. commitment to democratic principles and the protection of human rights.The Leahy Act has been an important tool in protecting human rights for nearly 20 years, and I am fully committed to its implementation, including strict adherence to the Department's Leahy vetting procedures.

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

Answer. Yes. The United States government regularly raises its concerns about selective use of the Sedition Act, national security legislation, and other laws to harass, detain, and imprison government critics, including opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim. We do so at the highest levels of government, and if confirmed, I will continue that practice.

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

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I am committed to raising U.S. concerns regarding human rights, civil rights, and good governance with Malaysian counterparts. In particular, discussing strong bilateral trade and investment between the United States and Malaysia provides an opportunity to underscore our firm belief that good governance and freedom of expression are essential to Malaysia's continued prosperity and ability to innovate. I will also seek to increase opportunities for exchanges between U.S. and Malaysian civil society in order to strengthen the capacity of non-governmental organizations in Malaysia.Human Trafficking

Question. As you know, last year Malaysia was promoted from Tier 3 to Tier 2 Watch List in the State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report. Yet, Malaysia has taken few significant steps to address its overall trafficking and forced labor problem—the steps that they have taken have been small in comparison with the

scope of the problem. The Malaysia 2016 TIP report reads, "[t]he Government of Malaysia does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. Despite these measures, the government did not demonstrate overall increasing anti-trafficking efforts compared to the previous reporting period." Despite a reformed victim protection system, migrant workers continue to suffer on palm oil plantations and in electronics factories. Though trafficking convictions increased last year, investigations and prosecutions decreased. And no one has been held accountable for the mass graves found last year on the Thai border.

What, in your view, is the rationale for keeping Malaysia on the Tier 2 Watch List?

Answer. Secretary Kerry made the 2016 tier placement decisions based on an assessment of government efforts to meet the minimum standards established under the TVPA. These efforts are outlined in the 2016 report, along with specific recommendations for Malaysia. One key effort was Malaysia's continued work to reform its victim protection system with the goal of giving victims the ability to move freely in and out of shelters and to seek employment, the top TIP report recommendation for several years. Malaysia welcomed international expert opinion and convened a series of consultation sessions with NGOs during which civil society was given the opportunity to provide specific edits and recommendations on the draft regulations, which have since become law.

Malaysia has much work to do to improve the situation of trafficking victims and to hold traffickers accountable, including increasing investigations, prosecutions and convictions. If confirmed, I will remain committed to urging Malaysia to make progress based on those recommendations.

Question. Can you pledge that, if confirmed as Ambassador, you will do all that is within your power to ensure that political considerations will not influence Malaysia's ranking in the State Department Trafficking in Persons Report?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will continue to lead the Embassy in reporting the facts accurately and completely, and to provide the TIP office and the Secretary of State our best and honest assessment of Malaysia's efforts to address this serious problem. My team and I will objectively assess the government's efforts each year against the TVPA's minimum standards in any recommendations to the Department regarding the annual Trafficking in Persons Report.

Question. What is your strategy to incentivize Malaysia to take more significant steps to prosecute traffickers involved in trafficking—not just a few cases, but a greater effort to tackle human trafficking as a product of organized criminal syndicates?

Answer. I believe the Trafficking in Persons Report is an important tool to incentivize countries to take significant steps in each of the TIP focus areas: protection, prosecution, and prevention. The Report and its recommendations make very clear to Malaysia the urgent need to make progress on prosecutions and convictions of traffickers. I understand the Government of Malaysia has welcomed U.S. and international experts to help build the capacity of its investigators, prosecutors, and judges to bring successful TIP cases. If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Malaysia to support that collaboration.

If confirmed, I will press for greater accountability for traffickers, especially increased prosecutions and convictions. I believe the U.S.-Malaysia Labor Consistency Plan side agreement to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) promotes these same priorities and incentivizes the Government of Malaysia to cooperate on these issues.

Human Rights

Question. Earlier this year Senator McCain and I sent a letter to President Obama expressing our concerns with regards to Prime Minister Najib's efforts to undermine the rule of law and basic human rights. The State Department's Country Report on Human Rights for 2015 describes Malaysia's restrictions on freedom of speech and expression, on the press, and on assembly, as well as sedition charges against dozens of activists, lawyers and opposition politicians.

As Ambassador, how will you prioritize human rights in Malaysia with other U.S. strategic and economic interests?

Answer. Protecting human rights has been and will continue to be a priority of the United States in its diplomatic engagement. Advancing respect for human rights, freedom of expression, transparency, and rule of law are critical to achieving many goals of the Mission—from countering violent extremism to increased trade and investment—in Malaysia. It will be my priority, if confirmed, to underscore to the government of Malaysia the importance of good governance, rule of law, and

freedom of expression to the country's continued prosperity and ability to innovate. In the context of our strong bilateral trade and investment, I will also work to ensure that goods and services from Malaysia meet the highest labor standards.

Question. What specific areas—good governance, anti-corruption, labor rights, freedom of information—is Malaysia making progress and where do the most significant challenges remain?

Answer. While high-level political corruption remains a major challenge in Malaysia, regulators and law enforcement officials have taken steps to combat money-laundering and terrorism finance. In February 2016, Malaysia gained full membership to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) after undergoing an intensive mutual evaluation.

The United States champions good governance and transparency. In Malaysia, most government documents, including draft legislation, are not generally available to the public. If confirmed, I will support longstanding U.S. government efforts to urge the Malaysian Government to share draft legislation with stakeholders from industry and civil society, and in particular proposed legislation that would restrict the free flow of information online.

Finally, the U.S.-Malaysia Labor Consistency Plan requires Malaysia to make significant progress on labor rights before the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) can enter into force between the United States and Malaysia. These improvements include enforcing the core labor rights as outlined by the International Labor Organization (ILO)—freedom of association and collective bargaining, and the eradication of discrimination and forced and child labor. Malaysia has begun to amend its laws to bring it into compliance with these international standards. Malaysia has already made modest progress by amending and issuing regulations to its anti-trafficking law that are intended to enhance the ability of victims to move freely and to work. The government has begun collaborating with civil society on trafficking victim protection, including by funding NGO victim support activities for the first time. While much work remains, these are important steps in reforming Malaysia's victim protection regime and improving the government's efficacy in the fight against trafficking. As the recent TIP report emphasized, Malaysia needs to increase trafficking investigations, prosecutions, and convictions. I will work steadfastly to ensure Malaysia lives up to these commitments, if confirmed.

Question. How will you promote human rights with Malaysia's youth, including in counter-terrorism and CVE work in Malaysia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support greater opportunities for the peoples of Malaysia and the United States to meet and deepen their understanding of each other's cultures and values, including through tourism, education, and other people-to-people exchanges. Outreach to Malaysia's youth and communities outside the capital will be a particular area of focus for me, if confirmed.

Working with the Malaysian government, the U.S. government's CVE efforts are focused on strategic communications projects to analyze target audiences, and to create and disseminate information. If confirmed, I hope to leverage government-civil society partnerships to ensure a wide range of stakeholders participate in CT and CVE efforts.

Corruption

Question. With multiple media outlets reporting that money from the 1MDB fund was diverted to Prime Minister Najib's bank account, some analysts argue that U.S. support for Najib risks giving the impression that the United States is not concerned about these corruption allegations, or that the United States can tolerate some amount of corruption for the sake of maintaining U.S.-Malaysia cooperation. As you may know, I view anti-corruption efforts as absolutely central to our foreign policy.

How should the United States factor the 1MDB corruption allegations into its bilateral relationship with Malaysia?

Answer. The peoples of the United States and Malaysia have a strong relationship built on common economic and security interests and mutual trust. Investing in the long-term relationship between the United States and Malaysia provides a strong foundation for the United States to address issues of concern, including corruption. The United States will continue to urge the government of Malaysia to apply the rule of law consistently, fairly, and transparently, and with respect for universal human rights—as we have routinely done at the highest levels. Additionally, our agencies have expanded cooperation on this important issue with Malaysian institutions like the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC). If confirmed, I would work with all agencies and departments of the U.S. government to support the U.S.

government's commitment to preventing and combatting corruption, including training and capacity building programs for Malaysian regulators and law enforcement officials to combat corruption and other financial crimes.

Question. To what extent are anti-corruption objectives systematically incorporated into the U.S. government's foreign assistance programming in Malaysia?

Answer. Malaysia, as a high-middle income country, does not receive significant U.S. foreign assistance. If confirmed, I would seek to ensure all assistance programming in Malaysia is carried out in a manner consistent with U.S. law and with the strictest respect for our commitment to prevent and combat corruption.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE LAKDHIR'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. In late June a night club in Malaysia was bombed at the direction of ISIL. Is Malaysia doing enough to combat the threat from ISIL? Are we concerned that the night club bombing could lead to additional ISIL attacks in Malaysia?

Answer. The recent nightclub bombing, reportedly carried out with Da'esh influence, elevated the sense of urgency and reinforces the importance of the commitment shared by the United States and Malaysia to eradicating Da'esh. The Malaysian government takes seriously its role to protect its citizens against violent extremism, as evidenced by the over 180 Da'esh supporters arrested in the past three years. Malaysia recognizes the threat is real and has taken a number of significant steps towards combatting the threat of Da'esh. Malaysia joined the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, and has signed two terrorist information sharing arrangements with the United States.

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Malaysian government and people to support our global strategy to cut off ISIL's financing, dismantle its networks and supply lines, ensure fewer foreign fighters join, and ultimately eradicate ISIL.

Question. ISIL launched publication of a new newspaper to recruit fighters from Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, southern Thailand, and southern Philippines which apparently overlaps with the territory of their stated Southeast Asian caliphate. Are we focused on addressing the message from this newspaper?

Answer. Malaysia's efforts to counter-Da'esh narratives are well underway, including a number of workshops supported by the United States and U.S. private sector participants. With significant support from the United States, Malaysia plans to launch its Digital Strategic Communications Division in July. If confirmed, I will do whatever I can to support these efforts.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2016

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

Hon. W. Stuart Symington, of Missouri, nominated to be Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Nigeria
Andrew Robert Young, of California, nominated to be Ambassador to Burkina Faso
Joseph R. Donovan, Jr., of Virginia, nominated to be Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:31 a.m. in Room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Jeff Flake, presiding.

Present: Senators Flake [presiding], Rubio, Gardner, Markey, and Murphy.

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

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

Today the committee will consider the nomination of three highly experienced career Foreign Service officers to be U.S. Ambassadors to Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Indonesia. We never knew that Indonesia had become part of Africa. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. But we will take it for the day.

Glad to have you here. I met with each of you in my office last week and appreciated you making time for that. I was, as I usually am, very impressed at the expertise and commitment and experience that you all bring to this potential new post.

As the largest sub-Saharan African country, Nigeria remains of critical importance to the U.S. interests especially in the effort against Boko Haram. However, the stress of low global oil prices on Nigeria's economy is creating numerous challenges for President Buhari's administration and Nigeria's broader security.

Burkina Faso is another West African country that recently achieved democratic transition of power first since its independence in 1966 with newly elected President Kabore. He enjoys considerable domestic and international goodwill. There are many economic, political, and security challenges he faces.

Finally, Indonesia is the largest and one of the most important countries in Southeast Asia, a vital element to Asia's future development. Our close bilateral ties with the Indonesian Government in areas of trade, counterterrorism, and maritime security will need careful stewardship in the years ahead.

I thank each of you for your time today. I am aware of the sacrifices that you make but, in particular, the sacrifices that your families make for you to serve in these posts.

And with that, I will recognize the distinguished ranking member for a few comments. Senator Markey?

STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much. Thank you for having this hearing.

Each of these countries presents important opportunities to advance American interests while helping to ensure peaceful and prosperous lives for hundreds of millions of people in two of the world's most dynamic and fastest growing regions.

In August, I led a congressional delegation to West Africa that included a visit to Nigeria, a country that plays a critical role not only in its region but for the entire continent. When many think of Nigeria, they think of the security threats of Boko Haram and other extremist groups in the northeast or from piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. These threats are real and they are serious.

But our visit also showed a dynamic and hopeful Nigeria. In Lagos, I met many brilliant young entrepreneurs whose innovative startups are creating a new knowledge-driven economy. Their work has extraordinary potential to lift many millions of Nigerians out of poverty and make the country a major player in the 21st century economy. The United States can be a critical partner in supporting the efforts of these Nigerian pioneers.

Burkina Faso, which translates in English to the land of the upright people, also offers reasons for optimism about the future of West Africa. After decades of autocratic rule, the people peacefully demanded democratic reforms. They are now working to further those reforms, strengthening their political institutions and civil society and preserve a culture of peace and tolerance in a region threatened by growing extremism. Also essential are their efforts to reduce poverty by building inclusive and sustainable economic development in one of Africa's poorest countries.

