

SYRIA'S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

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BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN AND
SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS
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SYRIA'S HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2013

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN AND
SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIAN AFFAIRS,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert P. Casey (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Casey, Boxer, Cardin, Risch, Johnson, and Corker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT P. CASEY, JR., U.S. SENATOR FROM PENNSYLVANIA

Senator CASEY. The hearing will come to order.

Thank you for being here. We are trying our best to start on time, and we are pretty close. But, thank you for taking the time to be here this morning.

The Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs meets today to examine the United States response to Syria's deepening humanitarian crisis for both those living inside Syria and those who have sought refuge in the region.

Two years ago, thousands of Syrians took to the streets, peacefully protesting the autocratic regime that had run their country as a police state for decades. Inspired by the events in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, these protesters met the full force of Bashar al-Assad's internal security services, and then, of course, the military. Since then, the conflict has escalated, driving more than 1 million refugees to neighboring countries. Some 2½ million are displaced within Syria. And, most tragically of all, more than 70,000 people have been killed in this conflict.

When we quote these numbers and statistics, which seem to rise every day, we risk losing sight of the human face of this crisis. Today's hearing will focus on the men, women, and children who suffer daily, despite the courageous effort of aid providers, and who have little hope that this protracted conflict will end.

Just a couple of examples. Men like Waleed, a 37-year-old doctor who fled Syria with his family, out of fear that, if he stayed, his children would grow up as orphans. Across the border, in Iraq, he works in the same refugee camp in which he lives, offering his skills to Doctors Without Borders.

Or women like Ara, who gave birth to a son as shells from Assad's warplane fell around her home. The regime has targeted hospitals for airstrikes. Hospitals. So, without medical care or facilities, Ara depended on her neighbors and a local midwife. Amid the violence in northern Syria, she fled for Turkey as soon as her baby was healthy enough for the journey.

Or young children, like Rami, who, at just 10 years old, walked 6 hours at night across the border into Lebanon, taking care to avoid the land mines that dotted the path along the way. Rami now shares one room with 11 family members, but has found a way to continue going to school.

A recent report in the New York Times caused many to question why most of the U.N. assistance is delivered to regime-held territory. I applaud the efforts of our international partners who negotiate the very complicated Syrian landscape to deliver assistance to those who need it, without prejudice. Without a mandate from the U.N. Security Council or permission from the Assad regime, the United Nations cannot cross Syrian borders to deliver assistance without risking violation of international law.

Despite these challenges, the international humanitarian assistance organizations are figuring out ways to get help to many of the 4 million Syrians who are in need of assistance. They have brought flour to Aleppo's bread bakeries, they have provided medical kits to clinics still operating in opposition territory, just by way of example. The United Nations has led at least three convoys of aid across the battle lines from Damascus to reach the Atme Camp in the embattled north. First, they must negotiate with Assad's government, then with the Free Syrian Army fighters, and all the while trying to avoid the Nusra Front terrorists.

We face many challenges in navigating this complicated landscape, and I remain concerned that our assistance may not be getting to those who need it. The outlook for Syria's refugees is mixed, even when they reach Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, or even Egypt. These countries have done the right thing in keeping their borders open, even as thousands of refugees pour into their countries each and every night. According to the United Nations, about 78 percent of these refugees are women and children, likely because they are so vulnerable to exploitation if they remain in Syria.

Just a couple of examples in different countries. Lebanon is now home to more than 300,000 registered refugees, the most of any neighboring country, especially given its size. This influx constitutes a 10-percent increase in Lebanon's population. That would be like adding more than 30 million people to our territory in the United States. These refugees do not rely upon camps. Instead, multiple families crowd into storefronts, garages, unfinished houses, basically anywhere they can find shelter.

Second, in Jordan, many of the more than 300,000 refugees live in the sprawling Zaatari camp, where many international NGOs are active. At this camp, children can go to school and receive immunizations while families receive food assistance and shelter. Nonetheless, Jordan's infrastructure—its water and sewer systems, its health services, its schools—are not equipped to handle this kind of exodus. Many needs still go unmet in that country.

Turkey, by way of a third example, is not only the nerve center of the opposition efforts, but it has also stepped up and spent more than \$600 million to set up 17 refugee camps, with more that are planned.

Iraq, also, is hosting more than 100,000 Syrian refugees, despite still dealing with more than 1 million Iraqis who are, in fact, still displaced. Some 40,000 have even traveled hundreds of miles, to Egypt, itself.

Now, with our support, these refugees will one day return to a more democratic, representative Syria. Already, the people in free areas of the Aleppo government have elected local councils that are assisting with humanitarian aid distribution, also law and order and restoration of basic services.

Yesterday, Syria's opposition elected Ghassan Hitto as the first Prime Minister of the interim government. A capable alternative to Assad present on Syrian soil would not only inspire confidence, but also give the United States and the international donor community an important partner in assistance delivery in the north.

I just left a press briefing with Senator Rubio. He and I will be introducing legislation later today that will authorize additional humanitarian and refugee assistance, including seed funding for a reconstruction fund that will allow the Syrian people to rebuild after Assad. It will include providing vetted elements of the Free Syrian Army with essential nonlethal equipment and training. It will also encourage the administration to sanction entities that still do business with Assad's regime. We hope that this legislation will help the administration address a Syrian crisis that is fraught with challenges—political, military, and, of course, humanitarian.

Today, we have gathered to focus on these humanitarian assistance and refugee challenges, so I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on the following key issues:

No. 1, What is the United States doing, and what more should be done, to ensure that humanitarian assistance is getting to those who need it?

Second, How can the United States and the United Nations improve coordination between and among donors and implementing partners?

Third, What should the international community's priorities be for reconstruction and refugee return in the event of Assad's removal from power? And what steps should we be taking now to lay that foundation?

We are fortunate today to have with us two witnesses who can speak about United States policy in Syria: The Honorable Anne Richard, Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration at the Department of State, and Nancy Lindborg, Assistant Administrator at the U.S. Agency for International Assistance, that we know as USAID. In addition to tremendous professional expertise in humanitarian refugee assistance, these women have traveled to the region, earlier this year, to examine the situation firsthand.

We will then hear from His Excellency Antonio Guterres, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, who will be appearing in front of this subcommittee as a courtesy, not as a witness to offer testimony, to share his perspective on Syria.

On our third panel, we will have two individuals with great experience. Tom Malinowski, the Washington director of Human Rights Watch, will offer his insights into the conflict, having spent time in and around Syria talking directly with the victims. We are also joined today, on our second panel, by Michael Singh, of The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, who worked on Middle East policy issues at the National Security Council during the Bush administration.

All of these witnesses have extensive experience and expertise in the region, and I look forward to their observations and thoughts on how we can tackle the tremendous humanitarian challenge before us.

I thank you very much for being with us today.

I now turn to our ranking member, Senator Risch, for any opening comments he would have.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO**

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Chairman Casey. I appreciate that.

Today, we focus on a part of the world over which this subcommittee has interest; of course, the Middle East and North Africa, which are the focus of this committee. In particular, we are going to focus on the issue of the refugee problem. And that is the type of issue that Americans have always been deeply interested in.

Unfortunately, today the finances of this country have deteriorated to the point that we cannot provide the kind of assistance that we used to provide in the past. Indeed, every dollar that we spend is borrowed from China and other places, and will have to be repaid by our children and our grandchildren, who will face their own types of challenges as they grow up.

Nonetheless, the situation is there. The United States has always stepped up, being able to do what it can possibly do. And, as I said, today that is much more limited than what it has been in the past.

As far as the specific country of Syria, we are interested in the complexity of the situation there. We know what the situation is today. I think the Chairman, and myself, met with representatives from Jordan and all the host countries that really are taking refugees today. And it is a serious situation, and they are doing the best that they can in dealing with it. Indeed, many of those countries are doing it only because of the financial aid from the United States. Again, with borrowed money.

We all know that the situation today in Syria is very, very complex, and we, all of us, are interested in what a post-Assad scenario will look like in Syria. And, unfortunately, because you have about a dozen groups that are vying for position as a new government is formed, it is very difficult to make an assessment of what a post-Assad scenario will look like. I would be interested in hearing from members of the two panels as to what you can look forward to in the coming days, months, or years ahead, whatever it is. Obviously, the return of those who fled to other countries, will be greatly affected by what the new Syria will look like.

With that, I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, unfortunately, I can not stay; I have a home-State matter in Energy and

Natural Resources, but I will be looking forward to reviewing the transcript and the testimony.

Thank you.

Senator CASEY. Senator Risch, thank you very much.

We will go from my right to left. We will start with Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration, Anne Richard.

STATEMENT OF HON. ANNE C. RICHARD, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POPULATION, REFUGEES, AND MIGRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. RICHARD. Thank you very much, Senators. Thank you for holding this hearing, and for your attention to this important matter.

Good morning, Chairman Casey, Ranking Member Risch, and other members. Thank you.

Essentially, today we are commemorating the 2-year anniversary of the Syria uprising; it coincides with another dark milestone. Over 1 million refugees have fled Syria. More troubling, half of that number arrived in the last 2 months.

I would like to share with you the approach the Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration is taking to address the crisis, and how that complements and reinforces what the U.S. Agency for International Development is doing. I shall briefly comment on how the refugee crisis is affecting the neighboring countries, and then the challenges we face in delivering humanitarian assistance to those in need throughout the region.

In Jordan, approximately 30 percent of the 350,000 refugees live in the Zaatari refugee camp in northern Jordan. The majority have been taken in or helped by relatives, friends, or even strangers. We are grateful that Jordan continues to allow Syrian refugees to cross its borders. We have asked them to ensure Palestinian and Iraqi refugees can also cross. And we recognize that its resources are stretched. We are in close, regular contact with the Government of Jordan about the crisis.

Lebanon is hosting over 357,000 Syrian refugees, in addition to over 33,000 Palestinian refugees who have fled Syria. They live in host communities, allowing greater freedom of movement and possibilities for self-sufficiency. The presence of so many refugees in a country of 4 million people—as the chairman said, 10 percent—the equivalent of 10 percent of the Lebanese population—taxes Lebanon's infrastructure and resources, and has increased tensions within the refugee hosting communities. Hezbollah's presence in southern Lebanon creates a challenge for those providing aid, while its involvement in the government complicates United States efforts to provide help. Despite these strains, the Government of Lebanon continues to keep its borders open, though its leaders warn that Lebanon has reached a saturation point.

Over 110,000 Syrian refugees have fled to Iraq, most to Kurdistan. Domiz camp accommodates approximately 54,000, and two camps in Anbar province, at al-Qaim, accommodate over 7,500. Others live in villages and communities.

For some time, the Government of Iraq has kept the al-Qaim border crossing with Syria closed, except for medical emergencies and

letting some of the elderly cross, and, more recently, has closed the Rabiya crossing. We have asked them to allow all refugees to cross.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the Government of Turkey has addressed the humanitarian needs and shouldered most of the costs of the over 186,000 refugees registered in 17 camps set up by the government. There are another 71,000 registered, or soon to be registered, living outside of camps, and the Government of Turkey estimates that an additional 100,000 refugees live in the area, in the cities of Turkey.

We recognize the huge strain that the influx of refugees is currently placing on host countries. It is essential that neighboring countries continue to keep their borders open for those refugees fleeing violence in Syria. In every meeting with officials from these countries, we thank them for allowing refugees to cross, and discuss ways to help them uphold humanitarian principles while protecting their own security and preventing a spillover of violence.

The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration works closely with our colleagues at USAID, and together we lead the U.S. Government's humanitarian response. Nancy Lindborg and I have traveled often to the region. We have traveled together twice. And on our most recent trip, we were also joined by Ambassador Ford, in Turkey, prior to our participation at the January Kuwait Donor's Conference. Our communications teams are taking every opportunity to get the message out about the dimensions of the crisis and to highlight our government's leadership role in responding.

The State Department is helping to get as much humanitarian aid as possible to Syria's conflict victims. We are providing funding to the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and nongovernmental organizations, which all bring technical expertise and operational capacity to a crisis as large-scale as this.

Of the nearly \$385 million provided thus far, the State Department's contributions total nearly \$185 million and meet basic humanitarian needs, such as shelter, water, and health, both inside Syria and in host countries.

The delivery of assistance is often undertaken at great personal risk. In recent months, United Nations convoys have delivered aid to opposition-held areas in Syria, where thousands are in acute need of humanitarian help. Such movements are highly dangerous. I am glad we are joined today by the High Commissioner, Antonio Guterres, because he was personally involved in getting those first convoys through. He was on the phone constantly to ensure their safety and that they would be able to cross the battle line safely and get to the people in need. It was a remarkable example of daring by the High Commissioner of Refugees and his staff.

Of course, people in need are not concentrated in one area, and can be found all around the shifting battle lines. Humanitarian organizations provide aid in a neutral and impartial manner. The United Nations is seeking to get access to all communities in need, on a regular basis. It is unacceptable, and a violation of humanitarian principles, for the Syrian regime to deny this access.

I should also mention that the fighting has also endangered the lives of Palestinians and Iraqi refugees who lived, or live today, in

Syria. They, too, are caught up in the crisis, and have been displaced or fled the country.

On a serious matter, the international community is facing a resource crisis. The U.N.'s regional response plan has, thus far, received only 21 percent of the funds it needs to operate in the first half of calendar year 2013. Other donors must quickly provide the funds that agencies need to keep lifesaving operations going.

Even if the Assad regime falls soon, humanitarian aid will likely continue. This is because of the widespread destruction of Syria's infrastructure and predicted flows of refugees that will continue to cross borders, likely in both directions. Needs could extend into the long term.

Another issue of interest to this subcommittee: coordination of the international humanitarian response. This is complex and must occur on multiple levels, but it is occurring. The United States participates in Syria, humanitarian foreign meetings in Geneva that bring together senior officials from key donor governments, countries affected by the crisis, and U.N. leaders to coordinate our collective response.

We are also deepening our coordination with the Syrian Opposition Coalition's Assistance Coordination Unit, as are U.N. agencies and other partners.

To conclude, I want to tell you that we are doing our utmost to respond to this. It involves talking to other governments about doing more, about following through on their pledges. It involves traveling to the region. It involves talking to Syrian-Americans and other Syrian diaspora groups, about what can be done, exploring every avenue, trying to get access to very, very hard-to-reach places.

I think the American taxpayer should feel good that we are taking great care with the resources to which we are entrusted to get aid in. And our intention is to save as many lives as possible.

So, thank you for your attention this morning.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Richard follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY ANNE C. RICHARD

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon, Chairman Casey, Ranking Member Risch, and members of this committee. Thank you for hosting this hearing today on the humanitarian crisis inside Syria. I am pleased to be able to appear before the committee with my colleague, USAID Assistant Administrator Nancy Lindborg. Our offices work closely together to provide critical humanitarian aid to those affected by the violence in Syria.

The 2-year anniversary of the Syria uprising coincides with another dark milestone: over 1 million refugees have now fled across Syria's borders into neighboring countries. More troubling news is that half of that number arrived in the last 2 months. The United Nations (U.N.) estimates that over 2.5 million people are displaced inside Syria and many more have been affected by the upheaval and fighting.

I would like to share with you the approach my Bureau in the State Department is taking to address the crisis and how our efforts and USAID's work are complementary and mutually reinforcing. I shall first briefly comment on how the refugee crisis is affecting the neighboring countries, discuss the challenges we face in delivering humanitarian assistance to those in need throughout the region, and provide some specifics on the priorities of the Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and our diplomatic outreach to other countries.

REFUGEES IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

Countries bordering Syria are approaching a dangerous saturation point with refugees. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in January of this year, 2,000 people fled Syria every day. In February, the number climbed to 5,000 a day; and in March, we've seen 8,000 people a day crossing from Syria into Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Turkey. In addition to serving as evidence that life inside Syria has become extremely dangerous for many, the number and the rate are overwhelming the capacity of humanitarian aid organizations to meet the needs of these victims and are sorely testing the limits of host countries' abilities to provide safe shelter. If international borders are closed to Syrians seeking refuge, the awful tally of human destruction will only increase.

Jordan

There are approximately 350,000 refugees in Jordan according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Approximately 70 percent of refugees in Jordan live outside of the refugee camps in cities and towns. Many have been taken in or helped by relatives, friends, or even strangers. Only 30 percent live in the Zaatri refugee camp in northern Jordan. The Government of Jordan set up Zaatri in response to the large numbers of refugees crossing the border, and it has moved to set up another camp, as yet uninhabited, and initiated plans for another. Zaatri camp has been plagued by security problems and we have been in active conversations with the UNHCR and the Government of Jordan to improve the safety of refugees there as well as humanitarian workers.

Jordan is allowing refugees to cross its borders but is finding that its resources are stretched to help massive flows of refugees while providing services to its own citizens at the same time. We should note that we are concerned by reports that some Palestinian and Iraqi refugees have been turned around at the border and we have asked the Government of Jordan to let them cross. We've thanked the Government of Jordan for its ongoing assistance to the refugee population, and asked them to keep their borders open to all refugees. Knowing the significant economic cost associated with hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees, the U.S. Government is providing Jordan with budget support.

Lebanon

Lebanon is hosting over 354,000 Syrian refugees. Lebanon has also taken in 32,000 Palestinian refugees who have fled the violence in Syria. Syrian refugees in Lebanon live in host communities and are not in camps, which allows for greater freedom of movement, greater possibilities for self-sufficiency and a semblance of a normal life. At the same time, the presence of so many refugees in a country of 4 million people taxes Lebanon's infrastructure and resources and has increased tensions within the refugee-hosting communities. Hezbollah's presence in southern Lebanon creates a challenge for U.N. agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGO) in providing aid, while its involvement in the Government of Lebanon complicates U.S. efforts to provide help during this crisis. Despite these strains, the Government of Lebanon continues to keep its borders open, though its leaders have warned that Lebanon has reached its saturation point and requires significant international assistance in order to support the refugees.

Iraq

Over 110,000 Syrian refugees have fled to Iraq, and most are now in Kurdistan. Domiz camp in Kurdistan accommodates approximately 54,000 persons, and two camps in Anbar province at Al-Qaim accommodate over 7,500 persons. In addition to those living in camps, there are many who live in villages and communities. In Kurdistan, Syrians are permitted to live and work in the community once they have registered.

Since October 21, 2012, the Government of Iraq has kept the Al-Qaim border crossing with Syria closed, except for medical emergencies and some family reunification cases. Local authorities and the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displacement state that the border is closed for security reasons. Syrian refugees in Anbar prior to the closure of the border are restricted to the camps, although some have family members nearby. The main reasons for return to Syria continue to be lack of freedom of movement out of the camp and lack of a way to earn a living. UNHCR continues to provide support to those expressing interest in returning to Syria but is not encouraging repatriation because conditions are not conducive to a safe return.

Turkey

Since the beginning of the crisis, the Government of Turkey has supported most of the humanitarian needs of the refugees from Syria who have crossed its border. In addition to 186,200 refugees registered in 17 camps set up by the government and 71,000 registered (or soon to be registered) outside of camps, the Government of Turkey estimates that an additional 100,000 unregistered refugees live in urban areas. While the government has previously focused its support for Syrian refugees on the camp-based populations, it is now beginning to address the needs of the out-of-camp Syrians by setting up centers where urban refugees can register for IDs and free health services. Turkey has a strong economy but is experiencing a decline in its once vibrant cross-border trade with Syria.

CHALLENGES IN CRISIS RESPONSE

The challenges before us are many. USAID Nancy Lindborg's testimony discusses access, security, and funding issues. Therefore, I will focus on: (1) the need to work with host governments to ensure that they keep their borders open to refugees and have what they need to help the refugees; (2) specific contributions made by the PRM Bureau; and (3) ensuring that other countries are contributing to humanitarian aspects of the crisis so that the U.N. and other humanitarian agencies have more of the support they need to respond.

WORKING WITH HOST GOVERNMENTS

We recognize the huge strain that the influx of refugees is currently placing on countries that neighbor Syria. In both Jordan and Lebanon, government leaders are concerned about their capacity to absorb so many refugees. Iraq has expressed concerns that al-Qaeda and its Syria affiliate, al-Nusra Front, are sending fighters and weapons across the border. Turkey, for the most part, has maintained an open border policy for all refugees, although each day it limits the number of refugees allowed to cross at border crossings with high traffic. It is essential that neighboring countries continue to keep their borders open for those refugees fleeing violence in Syria. In every meeting with officials from these countries, we thank them for allowing refugees to cross and discuss ways to help them uphold humanitarian principles while safeguarding their own security so that they are protected from a spillover of violence.

It is important that short-term relief programs link to longer term development aid as part of overall U.S. Government aid to the region. This is particularly the case in Jordan and Lebanon. We must leverage other aid and investments and incorporate refugees into the fabric of these countries, in order to minimize the costs that hosting refugees places on communities. This is an important area in which the State Department and USAID are working together.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE RESPONSE

The Department and USAID lead the U.S. Government's humanitarian response and we work closely together in response to the crisis. Nancy Lindborg and I have traveled together to the region twice and were also recently joined by Ambassador Ford in Turkey, prior to our participation at the Kuwait Donors Conference in January. Our communications teams are taking advantage of maximizing every opportunity to get the message out to domestic and international audiences about the dimensions of the crisis and to highlight our government's leadership role in responding.

That said, allow me to outline the role the State Department has in helping to get as much humanitarian aid into Syria as possible through partners. Over several decades, PRM has developed a privileged relationship with the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and non-governmental organizations. These agencies are a key part of the international humanitarian system that is governed by humanitarian principles. They bring technical expertise and operational capacity to respond to this large-scale crisis. Of the nearly \$385 million in humanitarian assistance that USAID and the State Department are providing in response to the Syria crisis, the State Department's contributions total nearly \$185 million. Our contributions provide life-saving emergency assistance to meet basic humanitarian needs, such as shelter, water, sanitation, and health both inside Syria and in host countries.

The delivery of assistance is often undertaken at great personal risk to those distributing the aid. For example, in the past couple of months, two UNHCR convoys and one U.N. interagency convoy have delivered aid into northwest Syria, where thousands of internally displaced people are in acute need of humanitarian help.

The operations were carried out in collaboration with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and the local community. Once the convoys moved across battle lines into areas controlled by the opposition, the missions were facilitated by the Syrian Opposition Coalition. Such operations are dangerous and difficult, which underscores the need for unhindered and safe access for those providing humanitarian assistance inside Syria. We will continue to encourage the U.N. to do more such cross-line assistance deliveries, counting on the Syrian Opposition Coalition to help coordinate and negotiate safe access. While these convoys are good, much more is needed to ensure supplies consistently and safely reach people in need.

Of course, people in need are not concentrated in one area and instead can be found on both sides of shifting battle lines. Humanitarian organizations provide aid in a neutral and impartial manner. The United Nations is seeking to get access to all communities in need on a regular basis. It is unacceptable and a violation of humanitarian principles for the Syrian regime to deny this access.

I should also mention the plight of the 525,000 Palestinian refugees who were living in Syria prior to the start of the conflict. They, too, have been caught up in the violence in Syria. Fighting has engulfed many Palestinian refugee camps and neighborhoods, including in Yarmouk, causing over half of Syria's Palestinian population to be displaced. For the most part, the Palestinian population has kept away from taking sides in the conflict. Those refugees who remain in camps are the poorest and most vulnerable. Some Palestinians have fled Syria, but most remain inside the country, having heard that they will be turned away at the borders with neighboring countries. The United States is the largest bilateral donor to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the U.N. agency responsible for assisting Palestinian refugees. There are also approximately 63,000 Iraqi refugees inside Syria. In recent months, many other Iraqis who were living as refugees in Syria have chosen to return to Iraq or flee for a second time to other countries.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF OTHER COUNTRIES

With no end in sight, we are facing a resource crisis. The U.N.'s Regional Response Plan to assist up to 1.1 million Syrian refugees in the region has thus far received only 21 percent of the funds it needs to operate for the first half of 2013 and, as of mid-March, refugee arrivals have already nearly reached June 2013 planning figures. Despite our own budget constraints, the United States continues to make every effort to continue to provide funding to meet the increasing needs. However, it is vital that other donors quickly honor the pledges they have made and provide the cash that agencies need to keep life-saving operations going.

Even if the Assad regime falls soon, displacement and the need for humanitarian aid will continue. This is because of the widespread destruction of Syria's infrastructure and predicted flows of refugees that would continue to cross borders—likely in both directions. If refugees are not able to return for years, host countries will need to continue to help host Syrian children in schools, and help families with medical facilities, and provide other public services.

Using diplomatic channels, we are using every opportunity to ask other donors to follow through on the pledges they made at the Kuwait Donors Conference in January in order to raise the promised \$1.5 billion. The Secretary and other Department principals have reached out to other governments to ask them to do more for the Syrian people, including Syrian refugees. Funding is urgently needed if U.N. agencies and others are able to continue to operate.

Coordination of the international humanitarian response is complex and must occur on multiple levels. The United States participates in meetings in Geneva of the Syria Humanitarian Forum that bring together senior officials from key donor governments, countries affected by the crisis and U.N. leaders to discuss the humanitarian aspects of the crisis, and to coordinate our collective response. We also actively participate in U.N. coordination meetings in the field. In addition, we are deepening our coordination with the Syrian Opposition Coalition's Assistance Coordination Unit. We have also encouraged U.N. agencies and other partners to do the same, and are pleased with the initial results.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that my Bureau's primary concerns are providing protection to and aiding those who have fled the violence. The State Department's overall goal, of course, is a return of peace and stability to Syria and to one day see the refugees return home.

I am grateful for the generosity of Congress and the American people who make our assistance possible, and for the excellent collaboration with the State Department's Near East and European Bureaus, and USAID colleagues. Thank you once again for the opportunity to highlight PRM's role and some of our concerns regard-

ing the Syrian humanitarian crisis. I would be happy to answer any of your questions.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Assistant Secretary Richard.

And now we will hear from Assistant Administrator of USAID, Nancy Lindborg.

STATEMENT OF HON. NANCY E. LINDBORG, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. LINDBORG. Great, thank you, Chairman Casey, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee. Thank you very much for holding this hearing today and inviting us to speak. And thank you also for your continued support for our humanitarian programs, both in Syria and globally, where our assistance continues to save lives on a daily basis.

And it is always a pleasure to be here with my good colleague, Assistant Secretary Anne Richard. We have worked very closely on this crisis, and, as Anne mentioned, have traveled together several times to the region.

I have submitted my entire testimony for the record, but let me just focus on specifically how we are working inside Syria to provide assistance, and some of the challenges we are facing.

You described, Chairman Casey, very eloquently, the grim statistics and some of the human stories behind that. It is important, I think, for us always to remember, behind those numbers are the Syrian families, women and children, as you identified, who have lost homes, livelihoods, and, all too frequently, their loved ones.

The United States is fully committed to standing by and with the Syrian people. This is a message that Anne and I and others have brought consistently to the region as we speak to refugees and through social media and other ways to people inside Syria.

Our aid has been a lifeline to more than 2.4 million people inside Syria since the conflict began, nearly 2 years ago. And of the \$385 million in humanitarian assistance that we have provided to date, \$216 million of that is going inside Syria. It has reached all 14 governorates, and about 60 percent of that aid is reaching opposition and contested areas. We know it is not enough, but we are working to ensure that it reaches as broad a swath of those in need. It is being put to work on the ground every day in some of the areas affected by the worst violence, including Idlib, Aleppo, and Daraa. And we know that the needs continue to grow. And that is why, as the situation worsens, it is more important than ever for all nations to step forward with help, and to turn pledges into lifesaving aid.

Our approach is to work through all the possible channels to deliver assistance. We are working through the United Nations, through international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, local Syrian groups and networks, to ensure that we can reach as many people as possible. We coordinate closely with the Syrian Opposition Council's Assistance Coordination Unit, which has assumed an increasingly vital role in its efforts to help ensure that we reach Syrians, especially in opposition-held and contested areas. We have a full-time person working with them, as does the

United Nations. And the Assistance Coordination Unit has moved quickly since its formation, just a few months ago. It does, however, remain a very nascent institution, and we continue to provide support so they can better leverage and coordinate international assistance throughout Syria.

To meet their most urgent needs, we have prioritized food, basic medical and trauma care, and relief supplies. Through the winter, we pushed hard to provide warm blankets, winter clothes, plastic sheeting, and mattresses for more than a million Syrians who had been forced from their home, often more than two or three times as families are moved as the conflict moves about.

The United States is the largest donor for emergency food assistance, and we have, through the World Food Programme, supported activities that are reaching 1.5 million within Syria and approximately 300,000 refugees in neighboring countries, and this target is set to double in the months ahead.

You mentioned, Senator Casey, the flour program, where U.S. flour is reaching 50 bakeries that are feeding 210,000 people in the northern governorates of Aleppo.

We are working, also, with partners, including a cadre of very brave Syrian physicians, to support health care, trauma care. We are supporting 144 hospitals, health clinics, and mobile medical units. We are also focused on those who are internally displaced. The numbers are staggering. More than 2.5 million Syrians—and this may be a conservative number—have been forced to flee their homes and are still inside Syria. The majority are living with other families; families who are already stressed by the violence and the deteriorating system.

So, we are working to support both the host communities as well as those makeshift camps, especially that have sprung up along the Turkish border.

In the Olive Tree Camp, in Atmeh, for example, we have established 120 garbage collection points and trash removal services, repaired water pumps, and brought in water trucking and sewage pipes. These were completely unimproved sites, and so it is imperative that we move to help those.

All of our programs are looking at the psychosocial impacts of this conflict. We have a generation that is now touched and traumatized by the conflict.

Finally, as the warm weather becomes—as we move from winter into warm weather, we have a new set of challenges, and our focus will increasingly shift to clean water, sanitation, hygiene, so that we can prevent the potential onset of waterborne diseases.

I want to quickly identify three key challenges.

The first is access. The single greatest challenge to providing more and better humanitarian assistance is access. We urgently need to be able to, not just cross lines, as Anne has talked about, but to cross the borders to ensure that we are able to reach the most vulnerable groups of Syrians.

Second is security. It is a constant concern. Humanitarian workers are targeted every day. We receive reports of kidnappings, targeting of clinics and of bakeries. Our top priority is to ensure that this aid can continue, and in a way that protects both recipients and the very courageous aid workers who provide it. For this

reason, our assistance is often unbranded. However, we do share a sense of urgency in letting the people of Syria know that we are providing help and standing with them, so we are looking at all the ways in which we can get that message through: selective branding, where we can, as well as with messaging, visits to the region, media, working with the diaspora.

Finally, resources. On the 30th of January, the Emir of Kuwait hosted an international pledging conference at a very critical moment both for raising awareness and funds for the U.N. appeal. Unfortunately, only 21 percent of those funds have come through. So, as the humanitarian worst-case scenario becomes the current scenario, we need all countries to contribute. Our diplomats are, globally, urging all countries to follow through on the generous commitments they made in Kuwait, and we urge you to help us on that mission.

Finally, without our continued full-fledged humanitarian response, the Syrian people may not have the opportunity to achieve their democratic aspirations that began 2 years ago. We know humanitarian aid is not the answer, but, without it, we would see an even worse spiraling of the crisis.

Thank you for your support and happy to take any questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lindborg follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF USAID ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR NANCY E. LINDBORG

Chairman Casey, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to speak with you today. I appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about the U.S. response to Syria's humanitarian crisis and the great challenges we face. Thank you also for your continued support for our humanitarian programs around the world, which are making a positive difference every day for millions of people.

INTRODUCTION

We are facing a grim and escalating humanitarian crisis in Syria. The statistics are numbing: more than 70,000 dead; more than 4 million people inside the country in need of assistance, including over 2.5 million displaced from their homes. We have already surpassed the somber milestone of more than a million refugees who have fled to the relative safety of neighboring countries, with greater numbers of refugees fleeing the violence each day.

And behind these statistics are the stories of individual Syrians who have lost their homes, their livelihoods and all too often their loved ones. I had a sobering visit to the camps in Turkey and Jordan a month ago with Assistant Secretary Anne Richard and Ambassador Robert Ford. We stood at the border late one night as thousands of Syrians walked across into Jordan, including one young woman who was 6 months pregnant and fearful she would lose her child.

The United States is fully committed to standing with and supporting the Syrian people. The United States has provided nearly \$385 million in humanitarian aid to date, \$215 million of which is helping those in need inside Syria. And I want to be clear: our funding is not just a pledge; it is being put to work on the ground every day, in some of the areas affected by the worst violence, including Idlib, Aleppo, and Dar'a.

We know that the humanitarian needs are growing; we know our humanitarian assistance will not end the bloodshed. Without a political solution, no amount of aid will turn the tide. At the same time, we also know our assistance has provided a lifeline to help over 2.4 million people in Syria since the violence began 2 years ago. And our continued, full-throttle humanitarian response is saving lives and is vital to mitigating the impact of an already desperate situation—for the Syrian people, neighboring countries, and the future of a region at the heart of U.S. national security interests.

THE U.S. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The United States has fully mobilized resources to provide humanitarian assistance in Syria, where we face the most complex, dangerous, and difficult crisis in the world today. Working in tandem with our colleagues from the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the Department of State, USAID is working through all channels to enable our assistance to reach people throughout Syria. These channels include the United Nations (U.N.), international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and local Syrian organizations and networks—and collectively thousands of dedicated and very courageous humanitarians who risk their lives daily to provide aid inside Syria, including the generous and brave Syrians who are sheltering family and helping those in their communities every day. Our assistance is currently reaching all of Syria's 14 governorates, and approximately 60 percent is reaching those in contested and opposition-held areas.

To help meet the most urgent needs, we have prioritized the provision of food aid, basic medical care, trauma care, and relief supplies. Throughout the winter, we pushed hard to provide warm blankets, winter clothes, plastic sheeting and mattresses for over 1 million Syrians who have been forced from their homes, many displaced for the second or third time. Now, as winter becomes spring, warm weather brings a new set of challenges, and our focus will shift to providing clean water, improving sanitation and stepping up hygiene supplies and education to thwart the onset of waterborne disease.