And last, at the center of economically dynamic Southeast Asia, Indonesia is a democracy and a secular state that also has a larger Muslim population than any other country in the world. Those facts stand as a clear rebuke to those who say that Islam is inherently antagonistic to democracy.

So I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing, and we thank all of our nominees for being here today.

Senator FLAKE. Well, thank you, Senator Markey.

We will now turn to our nominees. The first nominee is Stuart Symington who served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central Africa and African Security Affairs since 2015. His previous positions include serving as U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda and Djibouti. We were commenting in the office that Djibouti, Nigeria,

about the same population, and everything else. So this is going to be a big change.

Our second nominee, Andrew Young, most recently served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Mali. Previous assignments include South Korea, France, New Zealand, Burma, India, and Hong Kong. And I am sure he is going to find a way to practice his Korean skills in Mali as well.

Last but not least, Joseph Donovan, who currently serves as Managing Director of the Washington Office of the American Institute in Taiwan, previously served as Foreign Policy Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon, also served in Hong Kong, Japan, China, South Korea, and Qatar.

With that, we will recognize Ambassador Symington.

STATEMENT OF HON. W. STUART SYMINGTON, OF MISSOURI, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

Ambassador SYMINGTON. Chairman Flake, Ranking Member Markey, to you and to all the distinguished members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I want you to know how deeply honored I am to sit before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for their confidence in my ability to lead U.S. engagement with one of, as you said, our most important partners on the African continent.

I am also delighted to share with you the special pleasure I have to have my wife Susan; my son Stuart; my mother and father, Stuart and Janie Symington; brother John; and nephew Jack with us today. It is a remarkable testament to how at home and abroad they serve also with me, as they do with all other Foreign Service officers.

Senator FLAKE. Where are they? Can they raise their hands here? The Symington family. All right.

Ambassador SYMINGTON. Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent half of my 30 years of public service working to advance peace, security, and prosperity for the people of the African continent. In all of these endeavors, including during my two jobs as Ambassador and my previous job in Washington as Deputy Assistant Secretary and Special Representative for the Central African Republic, I have learned one thing that matters most, and that is the partnerships that we form with the people of the place we work to advance our interests and the wellbeing of people.

Nigeria is home to more than 180 million people. And as you said, Senator Markey, some of the most vibrant and entrepreneurial people in the world are there. The United States has in Nigeria a unique opportunity to engage productively in that vital partnership.

In 2015, we showed that by the relentless U.S. diplomatic efforts and technical assistance, helping their national electoral commission that supported the people of Nigeria in a vote that became a peaceful change from one party to another for the first time in that nation's history.

Additionally, our engagement with Nigerian health authorities helped to stop in the City of Lagos an Ebola epidemic which could have wreaked havoc with the most populous city in Africa.

We welcome profoundly President Buhari's call to fight corruption and to make steps towards achieving that goal. I would just highlight his high profile public campaign, the institution of a single account, and his work to investigate corruption.

Mr. Chairman, despite such progress, I am keenly aware of the profound challenges that remain. These include, as you pointed out the other day, Senator Markey, improving the climate for the telecommunications industry that could put so many people to work. They also include energy. The Power Africa legislation and the Electrify Africa effort that you all backed can make a profound difference on the continent. It includes health where we are spending most of our money and the governance of health, which is so critical to make sure it gets where it is needed. It also includes justice, human rights, and education.

Finally, with all the other countries of this region and many others around the world, Nigeria faces, as you mentioned, an extraordinary terrorist threat from Boko Haram. Boko Haram, which in March 2015, declared its affiliation to ISIL, has killed tens of thousands, kidnapped thousands, displaced many more, and today threatens a large segment of the population. Nigeria and its neighbors have driven Boko Haram out of much of the territory that it controlled in 2015. However, its attacks have now created a humanitarian crisis of extraordinary proportions, and the group still continues to challenge state authority in many places as the government works to reengage with and provide services to the people in that territory.

Nigeria also faces serious security and governance challenges in the south in the Niger Delta where militants have attacked critical oil infrastructure, slashing oil output and slowing Nigeria's economic growth at a time of falling oil prices.

Security problems are significant. Addressing them is critical, but it has to be done in a proactive, consensus-oriented, and achieving manner that prioritizes both security and the connection with the local communities that is the true heart of lasting security in any part of the world.

As the people of Nigeria pursue solutions to these challenges, for both practical and moral reasons, the United States has a profound interest in their success. As we work together to address those challenges, we will continue to work with Nigerian partners to ensure human rights are fully protected. These rights are profoundly important to the people of Nigeria and their future, just as they are to us. Nigeria has the resilience and ability to overcome these problems by drawing on the strengths of its people, on their energy and vitality, and on Nigeria's other great natural resources.

If confirmed, I will work with those in the public and private sector to create opportunities for the people of Nigeria to grow and diversify their economy. Its success is not just important to Nigeria. It is important to the continent and to the world. Facing the tough challenges ahead together, our partnership with Nigeria aims to see that Nigeria becomes both an anchor of prosperity and stability

and an outstanding role model for other developing countries around the world.

Mr. Chairman, these are great challenges, but if confirmed as your Ambassador and the Ambassador of the United States, I look forward to working with every member of what is a truly extraordinary U.S. mission, a team both in Abuja and in Lagos, to advance U.S. interests, to strengthen our partnership with Nigeria, and to ensure the safety and security of all our citizens. If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward especially to working on this critical agenda with you and your colleagues and with all those who are inspired, as you are, to continue this effort on the continent of Africa.

I thank you very much for your invitation today and welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Symington follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF W. STUART SYMINGTON

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, and distinguished members of the committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I am grateful to the President and to Secretary Kerry for their confidence in my ability to lead U.S. engagement with one of our most critical bilateral partners on the African continent. It is a special pleasure to have my family with me here today as they have been at every step of my diplomatic career.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent half of my more than 30 years of public service working to advance U.S. efforts to support the peace, security, and prosperity of Africa and its people. In all these endeavors, including during two prior postings as Ambassador and my present work in Washington as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, I have seen that what matters most are the partnerships we form that advance the well-being of people.

Home to as many as 180 million people and Africa's most populous country, Nigeria provides a unique opportunity to engage productively in partnerships. We have a chance to build on recent successes as we face the challenges ahead. In 2015, relentless U.S. diplomatic efforts and technical assistance to Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission supported the people of Nigeria as millions voted in a credible elections process. Nigeria saw the peaceful transition of power from one political party to another for the first time in its history.

Additionally, U.S. engagement with Nigerian health authorities helped contain Ebola in the dense population center of Lagos, averting a public health catastrophe in Africa's most populous city.

We welcomed President Buhari's call to fight corruption and his government's initial steps towards that goal. These include high-profile investigations, the use of a single auditable treasury account for receipt of all public funds, and steps to reform the state oil company and the military procurement process, as well as an ongoing public campaign against corruption.

Mr. Chairman, despite such progress, I am keenly aware that profound challenges remain in many areas, including health, energy, economic growth and job creation, governance, justice, human rights, and education. Similar to other countries in the region, Nigeria continues to face an extremist threat. Boko Haram, which in March 2015 declared its affiliation to ISIL, has killed tens of thousands, displaced many more, and threatened large segments of the population. Nigeria and its neighbors, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, successfully drove Boko Haram out of much of the territory the group had controlled in 2015. However, Boko Haram still challenges state authority in the Northeast as the government endeavors to hold and provide services in territory it has regained, and Boko Haram's attacks have created a humanitarian crisis.

Nigeria also faces serious security and governance challenges in the Niger Delta, where militants have attacked critical oil infrastructureslashing oil output and slowing Nigeria's economic recovery in a period of already reduced oil revenue. Security problems are significant and addressing them in a proactive, consensus-oriented manner that prioritizes dialogue with local communities is one of Nigeria's heaviest responsibilities.

As the people of Nigeria pursue solutions to these challenges, for both practical and moral reasons, the United States has a profound interest in their success. As we work together to address those challenges, we will continue to work with our Nigerian partners to ensure human rights are fully protected. Those rights are profoundly important to the people of Nigeria and to their future, just as they are to us.

Nigeria has the resilience and ability to overcome these problems by drawing on the strengths of its people, on their energy and vitality, and on Nigeria's other great natural resources. If confirmed, I will work with those in the public and private sector to create opportunities for the people of Nigeria to grow and diversify their economy.

In conclusion, Nigeria's success is not just important to Nigeria but it's important to the continent and the world. As President Obama said in advance of his bilateral meeting with President Buhari in Washington D.C., "We are looking forward to hearing.how the United States can partner with Nigeria so that Nigeria ends up being an anchor not only of prosperity and stability [on the continent], but can also be an outstanding role model for developing countries around the world."

Mr. Chairman, I have been fortunate to work in public service and particularly on African issues for so many years. If confirmed I look forward to working with our truly extraordinary U.S. Mission team in Nigeria and, as Chief of Mission, to ensure the safety, security, and productivity of all U.S. citizens as we work together to advance U.S. interests in Nigeria.

Should I have the fortune to receive the confirmation of you and your Senate colleagues, I look forward to working on this critical agenda and inspiring others to contribute to this effort. I thank you for your invitation today, and I welcome any questions you might have.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Ambassador Symington.

Mr. Young?

STATEMENT OF ANDREW ROBERT YOUNG, OF CALIFORNIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO BURKINA FASO

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, for a diplomat who has spent 25 years serving his country on five continents across the globe, there is no greater honor that I can feel today than to be before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Ambassador to Burkina Faso. I am humbled by the support that Secretary Kerry entrusted in me for this nomination.

I am joined today by Margaret Hawley, my spouse, my partner, and fellow Foreign Service officer, and my son Nathan, who is a student at American University. My daughter Claire, a student at Yale; and my mother, who is in an adobe house in California; sister Danee and brother Jon and broker Blair and in-laws are monitoring this from the feed from the west coast. And if my dad were here, he would be the fellow with the big grin smiling and illuminating the rest of the room with his irrepressible enthusiasm.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, my love for Africa began 30 years ago as an intern at our embassy in Central African Republic-Bengui. You know, while we endured the power outages and gamma globulin shots that hurt like the dickens and we had terrorist attacks and monitored the trial of former Emperor Bokassa for unmentionable crimes, we also engaged the team to help people lift themselves out of poverty, to address health care concerns, and to address education for women and girls and human rights.

I cherished what I learned in a small town in the heart of Africa and it inspired me to take a master's degree in African studies and to work for the Commerce Department in the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to support private sector investment in Africa.

I then joined our diplomatic service where I saw firsthand the importance of putting promotion of democracy at the forefront of U.S. foreign policy.

Last year, I was honored to receive the State Department's Mark Palmer Award for Democracy for work that I had done in Burma with Aung San Suu Kyi and my work here on Capitol Hill as a legislative fellow and also in Mali where, as you said, Mr. Chairman, I served for 3 years as Deputy Chief of Mission.

If confirmed as the next Ambassador to Burkina Faso, I will draw upon these experiences to advance our interests prioritizing three core areas: good governance, security, and equitable development. As Senator Markey mentioned, the Burkinabe people bravely demonstrated their commitment to democracy in 2014 by standing firm to stop ex-President Campaore from undermining the constitution and extending his 27-year rule. Doing what is right and not what is easy, Burkinabe civil society with the support of friends, including the United States, stood firm and faced the guns of the presidential guard who attempted to seize power in 2015. And when given the opportunity to express their views at the ballot box, the Burkinabe people again stood up and voted in record numbers in elections in 2015 and 2016, elections that were judged widely as free, fair, and transparent. And today, as Senator Markey said, the leadership that is in place in Burkina Faso consents with the consent of the governed. But that democracy, that democratic transition, as you said, Senator, remains fragile.

If confirmed, I would seek your support and your guidance to help the Burkinabe people consolidate that democracy as a bulwark against the instability that reigns in that tough neighborhood, which is the Sahel. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and other terrorist groups based in Mali—they export death and insecurity throughout the region.

If confirmed, my second priority would be to address those security concerns, including the types of deadly attacks that have occurred in Ouagadougou and in Mali that I saw firsthand during my time in Mali. But in security, we have a strong partner in the people of Burkina Faso. They have deployed more than 12,000 peacekeepers in the toughest spots around the world, standing watch in our common interests—to promote our common interests since 1993.

So if confirmed, I would work through these existing programs and also new opportunities like you know, like the National Guard State Partnership Program to help emphasize and support indigenous capacities for Burkina Faso to deter and to respond to the types of terrorist threats that we have seen and to advance our common goals to combat violent extremism in the Sahel.

Priority three would be equitable development, which reinforces good governance and security. One of the brakes on Burkina Faso's growth has been inadequate infrastructure. Burkina successfully completed a 5-year, $480 million Millennium Challenge compact in 2014 that made great advances to unlock the country's potential. Our adept USAID and Centers for Disease Control teams—they play key roles in multi-sector resiliency programs. And Burkina Faso, as you said, Senator, a land of integrity, of upright people, they have earned high praise for their effective use of valuable ex-

ternal assistance. New resources could jump start Burkina as that bulwark against instability in the Sahel.

Strong people-to-people ties embrace innovative exchange programs and a vibrant Peace Corps presence that includes efforts focused on an issue near and dear to my heart, engaging youth and empowering women and girls.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, you know, as we meet in this historic chamber, I am struck again by the awesome responsibility levied on an ambassador to protect fellow Americans. I have faced that responsibility during my time in Mali and when we confronted terrorism and defeated the Ebola threat. If confirmed, I will, above all, endeavor to protect American citizens and interests abroad. I will work to support good governance, which is the bedrock of effective society that reflects our shared values. And I would seek to advance U.S. national security while promoting equitable development.

And finally, if confirmed, I would look to you for counsel and support to advance these common interests.

I welcome your questions and thank you so much for considering my nomination.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Young follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANDREW R. YOUNG

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and other members of the committee, for a Foreign Service Officer who has spent 25 years serving his country on five continents across the globe, I can tell you there is no greater honor for me than to appear before you as President Obama's nominee for United States Ambassador to Burkina Faso. I am humbled by Secretary Kerry's support to take on this responsibility. I am joined by Margaret Hawley, my wife, partner and fellow Foreign Service Officer for the past 26 years and my son Nathan, who studies at American University. My daughter Claire, a sophomore at Yale, is following the live stream as is my mother, Joyce, who is watching from her adobe house in Bakersfield California, and my sister Danee from Denver, brothers Jon from California and Blair from Oregon. Were he still with us, I think my irrepressible father, Bob, would be literally glowing from the front row.

My love for Africa began thirty years ago as an intern at the U.S. Embassy in Bangui, Central African Republic. While we endured power outages, gamma globulin shots that hurt like the dickens, a terrorist hijacking, and the trial of former Emperor Bokassa for unmentionable crimes, we also worked as a team to support human rights, empower women and girls, and encourage self-help projects to lift people out of poverty. I cherished what I learned from life in a small town in the heart of Africa. After that, I received a Master's Degree in African Studies, and worked at the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to support the private sector in Africa. Joining our diplomatic service, I saw first-hand the importance of promoting democracy as a key component of our foreign policy. I was honored last year to receive the State Department's first Mark Palmer Award for the Promotion of Democracy for actions taken in Burma, on Capitol Hill when I was a Legislative Fellow for Senator Lieberman and in Mali where I have just completed three years as Deputy Chief of Mission. If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Burkina Faso, I will draw upon these experiences to advance U.S. interests in Africa.

There is a good reason that the name Burkina Faso means "Land of the People of Integrity." Integrity is a key value for the Burkinabe who are strong partners of the United States in our common struggle to promote democracy, development, and to fight instability. Inspired to do what is right, not what is easy, Burkinabe civil society, with the support of friends including the United States, took actions in 2014 to stop the actions of then President Compaore to undermine the institution of the constitution, to restore democratic governance, and to confront some elements of the Presidential Security Regiment's attempt to disrupt democratic transition in 2015. Presidential, legislative, and municipal elections in 2015 and 2016 were judged free and transparent. New leadership is in place, empowered by the consent of the gov-

erned. But that democratic transition remains fragile. If confirmed, I would prioritize supporting the Burkinabe to consolidate their democracy and seek your support to nurture a nation that confronts a host of challenges.

Burkina Faso is in a tough neighborhood. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb and other terrorist groups like al-Mouribitoune based in Mali export death and violence to the region. I witnessed this first-hand during multiple terrorist attacks in Mali. Within its means, Burkina Faso has been a valued partner in promoting regional security and combating terrorism. Deploying peacekeeping troops in places like Mali and Darfur, Burkina Faso has been a security provider in Africa. Since 1993, Burkina Faso has contributed more than 12,000 peacekeepers around the world and currently has more than 3,000 deployed. Burkina Faso hosts more than 32,000 Malian refugees with humanitarian assistance from the United States. If confirmed, I would work to build on this solid base through these programs and others like the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) to enhance Burkina Faso's capacities in our common efforts to combat and prevent violent extremism.

One of the brakes on Burkina Faso's growth has been inadequate infrastructure, especially in the energy sector. Burkina Faso completed a five-year $480.9 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact in 2014 focused on agriculture, girls' education, and rural development. The positive reports on Burkina Faso's effective use of these scarce and valuable resources and the country continuing to pass its scorecard would make Burkina Faso eligible to be considered for a second compact.

People-to-people links between the United States and Burkina Faso have grown ever stronger through a vibrant Peace Corps presence that today includes more than 114 volunteers who serve throughout the country in Health, Economic Development, and Education—particularly focused on an issue near and dear to my heart; engaging youth and empowering women and girls. In addition, our people-to-people links include engaging future leaders such as the innovative Young African Leaders Initiative that includes the Mandela Washington Fellows, Fulbright, Humphrey, and International Visitor exchange programs. If confirmed, I would welcome your support for these programs that help empower Burkinabe partners to address the root causes of the challenges facing the region.

If confirmed, my priorities will be to promote democracy and good governance; advance peace and security; and, promote equitable economic opportunity and development. With the interagency team and the support of Congress, I would draw on my recent experience in Mali and innovative whole-of-government programs to work in tandem with the host government to strengthen democratic and governance institutions to support transparency, human rights, religious freedom, rule of law and justice, and citizen participation and representation.

Having seen first-hand the challenging security environment of the Sahel during a number of terrorist attacks, if confirmed, I would prioritize security cooperation in ways that support Burkinabe forces' efforts to enhance capacity and professionalism to maintain public order, protect borders, counter terrorism, cooperate regionally, and continue peacekeeping operations. To do so, I would ask for your support for the sustained partnership and mentoring programs I have seen work well in neighboring countries. Finally, if confirmed I would seek to build on previous efforts—such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Power Africa, and Millennium Challenge Corporation investments to increase and sustain economic well-being with trade and investment in Burkina Faso. Together, our team would build on efforts to foster Burkinabe resilience and capacity to address the challenges of economic opportunity, demographic and environmental change in our common interest.

If confirmed, my priorities would be to maximize the effectiveness of our cooperation with Burkina Faso. I will above all endeavour to protect American citizens and interests, advance U.S. national security in the Sahel region support good governance as the bedrock of an effective society that reflects American values in all interactions with the government and people of Burkina Faso. If confirmed, I will look to you for counsel and support as I seek to build on the achievements of Ambassador Tulinabo Mushingi and his team in advancing our shared values and common interests. I welcome any questions you may have.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my nomination.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Mr. Young.

Mr. Donovan?

STATEMENT OF JOSEPH R. DONOVAN, JR., OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Markey, thank you very much for this opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee to become the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for placing their confidence in me and for the incredible opportunity to serve the United States in this country of such importance to us.

I would also like to introduce my wife, Meo Chou, and our two sons, James and Matthew. Without their love, support, and sacrifices, I would not be here before you today.

Mr. Chairman, Indonesia is an increasingly important player on the world stage. It is the world's third largest democracy, the most populous Muslim majority nation, and an emerging economic leader. Indonesia is a member of the G–20, the World Trade Organization, APEC, and a leader in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Indonesia is also a tolerant and diverse Muslim majority country, and its historic peaceful transition to democracy has important lessons for other nations in transition.

Put simply, it is in our national interest to continue to grow an effective partnership with this dynamic nation. Today, the United States and Indonesia enjoy excellent relations. During President Jokowi's October 2015 visit to Washington, we committed to forge a strategic partnership based on shared interests and common values that focuses on deepening people-to-people ties, enhancing security cooperation, strengthening our economic ties, and increasing collaboration on global and regional issues.

We share an abiding interest in addressing challenges on the international stage. The United States looks to Indonesia as a valued partner in areas such as counterterrorism, environmental conservation, peacekeeping operations, and the regional promotion of human rights and democratic governance. Indonesia is a key partner in our efforts to promote regional prosperity and stability.

Our development cooperation through USAID and the Millennium Challenge Corporation is a key tool for our strategic engagement with Indonesia. Working with a wide range of partners, government, the private sector, civil society groups, and educational institutions, we are advancing U.S. interests by promoting a more prosperous, democratic, and resilient Indonesia. Our development partnership focuses on areas of importance to the Indonesian people. We seek to augment their efforts to build capacity and improve governance, including in such areas as environmental protection, health, and countering violent extremism.

U.S.-Indonesia defense cooperation has never been stronger or more comprehensive than it is today, and we are proud to be Indonesia's top defense partner in joint exercises and other engagements.

If confirmed, my priority will be to continue to forge an even more effective strategic partnership between our two nations. I will pursue opportunities for U.S. business, for example, by promoting U.S. solutions to Indonesia's requirements in the power and aviation sectors. Likewise, I will endeavor to use our trade and invest-

ment framework agreement talks to reduce legal and regulatory impediments to trade and investment.

I will continue our close cooperation on counterterrorism, as we combat the threat of ISIL.

I will look to enhance education cooperation by increasing the number of Indonesian students studying in the United States, promoting U.S. education, and facilitating partnerships between U.S. and Indonesian universities and scientific institutions.

I will utilize public diplomacy programs such as the Young Southeast Asia Leaders Initiative to project America's values and emphasize our respect for human rights and the rights of members of religious minorities, as well as our opposition to human trafficking.

Mr. Chairman, during my Foreign Service career, I have been fortunate to serve the United States in both Washington and in East Asia and the Middle East. If confirmed, I will use my experience to lead our mission in Indonesia to tackle the challenges of the 21st century, including the oversight of security and safety for our personnel in Jakarta and our two constituent posts in Surabaya and Medan. If confirmed, I will look forward to working with this committee and with the Asia Subcommittee and the full committee and engaging with each of you, whether here in Washington or during your visits to the region, as we continue to promote our interests in Indonesia.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to take your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Donovan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOSEPH R. DONOVAN, JR.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the President's nominee to become the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for placing their confidence in me and for the incredible opportunity to serve the United States in this country of such importance to us.

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Mr. Chairman, Indonesia is an increasingly important player on the world stage. It is the world's third-largest democracy, the most populous Muslim-majority nation, and an emerging economic leader. Indonesia is a member of the G20, the World Trade Organization, APEC, and a leader in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Indonesia is a tolerant and diverse Muslim-majority country and its historic, peaceful transition to democracy has important lessons for other nations in transition.

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Our development cooperation through USAID and the Millennium Challenge Corporation is a key tool for our strategic engagement with Indonesia. Working with a wide range of partners—government, the private sector, civil society groups, and

educational institutions—we are advancing U.S. interests by promoting a more prosperous, democratic and resilient Indonesia. Our development partnership focuses on areas of importance to the Indonesian people. We seek to augment their efforts to build capacity and improve governance, including in such areas as environmental protection, health, and countering violent extremism.

U.S.-Indonesia defense cooperation has never been stronger or more comprehensive than it is today, and we are proud to be Indonesia's top defense partner in joint exercises and other engagements.

If confirmed, my priority will be to continue to forge an even more effective strategic partnership between our two nations. I will pursue opportunities for U.S. business, for example, by promoting U.S. solutions to Indonesia's requirements in the power and aviation sectors. Likewise, I will endeavor to use our Trade and Investment Framework Agreement talks to reduce legal and regulatory impediments to trade and investment. I will continue our close cooperation on counterterrorism as we combat the growing threat of ISIL. I will seek to enhance education cooperation by increasing the number of Indonesians studying in the United States, promoting U.S. education, and facilitating partnerships between U.S and Indonesian universities and scientific institutions. I will utilize Public Diplomacy programs, such as the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI), to project America's values and emphasize our respect for human rights and the rights of members of religious minorities, as well as our opposition to human trafficking.

Mr. Chairman, during my Foreign Service career, I have been fortunate to serve the United States in both Washington and in assignments in East Asia and the Middle East. If confirmed, I will use my experience to lead our mission in Indonesia to tackle the challenges of the 21st century, including the oversight of security and safety for our personnel in Jakarta and our two constituent posts in Surabaya and Medan. If confirmed, I will look forward to working with this committee and engaging with each of you, whether here in Washington or during your visits to the region, as we continue to promote our interests in Indonesia.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to take your questions.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you all. Thank you all for your testimony.

I will start the round of questions.

Ambassador Symington, what is the biggest difference with the new government now, the Buhari government, as opposed to the Jonathan government in terms of our security cooperation with Nigeria? What opportunities do we have now that we did not before?

Ambassador SYMINGTON. Senator, thank you for that question and for the focus on the differences.