Food

The United States is the largest donor for emergency food assistance for those affected by conflict in Syria, including those who have fled to neighboring countries. World Food Programme (WFP) activities supported by USAID currently provide monthly rations to nearly 1.5 million within Syria and approximately 300,000 refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt. WFP targets for these programs are set to increase in coming months to 2.5 million people inside Syria and 755,000 in neighboring countries. Moreover, USAID's emergency food assistance delivered through NGOs is providing a lifeline for vulnerable Syrians in areas where access is most constrained by the conflict.

As civil war disrupts everyday life, the U.S. Government is seeking ways to address critical daily needs in the worst-affected areas. In Aleppo governorate, for example, USAID is providing enough flour to more than 50 bakeries to provide daily bread for 210,000 people. Some of these bakeries had been shuttered for nearly 3 weeks before this program began, and they are now able to operate. Syrian families in these areas have bread, and the bakery owners and workers are once again earning income.

Medical Support

Working through partners, including a cadre of very brave Syrian physicians, we are supporting a lifeline of essential medical supplies and drugs, trauma training for doctors and support for hospitals and mobile clinics. This assistance is saving lives every day. We just heard a story in which one mother was on the street with her 2-year-old son when he was shot in the arm. She was able to rush him to a nearby clinic supported by USAID, where doctors treated him for 4 days, with a hopeful prognosis for full recovery.

As the conflict has continued and the health care system deteriorates, we are seeing a shift from primarily helping those wounded by airstrikes or gunfire to also treating those suffering from more routine ailments. Right now in Syria, the United States is providing support for 144 hospitals, health clinics, and mobile medical units. This includes providing medical supplies and equipment, paying doctors' salaries, and training additional first responders and medical staff. Our medical teams have treated hundreds of thousands of patients, including 35,000 surgeries performed. In addition, we have trained nearly 1,000 people to provide much-needed emergency medical care.

Helping the Internally Displaced

Many Syrians have lost their homes in the war, fleeing with little but the clothes on their backs to stay with host families or find refuge in schools or makeshift camps in Syria. The majority of those displaced inside Syria are living in Syrian host communities already stressed by the ongoing violence, pushing many of these communities into a precarious situation. And many families have been displaced more than once, fleeing as the violence surges through different parts of the country.

Throughout the winter, we provided blankets, heaters, and warm clothes to the displaced and to host families, and we are now providing clean water and improving

sanitation, which is critical to preventing the spread of illness and disease. As makeshift camps have sprung up along the Turkish border, such as the Olive Tree Camp in Atmeh, near the Reyhanli border crossing in Turkey's Hatay province, we are responding with assistance to improve basic personal hygiene also essential to preventing disease. At Olive Tree, U.S. assistance has also established 120 garbage collection points and trash removal services, repaired the water pump, established water trucking, installed a pipe for sewage system, and constructed 140 latrines.

Protection and Psychosocial Support

Each of our humanitarian programs also takes into account protection of the most vulnerable populations, including women, children, and the elderly. Our field hospitals are providing emergency care and emotional support for children, women, and men who have suffered sexual- and gender-based violence. The hours and days following rape are critical to treat injuries related to the assault, prevent infection, and receive the emotional support that will help survivors recover and resume a full life.

After the brutality they have suffered and witnessed, children and adults alike need psychosocial support to help them through this crisis. From helping to form women's groups that encourage discussion to providing vital psychosocial support for children by providing a safe space for them to play and interact with their peers, we are helping to provide ways for Syrians to work through the trauma. With U.S. Government support, UNICEF continues to provide psychosocial support to more than 32,000 children in Damascus, Rif Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo governorates, including in conflict locations. In 2013, UNICEF aims to reach 300,000 children throughout the country.

Coordination

In these complex crises, it is imperative to coordinate with other international partners to ensure we make the most of important humanitarian contributions. By working through the U.N.-led coordination effort for Syria, the humanitarian community can collectively identify, respond to, and meet immediate humanitarian needs without duplication. We continue to encourage our partners and other donors to participate in and support these coordination efforts for the strongest possible international response.

The Syrian Opposition Coalition's (SOC) Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) has assumed an increasingly vital role in coordinating efforts to reach Syrians, especially in opposition-held and contested areas. With support from the international community, the ACU coordinated a rapid needs assessment of northern Syria, which provided a more complete picture of needs, key affected populations, and priority sectors for assistance.

The United States, the United Kingdom, and the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs now have full time liaisons in Turkey to work with the ACU. USAID's Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) in Turkey participates in the ACU's weekly humanitarian coordination meetings, where partner organizations and others from the international community share information about identified needs and map out current and planned assistance.

The ACU has moved quickly since its formation in November to assume its current role. However, even with these heroic efforts, it remains a nascent institution that needs support. So we are continuing to help the ACU build its capacity to maximize its ability to coordinate and leverage international assistance inside Syria.

KEY CHALLENGES

Despite the efforts of the USG and other international partners, Syria's humanitarian crisis is outpacing current response capacity, and we continue to face three significant hurdles that prevent us from reaching all those in need: lack of access, insecurity, and insufficient resources.

Access

First, the single greatest factor limiting humanitarian aid is the lack of access. As I noted in my recent comments at the U.N.-hosted Syrian Humanitarian Forum, we urgently need greater access to forestall the growing humanitarian crisis, including greater access across borders in order to reach the most vulnerable groups of Syrians.

In recent months, we have seen significant breakthroughs in the delivery of assistance across battle lines. Three U.N.-sponsored convoys of trucks recently reached displaced Syrians in the country's north. As a result of delicate negotiations with the Syrian Government and opposition factions, and with the critical partnership of the SOC, these cross-line operations have made a tangible impact and must con-

tinue. But they are logistically complicated and dangerous, underscoring the need for direct, cross-border delivery to meet communities not otherwise easily reached.

Security

Second, with each operation, security is a constant concern, and humanitarian aid workers, particularly medical professionals, are continuing to be targeted for detainments and assassinations. This month, three USAID-funded medical clinics were bombarded in a single day, one of which was completely destroyed by mortar shells, which killed 10 people. Our top priority is providing life-saving aid, so we provide assistance in a way that protects both recipients and the courageous aid workers who provide it. Endangering the aid workers would mean undermining the humanitarian effort itself.

For this reason, U.S. humanitarian assistance in Syria is currently provided without branding. We continue to work to find ways that we can selectively brand in order to safely inform the Syrian people that the United States cares deeply about their suffering and is responding as the leading donor and the largest, most proactive provider of humanitarian assistance.

Meanwhile, we are amplifying our message of support to the Syrian people through official visits with intense regional media engagement, including the trip to the Syria-Jordan border I took earlier this year with Ambassador Ford and Assistant Secretary Richard; regularly engaging diaspora groups; and a government-wide push to communicate directly to the Syrian people.

Resources

Finally, to ensure needed resources, it is imperative that all countries help shoulder this burden. On January 30, the Emir of Kuwait hosted an international pledging conference at a critical moment for raising both awareness and funds for this crisis. Unfortunately, since then, only 21 percent of those pledges have been provided, and funds are running out. We urge all the countries who participated in the conference [?] to follow through on the generous commitments they made. Moreover, this appeal only extends through the end of June. As the humanitarian situation worsens by the day, we continue to focus on mobilizing increased international support.

CONCLUSION: A PIVOTAL MOMENT

Without our continued, full-fledged humanitarian response, the Syrian people may not have the opportunity to realize their democratic aspirations and see their struggle through. We must remain steadfast in our commitment to providing assistance for all those in need inside Syria. We must also continue to support the governments and people of Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, Egypt and other nations who are so generously hosting refugees fleeing Syria to help ensure these nations can maintain open borders.

Thank you for your time today and for your continued support for our efforts in Syria.

I am happy to take your questions.

Senator CASEY. Thanks very much.

I will start. And I want to start with you, Assistant Administrator Lindborg, regarding one of the points you made toward the end of your testimony. Other than the frustration that we have not made nearly enough progress on this—what can only be described as a tragedy—second only to that frustration is the frustration that sometimes even when we are doing a lot, like \$385 million of support, folks do not know it or do not have a sense that it is the American people providing that aid. And I know you talked about that branding question. And we speak to it in our legislation we are introducing today. But, walk us through that, in terms of where you see that issue going, in terms of a better strategy or approach to providing some measure of identification that indicates the support the American people are giving.

I think people are very willing to provide the support, and pleased that we are providing it, but they also want to have a sense that—on the ground, that it is coming from our folks here at home.

Ms. LINDBORG. Thank you, Chairman Casey.

You know, we are constantly balancing the priority of ensuring that aid reaches as many Syrians as possible throughout the country. It is the most complex, dangerous environment in which we are working, globally, right now, so we want to ensure that our humanitarian partners are not unduly targeted or that the communities receiving the aid are not unduly targeted, more than they already are.

So, we are branding when and where we can, and we are looking, as well, at what is the broader communication strategy, and already aggressively pursuing contact through regular calls with the diaspora community here in the United States, visits to the region, where we do extensive media, both Arabic-language media—we are working through social media options to reach people inside Syria—all the ways in which we can get the message out that the American people are standing with the people of Syria, that we are there in their time of need and have provided extensive amounts of humanitarian aid.

Also, by working with the Assistance Coordination Unit, weekly coordination meetings, sharing information on needs and what is going in, and where, so they know, very specifically, what we are doing, and further able to communicate that, as well.

Senator CASEY. I know we have had, in this instance, some non-traditional donors, such as Gulf States. If you can outline for us some of the efforts you are undertaking to encourage new donors. I realize sometimes being a donor isn't enough. It is one thing to make a pledge, it is another thing to deliver on it. That is still, I know, a problem. But, just if you can outline the efforts that have been undertaken to encourage new donors to the joint U.N. coordinating and reporting structures.

Ms. LINDBORG. We have done extensive outreach to new donors, both to encourage them to help shoulder the burden, to turn their very generous pledges at Kuwait into programs on the ground. We are also working with them to encourage them to be a part of the coordination structure through OCHA, the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which is a U.N. entity, and also to join us in the coordination meetings that the SACC Assistance Coordination Unit chairs in southern Turkey.

We know that it is only by working together that we can ensure that you have made the most of the aid that is going in. We, about a year ago, signed a memorandum of understanding with the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, the OIC, which is part of an ongoing drive to enable better coordination and understanding of how to work together to maximize the impact of our humanitarian assistance, especially as global needs rise and we need to maximize all of our resources.

Senator CASEY. I will come back later to ask a question about some of the mechanics of delivering the aid.

But, Assistant Secretary Richard, I wanted to ask you about the border question. In my opening statement, I commended the effort undertaken by neighboring countries to leave their borders open. And obviously, the numbers of refugees they have taken in is really extraordinary and should be commended. There is a concern, though, that some of that will begin to break down, in terms of the

borders, a concern about Iraq may be limiting the inflow. I am just wondering if you can tell us what efforts the State Department has undertaken to encourage countries to keep those borders open, as best they can.

Ms. RICHARD. As we mentioned, we have been traveling to the region quite a bit, and we also receive visitors from those countries here in Washington, and have talked to people at the embassies, as well. And so, in every conversation, we ask them to keep their borders open.

You specifically mentioned Iraq—the Iraqi National Security Advisor was here in town recently, and I went with Ambassador Robert Ford, specifically, for the purpose of talking to him about that piece, about the problems with the border crossings. There are fewer refugees seeking to get into Iraq, but it is still an important point. And so, we continue to make that point.

It helps, I think, that at the same time that we are asking them to keep their borders open, that we are also offering help. And, in some cases, such as with the Jordanians, that is direct financial help, and, in other cases, it is to remind them that most of the money going through the international organizations is coming from the United States, and encouraging them more closely with the United Nations and other international agencies.

Senator CASEY. Thanks very much.

Senator JOHNSON.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you both for your really well-laid-out testimony. I am new to the committee, and really kind of new to this issue, so there are just kind of some basic information that I know this may be kind of difficult for you to typify, but of the 70,000 casualties, is there any kind of breakdown, in terms of how many of those are opposition versus those individuals loyal to the Assad regime?

Ms. RICHARD. I do not have a breakdown. Nancy just said she has not seen one, either.

One of the concerns is that a lot of civilians, who are not necessarily combatants and were just minding their own business and pursuing their own lives, are being massacred by bombing from their own government. So, certainly, some are on one side, some are on the other, and some may have feelings for one side or the other, but are being caught up in a war and sacrificing their lives, when they are really just trying to go about their own business, or kids going to school, or people standing in line at a bakery.

Senator JOHNSON. That would also be true, then, basically, of the refugees, also? They are just caught up in this thing, and they are not—you cannot really typify that half of them are loyal to the regime and half to the opposition?

Ms. RICHARD. Well, most of the refugees are critical of the regime, and horrified to find themselves in the situation. When we were in Jordan, we went up to the border with Syria, at night, and we saw the refugees come across, and we met with them. And they were families—old folks, parents, kids, up way past their bedtimes, completely shocked by what was happening in their lives. You know, maybe they would have a suitcase with all the family's possessions. Suddenly, their homes have been destroyed, their friends or relatives have been killed. And so, they are not fleeing because

they are afraid something bad might happen, they are fleeing because they have witnessed terrible things.

Senator JOHNSON. Can either of you imagine a scenario in which this humanitarian crisis does not continue, does not escalate, where the Assad regime stays in power?

Ms. Lindborg.

Ms. LINDBORG. I think that we imagined that there will be a significant need for humanitarian assistance for some time to come. As has been frequently talked about, there is great hopes that Assad will leave power soon, and we would still need to have humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of that departure.

Senator JOHNSON. But, again, can you imagine any kind of winding down of this tragedy with Assad still in power? Or, he has to be replaced? He has got to go?

I mean, Ms. Richard, you have an expression on your face, there.

Ms. RICHARD. It is hard to imagine a peaceful outcome where Assad is still involved.

Senator JOHNSON. So, if anything, that has got to be the goal of our policies. We need to make sure that Assad is gone.

Ms. RICHARD. Well, I—

Senator JOHNSON. I mean, you know, and just a—you know, peace talks, trying to reach some negotiated settlement is going to continue the humanitarian disaster?

Ms. RICHARD. You know, we have traveled a lot with Ambassador Robert Ford, who is lead spokesman on the political piece of this; whereas, we are speaking about the humanitarian piece. So, he is seeking a negotiated outcome, a peaceful outcome. I have heard Toria Nuland—our colleague, Toria Nuland—many times, from the podium, you know, talk about our desire for the end of the Assad regime and some kind of a new government that involves all parts of the society, peacefully, stably, coming together.

One of the problems is that, when this first started, a couple of years ago, there was hope that it could end quickly. The longer it goes on, the more extensive the damage inside the country, the more need there is going to be for reconstruction, the more horrors that have been visited on people. So, they have been traumatized, and they are going to need help getting their lives back together.

Senator JOHNSON. OK, but, basically, just so I understand your testimony here, that a negotiated settlement that keeps Assad in power would be just—it will continue the humanitarian disaster. We will not find a solution to the problem if Assad stays.

Ms. RICHARD. I am not authorized to talk about—

Senator JOHNSON. OK, that is fine.

Ms. RICHARD [continuing]. Whether Assad is in or out. But, the negotiated settlement is the desire that we are all seeking and that we are all pushing for.

Senator JOHNSON. OK. No, obviously, this humanitarian effort costs a lot of money, and we have very severe budgetary problems. The figures I have is, our foreign aid is about \$36 billion a year. Is that already always purposed? Is that all that—as the year begins, do we know exactly where that is going? Is there any ability to shift funding from one area to another, based on priorities?

Ms. RICHARD. We put together budget estimates, and request that from Congress. But, the budgets are put together so far in

advance of the fiscal year—really, the spring of the year before you get the budget, is when estimates are being put together. So, last year’s funding and this year’s funding requests were put together before the crisis in Syria had erupted, and certainly before anyone thought it would reach this extent.

And so, we are grateful to Congress for giving us some flexibility in using contingency funds to respond to the crisis. But, the mood, up here on Capitol Hill, to restrict funding, really charges us to be very, very careful in how we are spending our foreign aid dollars. And also, in my office—both of our offices have global responsibilities, so we are trying to stretch our funding to respond, not just to Syria, which is a major crisis that we spend a lot of time focused on, but also to crises in the rest of the world, too.

Senator JOHNSON. I know it is hard to prioritize this, but, I mean, how far up the priority list do you list Syria, in terms of the priority—

Ms. RICHARD. I spend most of my time, now, on the Syria crisis.

Senator JOHNSON. But, is that true of the entire State Department of this administration in terms of humanitarian foreign aid?

Ms. RICHARD. Yes.

Senator JOHNSON. So, this would be a top priority—

Ms. RICHARD. You are talking to both of the—

Senator JOHNSON [continuing]. Ms. Lindborg.

Ms. LINDBORG. Very—

Ms. RICHARD [continuing]. Offices that work on humanitarian aid in the administration, and we are spending all our time on this. And we are trying to carve out time to not neglect other parts of the world, of course.

Senator JOHNSON. OK.

Ms. Lindborg, did you want to respond?

Ms. LINDBORG. Just to add that, without question, this is a significant top priority, and we are having to look at tradeoffs, globally, unfortunately.

Senator JOHNSON. OK. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

Senator Boxer.

Senator BOXER. Thanks—thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank Senator Risch, who has had to leave, for putting this together.