The single greatest difference is Buhari's forthright understanding of the importance of tackling both security challenges and the corruption that feeds them in many parts of the world.

I think that as he thinks of the tasks ahead, what he needs in part is the kind of teamwork with his neighbors and with other partners, including us, that is essential to address this issue. And he also needs to keep working across the board to make sure that his government is seen to deliver the sorts of services to those who have been affected by terrorism that can win them to the cause because the security threats they face are too great for governments alone to handle.

And so I would say that as we work with him in the days ahead, as we think of ways that we can train, ways that we can equip, ways that we can inform, ways that we can help with logistics and flesh out strategies and teamwork, what we have in President Buhari and his government is a willing partner genuinely interested in using resources well to enhance the welfare of his people. So if in the days ahead we can continue on that course, making wise decisions about how best we can help deal with one part of what is an absolutely clear global threat against not just Nigerians but us, I think we will be well served, Senator.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Young, talk for a minute, if you can, drawing on your experience in other African countries as well and most recently in Mali. How does our soft power or programs through USAID and Millennium Challenge and others help in terms of security cooperation in these countries? Is it a necessary part? Is it helpful or not?

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, Senator. I think you have honed in on exactly one of the great attributes we have to advance our national interests in places like Mali and in places like Burkina Faso, were I confirmed to be able to serve there.

We have an extraordinary high level of public support in both those countries. The United States is perceived to be a partner who looks to support the common interests of our partners in Burkina Faso and our partners in Mali where I recently spent 3 years. And I think that that opens the door for us to find that common interest to solve a problem. I can give you some examples.

When we were in Mali, the team worked very, very carefully to develop a security component, and in that security component, we had a national guard team that showed goodwill but lacked training and capacity. Through a series of interventions, we helped this team respond and create a quick reaction force that helped provide security around our embassy. Later we continued a mentoring program. That quick reaction force was able to follow behind some of our teams that responded to the attack on the Radisson Hotel, again showing their capacity to take the fight to the enemy under the leadership and partnership with Americans.

And then finally, a neighbor was attacked about 400 meters from the embassy a few months later. That quick reaction force responded directly under their own initiative to provide lifesaving aid to their fellow citizens. I think that sort of teamwork that we empower enables us to advance our common interests.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Donovan, we are right now in discussions, obviously, or negotiation with TPP. Can you talk a little about the importance of engaging trade with Indonesia? Obviously, we want to make sure that Southeast Asian countries are part of our trade orbit and do not only have China as an option. How important is it for us to engage?

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Senator.

Certainly when we look at the rebalancing strategy, it has at least three legs to it. One is on the security area. Another is the growth and development of regional organizations or regional architecture, if you will. And the third is trade. And TPP plays a major role in the trade leg of this. Indonesia has expressed an interest, as have others in participating in TPP, and as we have with others, we have welcomed Indonesia's interest in participating at some point in the future in TPP and, as we have said with others, if and when they are qualified to take the steps in order to do that.

Overall, though, I think it is also important to recognize that our overall trade with Indonesia last year was about $27 billion. The American Chamber of Commerce, just in a meeting last week—the American Chamber of Commerce in Jakarta in a meeting last week stated that our economic relationship with Indonesia is very strong, but the opportunities are immense. And I think that says it all in

terms of the possibilities for going forward that we can do with Indonesia on trade. We look at it in terms of regulatory issues and encouraging them through our trade and investment forum agreement meetings to relax some regulatory restrictions that are placed on American products. Also we look for ways to encourage American investment in Indonesia, which we think also is a very positive force.

All of these areas I think combine as part of our economic relationship and showing that the future could be immense for us in Indonesia.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Mr. Markey?

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

Mr. Symington, I was in Nigeria last month, and I was told that 1 million doses of the medicine for HIV/AIDS had actually just been stolen and disappeared even though that government is part of our program to help to ensure that that type of aid reaches the people who need it the most. And of course, that medicine could then be sold on the black market for a lot more money.

So I guess my question to you is that the Buhari government has promised reforms that promised that they are going to try to root out the deep corruption that has historically existed inside of that country. Can you give us, from your perspective, a progress report on how successful this new government has become?

Ambassador SYMINGTON. Senator, thank you for highlighting what is I think their greatest challenge. It is to go beyond the statements to the practice.

Let me just say that one of the most important ways to make sure that you tackle corruption is to get the facts. And one of the things that we have done is to engage with them across the board to ensure that we have accurate information on the use of not only our resources but theirs. And that statistical challenge is one that we are working with our partners on every day.

The second thing is that when there are problems, you need to hold people accountable, and my understanding is that some changes in the team that work on health in Nigeria reflect an effort to ensure accountability.

So I think that they have got remarkable challenges ahead, but none is more important than to actually deliver the kind of goods and services not just supplied by the Nigerians but by their international partners, including the United States, to the people of Nigeria. They have said that that is their goal, and I think it is vital that we work with them to make sure that they achieve it.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

Mr. Young, the people in Burkina Faso—they live in a very dangerous neighborhood. There are terrorist groups coming from pretty much all directions towards that government. And I guess my question to you is what do you think the chances are of this government not ultimately being able to withstand its own internal stresses and that it could be overturned in a way that did not reflect its democratic values.

Mr. YOUNG. So thank you, Senator. You highlight the challenge before us, but I think you also in your introduction highlighted the core resource upon which we can build to address that problem.

Burkina Faso, a land of people of integrity—this is an historic opportunity for us to invest in that fragile democracy and invest in those nascent security institutions to ensure that our interventions and the will of the Burkinabe people to build a democracy at this crucial point in their history reaches its fruition. So I would say this is an opportunity for us to inoculate this fragile democracy from the challenges, and if I were confirmed, I would keep your question and your themes at the forefront of every activity that I would do to move forward.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you.

And, Mr. Donovan, there is a country of vast size and resources that you are being nominated to represent the United States. They have, unfortunately, much illegal logging that goes on. Their forests are ultimately central to, like the Amazon, providing the lungs for the planet. There is much corruption around this entire sector inside of their country, and yet we are hoping and expecting them to comply with these international goals that were set in Paris last December.

Could you talk, from your perspective, about the role that you expect Indonesia to play and how you would intend on keeping them accountable to meeting the goals that have been established for them?

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Senator. I think you point out two very important areas of cooperation that we have with Indonesia. One would be on the fight against corruption, and the other would be on climate change and biodiversity and environmental protection. They are, as you noted, very closely interrelated with each other.

And I cannot emphasize enough these are areas that we partner with Indonesia together, but they are also areas that Indonesia has identified as important priorities for themselves and for cooperation with us. This is really a true partnership and it is a two-way street.

With regard to corruption, we cooperate with not only the Indonesian Government, President Jokowi and his government, but also with civil society in Indonesia. And we really have three objectives as we move forward on it. One is to strengthen the Government of Indonesian bodies that are responsible for the fight against corruption. The most prominent of them is an organization called KPK, which is corruption eradication commission.

Another area that we work on is to promote an anti-corruption culture within Indonesia.

And the third would be to take steps to strengthen the rule of law.

All of these again we do in cooperation with the Indonesian Government and with Indonesians themselves. We work on these in different ways. We offer assistance and training for prosecutors. We speak out in public. We attempt to work with civil society organizations to build on this culture, but also we provide training and other assistance on it.

With regard to biodiversity and climate change, we are working very hard to help Indonesia to achieve its goals that it has declared in terms of curbing its own carbon emissions. We have programs both from the Millennium Challenge Corporation and from USAID

in such areas as land use, also in terms of both training and how you manage the land, what you can do to reduce emissions, and also in health areas as well.

So all of these I think are areas that we work very, very closely with the Indonesian people and the Indonesian Government on.

Thank you.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Senator Gardner?

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for accommodating Mr. Donovan's hearing this morning. Thank you very much for making that happen on the itinerary today.

And to the fine members of the Foreign Service, thank you for your service and commitment to our country.

Mr. Donovan, I had the pleasure of meeting you in my office a couple of weeks ago and look forward to this confirmation hearing and the remaining of the process.

A couple of questions that we covered in the office when we had a chance to visit. What do you think the highlights of the U.S.-Indonesia relationship have brought to us so far, areas that we should look at as examples of success to this point?

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

I think there are a number of areas where our cooperation has increased and where Indonesia is certainly demonstrating regional leadership. One area would be in the fight against counterterrorism. For instance, in the last several weeks, Indonesia has hosted regional conferences, both on the fight against foreign fighters and in a second conference, on the effort to curb foreign terrorist financing. And that certainly is a major step forward and a good thing as far as we are concerned.

Also we are partnering with Indonesian civil society in the formation of a religious diversity, Muslim diversity, conference that was just held several days ago. In this particular conference, the State Department representative to Muslim communities and the embassy both participated. And this is an example of Indonesia showing leadership as a diverse but tolerant, moderate Muslim nation and acting as a role model. I think all of those areas have been particularly important.

Senator GARDNER. You mentioned the issue of counterterrorism. How many Indonesians are currently fighting with ISIL in Syria or other terror groups?

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Senator.

I have seen a number of different statistics, and what I am going to give you I think is probably a better idea of not the specific numbers, but just an idea of the extent of it such as we understand it.

One of the problems in estimating the number of foreign fighters from Indonesia is the fact that their family members go with them. So I have seen estimates of a total of perhaps as much as 1,000, but of those, many members would be family members. And perhaps a more realistic figure would be about 300 to 600. But, again, please do not hold me accountable for the exact numbers on this. Of these, I think we also estimate approximately 100 or so have returned to Indonesia in one form or another.

Senator GARDNER. And what are the Indonesian Government's policies for domestic militants and the threat that they pose to the Government of Indonesia, the people of Indonesia when they return and how we can work with them on that issue?

Mr. DONOVAN. First of all, I think it is important that we share the very common goals with them, and that is, one, preventing foreign terrorists or local terrorists for that matter from conducting attacks; second, from spreading hateful ideologies; and third, for recruiting vulnerable populations, including youth, and recruiting them.

What we are cooperating with Indonesia on is in such areas as information sharing. We cooperate in areas including the prison management and the monitoring of prisoners after they have been released to make sure that that is handled properly, and also in speaking out in the community, engaging with members of civil society and civil society organizations, to make sure that we do not vacate that field to foreign terrorists or to extremists.

Senator GARDNER. And would you consider this area to be the greatest counterterrorism gap that Indonesia has? Is there another area of greater concern to the U.S.?

Mr. DONOVAN. Well, certainly one thing that we are very cognizant and we support Indonesia on is their counterterrorism programs are civilian and law enforcement-led. And I think this is a very important priority for us as it is for Indonesia as well. And so we work again with the law enforcement agencies to make sure that they play the leading role. There have been a number of successes just in the past month or 2 in Indonesia. One was the death and the killing of Santoso, who was the leading terrorist in Indonesia. Just last week, his deputy was captured, and there was a press report today saying that another member of his group was killed within the last several days. So I think that is a very good sign.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Donovan.

And shifting to trade, what are the biggest barriers right now that you see between the U.S. and Indonesia in matters of trade?

Mr. DONOVAN. One of the issues that we have to deal with is excessive regulation, regulatory restrictions on our products coming in, which I might add also raises the price for Indonesian consumers. And I think that that is an area that we need to be working on and working with Indonesia through the Trade and Investment Forum Agreement mechanism that we have. Our most recent meeting was in April in Indonesia.

Another would be in the area of investment. Indonesia has a negative investment list that makes it difficult sometimes for foreign investors and certainly for U.S. investors to really engage in ways that they would like to do. And I think in all those areas, we need to work a little bit harder.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Donovan.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you.

Ambassador Rubio?

Senator RUBIO. Not yet. [Laughter.]

Senator FLAKE. Senator.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you for the promotion, but not yet. I appreciate it.

Mr. Donovan, let me ask you. In 2006, Indonesia passed a law requiring minority religious groups to collect signatures from the local majority group before building houses of worship. So since the passage of that so-called religious harmony bill, more than 1,000 Indonesian churches have reportedly been shuttered and untold numbers of others have never been built.

To what extent do you plan to make religious freedom a priority in your dealings with the Government of Indonesia?

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Senator.

Obviously, every society and every government and every country is judged in part by the way that it treats its minorities. Within the Indonesian constitution, it contains guarantees of religious freedom. But there have been instances of abuses involving religious minorities. We certainly urge the Indonesian Government and work with civil society in Indonesia to look at those and do what they can to have—you know, Indonesia really regards itself and is very proud of its tradition as a diverse society. And we encourage Indonesia to live up to that. And we work—again, I mentioned the religious commission that was just formed—to try and move forward in that area. In terms of my efforts on that, I can assure you that one of the priorities I will have, if confirmed, is helping Indonesia to deal with issues involving religious minorities, to make sure that they not only are entitled but receive the same freedoms of other Indonesian citizens.

Senator RUBIO. We had a hearing here last week in the subcommittee about child marriages, which I think is a misnomer because a marriage is supposed to be a consensual relationship between two people. In the case of a 14- or a 13-year-old I do not think that is accurate. In fact, I know it is not.

But this particular case about protecting women and girls abroad has become a priority of U.S. policy. In your view, what more can the Indonesian Government do to protect women and girls from the rampant abuse and to promote more quality for all women and young girls in the country?

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Senator.

Certainly one area would be to shed a little bit more light on this and to make sure that the Indonesian people are aware of issues like this going on. I think certainly when you look at public opinion polling in Indonesia, there is a great desire to move forward to protect the rights of minorities. And I think practices like this—one of the things that we can do is work with civil society organizations to make sure that the Indonesian people are aware of what is going on.

Senator RUBIO. Mr. Symington, I want to ask now about Nigeria for a moment.

The independent bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has recommended that Nigeria be designated a country of particular concern. Here is the quote from their report. Quote: the Nigerian federal government fails to implement effective strategies to prevent or stop terrorism and sectarian violence, and it does not bring to justice those responsible for such violence, thus fostering a climate of impunity. End quote.

In your view, why has the Department of State failed to make this designation, and do you believe that Nigeria has the capacity to improve religious freedom conditions, particularly while more fully and effectively countering Boko Haram and sectarian violence? I guess the first question is the most important. In your view, why has that designation not happened?

Ambassador SYMINGTON. Senator, thank you for both this question and the previous question about the importance of religious liberty.

I do not think that there is a single issue more important in Nigeria than that the country continue to be seen by all of its citizens as a country that protects the rights of each one of them regardless of what their religion is. This issue comes up every day.

It is true that in the northeast, most of the victims of terrorist attacks are Muslims. But there are conflicts that continue to try to rip the country apart and try to rip it apart along religious lines.

I think that the single most important thing that we can do is to stress every day that the notion, e pluribus unum, out of many, one, is not an idea that is just American but universal, and at the core is belief. And at the core is the individual person.

We have spoken to and will continue to engage with not just the president but with state and local leaders, with religious leaders, with civil society throughout the country in Nigeria, and if confirmed, I look forward to contributing to that.

Senator, I do not know the answer to the question regarding the designation, and I will find it out and submit it to you.

Senator RUBIO. Let me then in closing ask you in general do you believe the Nigerian Government and its security forces are taking sufficient steps to protect civilians, especially young girls, from human rights abuses such as kidnappings and forced conversions.

Ambassador SYMINGTON. Senator, thank you again.

I think that not just the Nigerian Government, the Nigerian people and their partners, including the United States, need to continue and increase the steps that we take. Boko Haram and others have been reduced, but awful things continue to happen on a daily basis. And in a country as vibrant and as important to its own people and to the world as Nigeria, we cannot stop where we are. We have to go forward together. There literally is nothing more important.

There is a bond of trust that must be forged between the people of any place and the leaders of that place, and when that is threatened, it undermines all governance, all justice, and all opportunity. Forging with them that bond to make it stronger is essential for them but also for us, for as we think about the world ahead, I cannot imagine a more important relationship than the one that we have with the African continent. And I think our efforts there begin by thinking about individual people and starting with conscience, a fundamental freedom as well as a right.

Thank you, Senator.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you, Senator Rubio.

I want to thank the witnesses today.

One other question for Mr. Donovan. In 2015 I think, the President of Indonesia announced the intention to join TPP at some point. Is that still the understanding?

Mr. DONOVAN. It is my understanding, yes, Mr. Chairman. During President Jokowi's visit here in October of 2015, he did announce that Indonesia was interested in joining the TPP. I understand just overnight there have been some press statements that I cannot confirm that one of the things that the Indonesian Government will be doing is waiting to see how our handling of TPP will be undertaken.

Senator FLAKE. Thank you all for your testimony today. I appreciate my colleagues for the questions. And once again, thank you to the families that are here. We understand and appreciate greatly the sacrifices that you all make to have family members serve in these posts.

The hearing record will remain open until close of business Wednesday. We ask the witnesses to respond promptly to questions that may be submitted.

And I also ask for unanimous consent that Senator Klobuchar's statement be added to the record. She has some nice things to say about Ambassador Symington.

[Senator Klobuchar's statement follows:]

STATEMENT OF SENATOR AMY KLOBUCHAR IN SUPPORT OF AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE STUART SYMINGTON

Mr. Chairman, My good friend Stuart Symington is before the committee today regarding his nomination to be Ambassador to Nigeria. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend the hearing due to my obligation to serve as the ranking member for an anti-trust hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee. If I were able to attend today, I would provide my full support for Ambassador Symington's nomination.

I have known Ambassador Symington and his family for many years. I have long known that the Ambassador has a passion for furthering America's interests in the world and improving the lives of those struggling most. Through his decades of work at the State Department, this passion has become clear to everyone that meets the Ambassador. Ambassador Symington has spent his life representing our country in some of the most dangerous places in the world. In 2004 and 2005, he served under Ambassador Negroponte in Iraq managing the election process in a country that had been ruled by military dictators for decades. Before that, he served in Niger and dealt with military uprisings and terrorist threats. This experience is vital as we face new and evolving security challenges abroad and is especially relevant in light of the recent violence in Benue, Nigeria.

Ambassador Symington understands the complexities and long-lasting effects of civil war from his time as Ambassador to Rwanda. During his time there, the Ambassador helped build civil society and institutional capacity, vastly improving how people receive health care. He also strengthened economic integration and agricultural production. He did the same as Ambassador to Djibouti in the years prior to his time in Rwanda. Ambassador Symington's current position as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Central Africa and African Security Affairs brings more valuable experience to an already impressive history of service in Africa. These experiences uniquely qualify the Ambassador to represent the United States in Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa.

As Nigeria struggles to address terrorist groups like Boko Haram, and lift its economy from a deep recession, we need a steady and experienced hand leading the U.S. Embassy in Abuja. There is no doubt that Ambassador Symington is the person for the job. I am honored to give my full support for his swift confirmation.

Senator FLAKE. And with the thanks of the committee, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:53 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

REPONSES OF HON. W. STUART SYMINGTON, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SYMINGTON'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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. In every post, I have worked in partnership with people inside and outside government to promote human rights and democracy. Together, we have acted to improve electoral processes, to reduce ethnic and religious tensions, to promote equal justice, and to stop violations of human rights. For example, as Deputy Assistant Secretary, I visited Burundi, met with opposition, religious, and human rights leaders, and pressed government leaders in public and in private to stop using incendiary language that risked inciting ethnic violence and to retract earlier statements.

More recently, as U.S. Special Representative for the Central African Republic, I worked with civil society, an ecumenical group of religious leaders, youth, and leaders of all political parties to stop spoilers who threatened to derail the democratic transition, and ensure a successful, democratic election process. Earlier in my career, as Political Advisor at U.S. Northern Command, I worked successfully with our U.S. Mission in the Bahamas to advocate for increased government action to combat trafficking in persons, and with our Mission in Mexico to ensure military cooperation complied fully with the Leahy Law.

If confirmed to be U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, I can assure you that I will make human rights and democracy one of my top priorities and I will make certain that my team at Post does the same.

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

Answer. Stopping the horrific attacks of Boko Haram and providing support to those affected by that group is the most pressing human rights issue in Nigeria today. If confirmed, I will act to ensure that the United States continues to support Nigeria and its neighbors as they tackle the Boko Haram threat contributes to lasting security in the region. To do that, it is vital that the Nigerian government enlist the full support of its own people, by acting with precision and in accordance with its laws when using force, and ensuring that justice, good governance, and the delivery of essential services quickly follow when Boko Haram is displaced and defeated. It is also essential that the Government of Nigeria take responsibility when instances of security force abuse do occur, and that accountability and respect for human rights are key tenets of their security operations, including those against Boko Haram.

We will continue to act as true partners, working together to ensure that our efforts truly benefit Nigeria's people and our own. We will act together with civil society and government alike to ensure that those who seek to do good—including advocates of human rights and good governance—are protected by the law, and those who violate the law are held accountable.

Our objective is not just to degrade and ultimately defeat Boko Haram, but to help Nigeria change the conditions that gave rise to this group, and prevent the resurgence of other violent groups. There are no overnight solutions, and for Nigeria and its partners, this will require a sustained, long-term effort. Through our actions we aim to improve governance, strengthen the rule of law, and promote respect for human rights by supporting the development of strong governmental institutions focused on delivering fair and equitable treatment to all Nigerians.

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 Nigeria in advancing human rights, civil society and democracy in general?

Answer. While the Government of Nigeria has made some progress to address human rights issues, several obstacles remain. Nigeria's large population and territory and its extraordinary diversity challenge the National and State governments

as they respond to crises and seek to deliver services. A culture of impunity exists in Nigeria and there are inefficiencies in the judicial and criminal justices systems. President Buhari is right to underscore the fundamental importance for all Nigerians of stopping corruption. Additionally, there is a need for professionalism in the security services including both the police and military. There is a tendency of some powerful politicians at the local and national level to support electoral fraud and voter intimidation, and to foment ethnic and sectarian divisions.

We continue to emphasize to the Nigerian government that human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law by security forces undermine security goals; improvements in accountability for violations will enhance security force legitimacy; and, impunity for violations by security forces not only tarnishes Nigeria's reputation, but eliminates our ability to engage with those units accused of violations.

Following the violent clashes between members of the Nigerian Army and the Shiite group Islamic Movement of Nigeria in Zaria, Kaduna State, last December, the United States immediately called for a transparent and credible investigation into the killings of civilians. Transparent and comprehensive inquiries into incidents like this are crucial, along with no immunity for those found to be responsible, regardless of rank or position. The report issued by the independent commission appointed by the Kaduna state government notes just that.

I note too that President Buhari has made public statements demanding better behavior by the security forces and respect for human rights. We continue to press his government to follow through on this rhetoric by taking action regarding alleged security force abuses from before and after the start of his administration.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with human rights NGOs in the context of your responsibilities in Nigeria? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure any U.S. security assistance and security cooperation we may provide in support of Nigeria institutions or efforts reinforces human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I am fully committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the United States, and with human rights NGOs and advocates in Nigeria. I will work in partnership with the entire U.S. Mission staff to underscore to all our Nigerian interlocutors the fundamental importance of the Leahy Law and the principles behind it. The Leahy vetting program at the Embassy in Nigeria has been characterized as impressive and suggested as a model for the entire Department. As we work together to build security and strong democratic institutions, we will continue to also protect human rights and thus strengthen the bonds between citizens and their government.

Question. If confirmed, will you and your embassy team actively engage with Nigerian leadership to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted across in Nigeria?

Answer. If confirmed, my Embassy team and I will continue to actively engage with the Government of Nigeria at all levels to redress cases of any political prisoners or persons unjustly targeted by the government. I will continue to press the Nigerian government to promote respect for human rights, civilian protection, appropriate detention procedures, and accountability for abuses effectively. A key component of our security assistance to Nigeria has been the importance of respect for human rights and professional military conduct that focuses on protecting the civilian population, humane treatment of prisoners, and adherence to the rule of law.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with Nigerian leadership on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance. I will stress to the Government of Nigeria the importance of upholding freedoms of expression and assembly and inclusion of all citizens in the political process, while simultaneously continuing to demonstrate our support for civil society. If confirmed, we will continue to take allegations of human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law very seriously.

Question. The 2016 U.N. humanitarian response plan for Nigeria is currently funded at 22 percent, and sources on the ground have indicated that corruption and profiteering-including the looting of food aid by security forces-are hampering aid delivery.

- What more should the United States do to help improve humanitarian conditions in the north? If confirmed, how will you work with the Nigerian govern-

ment and international partners to draw attention and channel resources towards the emergency?
- How can we help stop the diversion of food aid?
- How do we combat sexual exploitation and abuse by security forces of those living in the camps?

Answer. Changing the grave trajectory in the Northeast will require the urgent and robust collective efforts of the Government of Nigeria and the international community. Over the past few months, the U.N. has scaled up its response and coordination mechanism to the highest levels, recognizing the truly dire conditions of many living in the Northeast. Concurrently, the Government of Nigeria has decided to establish an Inter-Ministerial Task Force to coordinate among national authorities and the international community—a sign of Nigeria's recognition of the complexity and scale of the humanitarian crisis in the Northeast. The Government of Nigeria, the UN, and the broader humanitarian community must dispatch a fully coordinated and cooperative response to maximize the effectiveness of the relief effort at this crucial time. We will continue to urge the Nigerian government to act with a greater sense of urgency with respect to taking a stronger lead role in providing and coordinating humanitarian assistance to ensure that needed assistance reaches its intended beneficiaries. Similarly, we are pressing our United Nations colleagues to deploy appropriate and sufficient staff to effectively support the Nigerians' efforts.