I am going to start with a couple of budget remarks, then I am going to get to the issue of the condition of women and what is happening to women, and then, if I have time, get to the issue of children, which I know my chairman really cares about.

We have spent almost half a billion dollars, according to my numbers, in this crisis, so far. And that includes \$100 million to Jordan to help with the refugees. And I hope the Syrian people know—because I am not so sure they know—how deeply we do care about them. Those caught in a terrible situation due to a dictator who is clinging to power. And, you know, this is not about the politics of it. You cannot talk about the politics of it. But, you know, I had a chance to meet with the Russian Ambassador and say, “What are you doing? You have so much influence, here.” And they

are getting better, but there has to be a very clear international message that Assad has to go.

And I heard Senator Kerry, who is now Secretary of State, today say that they understand the Europeans are going to give more military help to the opposition, and the United States has no objection.

So, I think things are certainly moving to get this to an end, but, in the meantime, you are there, trying to help the people caught in the middle.

Now, according to current figures, more than a million people in Syria are now living in neighboring countries. An estimated two-thirds of those refugees are women and children. And we know there have been commendable efforts by the international community, many of Syria's neighbors, We are very grateful. However, many of the women have already been victims of sexual assault.

According to the Rescue Committee, Syrians identified rape as a primary reason why their families fled the country. Many women and girls relate accounts of being attacked, in public or in their homes, primarily by armed men. These rapes, sometimes by multiple perpetrators, often occur in front of family members. This is a quote from that committee.

Sadly, the situation, at least for some women, is not improving—these are my words—even outside of Syria. And I want to tell you a story about one of these young girls.

According to an Associated Press story, a girl's father married her off, for \$1,000, to a Jordanian man. Her new husband promptly sent her to work in a brothel. Cheerfully acknowledging that he sells her for sex, he says, "I've got nothing to lose," the husband reportedly said, smiling, "I will eventually divorce her, and she'll end up going home."

Assistant Secretary Richard, can you speak to the situation of female refugees? What are we doing to help ensure that services are available for women who might have been victims of sexual assault?

Ms. RICHARD. Thank you very much for your long-time attention—

Senator BOXER. Thank you.

Ms. RICHARD [continuing]. To this issue, and for leading all of us to pay more attention to violence against women and girls in these humanitarian situations.

We are very concerned by reports of sexual- and gender-based violence. I am an alumnae of the International Rescue Committee, so, even though I meet with them a little less these days, because I cannot show favorites, I am aware of the report, and have talked to staffers about that.

We are working closely with aid agencies to beef up protection for vulnerable refugees, particularly women and girls. Our humanitarian funding helps support programs to protect the victims and educate the community about ways to prevent sexual- and gender-based violence.

With your permission, I will quickly go through, maybe, some of the different countries where we are—

Senator BOXER. No, I am just asking a pretty simple question. What are we doing, specifically, to help ensure that services are

available for women who have been victims of sexual assault? Just that narrow point. I will have other questions I will introduce into the record, but—

Ms. RICHARD. So, through our grant funding, we give funding to UNHCR to work in Jordan, Lebanon—

Senator BOXER. Good.

Ms. RICHARD [continuing]. And Iraq on this. In Turkey, we are working with the U.N. Population Fund. And then, in all of these places, we are funding nongovernmental organizations to do programs to respond to the needs of women and girls who have been victims, and also to prevent reoccurrence or any—

Senator BOXER. Thank you. But, can I ask you, Would you be willing to send us some more information on this so we can follow up?

Ms. RICHARD. Absolutely.

[The information supplied by the State Department follows:]

Senator BOXER. According to the rescue committee, Syrians identified rape as a primary reason why their families fled the country. Many women and girls relate accounts of being attacked in public or in their homes, primarily by armed men. These rapes, sometimes by multiple perpetrators, often occur in front of family members. This is the quote from that committee. Sadly, the situation, at least for some women, is not improving—these are my words—even outside of Syria.

Assistant Secretary Richard, can you speak to the situation of female refugees? What are we doing to help ensure that services are available for women who might have been victims of sexual assault?

Ms. RICHARD. We are very concerned by reports of gender-based violence (GBV) including sexual violence, and are working closely with humanitarian partners to strengthen protection for vulnerable refugees, particularly women and girls. Our humanitarian funding helps support programs to prevent and respond to GBV, including by providing assistance to GBV survivors and working with communities to prevent GBV. We are taking concrete steps to protect women from violence during conflict consistent with the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has received over \$111 million in U.S. Government funding for its response to the Syria crisis since 2012, provides GBV services and coordinates protection and GBV services provided by other U.N. agencies and implementing partners. UNHCR also works with host governments to develop capacity to help GBV survivors. The U.S. Government also supports NGO and international organization (IO) partners to complement UNHCR's programming and activities, providing an additional \$4 million to programs throughout the region to address GBV prevention and treatment.

The U.S. Government partners incorporate GBV education and support to survivors in their broader assistance programming including health, education, psychosocial, economic, and water, sanitation and hygiene assistance. Programs are designed to protect those most at risk and prevent violence.

In Jordan, UNHCR works in partnership with the Family Protection Department (FPD), affiliated with the Jordanian Public Security Department (PSD), to strengthen its capacity to address GBV and provide psychosocial support services in the northern part of the country (Irbid, Ramtha, Mafraq and Zaatari camp). PRM supplements UNHCR's efforts by supporting a program through an NGO partner, which provides direct services for women and children in Ramtha, Mafraq, Irbid, and the Zaatari refugee camp. This project assists over 20,000 refugees through direct case management for survivors (including male and child survivors of GBV), individual therapy, group therapy, supplemental psychosocial activities, health services (including reproductive health and care for survivors of sexual assault), and referrals. Another U.S.-funded NGO program is working to educate the refugee population on GBV and to build the capacity of health workers to better identify and respond to GBV cases they encounter.

In Lebanon, UNHCR, UNICEF, and other agencies are identifying gaps in GBV programs, providing technical training to Ministry of Social Affairs workers in contact with GBV survivors, and expanding referrals for survivors to receive specialized services. Recognizing that refugees in Lebanon are not in camps and are geographically spread across the country, the United States is complementing UNHCR's efforts by funding a nongovernmental organization to map local agencies that spe-

cialize in assisting women and girl survivors of violence in the north and Bekaa valley and are conducting intensive GBV capacity development training for two clinics so they can appropriately receive and manage GBV cases. Syrian refugees also access gender-based violence services provided through a separate NGO program targeting primarily Iraqi refugees.

In Turkey, the Turkish Government is the primary service provider to Syrian refugees through its Disaster and Emergency Planning Agency (AFAD) with UNHCR serving in an advisory capacity on camp services. The U.S. Government is funding the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to support GBV prevention and response in refugee camps, as well as reproductive health services. We are also funding an NGO for primary health care, mental health, and psychosocial support in both urban and camp environments that includes medical treatment and counseling to GBV survivors.

In Iraq, UNHCR is working with the refugee population to raise awareness of GBV and through its partners, is providing psycho-social counseling and legal support to survivors.

In addition, the United States has provided funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to support both its humanitarian response to the Syrian conflict as well as the development of a gender-based violence referral system for Palestinian refugees, including those affected by the conflict. UNRWA is working to ensure GBV survivors have access to necessary support from UNRWA staff and external medical services and to increase community awareness of this issue. UNRWA has included Palestinian refugees from Syria that are displaced in Lebanon in its GBV programming and is currently developing a referral system for Palestinian refugees inside Syria, despite the operational challenges.

We work with humanitarian agencies, tapping into their expertise, to determine the best way to deliver assistance in a culturally sensitive manner. For example, one NGO partner conducted assessments to inform its GBV programming. The assessments included not only female refugees but men and boys as well as service providers. The NGO noted that it was not easy to determine if participants were speaking about personal experiences, situations they witnessed, or stories they heard. As a result, the NGO concluded that GBV is prevalent in the Syrian crisis; the NGO is continuing to develop relationships and gather data to understand the scope of the problem. During the assessments, the refugees indicated that they preferred to obtain GBV-related services in a location that would not identify them as a survivor. For this reason, the NGO has incorporated GBV programming into medical service provision.

We recognize that more remains to be done and remain committed to addressing this pressing humanitarian need.

Senator BOXER. Now, I imagine you both have seen a recent report by Save the Children, entitled "Childhood Under Fire," about the devastating impact the war in Syria is having on Syria's children. The report's findings are staggering.

Today, within Syria, more than 2 million children are in need of assistance, suffering from trauma, malnutrition, and disease. Many are unable to attend school, and living in crowded and unsanitary conditions. One survey, conducted by Turkish researchers, found that three out of four children they interviewed had lost a loved one to fighting.

Perhaps most chilling, children as young as 8—oh, this is—have been used as human shields and are increasingly being recruited as armed actors in the conflict.

Can you speak to the situation of children in this conflict? What, if any, specialized services are the international community and host nations able to provide to children who are able to leave Syria?

Ms. LINDBORG. Thank you. And, you know, these are the horrors of war, absolutely. And again, thank you for your leadership and concern for this.

I would just add, on the issue of violence against women, that, I mentioned in my testimony, we are supporting 144 hospitals, clin-

ics, and mobile clinics inside Syria, and we know that it is those hours immediately following a rape that it is most important to get help, so we have prioritized getting in rape kits, training the health care professionals on counseling, and looking at ways in which we can prevent infection and some of the health repercussions following a rape.

The protection is difficult, which is—you know, you want to be able to stop the rapes. At this point, inside Syria, given the conflict, we are better able to do the treatment. And the goal, as we get to stabilize the situations, obviously, is to help to stop—

Senator BOXER. Right. But, in the refugee camps, there ought to be a way to stop the assaults there—

Ms. RICHARD. Right.

Senator BOXER [continuing]. And ought to be a better way to—it has to be zero tolerance, period. And, I mean, look, I know how hard this is. We cannot stop it in our own military. I mean, this is an epidemic—let me make that point—that women are suffering mightily in this 21st century, and children are suffering. We have come so far, and yet we have so far to go. And it is hard to really talk about it.

I met a gentleman who is from Syria. He is a very successful businessman. And, I mean—just has everything you can imagine in the world, and he would give it all up in a second if he could end this conflict. So, I think the whole point, I think, that Senator Johnson made, is that, you know, trying to get behind this to what is happening on the ground is absolutely essential. This has to end, because of these horrors.

But, you are in a position to really tell the world what is happening. And I hope that you will get out there. That is why I am so grateful to Senators Casey and Risch, because, a lot of times—because we have a thousand issues—we have the budget issues now—clearly, it is hard. We have budget issues. We have given half a billion. I certainly want to do more, if it is spent wisely. We need to get—you know, we have philosophical arguments, here. I argue, you get back to the balanced approach of the Clinton years, we can do more and still balance the budget. Others say, no, that is not the way. And that is a different argument. But, meanwhile, this goes on.

So, let me just change my question and end with this. Would you be willing, with your groups that are going to testify later and all the good people who are out there, to really bring this shameful situation forward? You are the ones that know. You are the ones who I know have cried on the ground. But, people have to understand it, because then I think players, like Russia, like China, others, will be compelled, in the court of just human feeling, to maybe do more to end this thing, and stop giving hope to this dictator, that he can stay there and eventually win.

So, without getting you into politics, will you use your positions to do as much as you can to tell the truth about what is going on over there? I would ask both of you that.

Ms. RICHARD. We will, and we are. And I have told my communications staff, and also the larger public affairs part of State Department, that if there is any request for media or media

interviews, my answer is, “Yes. So, don’t even ask, just start to schedule.”

And so, we do a lot of this together, because we want the U.S. Government speaking with one voice. And I was talking to CBS yesterday, and we also use all of the social media technologies so that we can talk, inside Syria, to people there, using Skype or using whatever technologies are out there. I am the mother of two teenagers that cannot believe mom is using all the latest Twitter feeds and Skype products. And I said, “Whatever works, I want our voices out there. I want people to hear this.”

Ms. LINDBORG. Yes, I would just echo that we have, and we are. We are giving speeches, we are using the media. It is hard to truly capture the horror of going to the camps and being shown pictures, by a woman, of her dead children on her cell phone, in this very tragic twist on technology. This is a lifetime changed for children who have gone through this trauma, for the women who have suffered this brutality.

There is, I think, enormous progress, globally, on bringing these issues to a new norm, that this is not OK, and yet, we have these conflicts, where this goes on. It is always the women and children who suffer the most.

So, we are absolutely out there, telling the story as much as we can, and we thank you for your passion on this issue, because it is the face of war that often gets put underneath the statistics.

Senator BOXER. Thank you.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Senator Boxer.

Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Thank you for having this hearing. And I will be very brief.

And thank you for your testimony.

In recent months, I have been at refugee camps both in Turkey and Jordan, and I know the need there is growing rampantly since that time. And obviously, we are reading reports of refugees and what they are attempting to do to find safety.

I guess I would just ask you, more of a macrolevel—it seems to me that this could go on for some time, and there are lots of human needs that are not being met. And yet it seems, the day after Assad falls, which I think, you know, all here believe is going to happen, there is going to be a tremendous effort that is going to need to take place to keep extremism from being overly rampant and more than—I mean, we know it is going to be rampant, but to calm that, but also just to deal with the basic needs of a country that, basically, is not functioning and does not have the institutions at least in opposition-group hands today.

Do you think we are doing enough, as a nation, to plan for the day after, to have the elements in place that are going to be necessary to keep this from bleeding over into other countries once Assad falls?

Ms. RICHARD. I have been in the administration since April of last year, and, around the same time, there were different committees put together the day after Assad falls. And those committees have met, and have stayed together. So, I think that the administration is doing a good job anticipating that.

What has been distressing is that that day is not here yet. And so, I also think the United States is doing a very good job in leading the humanitarian response that we are part of, and being the top donor to that.

I think where there is not enough being done is, we do not have enough other countries joining us in putting money on the table and helping to be prepared to not just help the humanitarian response now, but also to be prepared for the reconstruction of the country.

Maybe I could pass it to Nancy now, because I know she is also involved in talking to people about having Syrians ready to govern, having Syrians ready to lead on the inside.

Ms. LINDBORG. Thank you.

I would just add that we cannot wait until the day after, and that a lot of the—

Senator CORKER. No, I am not suggesting that. I am suggesting maybe we are not doing enough now to plan for the day after and along the way.

Ms. LINDBORG. So, just to note that, in addition to the planning that has gone, there is already activities going forward. Secretary Kerry just announced a new package that augments what we have already done, which is expressly designed to move a transition process forward, to begin investments in some of the small infrastructure that is so essential for providing services to Syrian citizens in the areas that are more accessible.

You are absolutely right, that is the question to be focused on, and plans and activities are both moving forward.

Senator CORKER. Let me ask you a question. We have a—you know, I know a vote took place yesterday, and the coalition has elected someone who spent three decades in Texas, which, you know, maybe makes you think that maybe we might have a degree of influence, in the event this person succeeds. But, I know many of the coalition members were hesitant to vote for a Prime Minister at this time, because, I mean, in many ways, this person is destined for failure; meaning that there are many things to overcome within the country, and, if this coalition is not seen as delivering the basic services and needs, it is something that Assad could certainly build upon.

Are there things that we can do directly, right now, with this newly elected quasi-Prime Minister, to ensure that he and the group working with him are successful on the ground?

Ms. LINDBORG. We know, from past transitional and post-conflict situations, that it is critical for new governing authorities to be able to gain that trust of their people, and accountability, by delivering essential services, which is exactly why this new package is designed to do that, to help the Syrian Opposition Coalition both gain greater capacity, but also, at the same time, deliver. We have been working with them to identify what some of their immediate priorities are, and are already moving forward. It is things like garbage trucks for collection of trash, it is youth programs, it is getting rubble out of some of the areas that have been destroyed, it is getting fuel in.

So, this is separate from our humanitarian programs. It is through programs like the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives

and the Middle East Partnership Initiative, that are expressly designed to address these kinds of transitional priorities.

So, that is moving apace. They have also asked, for example, for 25 firefighters in Aleppo to be trained on search-and-rescue techniques so that they are there and able to provide that essential service, in the event of additional attacks.

We are very encouraged by what happened in Aleppo, with the recent elections at the local level, and understand that it is both a ground-up and a center-in that we need to be looking at as we support a transition.

Senator CORKER. And one last question. I apologize, I need to run to another hearing. But, you know, I have met with Syrian rebels in refugee camps along the Turkish border, and the mantra that you hear there is that, "Look, you know, we can have all these civilian groups that you wish, drinking wine in other parts of the world as they act as if they're representing us, but us, the folks on the ground with the arms, are going to decide the future of Syria." Just like your take on that melding together over time with these efforts that you have underway.

And, second, we are obviously not overtly involved, right now, in supplying arms. Other countries are. Secretary Kerry, yesterday, gave the green light for some European countries to go ahead and do the same. Do you think that our presence is being felt adequately on the ground so that we do have effect as we move down the road in helping shape the future of Syria?

Ms. RICHARD. I can talk to the first part of that, about the melding together of the Syrian diaspora, maybe, and the Syrians who are doing the fighting, and maybe Nancy can pick up, then, on how our presence is being felt on the ground.

I was speaking to a Syrian-American group over the weekend, and they are working so hard to raise money and get aid in, in a way that is just really noble. And a lot of them have relatives inside Syria, so I think that the ties are pretty strong.

Of course, their experiences in recent weeks and months are quite divergent, when it is just so much safer here in the United States. There are some Syrian-Americans who are afraid of speaking out, for fear it will hurt their relatives, but their ties are quite strong, and communication is quite good.

I also wanted to mention, the new Prime Minister, that you mentioned, Ghassan Hitto—Nancy and I had lunch with him in Turkey, in January, because he was so involved in the assistance efforts. And we have also received the Assistance Coordination Unit—the Syrian and coalition's Washington representative in our offices. So, we have very good communications with their top representatives.

Senator CORKER. I know that I have taken over the length of time allotted, but—is our presence on the ground being felt by those people who are going to determine the future of Syria? Do they know that we are providing this aid? Do they know that we are involved? Do they feel like that we are involved enough to help shape the future of Syria, once Assad falls?

Ms. LINDBORG. Let me just speak from the humanitarian perspective. And we know that our partners work every day at the local level with the emerging relief committees or the medical com-

mittees, you know, the kind of organization that happens at a local level. They know this assistance is coming from the United States. Our partners work with them every day to ensure that the assistance is getting out to all parts, including some of the hardest hit contested in opposition-held areas.

We are also working very closely with the ACU, the Assistance Coordination Unit of the Syrian Opposition Council, to coordinate, on a regular, ongoing basis, to identify where are the needs and to ensure that the assistance is coordinated and they know what exactly is going out.

So, the leadership at every level, without question, understands our commitment to provide humanitarian assistance.

Senator CORKER. Thank you for the time.

I would suggest that you send a group up, in a classified setting, to walk us through how you see things unfolding, once Assad falls and what the plan is to ensure success by the coalition when that happens. I think that would be very helpful to us, and it might be a good disciplinary process for you all to make sure that you have actually done that in an appropriate way. I think that would be very helpful to all of us.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Senator Corker.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am going to follow up on Senator Corker and Senator Boxer's comments. The humanitarian crisis in Syria, as Senator Boxer was going through the tragedies to women and children, the number of deaths, now about 80,000; the number of people who have been victim of violence, we do not know the exact numbers; displaced people, several million; outside of Syria, now crossing a million. Assad needs to leave, but he also needs to be turned over to The Hague, because there are war crimes that have been committed. There is no question about that.

And, in your response to Senator Corker, Secretary Richard, you indicated that other countries need to do more. And I could not agree with you more. But, I would point out that there is a perceived lack of decisive leadership by the United States—not necessarily as it relates to lethal aid, but as to the role the United States is playing in helping coordinate the opposition.

I was in the region a couple of weeks ago, visited the refugee camp in Kilis, and I compliment the Turks; I think they are doing an excellent job in managing a very difficult circumstance, at mostly their own cost; and they are giving hope to the Syrians, giving a safe haven, and facilitating humanitarian assistance coming in through that border, which is under the control of the opposition. So, that was a positive sign.

You have heard frustration, in this committee, as to how the United States, who is providing a great deal of assistance, how that aid is being perceived by the Syrian people. And that is a legitimate concern. I would point out, although the United States, I think, is giving the largest sum of humanitarian aid of any country there is a great deal more that needs to be done.

The reason I said, originally, Secretary Richard, that “the perceived U.S.”—in my visit, in talking to the opposition forces, whether at the border or in Istanbul, there was a frustration that

the United States has not been decisive in providing direction. The opposition is not well defined. The control of the country by the opposition is different sectors in different parts of the country, so there is not the uniform network that makes it easier for us to provide assistance.

So, on the humanitarian side, we have to rely on international organizations, NGOs. And I guess my question is, What assurances can you give to us that the funds and moneys that are being provided by the American taxpayers are furthering the U.S. interests? And that, primarily, is humanitarian. So, is it getting to the right people? But also providing, we hope, stability in a more democratic society, with the United States brand helping achieve those objectives. So, how much confidence do we have that the international assistance that we contribute to is being distributed in the most efficient way and with U.S. objectives?

Ms. RICHARD. Thank you, Senator. We have a great deal of confidence that the aid that we are providing to refugees in the countries surrounding Syria is being provided in a very efficient way by professionals and experts who know what they are doing. And we do not provide it if we have a sense that they do not know what they are doing. And we have seen a tremendous professionalization, over the last decade or so, of the people who provide aid. It is not a group of amateurs who just sort of roll up their sleeves and dig in, anymore. There is a lot of thinking and care that goes into this.

Inside Syria, there is a very chaotic situation, and there is live fighting and violence going on throughout the country, and that makes it much more difficult to provide aid in an efficient way. And it is more of a challenge to try to get access, in any way we can. And our colleagues at USAID, our United Nations and international and NGO partners, are using as much brainpower as they can to figure out how to get access and how to get the aid to where it is needed.

You talked about the frustration, among Syrians in the camps, but also on the inside, that the United States is not doing enough. I think that it can be attributed to several things, because we are doing everything we can to get the word out that we are leading in the response. But, some of these folks are cut off from that information. Some of the leaders are being very mischievous when they talk to journalists; they say, "Oh, we don't see anything, we're not getting anything," because they are hopeful that that will then prompt more to come in. Some are really more frustrated about the United States not providing arms—and so, that is what they are talking about, as opposed to the U.S. humanitarian piece.

So, some of those problems, we can do something about, and some we cannot. And so, we are trying to get the word out about the leading role the United States is playing, trying to get that out in Arabic, trying to get it into Syria. And then, Nancy and her folks have been trying to figure out how aid can be branded with the U.S. flag or, you know, somehow indicate that the United States has helped the opposition to get aid in.

Ms. LINDBORG. I would just add to that, Senator, that we have worked to use all possible channels to ensure aid is getting directly to those in need throughout all 14 governates and including a focus

on areas that are hard to reach in the seven northern governates. And we are working with the United Nations, with NGOs, also with Syrian organizations, some very brave Syrian doctors—

Senator CARDIN. I appreciate everything you are saying, and I understand the challenges. And in some parts of Syria, there is not a network, and the NGOs cannot work in those areas safely, and they are not there, so it is hard to get aid to those people that are in a crisis. And I accept the fact that people have different agendas in the opposition, so what they say may not be totally ingenuous.

But, I will point out, in talking with government officials, other governments in that region, there is a concern about U.S. leadership and what exactly the United States is prepared to do. Now, I think Secretary Kerry has clarified that, and his visit to the region, I think, helped a great deal. There is now additional resources that are being made available. I think the President's visit, this week, will also clarify U.S. intentions, and that we are strongly engaged and strongly committed to the removal of Assad as a leader in Syria, with a new regime coming into place. So, I think we are making progress in that.

But, I must tell you, when so many of the stakeholders in that region see the United States as not adequately providing its direction and leadership, there is a problem there. And part of it is how we are perceived in that region as a result of it.

So, I know the work that you are doing is extremely challenging. I know that we are playing a major role. I would just urge us to coordinate our game plan better than we have in the past, in order to get, not only the humanitarian aid out there, but also to provide for a smoother transition to a new government that will reflect the values that we hope that they will.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

I want to thank the Assistant Administrator and the Assistant Secretary. We have a lot more questions we will submit for the record.

Let me, as well, as you leave, commend your public service. This is very difficult work, the complexity of which I am not sure I can understand or appreciate, and I am sure that is widely shared. But, we are grateful for your commitment.

We will stay in touch with you, and we will leave the record open for members to submit questions. And we are just grateful for your time and your appearance here today.

Thank you.

Ms. RICHARD. Thank you so much for holding the hearing.

Senator CASEY. Thank you.

Ms. LINDBORG. Thank you very much. Appreciate your support.

Senator CASEY. Thank you.

We will transition now, because we want to hear from His Excellency Antonio Guterres, who is the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. He is appearing as a courtesy, to provide us a briefing on the situation in Syria. And we are grateful for his presence. We know his time is limited, but we are honored that he is here, in his second term as High Commissioner and someone who has served Portugal as a Prime Minister, and a person of great experience, and someone who has dedicated, now, years to the good work

that is done by the United Nations and in this capacity, as High Commissioner for Refugees.

Your Excellency, we are grateful you are here, and we want to provide you as much time as you need to give us a briefing. And I know that some of us will have questions, and try to get you out of here at the appointed time.

Thank you very much.

STATEMENT OF ANTONIO GUTERRES, UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, NY

Mr. GUTERRES. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the panel.

I want to thank you, first of all, for this opportunity to brief the panel and to say I just came from the region, and the visit confirmed to me that this Syrian crisis is the most complex, the most dangerous, and with worst humanitarian consequences of all the conflicts I have seen since I started, 8 years ago, in this post.

The numbers are clear. Since yesterday, 1.15 million refugees in the countries around. And even according to a statement of a member of the government, now 3.6 million displaced inside the country. And it is not only the present situation, it is the staggering escalation we are witnessing. In April, we had only registered 33,000 refugees. In December last year, 500,000. Now more than the double. In December, every single day, 3,000 people crossed the border; in January, 5,000; in February 8,000. In the last few weeks, there were days of 14,000 people fleeing Syria.

And the response to this humanitarian catastrophic situation would not be possible without the generosity of the neighboring countries that have received all these Syrians and provided them with protection and assistance.

All our advocacy has been centered in keeping the borders open. And I think that, largely, we were successful on that. There are some problems; and whenever there is a problem, we engage directly with the government and try to solve it as quickly as possible. But, more than the numbers, what I believe matters here are the refugees themselves, and the displaced people inside Syria, themselves. Each one of them is a human tragedy.

Most of the people have left, having lost members of their family. Almost all of them have lost everything they possessed. When I visit these camps and I talk to people, there are two words that come to my mind. It is "anger," but it is also the "trauma" that I feel. Anger, first of all, with the international community, that they can see that has not been able to stop this conflict. And trauma—we have the risk of a generation that is emerging fully traumatized by violence. And let us not forget that more than three-fourths of the people are women and children; and let us not forget, in particular, that children are the majority, and one in each five refugees coming to Jordan is less than 4 years old. Visiting schools and looking at the drawings, all the drawings are planes bombarding villages or people being killed by other people.

I was visiting a family in Zaatari camp, just last week, and there was a boy of 4 years old that was permanently shooting with a gun during all my visit. And, of course, I referred, to make sure that

he would have the psycho-social support that he absolutely needs, because the level of trauma is, indeed, quite dramatic.

And then, as it was said, there are harrowing reports of rape and sexual abuse to women and children in Syria. And, unfortunately, when coming to the exile, we have to struggle with situations of family violence, with situations of sexual violence, and we have families that push their young women or girls into early marriage or prostitution. We are trying to build, together with our partners and with the support of the authorities, what we hope will be a robust capacity to both prevent and to address the plight of the victims in these situations. But, these are, indeed, demonstrations, also, of the dramatic human tragedies that we are facing.

Now, to respond to the situation, UNHCR has, now, about 2,000 people on the ground, in 16 offices, and we have two essential missions. Outside the country, and in accordance with our mandate, we coordinate about 60 U.N. agencies—UNICEF, WFP, and a few others—and NGOs, together with the members of the Red Cross/Red Crescent family, and working very closely with governments in order to make sure that the adequate levels of protection and assistance are provided. In Turkey, as it was said, the government is, itself, dealing with most of the expenditure that corresponds to the situation, but, in Jordan, in Lebanon, in Kurdistan, we are very strongly involved, together with our partners, from shelter to different relief items, from food to water and sanitation, from education to health, all the basic needs of this population in such a traumatic environment.

Inside Syria, we still keep our manned attenuation to about 60,000 Iraqi refugees we are supporting and a few Palestinians that came from Iraq, all who deals with the traumatic situation of the Palestinian refugees in Syria, most of them already displaced inside the country, and some with problems in leaving the country. But, inside Iraq, we are also part of a broad humanitarian family—namely, within the U.N. framework—as one of the members of the team trying to assist the people displaced inside the country.

And, indeed, one of the most challenging questions that we are facing relates to the support to the people displaced in areas that are not controlled by the government. That is why we pioneered two huge convoys into the northern part of the country, through cross-lines, as we are not allowed to do cross-border, and we are now pushing as much as possible for the whole U.N. country team to do successive operations of this type. But, let us also not forget—and I could witness that in Turkey—that more than 30 NGOs, or coalitions of NGOs, are doing cross-border support from Turkey. And what I believe it is very important is to make sure, based on the principle that everybody should be supported, wherever they are, whoever they are, whoever they support, whoever controls the territory where they are—what is needed is, in all these operations, to have, I would say, more support and better coordination. And that is why the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, was in Turkey just after me, in order to try to push for these more effective efforts for the Syrian people inside the country, where the conditions are, I would say, worse than the conditions outside.

If I may end my comments, what we are facing is a dramatic gap in resources. We were planning for 1.1 million refugees in June.

We reached that in mid-March, but we are only funded by less than 30 percent. And I am talking about all the organizations of the refugee response plan that we coordinate. Sixty, as I mentioned.

And it is impossible to go on. Many organizations will have to cease their activities, and we might need to restrict ourselves to core protection and to lifesaving for the most vulnerable, which, of course, would be a tragedy.

I know how difficult the situation is around the world. We had the Kuwait Conference. It is not yet clear what will happen in its implementation. Until now, Kuwait has signaled that they want to channel their support through the multilateral organizations. In relation to the other gulf—donors from the gulf, I have a clear impression that very little, if any, money will be channeled through the multilateral system, and that they will use their usual channels that are bilateral, or through their own charities, mainly. And so, this will not be the game changer we all hoped for. That is the reason why I am addressing Parliament. I have been in Parliament for 25 years, and I know how difficult it is to be in Parliament when funding is a problem, in general terms. But, that is why, in addressing Parliaments, I have been suggesting the possibility to consider that the Syrian situation, at such a dimension, such a scale, to be looked separately from normal humanitarian aid budgets, because, with normal humanitarian aid budgets that exist around the world with the traditional donors, I do not think there is a chance to face a challenge of this dimension. And if this challenge is faced, probably we will be, then, in a dramatic situation, trying also to confront the Sudanese or south Sudanese, the Congolese, the Afghans, and all the others that are suffering similar situations, but with much less impact in the global media than the Syria one.

Having said so, I want to express my very deep appreciation to the fact that the United States has been our largest supporter, not only in relation to Syria, but to all our operations worldwide. And, without the United States, it would have been absolutely impossible to come to where we are. We would have to give up, long ago, and that would be a terrible tragedy. This is not only a humanitarian question; I do believe, looking at Lebanon, looking at the fragility of the Lebanese situation, more and more intensive fighting in the recent past; looking at Iraq, even the Prime Minister said that Iraq might have a civil war because of what happens in Syria; looking at Jordan, its extremely difficult economic situation; the fact the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not solved, nearby; the fact that we have a very sensitive area, the gulf—some call the Arabian Gulf, some call the Persian Gulf—and the Strait of Hormuz—I think if this conflict is not stopped, there is a risk of spillover, and we could have an explosion in the Middle East that probably nobody would be able to cope with.

And to support the victims is very important, because of them, first of all, but it is also a factor that can contribute to stabilize the situation, to the extent possible, outside the country, and hopefully to create the conditions for, one day, these people to be able to go back home and to fight, still, something inside Syria.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Guterres follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANTONIO GUTERRES

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to appear before you today to offer my perspectives and concerns regarding the humanitarian situation of displaced Syrians.

UNHCR currently has 3 offices inside Syria and 13 in the four neighboring countries that have been receiving the majority of Syrian refugees (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Iraq). There are over 2,000 UNHCR staff working in these five countries. We lead and coordinate the response to the Syrian refugee situation in the host countries, working closely with the host governments and our U.N. and NGO partners. Of our partners, the two largest are the World Food Programme, which supplies food rations and vouchers to the refugees, and UNICEF, which provides child protection services, education, and water and sanitation.

Inside Syria, UNHCR has been present since the early 1990s, initially to support Iraqi and other refugees which Syria has generously hosted for many years. Since mid-2011, when the crisis took a distinctly violent turn and started producing significant internal displacement, we have also been assisting persons uprooted inside the country with relief items and shelter assistance. We provide help wherever we are able to access people in need with a minimum of security. Unlike in refugee situations, there is no single agency with a mandate to protect internally displaced persons. Our assistance to Syrians who have fled inside their own country has therefore been part of a collective U.N. and NGO response effort led by the U.N. Emergency Relief Coordinator and OCHA.

My comments today will focus on the humanitarian situation of displaced Syrians, both refugees in the neighboring countries and those uprooted inside Syria. I returned just a couple of days ago from a week-long trip to Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon, where I met with refugees, government officials, host communities and staff of our partner organizations.

Mr. Chairman, we are facing a tipping point in Syria. The humanitarian situation is dramatic beyond description. The refugee crisis has been accelerating since last summer, and has reached staggering proportions since the beginning of this year.

In early April 2012, UNHCR had registered about 33,000 Syrian refugees in the region. By December, this number had grown to half a million. Now, 2 years after the conflict started, we have registered—or given out registration appointments to—more than 1.1 million Syrians across the Middle East and North Africa. Daily arrival figures averaged 3,000 people in December, 5,000 in January, and 8,000 in February. In recent weeks, there were several days with as many as 14,000 people crossing the borders into neighboring countries in the space of 24 hours.