The humanitarian crisis in Nigeria and the broader Lake Chad Basin is a critical priority for the United States, and we have worked to draw much-needed attention and funding for the response, including through high-level visits by U.S. government officials such as Secretary Kerry, Ambassador Power, senior USAID officials, and others. We have provided robust humanitarian assistance to Nigeria and the broader region to support Boko Haram's victims. We are the largest international donor, and we are constantly exploring how we can use our assistance to reach more people.

In FY 2015 and FY 2016, the United States provided more than $318 million in aid in the Lake Chad Basin region, of which more than $165 million was for Nigeria alone, and we are working to do more. We are working in close coordination with other donors, in particular the European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom (UK), and look forward to continuing to support the efforts of the U.N. and the Government of Nigeria to marshal resources for this response, reaching beyond the normal base to include the private sector and international financial institutions. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate that the United States provide a robust response to this acute humanitarian crisis.

At the highest levels, we continue to urge the Government of Nigeria and the U.N. system to streamline the delivery of humanitarian support to the Northeast. Furthermore, we are working with the Government of Nigeria to ensure that lifesaving resources are used for their intended purposes. Nigeria is taking allegations of stolen food aid seriously; Nigeria's Senate and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission have announced investigations into allegations of food aid theft. We are supporting the Nigerian government's efforts to curb this behavior by building government capacity to ensure effective monitoring mechanisms are put in place. We will continue to press for improved coordination with the United Nations to strengthen the collaborative international response to the crisis.

USAID is working closely with its partners on the ground to safeguard assistance, requiring all implementing partners to have acceptable risk management plans in place, and to monitor aid distribution closely. In Nigeria, a variety of tools are being employed to respond to the food security crisis including electronic food vouchers that help reduce risk by improving tracking and reporting of aid. Further, USAID has multiple feedback mechanisms in place for reporting possible diversion or theft and will begin using a third party monitor in FY 2017. We will continue to press for improved coordination with the United Nations to strengthen the collaborative international response to the crisis.

We have also been disturbed by reports that Nigerian officials and security personnel have taken advantage of displaced persons in camps and settlements in northeastern Nigeria, including cases of sexual abuse. I am keenly aware and we are actively engaged in addressing the appalling allegations of sexual misconduct toward internally displaced persons who are already victims of terror. We have shared these reports with Nigerian officials and urged them to take immediate steps to stop such behavior. Allegations of sexual misconduct against military and official personnel must be investigated in a timely manner. Such allegations, whether true or not, risk further undermining trust in legitimate institutions of governance-strengthening the hand of Boko Haram. Our Embassy continues to urge that all

such allegations be swiftly and frankly addressed. If confirmed, I will join in pressing the Nigerian federal and state governments to fully implement a zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, to quickly investigate allegations, and to publicly hold accountable those found guilty of committing abuses against civilians.

At the same time, it is important to assist those who have suffered sexual violence. USAID is already providing health care, psycho-social support, and gender-based violence programs directly to internally displaced persons, including recently arrived women and children. We will continue to work with the Nigerian government, communities, and international organizations to support victims of gender-based violence. Boko Haram itself employs systematic rape and brutality against women and girls. These victims have suffered profoundly. They need help so that they and the region can move forward together.

Question. The Nigerian government is taking steps to restore security in areas of the Northeast ″liberated″ from Boko Haram, but abuses by police and other security forces now and in the past are a major obstacle to building trust in these communities.

- What steps are being taken by the government to investigate past abuses, and mitigate the risk of further abuses. What are we doing to help the government in these efforts?
- If confirmed, will you commit to making accountability for security force abuses a top priority?

Answer. President Buhari has made public statements demanding better behavior by the security forces and respect for human rights. Transparent and comprehensive inquiries into incidents like this are crucial, with no impunity for those found to be responsible. We have been very clear with the Government of Nigeria that we take allegations of human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law by security forces very seriously. Our military assistance to Nigeria, as with all countries, is subject to Leahy vetting. We are required by law not to provide training or assistance to units or individuals for whom we have credible information of gross violations of human rights.

When the Nigerian Army clashed last December with an Islamic sect in Zaria, we immediately called for a transparent and credible investigation. The Kaduna State Judicial Commission of Inquiry released a report on its investigation into the Zaria incident. We have stressed at high levels the need to bring to justice those who perpetrated the violence.

I was pleased when then-President Goodluck Jonathan allowed international human rights observers access to Giwa Barracks, which was reported by Amnesty International to have been the site of hundreds of deaths. If confirmed, I will press the current administration for continued access and for all military detention facilities to offer humane detention conditions, including for suspected Boko Haram ex-combatants.

State and USAID democracy, human rights, and governance (DRG) programs are critical tools to strengthen civil society's capacity to monitor security force conduct and enhance community and state actors' ability to address threats from Boko Haram. DRG assistance is increasingly deployed to address violent extremism and its drivers and support core security goals around the world, and Nigeria is a strong example of such efforts.

I am committed to encouraging and helping to expand Nigeria's efforts to address human rights violations. If confirmed, I will make accountability for security force abuses a top priority. I will stress that transparency is the key when instances of human rights abuse occur. My goal will be to encourage the Nigerian government to be transparent about how Nigeria addresses human rights violations, to publicly share the results of human rights investigations, and to hold those who violate the law to account.

Question. The Nigerian government appears to have adopted a heavily militarized approach to counter two simultaneous threats, one in the Northeast, and one in the Delta. This approach does not address the root causes of radicalization and violent extremism, which in the Nigeria context, seem to be similar whether aggrieved populations are in the Northeast or the Niger Delta. Nigerian authorities are working with regional and international partners to address security challenges, but, as far as I know, there is no comprehensive government strategy to address the root causes of violence.

- How is the Nigerian government working to address the root causes of violent extremism, such as inequitable resource allocation and local level corruption? What, in your view, still needs to be done?

♦ How can the United States assist the Nigerian government in ensuring its planning to address root causes is as robust as its security approach?

Answer. There is no purely military solution to the security issues that Nigeria faces. It is critical that the Government of Nigeria address the drivers of extremism, including through the development of educational and economic opportunities. As Secretary Kerry said, ″To effectively counter violent extremism, we have to ensure that military action is coupled with a reinforced commitment to the values this region and all of Nigeria has a long legacy of supporting—values like integrity, good governance, education, compassion, security, and respect for human rights.″ If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Nigeria to encourage policies and practices that will help to strengthen the Nigerian people's trust in their government and in their own security institutions.

The Nigerian federal government must do more in partnership with Nigerian state governments to address the local conditions that create grievances and give rise to insecurity. This is particularly true in the Delta, where our embassy and consulate are working with both the federal and state governments to fully engage in this challenge. However, just as in the United States, the federal government cannot be responsible for addressing all community grievances; state government leadership must play a more responsible role in supporting development in both regions using the considerable resources available to them, especially in the Niger Delta. We are also working with a range of local non-governmental actors, including the business community, religious leaders, and civil society organizations to develop their capacity to manage and mitigate disputes before they give rise to insecurity.

he Government of Nigeria and leaders in the major faith communities have improved inter-religious relationships in the North. The federal government is also working with state governors in northern and Middle Belt areas of Nigeria to establish specific grazing territory to address herder/farmer conflicts, and it is working with local communities to improve conflict mitigation.

President Buhari has taken key steps in the past year to counter corruption. These efforts include: (1) high-profile investigative and prosecution efforts by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission; (2) the use of a single auditable treasury account for receipt of all public funds to prevent graft; (3) reforms in the state oil company; (4) investigations into corruption in military procurement; (5) a public campaign against corruption, including anonymous public tip lines; and, (6) formally joining the Open Government Partnership. We will work with the Government of Nigeria to strengthen its anti-corruption efforts at all levels.

The United States continues to provide security assistance to support the professionalization of the Nigerian security forces in order to increase the military's ability to counter extremism and its ability to monitor and patrol Nigeria's waters. Yet, we are keenly aware that our principal objective is not just to defeat Boko Harm, but to help Nigeria change the conditions that gave rise to such groups in the first place. This requires a sustained long-term effort to address the underlying drivers of insecurity.

There is a critical link between improving the democracy and human rights climate and countering violent extremism in Nigeria. USAID supports a number of programs that promote inter-religious and ethnic tolerance, as well as conflict mitigation and reconciliation, including efforts through the Office of Transition Initiatives to promote the legitimacy and capacity of governance structures in the conflict-affected Northeast. If confirmed, I will focus intensely on our work with civil society to better understand the root causes of these drivers, and I will use all our available tools at the Mission to help the Nigerian people counter violence and bend the arc of extremism towards reconciliation and peace throughout Nigeria.

Question. Our relationship with Nigeria is one of the most important on the continent. I understand the administration's Nigeria strategy is being updated.

♦ When will it be approved and when do you plan to share that with Congress?

Answer. The administration has a long-standing strategy that is classified, and that has been updated from time to time. We would be happy to brief you in the appropriate setting on the strategy. The overarching policies that guide our engagement with Nigeria have been described publicly in multiple documents. Our top policy priorities align closely with President Buhari's objectives:

♦ Defeating Boko Haram/Islamic State West Africa and restoring security and governance to northeastern Nigeria, as well as relieving the humanitarian crisis there. The Government of Nigeria has made progress in its campaign against Boko Haram, but that fight is ongoing and requires a committed and sustained response.

- Reviving oil production, preventing attacks on pipelines, and promoting dialogue and development in the Niger Delta. Preventing militant attacks on pipelines is critical, and this requires a broad dialogue in the Niger Delta and efforts to encourage economic development.
- Furthering economic policy reform by encouraging the adoption of market-friendly practices, encouraging international trade as well as local production of goods, and ensuring sound monetary policy. We will continue to promote U.S. business investment in and trade with Nigeria.
- Improving governance, strengthening the rule of law, and respect for human rights by supporting the development of strong governmental institutions with built-in accountability mechanisms, focused on delivering fair and equitable treatment to all Nigerians.
- Reducing corruption by encouraging transparent governance of public institutions.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE SYMINGTON'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Nigerian President Buhari has initiated a crackdown on government corruption, are we satisfied with the anti-corruption campaign? Are there areas Nigeria should focus on to root out corruption?

Answer. The United States remains a committed partner with Nigeria in the fight against corruption. I am encouraged that Nigeria is carrying out significant investigations and is willing to prosecute senior officials credibly accused of corruption. Prosecuting officials regardless of political affiliation will be key to the ultimate success of the anti-corruption effort. I believe the establishment of a Treasury Single Account is an important step in the right direction to better public financial management. While we are encouraged by this progress, there is still work to be done.

It is crucial that Nigeria continue to improve the transparency of its finances and those of its state-owned enterprises, such as the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, in order to reduce opportunities for corruption. If confirmed, I will continue to stress the importance of doing more, for example, by encouraging the government to make public audit reports of its annual financial statements, exercise adequate oversight over off-budget, and demonstrate willingness to partner with civil society on specific transparency and accountability efforts, including the development of an Open Government Partnership National Action Plan.

Question. Is Nigeria doing enough to combat Boko Haram? Is there more the U.S. could do to assist Nigeria and neighboring countries?

Answer. The Government of Nigeria has made progress in its campaign against Boko Haram, but that fight is ongoing and requires a committed and sustained Nigerian response with support from the United States and other partners. Nigeria and its regional partners must lead the fight against Boko Haram, and I am absolutely committed to supporting our partners in that effort.

Through our whole-of-government strategy, the United States is focused on assisting the efforts Nigeria and the other Lake Chad Basin countries to weaken Boko Haram's capacity, financing, and cohesion through both military and law enforcement; counter and prevent the drivers of violent extremism; promote more inclusive and capable local governance to address the underlying drivers of insecurity; improve respect for human rights and accountability for security force behavior; and, respond to the humanitarian needs of civilians affected by Boko Haram.

One component of our strategy is providing support to the Multinational Joint Task Force, which includes elements from Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Benin. This is part of a regional approach to a problem that transcends borders. Another component is bilateral security assistance to Nigeria and its neighbors. Through multiple channels, we are providing advisors, training, logistical support, and equipment. This assistance is vetted in accordance with our obligations under the Leahy Law. The fight against Boko Haram goes well beyond the battlefield. It is a fight that requires long-term solutions. Nigeria and the other Lake Chad Basin countries must address the drivers of extremism that gave rise to Boko Haram, including ineffective and exclusionary governance, corruption, lack of education, lack of accountability for heavy-handed security force responses, and a lack of economic opportunities for the growing young population.