There are now nearly 360,000 registered Syrians in Lebanon, over 350,000 in Jordan, some 260,000 in Turkey, and 115,000 in Iraq. Egypt has already registered over 40,000 and nearly 30,000 have fled to Europe. Many Syrians do not come forward for registration, either because they do not want to reveal their identity for fear of reprisals back home, or because they do not need assistance. So there are probably hundreds of thousands more in the region who are not part of the official statistics.

It is important to note that while the most memorable media images are of the refugee camps, such as Zaatari camp in Jordan, more than 60 percent of the Syrian refugees in the region actually live in urban areas, generously sheltered by host communities. These refugees are largely a hidden population, but their needs are also tremendous, and addressing them presents another set of difficult challenges.

Back in December, when UNHCR drew up its Regional Response Plan together with some 55 U.N. and NGO partners (including five American NGOs), we expected to have 1.1 million registered Syrian refugees by June. But the situation has deteriorated so quickly in recent months that we reached this number already in mid-March. If no political solution to the conflict is found soon, the refugee number could double or even triple before the end of this year. In addition, the longer the fighting rages in Syria, the less will there be for refugees to return to after the conflict ends, meaning that many of them may not be able to go home immediately once peace is established.

The refugee numbers are staggering, but they cannot convey the full extent of the tragedy. Most refugees have lost family members and everything they once owned—homes, businesses, and livelihoods. Three quarters of them are women and children, and in Jordan alone, nearly one in five refugees is under the age of 4. The children pay the hardest price of all, with millions of young lives shattered by this conflict, and the future generation of an entire country marked by violence and trauma for many years to come.

There are harrowing reports of rape and sexual abuse of women and children by actors to the conflict inside Syria. In the neighboring countries, we see the level of trauma in those who manage to flee, and struggle to scale up the capacity to provide psychosocial support to the victims. Refugees are also at risk, as some are forced into early marriages or even prostitution, often as a result of their families' despair and lack of income frequently coupled with the need to provide money for relatives who remained behind in Syria.

UNHCR and its U.N. and NGO partners are working closely with authorities, host communities and the refugees themselves, including religious leaders, to prevent sexual- and gender-based violence. In Jordan, for example, we are funding partner organizations that run women and youth centers in the Zaatari refugee camp, which provide awareness sessions and individual counseling. Several agencies working in the camp have protection staff manning hotlines and help-desks for victims of sexual violence, providing support and carrying out home visits. When necessary, victims' physical security is ensured through relocation, including to a government shelter in Amman, such as for early marriage victims of domestic violence. In addition, UNHCR has recently agreed with the government to fund a comprehensive programme to step up security in Zaatari camp.

Across the region, we have initiated plans to expand assistance to survivors of violence and women at risk, for example through income generation projects so as to make them less vulnerable. However, these activities have not received sufficient funding so far.

Mr. Chairman, the most tragic consequences of the crisis are being felt inside Syria itself. An estimated 3.6 million people are now displaced within their own country. They live with host families, in abandoned buildings and makeshift camps. Many of them are displaced over and over again as the fighting spreads. Some refugees in the neighboring countries told us they moved up to seven times within Syria before finally taking the decision to cross the border. As the devastation gets worse, ordinary people are finding it more difficult, and often even life-threatening, to access food, water, heating fuel, or medicines.

In addition, we must not forget that there are half a million Palestinian refugees in Syria who are affected by the conflict. Some 32,000 have already been compelled to flee abroad, mainly to Lebanon. A massive displacement of Palestinian refugees from Syria would have devastating consequences on efforts to preserve asylum space in the region. Strong support to UNRWA's efforts is essential, and I have repeatedly appealed to all parties to the conflict to respect and protect the Palestinian refugee population in Syria.

As part of the interagency response inside Syria, UNHCR has focused on community services, shelter assistance, and providing relief items to internally displaced people. Just since the beginning of this year, we have distributed basic items such as tents, blankets, and plastic sheeting to nearly 430,000 displaced Syrians in various areas of the country. We have rehabilitated 39 collective shelters housing internally displaced Syrians and provided cash assistance to over 19,000 extremely vulnerable families since the programme was launched 6 months ago. UNHCR coordinates a collective protection response relying on the local knowledge and contacts of various community-based organizations. We regularly visit collective shelters and provide on-the-job training for Syrian outreach volunteers who assist the displaced. Along with other specialized partners, we support a network of five community centers in key cities to provide emergency social services, child protection, and address grievances of victims of sexual violence. These centers provide psychosocial services, offer awareness sessions to help prevent sexual- and gender-based violence, and assist separated children.

Together with its partners, UNHCR has delivered aid to people in both opposition- and government-controlled areas. We launched a pioneer relief operation in northern Syria in January, when two convoys led by UNHCR international staff carried more than 300 metric tons of tents and blankets to help vulnerable people displaced between Aleppo and the Turkish border. That paved the way for several interagency U.N. convoys across front lines. International NGOs have also been providing critical humanitarian support in these areas. U.N. agencies and the NGOs in Syria continue assisting displaced people wherever we can reach them, often in the face of very high security risks. In the past, convoys have been shot at, hijacked, warehouses destroyed and looted, and several U.N.-contracted truck drivers have been killed since the beginning of the conflict.

Mr. Chairman, The violence in Syria and the massive refugee exodus it has caused are having a huge impact on the society, the economy and the security of the host countries, who are sharing their increasingly meager resources with the refugees. The economic cost of this is tremendous and leads to complex social consequences. Neighboring countries have been extremely generous and for the most

part kept their borders open, but their capacity to continue to do so is under very severe pressure.

Lebanon, the smallest of the host countries and yet the one that has received the largest number of refugees, has seen its population rise by a staggering 10 percent following the refugee influx. Refugees are spread out across 900 different municipalities, rendering the task of providing assistance extremely challenging. Apart from the obvious impact this has in a complex political situation, it has also put enormous pressure on available resources, in particular accommodation, health and education infrastructure. Authorities are growing increasingly concerned in the face of the unrelenting influx of Syrians. The conflict in Syria is becoming an existential threat to Lebanon, and strong international solidarity is required to support the country.

Jordan is also facing a very difficult economic situation, aggravated by dwindling revenues from trade, tourism, and foreign investment due to the Syria crisis. The country has also had to agree on an adjustment policy with the International Monetary Fund. Its limited energy and water resources, social service infrastructure and public security forces are dramatically overstretched. Like Lebanon, Jordan also needs massive support to deal with the humanitarian tragedy caused by the conflict next door.

Turkey's economic capacity is much stronger than those of other host countries, but the huge investments the country has made to assist Syrian refugees have taken a heavy toll and increased support from the international community is needed. The government has spent more than USD750 million to set up 17 camps and is planning to open three more during the coming months. It has now also started to register refugees in urban areas, and as the numbers continue to grow, authorities have asked for additional support to assist the urban population of Syrians.

Iraq is still struggling with its own transition to stability, and what happens in Syria has a direct impact on rising sectarian tensions in the country. There are warnings of a potential civil war if the Syria conflict continues, and recent events at the Iraqi-Syrian border are extremely worrying. In addition, the Al-Qaim border crossing remains partially closed to Syrians since October, preventing refugees from seeking safety.

International solidarity in support of the host countries must be urgently reinforced. This is not a question of generosity, but one of enlightened self-interest. By taking in thousands of new refugees every day, the countries on the front line of this crisis are doing the region and indeed, the world, an extraordinary service. Helping them deal with the consequences of the refugee crisis is imperative, as the preservation of their economic and social stability is in everyone's essential interest.

UNHCR and its partners have been cooperating closely, including with governments in the neighboring countries, to ensure available resources are maximized in the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis. Our Regional Response Plan is currently being reviewed in light of the accelerating outflows, and apart from including nearly 60 other agencies—both national and international—in it, we are also aligning the host governments' own appeals with ours. We have made efforts to coordinate with other donors and actors, mainly from the gulf countries, who have been providing very significant assistance to Syrian refugees. At the recent donor conference in Kuwait, I specifically encouraged nontraditional donors to ensure their aid is closely coordinated with the rest of the international response, to avoid duplication and ensure scarce resources are being targeted where they are most needed. We are currently waiting for feedback from the major donors of the region regarding their plans to disburse the substantial pledges they made at the Kuwait Conference 2 months ago.

As the refugee numbers are growing, there is a widening gap between needs and the resources available to support Syrian victims. UNHCR and its partners have received less than 30 per cent of the funding we need to assist the current number of refugees, let alone those who are yet to come. There is no way a gap of this magnitude can be filled with existing humanitarian budgets. That is why I have been appealing to donor governments and Parliaments to urgently approve extraordinary funding for the victims of the Syria crisis, to ensure that their most basic needs can be met and the stability of the region preserved. All of the agencies involved in this humanitarian response are dramatically underfunded, with some fearing to run out of money as early as Easter. This would lead to an even worse disaster for vulnerable Syrians and those who have been sheltering them, and we cannot afford to run this risk.

Mr. Chairman, 2 years into this terrible crisis, we need to be prepared for the situation to deteriorate further before it gets any better. If the worst-case scenario materializes, the international community will not only need to engage in an even

more significant humanitarian response. It will also need to be prepared to deal with unpredictable consequences should the situation in Syria lead to an explosion in the Middle East.

Combined with the real risk of this conflict spilling over across the region, as well as the challenges posed by other lingering crises nearby, what is happening in Syria today risks escalating very quickly into a disaster that could overwhelm the international response capacity political, security-related and humanitarian. This must not be allowed to happen.

Senator CASEY. Well, thanks very much, Your Excellency. We appreciate, not only the experience and hard work you are bringing to bear on these difficult issues, but the passion with which you approach them.

I was struck by the statement you made earlier in your remarks about, "Each one is a human tragedy," each person affected by the violence. I cannot even begin to imagine the horror that these families have lived through.

And I also appreciate the expression of gratitude that you enunciated. We appreciate that, when our taxpayers, our citizens, support efforts like this, that you express that gratitude.

Speaking for myself, I think there is even more we can do, even if it is not dollars, which I hope we can provide, but more we can do, in terms of better coordination, more of a focus, and trying to get better results.

You identified a major problem, which you referred to as a "gap in resources." That is something we need to focus on. And you also talked about getting more support and better coordination, as I said.

If you could identify, right now for us, that gap; is it a gap in resources that have been committed, that have not been delivered, or is it a gap, in terms of the overall initial commitment, even setting aside the actual delivery of the support?

Mr. GUTERRES. Looking at the refugee response plan, which—the one we coordinate—on top of that, we have the operations inside Syria, of which we are a member, but we are not in the coordination. It's the Emergency Relief Coordinator that assumes that function.

The plan was foreseeing that, in June, we would have \$1.1 million. And we made the calculations about the costs that corresponded to that. And we made an appeal. That appeal has been funded, until now, by less than 30 percent, for all organizations involved, which means that we have a gap of about \$700 million, in relation to the pledges made, not in relation to cash.

Just to give you the image of my organization, I have authorized the expenditure of \$300 million. I have firm projections—which means cash plus pledges plus amounts that we are convinced, because of the dialogue we have with governments, that we will receive—we have firm pledges plus cash plus firm projections that are less than \$200 million, which means that—I mean, my choice is very simple. Do we do what we have to do, and hope for the best? Or, do we stop, and let people suffering circumstances that, to be honest, I cannot assume? And so, we are risking, and hoping for the best.

And we know that this crisis is such a dramatic crisis, it is not only a matter of generosity, it is a matter of enlightened self-interest. Nobody wants to see the Middle East explode. That would be

a problem for the regional and global peace and security. So, we are hopeful that there will be support to what it is being done.

Now, we were expecting the gulf to be a game changer, because the gulf has never substantially supported multilateral organizations. Kuwait, as I said, has already said their pledge would be channeled through the multilateral system. But, our indications are that the same does not apply for the other countries. Whatever the United States can do with other countries of the gulf to make sure multilateral organizations—most U.N., Red Cross/Red Crescent, NGOs—would be very much welcome, because, indeed, we are facing a very difficult situation, because of the scale.

And when one looks at the present trends, our work with the governments—I have been in dialogue with Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon—with all three governments, we are expecting to have, in the end of the year, 1 million refugees per country. And that, of course, represents a dramatic impact in the economies, in the societies, in the security of these countries.

Senator CASEY. Are you talking about 1 million refugees per country by the end of 2013?

Mr. GUTERRES. If we maintain. If nothing happens, if there is no solution. And if we maintain the present rhythm of outflows, that is where we are going to get. And this is, I mean, an unimaginable impact in the economy, the society, and the security of these countries.

And what is, in my opinion, extremely important, looking at their generosity, is that they are ready to confront themselves with this reality, in terms of contingency planning. But, obviously, this represents a challenge that is unprecedented in the recent past.

Senator CASEY. I just want to make sure I understand. You are saying 1 million per—which countries?

Mr. GUTERRES. Jordan has, today, 356—if I remember well the numbers of yesterday. Jordan is receiving, every day, between 2,000 and 3,000. I was at the border, Thursday. Jordan has a very good system of border control, and the border guards are bright people. So, based on their night-vision systems, tower by tower, they detect where the refugees are coming, and—with a few kilometers, because they are walking to the border. And then we went to the border to receive them, and they came—women, children, elderly people—six wounded by bullets—and I could see that—then, afterward, with the night google, two villages close to one village, some armored cars and mortars. There were three mortars that, during our presence there, exploded. I do not know exactly where. And you could see another village that is more in line with the opposition, from where some of these people were coming; namely, the wounded. And every day, we have 2- to 3,000 people crossing the border. Now 350,000, from now until the end of the year, even if it is 2,000 per day, we still have probably almost 300 days to go, or 280, or something, times two, 600,000 plus 350,000; we are in 1 million. And it's 2,000 to 3,000 a day.

Lebanon is even more risky, because Lebanon is the way from Damascus. And in a battle for Damascus, Lebanon is the obvious escape. So, we might have, in Lebanon, that has already a 10-percent increase of the population, as it was rightly said by you,

Mr. Chairman—we can have at, all of a sudden, a major inflow. And Lebanon is the most fragile of the countries of the region.

Turkey, of course, is another capacity. And Turkey, in a very generous way—you mentioned \$600 million, or \$700 million that the Turkish Government has spent, itself—Turkey has another capacity, of course, but, for Lebanon, we are facing an existential threat. The Syrian crisis represents an existential threat. And for Jordan, because of the fragility of the Jordanian economy, this is, indeed, something that deserves a massive solidarity in the international community. We do not ask only for support, humanitarian organizations. I think it is very important that the governments of the countries around that are in the first line of protection of the international community against the Syrian crisis, do receive all the solidarity they deserve.

Senator CASEY. Thank you for that. I will try to get back to more.

Senator JOHNSON.

Senator JOHNSON. Well, first of all, Mr. High Commissioner, thank you for all your efforts and for your testimony.

Obviously, the humanitarian aid is incredibly important, and we support it. But, let's face it, it is the Band-Aid. The cure is to getting rid of the Assad regime.

Your comment—I wrote it down, “staggering escalation of the refugee problem”—does not indicate a metric that we are getting close to the inevitability of the regime falling. I hear a lot of talk that this is going to be inevitable, but is it? I mean, is the Assad regime inevitable to fall, or could they be there for years?

Mr. GUTERRES. Well, I do not have a crystal ball, and I am not supposed to make comments on political issues, because of my mandate, even if I have been in politics for 25 years of my life, and so, as you can imagine. And I recognize that there is no humanitarian solution for this problem. Let us be clear. I mean, we can alleviate the plight of people, but the solution needs to be a political solution.

My feeling, if I am to give a feeling—and when we do contingency planning, we need to look into several scenarios—my feeling is that this could last, with situations not very different from what we have now, but with a permanent degradation of the living conditions inside the country. Because many of the things are falling apart—educational system, health system, even basic services. This could last, still, for a large period. Whether it is months or years, I do not know. Nobody knows. But, we can face a situation in which it lasts, and we can also move from the present situation to a situation of chaos, for which we also have to be prepared. We might have refugees of different natures. If you look at the present pattern of refugees, they are, essentially, Sunni Muslims. But, one day we could have a situation with the minorities that is, of course, also of great concern to us all.

So, we need to be prepared for things to get worse before they eventually will get better.

Senator JOHNSON. OK. So, again, to summarize, I mean, your feeling from the ground, there is nothing inevitable right now. I mean, we just simply do not know what is going to happen. I mean, we are not seeing any inevitability, here.

Mr. GUTERRES. I am someone that believes in a positive outcome of history, and I hope for a positive outcome of history.

Senator JOHNSON. Sure.

Mr. GUTERRES. But, I think that it might take some time.

Senator JOHNSON. OK. You know, obviously, we are concerned of who—if the regime falls, who would replace them. We certainly want that group to be friendly to America, we certainly want to be friendly to them. We want to support the citizens of Syria.

My concern—because I have heard reports of potentially growing resentment of Syrians that they certainly understand that America has the military capability to potentially bring this conflict to an end, but we are not doing anything. Do you get that same sense? Are we falling, in Syrians' opinion, because we are not doing more, from a military standpoint?