Question. In March, two Nigerian girls were kidnapped and subject to forced conversion and marriage in Northern Nigeria. Only after public outcry and unprecedented public pressure were they ultimately returned. Of course we have seen simi-

lar tactics employed by Boko Haram. Is this issue prioritized in our dealings with the Nigerian government?

Answer. Yes it is. We are committed to working together with Nigerians to keep young women from being forced into marriage. We prioritize efforts to empower adolescent girls so that they are given opportunities to thrive in school. In northern Nigeria, we have programs that provide psycho-social support for women and young girls affected by the violence perpetrated by Boko Haram. USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance life-saving protection services—including health care, livelihoods assistance, and psychosocial support—for displaced women and girls, particularly survivors of gender-based violence, in northeastern Nigeria.

I have heard disturbing reports of women and girls, who have survived horrific ordeals while being held by Boko Haram, returning to their communities, only to be ostracized. For them, the struggle is not over. If confirmed, I will strongly encourage increased assistance from the Government of Nigeria to support these women and girls and reintegrate them back into their communities.

If confirmed, I will also continue our efforts to assist the Government of Nigeria in its efforts to return the Chibok girls safely to their families. We will continue to raise this issue in our interactions with the Nigerian government.

Question. Do you believe the Nigerian government and its security forces are taking sufficient steps to protect civilians, especially young girls, from human rights abuses, such as kidnappings and forced conversions?

Answer. The Government of Nigeria has made clear that it is committed to protecting its citizens, especially young girls, from abuses including kidnappings and forced conversions. But it is clear that the government needs to take additional steps to stop terrorist attacks and end such abuses. We are committed to working with them to achieve that goal.

Question. The independent, bipartisan, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has recommended that Nigeria be designated a Country of Particular Concern. "The Nigerian federal government fails to implement effective strategies to prevent or stop terrorism and sectarian violence and it does not bring to justice those responsible for such violence, thus fostering a climate of impunity." In your view, why has the Department of State failed to make this designation? Do you believe that Nigeria has the capacity to improve religious freedom conditions by more fully and effectively countering Boko Haram and sectarian violence?

Answer. In making a designation of a Country of Particular Concern, the Department of State assess the full range of information available, including from civil society, religious organizations, and domestic and international human rights groups. A key component of the Department's consideration is based on recommendations from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

The International Religious Freedom (IRF) Act states that the Secretary of State may designate a country a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) when the government is responsible for, or indifferent to, sustained, systematic, egregious violations of religious freedom rights. While both Muslims and Christians report discrimination or abuse based on religious affiliation in some parts of the country, the Government of Nigeria has worked to end, not foment such violence, and has actively worked to stem violence and to protect its citizens. Therefore, the Department of State has concluded that the government of Nigeria does not meet IRF Act criteria for CPC designation at this time.

Understanding that there is still work to be done, the United States will continue to urge the Government of Nigeria to do all that can be done to stop communal violence and prosecute those involved in attacks. If confirmed, I will build on the Embassy's work to promote religious freedom and tolerance in my discussions with government and with civil society and religious leaders. I will conduct regular outreach on the importance of religious freedom and engage journalists, academics, entrepreneurs, civic organizations, teachers, students, government officials, the armed forces, clergy, and traditional rulers in this effort.

Question. If confirmed, would you commit to ensuring that U.S.-funded education efforts in northern Nigeria to increase access to schools and reform traditional Islamic schools include lessons on the promotion of freedom of religion or belief and fundamental human rights?

Answer. The education of girls and boys is essential for the realization of a stronger democracy, informed civic participation, improved health, and economic growth in Nigeria. When we invest in education, we are investing in peace and prosperity, and expanding a population's ownership of its democratic system. Such investment enables Nigerians to tackle the great challenges facing health, human rights, and

human security in their country. If confirmed, I will prioritize the protection and promotion of the fundamental human rights of all people in our programmatic efforts and engagements.

REPONSES OF ANDREW YOUNG, NOMINATED TO BE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BURKINA FASO, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE YOUNG'S RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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 have always made the promotion of human rights and democracy a lynchpin of my political advocacy work. As the democracy and human rights officer in Burma, I developed and implemented strategies to support Nobel Laureate Aung Sang Suu Kyi and other National League for Democracy (NLD) supporters in their quest to bring non-violent democratic transition to the junta-led dictatorship. I traveled the country, documenting abuses and developing a close relationship with the democratic movement in the country, much to the antipathy of Burma's ruling generals. When Aung Sang Suu Kyi was released from house arrest and received the Congressional Gold Medal, she invited me to sit in the front row with 16 other champions of human rights, including Madeleine Albright and former Secretary of Defense William Cohen.

Working as Foreign Policy Fellow for Senator Joe Lieberman, I worked with a bipartisan team to debate, negotiate and then draft S. 516, the Advance Democracy Act of 2005, a bill which was condemned at the time by North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il and simultaneously praised by Russian democracy advocate, Natan Sharansky. The bill strengthened the U.S. government's ability to promote democracy abroad and today authorizes "practical steps to advance liberty, freedom and democracy around the globe."

In my most recent assignment, I served as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Mali, after dangerous civil strife had stripped the embassy of much of its leadership. Following the brutal coup d'état and under the threat of al-Qaeda linked extremists in the north, I worked to implement the Ambassador's vision for democracy, securing $10 million in election support funds, mobilizing 20 election monitor teams, and helping support this crucial step to re-establishing democratic government with the consent of the governed. If confirmed, I would prioritize supporting Burkina Faso's fragile new democracy using a similar set of tools.

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. Burkina Faso faces a number of human rights issues that continue to affect the country's population. The most significant human rights problems in the country include harsh and life-threatening prison conditions, as well as violence and discrimination against women and children, including female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). Additionally, the government has made efforts in recent years to combat human trafficking, yet does not currently meet the standards of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). In particular, child labor and the abduction of children into Koranic schools around the country remains a pressing concern. The fight for increased women's rights continues, and despite being illegal, FGM/C remains prevalent in some rural areas.

If confirmed, I will work with the Burkinabé government to address these top human rights concerns and encourage them to hold accountable any members of the security forces found responsible for committing abuses. I will also urge the Burkinabé government to rigorously enforce its legislation against human trafficking and to prosecute, convict, and punish traffickers, including increasing penalties imposed on convicted trafficking offenders to reflect the longer terms permitted under the May 2008 anti-trafficking law.

If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Burkina Faso to mobilize more effective national and international resources to fight the scourge of human trafficking, promote education for girls and women's rights, and combat female genital mutilation throughout the country.

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. As one of the poorest countries in the world (183 out of 186 countries in the 2015 U.N. Human Development Index), newly democratized Burkina Faso can only mobilize limited national resources to address these challenges. President Kabore's government has expressed a commitment to advancing justice and accountability efforts, but after two years of political turbulence, sustained efforts in these areas will take time to implement. The main challenges include limited resources for the Burkina Faso government and law enforcement to address human rights issues, lack of trust in the justice system, social and cultural practices that are often at odds with the rule of law, and the lack of consistency in enforcing the rule of law.

If confirmed, I would work with government and civil society actors to advance efforts on the key human rights and democracy challenges facing the country. I would specifically seek to bolster Burkina Faso's vibrant, strong civil society, which played a crucial role in democratic transition to improve democratic governance, address outstanding human rights issues, and strengthen rule of law and accountability.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights, civil society and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with human rights NGOs in the context of your responsibilities in Burkina Faso? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and similar efforts, and ensure any U.S. security assistance and security cooperation we may provide in support of Burkinabé institutions or efforts reinforces human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to support and proactively meet with the members of human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations that act as the backbone to Burkina Faso's vibrant civil society. As history shows, these groups play a large role in maintaining favorable human rights conditions in Burkina Faso and in holding their government to account on a range of issues.

If confirmed, I will continue the consistent use of the Leahy vetting process to ensure that the recipients of U.S. security assistance meet our stringent human rights guidelines.

Question. If confirmed, will you and your embassy team actively engage with Burkina Faso's leadership to address cases of key political prisoners or persons otherwise unjustly targeted across in Burkina Faso?

Answer. If confirmed, I will actively engage, not just with the government of Burkina Faso, but also with its civil society and human rights organizations to address cases of political prisoners or those unjustly targeted by the state.

I will continue to ensure open channels of communications between myself and those actors within the government who are responsible for ensuring respect for human rights, rule of law, and credible judicial processes in Burkina Faso.

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

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the sustained engagement U.S. Embassy Ouagadougou has with the Government of Burkina Faso on the issues of human rights, civil rights, and governance.

Question. How are we helping the Burkinabé consolidate its recent democratic transition? What level of funding are we providing, and what activities are and will we support?

Answer. We are helping Burkina Faso consolidate its democratic transition by strengthening key institutions like Burkina Faso's civil society and independent media as well as by reinforcing the country's resilience and ability to provide it citizens with security. Our strategy will build on the U.S. government's longstanding support for civil society, which has a long and vibrant history in Burkina Faso. Much of this support for civil society comes from two USAID projects, one entitled Peace through Development II (PDEV II) and the other called Providing Youth with Opportunities for Peaceful Political Engagement, which is implemented by the National Democratic Institute (NDI). PDEV II began in November 2011 and will continue through the end of this fiscal year. It was intended to help reduce the risk of instability and increase resilience to violent extremism in the Sahel. Although PDEV II is scheduled to conclude in December, USAID will continue similar Countering Violent Extremism programming in Burkina Faso. Providing Youth with Opportunities for Peaceful Political Engagement, a program designed to enhance the

capacity of youth to advocate and engage directly with political party leadership, ran from September 2012 to 2013.

Addtionally, Embassy Ouagadougou has consistently worked with civil society groups throughout Burkina Faso. For example, the Embassy, through a Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)-sponsored United States Institute of Peace (USIP) program, has been working with two well-known local civil society organizations on a community driven policing program. The program helps civil society and police work together to improve security and build trust. In addition, the Public Affairs Section takes advantage of various exchange programs to send members of civil society to the United States to expand their knowledge and networks.

U.S. support for elections continued throughout the transition period between the end of the Compaore regime in October 2014 and the election of President Kabore in November 2015. In addition to the ongoing PDEV II program, in February 2015, USAID launched its Partnership for Participation and Poise in Epic Polls program, implemented by the NDI and the International Federation for Electoral Systems (IFES), designed to support the Presidential and Parliamentary elections (November 2015) and the local elections (May 2016). The election fostered greater participation of youth and women in the election process and supported the National Independent Election Commission (CENI) to put in place a modern electoral results transmission system whereby preliminary voting results were available within 25 hours of the closing of the polls. The United States also served as the donor lead, coordinating more than $18 million. Recognizing the importance of a strong and independent media, the Public Affairs Section also trained approximately 60 journalists on the media's role in civic engagement and responsibility. In addition to civil society and elections support, and among other efforts to improve governance, Embassy Ouagadougou is helping Burkina Faso establish effective, legitimate and responsive law enforcement institutions in hopes of solidifying the country's democratic foundations, reducing the chance of future governance breakdowns, and fighting long-term drivers of violent extremism. Our efforts have been funded by the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), including the aforementioned community-driven police reform project that helps law enforcement and communities collaborate to improve security and trust and approximately $374,000 for community outreach programs targeting youth. In addition, by September 30, 2016, the United States will publicly commit $3.75 million in countering violent extremism funds to build on these efforts through programs to improve dialogue between communities and law enforcement, enhance road safety, and improve the effectiveness and accountability of public order management.

Finally, to support Burkina Faso's ability to provide security, since FY 2014, USAID and State have programmed over $39 million in bilateral assistance to support security and development in Burkina Faso, specifically to combat terrorism, support health and agriculture programs, including water and sanitation, and address humanitarian needs. Most recently, USAID inaugurated a program to build the capacity of the new National Assembly to position it as a truly independent second branch of government.

The joint Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL)-sponsored United States Institute of Peace (USIP) program has focused on training and coaching local organizations to facilitate and manage workshops that help local governments and communities identify the most pressing security needs and develop and implement collaborative, regional approaches to address them. These types of partnerships are more time- and staff-intensive, but the results are better tailored to local needs and create more durable capabilities that make it worth our investment.

Question. The 2016 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report lists Burkina Faso as a Tier 2 country, citing ″significant efforts″ being undertaken by the government. The report offers a number of recommendations for Burkinabé authorities, including vigorous investigation and prosecution of traffickers, increased resources for victims, and improved coordination among national and regional anti-trafficking committees.

If confirmed, how will you work with Burkinabé authorities to encourage progress in these areas? If confirmed, I would like to follow up with you on this after you arrive at post.