Mr. GUTERRES. Well, I do not think—as I said, in my contacts with the people, what I feel is that the people believe that the international community, as a whole, should come together, and should find a solution. I do not think they identify a specific country, or blame whoever, for whatever purpose. But, there is this frustration that the situation is going on and on and on, and the international community is not able to find a solution for it. That is what I felt is the anger that I witness when I discuss with people. And they see me, also, as a representative of international community, and sometimes they do not make easy the distinction between what is a strictly humanitarian work and what is also a political involvement. And even when I try to explain, “Well, this is—I can understand your feeling, but this is not what I can provide. What I can provide is just some support to alleviate your plight.” As I said, sometimes it is not easy to explain to people.

Senator JOHNSON. Sure. So, you sense a growing resentment, on the part of Syrians, against the international community, in general. Do you get a sense that America's involvement, help, is known, at all?

Mr. GUTERRES. Oh—

Senator JOHNSON. Or limited?

Mr. GUTERRES [continuing]. I have no doubt that—I mean, all these people are—we are not—this is not similar to, I would say, a crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo—and we are having one, by the way, in which tens of thousands of people cross the border to Uganda—these are people that have mobile phones. They listen to the news. They know what is in the Internet.

I mean, our convoy—our first convoy that went to the northern part of Syria, I saw it in the YouTube, and it was put in the YouTube by the Free Syrian Army. And I heard the general that was accompanying them explaining what he was doing. Which means that people know what is happening.

And so, I believe that the effort that the United States is making—namely, what has been recently announced—is perfectly known by the people. That does not mean that everybody likes or dislikes this or that thing, but I do not think—this is one of the most well-informed, politicized, and engaged, to a certain extent, refugee communities I've ever seen.

Senator JOHNSON. Well, that actually leads me in exactly my next line of questioning, here. I certainly totally agree with Senator

Boxer, in terms of her concern about what is happening to young women, to children—I mean, the horrors of war. I want to talk about, How do we get that information out? How do we publicize it? I mean, I certainly understand the power of the social media and Internet, but is there a really coordinated effort, a documentary—Is al-Jazeera on board with this? I mean, what are the media outlets? I mean, how are we truly trying to get this information out so that we can galvanize the world community, quite honestly, to help fill that funding gap? Truthfully, I do not see that information all that well publicized, all that well known, here in America.

Mr. GUTERRES. There were, recently, three very important reports from the IRC, from UNICEF, from Save The Children. I believe there are others being prepared.

And I have to say, again, these are things that are discussed in the Arab media. We follow the Arab media carefully, because, as you can imagine, it is vital to have positive attitudes toward the refugees. And there is a perfect consciousness of the dramatic situation inside Syria. If there is consciousness of something, even more than the situation of the refugees, is of the situation inside Syria—al-Jazeera, al-Arabiya, most of the other Arab channels—if permanent debates, permanent news, permanent images coming from the inside, and, as you can image, with extremely, extremely tough testimonies.

Senator JOHNSON. OK. Thank you, Mr. High Commissioner.

Senator CASEY. Thanks, Senator Johnson.

I know we have to allow you to leave, because we told you you would be out of here sooner, and I will take responsibility for that.

Just one final question. I realize that the funding gap is, obviously, of great concern, but let us set aside that for purposes of this question. Assuming you have the resources, or that is not an issue, but even just apart from that, what is the most difficult challenge you have dealing with a humanitarian crisis at this scale, and not having the kind of help you would hope, because of the limitations you have with, in this case, a host country that—so you have to figure out other means to get aid there? What is the biggest, kind of, mechanical or on-the-ground challenge that you have?

Mr. GUTERRES. I think the biggest challenge has to do with the fact that this population, that, as I said, is highly informed, relatively politicized, will become much more angry than what I have said. And the risks of conflict with host communities will dramatically increase. And this can be a very disturbing factor and something that will be another element in increasing the risks of spillover of the conflict that I believe are still there. If one looks at all closely linked to other situations of Syria and Lebanon, in the past and in the present, what we see in Iraq, the fragility of other countries in the region, I do believe that humanitarian aid—effective humanitarian aid—in this moment, is not only a moral obligation to the people that is in need, it is also a factor to help these move into the right direction, and to help that today's Syria might be, as we all wish, a normal country and not a failed state or a country that is desegregated or where it is very difficult to establish normal democratic institutions.

Senator CASEY. Your Excellency, we are grateful for your presence here in the briefing, and taking our questions, and especially

appreciate the commitment that you have made as High Commissioner. Thank you very much.

Mr. GUTERRES. Thank you very much.

Senator CASEY. So, we will move to the final phase of our hearing today, and that will be testimony by our third and fourth witnesses.

First, we have Tom Malinowski, who is the Washington director for Human Rights Watch, as I mentioned earlier—of course, Human Rights Watch is located here in Washington; as well, here in Washington, Michael Singh, managing director of The Washington Institute.

So, we are in about the last, maybe, 25–30 minutes we have.

Mr. Malinowski, we would ask if you could provide kind of a—both of your statements will be made part of the record, as will all the witness statements—but, we would ask you to provide, because we are in a more lightning-round phase, here, maybe a 3-minute overview, and then we will turn to Mr. Singh. Thank you very much.

**STATEMENT OF TOM MALINOWSKI, WASHINGTON DIRECTOR,
HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thanks, Senator, for having me.

As you mentioned at the outset, I was in Aleppo province, in northern Syria, in December. Human Rights Watch has had folks in and out a lot in the last year, in the areas in the north that are controlled by the opposition, where the opposition controls the ground, but where, unfortunately, the regime still controls the skies.

The suffering was extreme, and evident, and growing. Shortages of everything. There was little electricity, little fuel, which is needed for virtually anything that needs to get done, especially in cold weather. Probably the most important need, that everybody I spoke to in December stressed, was the need for flour, which is needed to make the staple food of bread that the people in Syria depend on. And it was really striking how completely absent the international community and the United Nations was from this entire area. The absence was visible. And you know why that is the case; you discussed the Sophie's Choice that the United Nations has been placed in, between operating in the south and operating in the north.

Some aid was crossing, some of which I know the United States was paying for. Literally no person I met, among the ordinary people in the north, knew that the United States was providing that. And everybody asked, you know, "Why isn't the international community here? Why aren't they helping us?" And that anger was directed particularly at the United States, partly because they knew I was American, but, I think, partly because they just see the United States as the driving force in world affairs, the most powerful country. They believe we can do a lot more, and they assume that everything we do and do not do is part of a plan, which is, of course, a mistake. But, they assume it. And so, they leap, then, to the assumption that if we are not helping visibly, that must mean that we want this to be happening, we want Assad to win.

When I got back, I raised these concerns with the administration. And certainly in the last couple of months, there has been a major stepping up of the effort to provide assistance, cross-border. No question about that. When we had a team in Aleppo city, in February, they noticed a lot more food was going in, a lot more aid was going in. The immediate humanitarian needs were less. People still did not know where it was coming from, but they even noticed that civilians were coming back to Aleppo city, despite all of the fighting there. That is the good news.

The bad news is that, as they were arriving, some of those same people were packing up their bags and leaving Aleppo again. And it was not because of the lack of food or electricity or heat, or even because of the daily fighting; it was because four Scud missiles had fallen on Aleppo city, destroying entire neighborhood blocks in the last several days.

And let us not forget, this is the central problem. It is not the humanitarian—strictly speaking, the humanitarian crisis—it is the fact that there are punishing airstrikes and Scud strikes on these areas all the time, designed to send a message to people, “This is what will happen to you if you let the opposition in.” This is what makes these areas ungovernable and what makes it impossible to implement all of these great plans that we heard about.

Despite that, there is more we can do. There is more we can do to get aid across the Turkish border. Turkey has been very generous. They could open more crossings, they could officially register some of the NGO staff that are operating there, and do other things to facilitate assistance.

There is more we can do to try to get the United Nations operating in those areas. This moving things from one side of Syria to another does not really work. One idea would be to go to the U.N. General Assembly, since the Security Council is blocked; try to get a resolution there to authorize the United Nations to provide cross-border assistance.

You asked about branding aid, Mr. Chairman. I would very much like to see “Made in the USA” on this stuff. And most of the Syrians I met would. But, I would defer to the aid providers on the ground. We are putting their lives on the line. And if they say it is insecure, I would defer to them.

Others have asked, “Should we provide it through the opposition?” I think it is absolutely essential that we provide some things directly to the local councils that are in charge of town after town in opposition areas, including cash grants. Help them provide basic services to their people—sewage and water and electricity, judicial police institutions. But, when it comes to pure humanitarian assistance, things like flour and medicine that have to be moved in very large quantities, I think we need to depend on the agencies that have the logistical capacity to do that, not on the opposition.

One last point, and this is the one I feel most strongly about, that we are having this discussion about branding because we want the Syrian people to know that the United States and the international community is doing something for them. But, I think it is profoundly unfair that we place the entire burden of proving to Syrians that America cares on these humanitarian groups provid-

ing food and medicine. That is not their job. That is the job of governments.

We had this same debate in Bosnia, 15 years ago. I was working at the State Department. And we were not doing much but providing food and medicine, and that is all we could talk about as the bombs were falling and people were being killed. And they had a word for it in Bosnia, which I will never forget. It was called “Bread for the Dead.” And that is the pattern we do not want to get into here in Syria.

Humanitarian aid is desperately needed. We need more of it, it needs to get to more people. But, we are not meeting our responsibilities if that is all we do. We only meet our responsibilities if we address the source of the suffering.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Malinowski follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TOM MALINOWSKI

Thank you Mr. Chairman for inviting me to testify today.

Since the beginning of the uprising in Syria, Human Rights Watch has made numerous trips to the northern part of the country from across the Turkish border. I was there in December for 4 days, visiting several towns in the countryside north and east of Aleppo City. Some of my colleagues went to Aleppo in February; we have also conducted research trips in the last year in Idlib and Latakia provinces. The Syrian opposition controls the ground in these areas, and is struggling, with growing but still insufficient international help, to provide for the civilian population. The Syrian Government, meanwhile, still controls the skies.

In some superficial ways, the area of opposition-held Syria that I saw—in Aleppo province—looks normal. The border crossing is straightforward. There are very few checkpoints along the roads. Behind the front lines, one does not see or hear constant, obvious signs of fighting. Our staff have felt secure enough to go in and out, to travel about, and to spend several nights inside at a time—though of course with careful planning and precautions—an important fact when considering whether a larger international humanitarian assistance effort is possible.

But the distress caused by this horrific war is evident, and growing. Though the towns I visited were far from fully safe, they are crowded with internally displaced people who had fled or been driven from areas closer to the fighting, some of whom have been displaced multiple times. Some were staying with friends and families; others were cared for communally in makeshift camps and facilities; all increased the burden on residents already running out of food and other necessities.

In Assad’s Syria, the central government provided many essential services and commodities. At first, perhaps unwilling to admit that it had lost control over large parts of the country, the government continued to allow deliveries of some goods and services to opposition-held territory. By late last year, however, as winter cold was setting in, the government began denying food, fuel, and power to these areas. Electricity became intermittent, if it came through at all. Fuel—essential for everything from transportation, to heating homes, to running generators that power hospitals and granaries that grind grain into flour—became in short supply. The shortage of flour, needed to make the bread that is Syria’s staple food, was the number one humanitarian concern expressed by virtually every Syrian I met—by ordinary people, by civilian administrators, and even by rebel military commanders.

When I was in Aleppo province in December, some supplies were coming across the border with Turkey, in what seemed like an ad hoc way. From time to time, local relief committees, established in every town to supervise distribution of humanitarian goods, would find out that someone, often a private individual, had brought a few truckloads of food or medicine or blankets from Turkey, and claim as much as they could; meanwhile, other towns would go without even as their supplies ran out.

It was striking how utterly invisible the international community was in northern Syria, in comparison to many other conflict zones around the world. There was no sign of the United Nations, with its distinctive vehicles and staff. The International Committee for the Red Cross has been able to visit these areas from time to time but has no permanent presence, a problem not just because of its experience in providing aid, but because the ICRC has a unique mandate and capacity to assist and

protect prisoners. I spent a few hours interviewing detainees in a rebel-run prison that no other international monitors had visited to that point.

There is a good reason why these and some other organizations were absent: Many were operating from Damascus to provide desperately needed aid to civilians in government-controlled areas of Syria. And the Syrian Government had told them that they would be expelled from that part of the country if they crossed the Turkish border—which means that they could get to northern Syria only through a long and dangerous drive through Syria itself. U.N. agencies have to respect the sovereignty of a U.N. member state, unless the United Nations passes a resolution that states otherwise—and thus far Russia has blocked efforts at the U.N. Security Council to press the Syrian Government to allow cross-border aid.

International donors had, in fact, paid for some of the small quantities of aid reaching northern Syria at the time of my visit. But since the origin of the aid was not made obvious to people on the ground, few had any idea where it was coming from. Everywhere I went, people asked: “Where is the international community?” Their anger was directed especially at the United States—perhaps in part because I had told them I was American, but mostly, I think, because they believe that the U.S., as the most powerful country in the world, has the capacity to help whomever it chooses to help, and because they assumed that everything the U.S. does, or doesn’t do, is the result of a deliberate, well-thought-out plan. “If America isn’t here helping us,” many people told me, “that must be because they want Assad to win.”

The absence of outside aid also diminished the credibility of Syria’s civilian opposition leadership, including the new Syrian Opposition Coalition (SOC). The SOC had just been established, raising hopes that it could mobilize relief from the international community to people inside Syria. I met many people in northern Syria, including those running the local Revolutionary Councils, who told me that they respected the leaders of the SOC, but would have little time for this new body—and certainly little incentive to defer to its authority—until it started delivering what they needed, beginning with food and fuel. Meanwhile, in some rebel-held areas, more extremist elements of the opposition, including Jabhat al-Nusra, were gaining support precisely because they were able to distribute humanitarian aid.

As difficult as conditions were in Aleppo province, our staff found they were even worse in the parts of Idlib and Latakia that they visited late last year—since those areas are less accessible from Turkey. By all accounts, civilians in the far eastern area around Deir ez-Zor have faced particularly great distress in recent months, and there is reason for concern about the inhabitants of the city of Ar-Raqqah, which had reportedly almost tripled in size due to the influx of displaced persons before falling to the opposition in February.

Mr. Chairman, Human Rights Watch and other organizations that had been on the ground in Syria have reported these concerns to the administration over the last several months, but I can report some good news. The U.S. Government has significantly boosted funding for assistance provided by private relief organizations operating across the Turkish border. When our team visited Aleppo in February, their contacts reported that more aid was arriving and that food shortages had lessened since our previous visit in December. Most people said that they still didn’t know who was providing the aid. But at least the aid was getting through. Partly as a result, even in Aleppo City, close to the front lines, our team saw many more civilians, including women and children, back in their homes—some of whom had returned from what they described as the indignity of living in displaced person camps.

But here is the bad news. It is also, I’m afraid, the most important news: While our team was in Aleppo, they noted that many civilians had begun leaving the city again. The reason was not the absence of aid or of electricity or of water, or even the fighting nearby, all of which they could endure. It was because the Syrian Government had started launching ballistic missiles, including Scuds, at Aleppo, weapons capable of leveling entire city blocks at one time. These ballistic missiles cannot be targeted accurately. When fired on cities, they serve one purpose—to terrorize people. The message these strikes deliver to civilians throughout Syria is clear: “This is what will happen to you if you allow the rebels into your towns and neighborhoods.”

In many of the opposition-held areas where our teams have conducted investigations, government airstrikes on populated areas had a similar effect over time. This bombardment is not constant. In many towns my colleagues and I visited in December, for example, there had been no airstrikes for several days. But this may have had more to do with the poor weather over northern Syria during that time. On my last day in Aleppo province, a clear, sunny day, virtually every town we had passed through was hit. During the afternoon, submunitions from a cluster bomb (an inherently indiscriminate weapon that the Syrian Government has routinely used),

struck across the street from the home where we had had breakfast that morning, killing three people.

When aircraft appear in the sky, there is no warning and nowhere to hide. Each day people just wake up and wish for bad weather. Even in the most securely held opposition areas, the threat of air and missile attacks complicates efforts to provide services to the population. Each local council faces dilemmas: Should schools be kept closed, denying children an education, or should they be opened, taking the chance that an airstrike could kill dozens of kids concentrated in one place? Should people be asked to pick up their daily bread at bakeries, as they traditionally have done, even though government forces have repeatedly bombed bakeries as civilians lined up outside? Or should far more cumbersome door-to-door deliveries of bread to people's homes be organized?

The lack of humanitarian aid is a big problem for ordinary people in Syria, Mr. Chairman. But the underlying problem is the lack of security.

That said, there are some steps that could be taken to alleviate the humanitarian crisis. Human Rights Watch would like to suggest a few.

First, the U.S. and other concerned governments should explore ways to make it possible for U.N. agencies to provide cross-border assistance to opposition-held areas in a safe and effective manner. It will be hard to provide assistance to opposition-held areas in the quantities needed if U.N. agencies with the logistical capacity to manage those kinds of operations are not involved. The U.N.'s efforts to provide so-called "cross-line" assistance—from government to rebel-controlled areas—will not suffice. Such convoys must cross dangerous frontline areas, requiring time-consuming negotiations with both government and rebel forces; it makes little sense to spend days and weeks moving supplies in this way to people who in some cases are living just minutes from the Turkish border.