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue working with the government on this issue, focusing on concerns including victim protection measures and long-term services for adults which remained inadequate during the 2016 reporting period. I would encourage the national anti-trafficking committee to hold regular meetings, as they did not meet for the second consecutive year. I would also encourage the government to implement the recommendations outlined in the TIP Report, including vig-

orous efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict trafficking offenders-including traffickers posing as Koranic school teachers-and apply penalties prescribed by the 2008 anti-trafficking law. Similarly, I would advocate for the allocation of increased resources for victims, including social reintegration, to prevent re-trafficking of identified victims. If confirmed, I will look forward to sharing the results of these efforts with you once I arrive at Post.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE YOUNG'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. Is Burkina Faso doing enough to combat terrorist groups that may target Western businesses?

Answer. Although not a persistent target for Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) or al-Mourabitoun, Burkina Faso's location and relatively porous borders make it an easy target for terrorist groups looking for opportunities to exploit. AQIM and al-Mourabitoun perpetrated an attack on a Ouagadougou hotel on January 15, 2016, killing 30 people, including one American. Burkina Faso understands it must improve its counterterrorism capabilities in order to protect its people and attract and keep foreign investment.

AQIM's new strategy to attack so-called "soft targets," including hotels and restaurants, outside of its traditional area of operations in northern Mali, is a difficult one for governments to address. Although training and equipment can make incremental improvements, the long-term development of well-managed and accountable security institutions that inspire public confidence is the key to sustainable progress against these threats.

As a member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), Burkina Faso has worked closely with the United States on border security, regional counterterrorism capacity development, and on preventing the spread of violent extremism through improved trust between citizens and government. These efforts help to address terrorism through improved law enforcement response but also, importantly, by reducing the vulnerability of communities to the appeal of terrorist groups. Burkina Faso is a charter member of the G-5 Sahel and has, correspondingly, increased its focus on enhanced regional coordination.

The democratically elected government in Burkina Faso faces high expectations for providing more effective security for its citizens from both terrorism and broader criminality. Burkina Faso has a strategic counterterrorism plan, which involves deploying its anti-terrorist task force to the north, establishing new police and military counterterrorism units, strengthening intelligence collection, monitoring and regulating religious messaging, building new border control stations, and increasing the size of the gendarmerie and police force.

Finally, Burkina Faso has been a valued partner in promoting regional security and combating terrorism. Currently, Burkina Faso has 1,881 military and police personnel deployed to Mali as part of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). This includes a recent increase in its commitment from one to two 850-member infantry battalions, along with one formed police unit.

REPONSES OF JOSEPH R. DONOVAN, JR., NOMINATED TO BE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA, TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DONOVAN'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR 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? Why were your actions significant?

Answer. The promotion of human rights and democracy remains a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy and has been central to my work throughout my career. During my tenure as Director of the Office of Chinese and Mongolian Affairs and later as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, we regularly engaged with our missions in the field, the NGO community, and Chinese government officials to discuss human rights concerns. As Director of the China Desk, I testified before the China Human Right Caucus to publicly register U.S. government objections to human rights practices in China. While I cannot claim individual success in improving the overall human rights situation in China,

there were significant moments in my career that underscored the importance of our efforts.

One of the most memorable moments for me was calling a family to inform them that their mother had been freed from a Chinese prison and would arrive in the United States the following day. Her release was the result of months of hard work by State Department officials, and I am proud to have played a role as China Director.

In another case, while serving as Consul General in Hong Kong, I ensured that we heard from dissidents and countered efforts by the People's Republic of China to prevent their participation in a Consulate event. As Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, I met with the parents of a young woman who had been abducted from Japan by North Korean agents. I worked with U.S. and Japanese officials to ensure that the North Korean abduction issue was one element of negotiations with North Korea. If confirmed, I will bring these experiences to my work to defend and protect the universal values of human rights that remain so important for the United States.

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

Answer. We support Indonesia's efforts to continually improve its human rights record and promote the rule of law, consistent with its international human rights obligations, as well as the aspirations of the Indonesian people. To maintain the positive momentum built over the last two decades, we encourage Indonesia to actively protect freedom of expression and assembly; conduct transparent and thorough investigations into unjustified killings, torture, and abuses by security forces; proactively protect the rights of members of minority groups, including ethnic minorities, religious minorities, and the LGBTI community; reinforce civilian leadership and the provision of fair trial guarantees in addressing internal security concerns; and protect religious freedoms as outlined in Indonesia's constitution. We also encourage openness, transparency, and accountability for past human rights violations and abuses.

The U.S. government regularly engages on human rights issues with Government of Indonesia officials and civil society representatives, and also uses high-level visits to address these issues. Officers at our U.S. Mission in Indonesia consistently discuss, at the highest levels, issues of concern as well as areas in which we can work together with the Indonesian government to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S. government uses its assistance programs—including under USAID, the Department of Justice, and the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs—to support Indonesia's efforts to improve the administration of justice. We will continue to leverage our military engagement to conduct training and exercises that develop the professionalism of the Indonesian military and help to further strengthen civilian control over the military. We will continue to support Indonesia's successful, civilian-led law enforcement approach to counterterrorism that upholds the rule of law and protects human rights. I look forward to meeting with Indonesia's women leaders to encourage their economic participation and equal access to important services like health care. And, I will continue outreach to academics, activists, human rights NGOs, and religious leaders to improve our understanding of and cooperation with Indonesia's diverse and pluralistic society.

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 Indonesia in advancing human rights and democracy in general?

Answer. Indonesia has made solid progress on human rights, and will have to continue efforts to reinforce rule of law and human rights as it responds to security threats and counters terrorism. Indonesian society must also balance cultural mores and traditions while protecting space for minority groups.

Civil society has flourished in Indonesia since the end of military-backed authoritarian rule in 1998, contributing to improvements in democratic governance and accountability. Government and an independent civil society must work together to further this success because greater protection of human rights leads to stability, prosperity, tolerance, and opportunity for all. We will continue to engage civil society, use technical assistance to support Indonesian efforts to bolster administration of justice in Indonesia, and leverage our military partnerships to conduct training and exercises that strengthen Indonesia's efforts to develop the professionalism and

civilian control of the military. Our mission also works to support Indonesia's efforts to counter the corruption that can undermine transparency and accountability important to human rights protection. We conduct programs to strengthen the key anti-corruption bodies, including the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), and support Indonesia's participation in the Open Government Partnership.

Question. Are you committed to meeting with human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs in Indonesia? If confirmed, what steps will you take to pro-actively support the Leahy Law and related efforts?

Answer. If confirmed, I am firmly committed to meeting with human rights and non-governmental organizations within the United States and Indonesia. I look forward to continuing the positive interactions and collaboration U.S. Mission Indonesia has already forged with established NGOs and civil society organizations, while also reaching out to newer and smaller advocacy groups.

If confirmed, I will proactively support the Leahy Law by ensuring our Mission maintains its stringent vetting processes for any member, former member, or unit of the Indonesian military or law enforcement nominated for training. I will also consistently highlight the importance of professionalism, rule of law, and respect for human rights in our engagements with Indonesia's police, military, and law enforcement counterparts.

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

Answer. The Jokowi administration has taken positive steps in releasing some political prisoners. The political atmosphere has improved in recent years, and there are fewer cases of political prosecutions. Still, some Indonesians have been arrested and remain in prison for peacefully expressing political beliefs. If confirmed, I will work with my Embassy team to further engagement on this issue, underlining that for democracies to flourish they must protect and provide space for a diversity of ideas and political discourse.

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

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will engage robustly with Indonesian leadership on matters of human rights, civil rights, and governance. As the second and third most populous democracies in the world, the United States and Indonesia share many values, and Indonesia's peaceful transition to democracy offers useful lessons to other countries in transition around the world. I will use our bilateral engagement to highlight Indonesia's successes and offer cooperation to ensure our shared democratic principles are upheld, and to promote respect for human rights.

AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE DONOVAN'S RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR RUBIO

Question. As the largest Muslim country that has largely controlled radical Islam groups, does Indonesia's approach offer any lessons learned for combatting terrorism?

Answer. We support Indonesia's successful, civilian-led, law enforcement approach against known violent extremist organizations and its efforts to foster community resilience against violent extremist mobilization. In addition to an effective law enforcement campaign led by the Indonesian National Police, the Indonesian-style practice of Islam has served as a bulwark against the spread of violent extremism. Indonesia's open, vibrant, and diverse civil society organizations play an important role in promoting narratives that counter violent extremism, and work at the local level to strengthen core democratic values. Indonesia has led regional and international cooperation, including hosting an August 10 International Meeting on Counter-Terrorism, and it actively participates in efforts to counter the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and terrorism financing in the UN, the Global Counterterrorism Forum, ASEAN, and other venues.

Question. Are we concerned that Indonesia's counter-terrorism tactics are hurting the government's chances of bolstering its counter-terrorism laws?

Answer. Indonesian political and law enforcement leaders recognize the importance of upholding the rule of law and fair trial guarantees even as they continue to successfully detect, disrupt, and arrest violent extremists and their networks. We support Indonesia's open discussion on amending its counter-terrorism laws to ad-

dress the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, prevent terrorist acts, and provide security to the public, while at the same time protecting the rights of individuals in an open, democratic society.

Question. As freedom of expression has been restricted in Indonesia; what more could the U.S. do to encourage the government to respect freedom of speech and expression?

Answer. Any restrictions on freedom of expression in Indonesia are of great concern to me personally and to the United States. The U.S. Mission in Indonesia directly engages with Government of Indonesia counterparts to share our views on the importance of protecting freedom of expression. The Mission supports Indonesian efforts, led by civil society organizations and human rights activists, to advocate for freedom of expression, a key component of Indonesia's constitution, and its international human rights and obligations. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for freedom of speech and expression and support efforts and programs in this areas.

Question. Religious freedom and violence remains a serious problem in Indonesia. Do you believe the Indonesian government is doing enough to protect religious minorities and allow space for all groups to practice their religion peacefully?

Answer. Indonesia's international human rights obligations and its constitution guarantee freedom of religion or belief to everyone, including all individuals who are members of a minority faith. This freedom includes the right to worship according to one's own beliefs. President Jokowi has included religious minorities in his cabinet, and the current governor of Jakarta, one of Indonesia's most popular politicians, is from the ethnic Chinese minority group and the minority Christian faith. The state should continue to protect individuals within its borders, particularly members of vulnerable religious minorities who often face the most discrimination at the local level. We appreciate President Jokowi's calls for tolerance, especially among religious communities.

Question. Protecting women and girls abroad is a major priority for the United States. What more can the Indonesian government do to protect women and girls from rampant abuse and promote gender equality?

Answer. Indonesia has made strides in advancing gender equality. Indonesian women serve in the most senior levels of government, and Indonesia has had a female president. One-third of President Jokowi's current cabinet members are women, including the Ministers of Finance, Foreign Affairs, and Fisheries and Maritime Resources. Women also lead top companies, and act as academicians, scientists, and researchers. Indonesia has ratified the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and implemented laws at the national and sub-national level to address gender disparities. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection works to mainstream gender in government policies, programs, and budgets and eliminate gender discrimination and violence against women.

Despite these advances, more can be done to support efforts to empower women in Indonesia. Mission Indonesia has incorporated gender equality and the advancement of women and girls into overall policy objectives, programming, and outreach. In collaboration with the Government of Indonesia, the Mission organized a multi-stakeholder planning conference to prioritize efforts to combat violence against women. Additionally, the U.S. Consulate General in Surabaya supports, through a PEPFAR grant, a local women's hotline project to prevent and respond to gender-based violence among women and girls in East Java and throughout eastern Indonesia. A recently announced $7.3 million USAID-funded project, "Bersama," supports Indonesia's efforts to reduce acceptance of gender based violence.

If confirmed, I will ensure that advancing the status of women and girls remains a top priority for U.S. Mission Indonesia.

Question. In 2006, Indonesia passed a law requiring minority religious groups to collect signatures from the local majority group before building houses of worship. Since the passage of this so-called ″religious harmony″ bill more than 1,000 Indonesian churches have reportedly been shuttered and untold numbers of others have never been built. To what extent do you plan to make religious freedom a priority in your dealings with the government of Indonesia? Are reforms to this legislation a current focus in U.S.-Indonesian relations?

Answer. Indonesia's international human rights obligations and its constitution guarantee freedom of religion or belief, which includes the right to worship according to one's own beliefs. Mission Indonesia supports the efforts of the Indonesian government, the public, NGOs, and civil society organizations to promote religious tolerance and understanding. We also regularly raise the issue of religious freedom

and tolerance with the government, including expressing concern over the closure of houses of worship and supporting the freedom for all religious communities to build and maintain their respective houses of worship. Civil society leaders from Indonesia and the United States jointly launched in August 2016 a Council on Religion and Pluralism to foster religious understanding. If confirmed, I will continue to engage Indonesian government counterparts, NGOs, and civil society to promote religious freedom and freedom of worship.

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