The Syrian authorities have rejected repeated calls to allow the U.N. to operate cross-border, and likely will continue to do so, as its strategy appears to be to increase, rather than diminish, the distress of people living in areas occupied by the opposition. Russia has not supported action by the Security Council even to ease the humanitarian suffering of civilians in these areas. The U.S. should continue to press for Security Council action. At the same time, it should explore an alternative approach: asking the U.N. General Assembly, where no country has a veto, to authorize U.N. agencies to provide cross-border aid.

Second, the U.S. government should increase support for private relief organizations providing cross-border assistance. This support has grown over the last few months, but is still insufficient. The U.S. should also encourage Turkey, which deserves credit for facilitating the assistance provided thus far, to take additional steps needed to increase its volume.

For example, most relief aid now enters Syria at one border crossing, south of the Turkish town of Killis. If Turkey were to upgrade and open other crossings, it would be possible to scale-up assistance, and allow access to more remote areas currently receiving little aid, such as in northeast Syria. It would also be tremendously helpful if Turkey were to allow humanitarian organizations managing cross-border efforts to obtain legal registration and work permits for their staff. This would enable them to obtain bank accounts and rent property, and make it easier for them to sign larger contracts with Turkish businesses to obtain supplies. Finally, it would be helpful if Turkey took the technical steps necessary to extend the coverage of its cell phone network into Syria, allowing aid workers to communicate more securely deeper inside the country.

Some have asked if assistance provided by the U.S. Government through non-governmental organizations should be labeled as coming from the United States. As I mentioned, many people I met in northern Syria were angry that the international community was not—as far as they could tell—helping them, and would I believe have been happy to see that aid was coming from the United States. But I cannot be certain that all Syrians would be, in a part of Syria where jihadi groups are increasingly active, or that branding aid would pose no security risk to those providing it. The U.S. Government, like any other government, ought to be communicating transparently about its aid and telling the Syrian people, through its contacts in the opposition and through the media, that it is providing assistance. But on the question of branding the aid itself, the U.S. should defer to those putting themselves on the line to deliver it.

Others have asked whether humanitarian aid should be provided directly to the Syrian opposition bodies, including the SOC, allowing them to distribute it to the population. We believe it is appropriate for the U.S. to provide direct assistance, including adequately monitored cash grants, to local councils to help them provide basic services to their people—to maintain water, sewage, electricity, and emergency response systems, to restore judicial and police institutions that will respect human

rights, and to start rebuilding infrastructure. Such assistance will meet immediate needs, strengthen the credibility of moderate elements in the opposition, and lay the groundwork for post-war reconstruction. But when it comes to pure humanitarian assistance—items like flour and fuel that have to be shipped across the border in large quantities and distributed to people impartially on the basis of need—it is better to rely on organizations that have the experience and logistical capacity on both sides of the border and that will ensure that aid is not politicized.

Let me make one final, and crucial point: The debate about branding aid is happening because donor governments want the Syrian people to know that they are doing something to help. But it is not fair to place on humanitarian organizations the entire burden of proving to Syrians that the United States cares about their plight. The humanitarian organizations are doing their job as best as they can under appalling conditions. To ask them to achieve political ends—whether building good will for the West among Syrians, or strengthening the opposition, or protecting Syrians from violence—is to transfer to them responsibilities that belong to governments, including the U.S. Government. It is a way of absolving governments of their responsibilities.

It is also not going to work. Humanitarian aid is important, but it is only a temporary solution, a band aid, to reduce suffering.

The world faced a very similar set of issues in Bosnia during the 1990s. For 3 years, as tens of thousands of civilians were killed and driven from their homes, as the city of Sarajevo was besieged by artillery and snipers, the primary response of the international community was to send humanitarian aid. A U.N. peacekeeping mission was deployed to protect that aid, but not to protect the people receiving it. I was a speechwriter at the State Department at the time, and the talking points I prepared in answer to questions about the killing in Bosnia always began with an account of the tons of assistance the U.S. had provided.

In Bosnia they called it “bread for the dead.” People accepted the aid, of course. They needed to eat and to stay warm. But they never felt that the international community was providing meaningful help so long as atrocities being committed against them continued. Food and medicine might keep them alive long enough to be killed by a bullet or tank shell. But it solved nothing.

Humanitarian aid is desperately needed in Syria, Mr. Chairman. We should be providing more of it, to more people. But there is no humanitarian solution to Syria’s humanitarian crisis.

Senator CASEY. Thanks very much.
Mr. Singh.

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL SINGH, MANAGING DIRECTOR, THE
WASHINGTON INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. SINGH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. I will be brief. You have my written statement.

You know, we are here talking today about a humanitarian crisis in Syria, but I think that it is not really possible, as Tom said, to address that crisis without a successful policy to resolve the conflict which is causing the crisis. And this is that rare foreign policy issue where we have a confluence of moral imperative and strategic interest.

The moral imperative is clear; it is what we have heard about today: 70,000 or 80,000 killed, almost 4 million refugees. But, I would say the strategic interest for the United States in doing more is also clear. This violence has spilled into neighboring countries. Those neighbors are our allies, and it threatens regional security. The flow of refugees threatens the security and the economic stability of our allies there, as well. Whereas, the fall of the Assad regime would represent a blow to Iran, because Syria has served as a conduit for raining influence and power projection in the Levant for many years. And, to the extent we act firmly in this regard, it will underscore our credibility, and that will be useful in many other ways in this region. It will send a message to our friends and to our foes.

Our current policy is not working. It has not been effective in addressing either the humanitarian crisis or advancing our interests. We have sought to contain this fighting while seeking to craft a diplomatic solution, but both of those goals have proven illusive. The fighting, as I said, has spilled over borders, and diplomacy has not really gone anywhere. And the redlines we have articulated—preventing a mass atrocity or the use of chemical weapons—have really ceded control over the question of our intervention, or the timing of our intervention, to the Assad regime.

And I think we need to, first, start a new policy discussion by assessing our objectives. I think our objectives should be to bring this war to a quick resolution, to avoid further regional spillover, especially in terms of the transfer of Syrian weaponry that we have talked about, and strengthen the moderate opposition to help them plan for a stable and peaceful post-Assad Syria, as has come up already in this hearing.

We face, obviously, very serious obstacles in doing this; not least of all, the presence of extremists in the opposition, which gets made from our allies, reportedly, as well as the support going to President Assad from Russia, Iran, and others; and, of course, the possibility that Syria may resort to last-ditch tactics, like the use of chemical weapons.

I think a strategy to achieve our objectives, despite these obstacles, should have three pillars: people, funding, and military support. And I will just very quickly talk about each one of those.

When it comes to people, I think, on the regime side, we need to assure minorities who still support the regime that they will be protected and included in a post-Assad Syria, and we need to provide incentives to military officers to defect.

On the opposition side, I think it is important that we support the Syrian opposition in forming an interim government, and that we try to channel as much support as possible through that government to give them leverage inside Syria.

When it comes to funding, the Syrian regime is reportedly still receiving imports and revenue for its exports. There was a report by Human Rights First, I think, which detailed this, and I think we do need to strengthen our sanctions, as you said, Mr. Chairman.

On humanitarian funding, you have already heard plenty about that. But, when it comes to the funds that actually help the opposition to defeat Assad, those have been very scant. We have provided just \$115 million, including the recently announced \$60 million that Secretary Kerry mentioned. And this is in contrast, for example, to the \$190 million that we just provided in budgetary support to the Egyptian Government. Now, Senator Johnson, you talked about priorities. I do not understand how that squares with U.S. priorities, or what should be U.S. priorities in this region.

When it comes to the military-support side, obviously this is a very contentious question. But, from my point of view, if we are going to break the sort of rough stalemate that has broken out between the regime forces and the opposition forces, that means either we have to degrade the regime forces or we have to bolster the opposition forces, or both. And if you look at the regime forces, frankly, as their ground forces have suffered attrition, they have relied more on air power and missile forces. And so, I would say

that we should be leading a discussion in NATO to target those with airstrikes.

When it comes to the opposition, obviously we do not want to leave the field to the extremists. We want to help the opposition build a professional, friendly, competent security force which will still be in place after Assad falls. And I think that if you are going to be a part of that, if you are going to offer training and equipment, you also have to offer arms; otherwise, realistically speaking, you are not going to have influence in that process, you are going to leave the field to the extremists.

I do not think this should just be a U.S. strategy; it should be an international strategy. So, a key part of this is building support. And one thing we have seen is that, even our regional allies are diverging strongly in their approach to Syria. And I think a more active U.S. leadership role would help to address that.

Now, I think all this carries risks, but, I think, as we have also seen, inaction carries risks, both to stability of the region and to our place in it.

Thanks very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Singh follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL SINGH

Chairman Casey, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to address this subcommittee on a topic of great moral and strategic importance to the United States. The topic of today's hearing is the humanitarian crisis in Syria, which is of a scale with few parallels in the world today. However, it is not possible to divorce this humanitarian crisis from the conflict which has given rise to it, nor is it possible to craft a successful policy to address the crisis without a successful policy to resolve the conflict. There is nothing humanitarian in providing assistance to the victims of a conflict we are doing little to end, when it is within our power and our interest to do far more.

In the Syrian civil war we see a confluence of moral imperative and strategic interest; where so often these impulses conflict, here they coincide. The moral case for action is clear—the United Nations has asserted that 70,000 civilians have been killed in Syria since March 2011, and almost 4 million, out of a population of 22 million, forced from their homes, about 1.2 million of whom have fled Syria entirely. These numbers overwhelm comprehension, yet still fail to convey the full extent of Syrians' suffering—the violence visited upon children, the terror inflicted upon civilians by indiscriminate air and missile attacks, or the deprivation imposed on both sides by war.

The case made by this grim toll is bolstered by the cause for which the opposition fights—freedom from tyranny and repression. It is prudent to harbor grave doubts that the overthrow of the Assad regime will yield democracy or even stability, and our policy cannot be based on the expectation of such an outcome. But our realism need not give way to cynicism—Syrians' struggle for liberty, with which Americans can uniquely identify, is genuine.

Nevertheless, it has been rightly observed, including by President Obama, that we cannot solve every humanitarian crisis. If a compelling moral case were our threshold for intervention around the world, we would find ourselves overextended and quite likely unsuccessful.

The moral case in Syria, however, is paired with a clear American strategic interest. The fighting in Syria poses a threat to regional stability, having already spilled over into Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, and Iraq—all of Syria's neighbors, and all allies of the United States. The massive flow of refugees from Syria into some of those countries, furthermore, poses an additional threat to their stability, and places severe strains on local economies.

The fall of the Assad regime, on the other hand, would deal a severe blow to the Iranian regime, which has long used Syria as a forward operating base from which to project power into the Levant. This is not to say that Assad's fall would leave Iran at a total loss—Iran has proven adept at operating in unsettled environments and cultivating alliances of convenience even with groups to which it is ideologically

opposed. Truly disadvantaging Iran would require the eventual emergence of a stable, sovereign state unwilling to serve as Tehran's proxy.

To the extent the United States follows up on our calls for Assad's departure with action to bring it about, we will also underscore the credibility of our warnings and our willingness to act to advance our interests. There is a perception in the Middle East—shared by our friends and our foes—that the United States has lost our will or even our capacity to act in the region, as demonstrated by our talk of a "pivot" to Asia, the removal of a Carrier Strike Group from the gulf, and, not least, our passivity in the face of the Syrian conflict. The message we send—whether by our action or our inaction—will not be lost on friend or foe. A new regional order has been forming in the Middle East since the outbreak of the Arab uprisings in 2011, and America's place in it will largely be decided by our handling of Syria and Iran.

CURRENT POLICY

Current American policy on Syria has not been effective either in addressing the humanitarian crisis or advancing our strategic interests. Our policy appears designed to contain the Syrian conflict while crafting a negotiated solution between the Assad regime and the opposition. Neither aim is succeeding. As previously noted, the conflict has increasingly spilled over into neighboring countries; and a diplomatic solution has proven elusive, as Assad has refused to stand aside, the opposition has despaired of negotiations with him, and his international backers have proven steadfast in their support for him and opposition to action in the U.N. Security Council, despite 2 years of diplomatic efforts by the Obama administration to sway them.

The ineffectiveness of our approach 2 years into the conflict naturally raises the question of what could prompt a change in our course. The redlines that the U.S. has articulated—use or transfer of chemical weapons by the Assad regime, or the commission of a mass atrocity—lack credibility or effectiveness: Credibility, because reporting over the course of the conflict make it unclear that Washington would detect the movement or use of chemical weapons or commission of an atrocity in time to prevent such actions, and because it is unclear that the administration would truly be willing to commit military assets in response given U.S. officials' estimates of the force required to achieve even limited objectives in Syria; Effectiveness, because U.S. and international warnings have not prevented tens of thousands of civilians being killed by other means. Our redlines also cede control over the question of international intervention to Assad; if we are to become more involved in this conflict, we should do so according to our schedule, not the regime's.

We are wrestling in Syria, in a sense, with the legacy of Iraq and Afghanistan rather than the challenges of the Syrian conflict itself. Americans are justifiably war-weary and wary of wading into yet another Middle Eastern conflict which on its face has little to do with us and seems unsolvable. Our economic circumstances and fiscal challenges do not lend themselves to new overseas engagements. But we must beware short-term thinking; whatever lessons one draws from Iraq and Afghanistan, the lesson of Syria years hence may be that inaction, just like action, has costs and consequences. The Middle East remains vital to American interests; turbulence there will have an impact on our own economic and national security, and any credibility we sacrifice in the region will need to be re-won many times over.

It may be that neither our allies nor the American public will support a bolder policy in Syria. I would argue, however, that we will not know until we make the case.

POLICY OPTIONS

An assessment of our policy options must begin with a reassessment of our objectives. It is insufficient and outdated to assert that Assad must go—Assad is in a sense gone, as he no longer governs wide swaths of Syria and is fighting to survive rather than for control; nor to pledge support for the opposition—the opposition is divided between relatively secular forces we can support and extremists we cannot; nor simply to provide humanitarian relief without addressing the conflict which drives the humanitarian crisis.

Instead, our strategic objectives—beyond the provision of humanitarian assistance and aid for refugees and their hosts—must reflect the current reality of the conflict in Syria. First and foremost, we should seek a quick end to that conflict, which almost certainly will require removing the Assad regime; in doing so, we should seek to limit any deeper involvement by Hezbollah or Iran in the conflict or the dispersal of Syria's WMD and other arms; given that the opposition may at this point be held together by little other than their mutual opposition to Assad, we should

also seek to forge a broad opposition consensus behind principles for a post-Assad Syria and encourage the formation of a broad-based interim government; we should seek to deter post-war score-settling and sectarian conflict; and we should seek to preserve Syria's territorial integrity to avoid the cascade of conflicts that could attend its disintegration.

In pursuing those objectives, we face serious obstacles. The armed opposition inside Syria includes extremists, who by some accounts are the best-organized of the various rebel factions and may receive assistance from U.S. allies in the region. It is unclear to what extent Syria's Kurdish minority is interested in being ruled from Damascus after the fall of Assad. The Assad regime apparently continues to enjoy support from some Syrian minority groups who worry about the intentions of the opposition and distrust Western assurances. The regime continues to receive support from abroad as well, in particular from Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah. And the regime retains dangerous capabilities such as chemical and biological weapons which it may employ in a last-ditch effort to survive.

To accomplish our objectives despite these obstacles, I propose a three-pillar strategy, focused on people, funding, and material support. For each pillar, we should design one set of actions focused on undermining the Assad regime, and another focused on bolstering the opposition and preparing for a post-Assad Syria.

People

While there have been numerous defections and casualties among the senior ranks of the Syrian military and the Assad regime, support for the regime appears to persist among the Syrian population, especially among the Alawite and Christian communities. Undermining that support requires a two-sided policy. On the one hand, the U.S. and our allies must be forceful advocates for Syrian minorities, working actively to ensure their representation in opposition bodies and guaranteeing their protection in post-Assad Syria. This is easily said, but more difficult to do, as mere verbal assurances are not likely to be deemed credible by these communities. It will require ensuring that these minorities are integrated into post-Assad planning efforts from the start, and after Assad's fall it may ultimately require the establishment of safe zones policed by international peacekeepers, to deter sectarian bloodletting.

The other side of this coin is incentivizing military officers and other high-level supporters of the regime to defect as many of their colleagues have. The U.S. and our allies can play a role in this by offering clemency to all but the commanders most responsible for the regime's war crimes, and encouraging the Syrian opposition to do the same. This need not preclude immunity being offered after Assad's fall even to officers who do not defect—that will be a question for Syrians themselves, who should be guided by lessons from Iraq and elsewhere—but those officers should not expect to be spared sanctions and other penalties during the conflict.

When it comes to the opposition, our focus should be on supporting responsible, democratically minded leaders of the political and military opposition, and helping them to govern and deliver services in areas where Damascus has lost control and planning in earnest for a post-Assad Syrian Government. The Obama administration has recently taken some welcome steps regarding the former, notably by committing funds to begin building local institutions in opposition-held areas. On the latter front, however, we should encourage the opposition to form an interim government which can serve as a focal point for opposition efforts, build a set of principles beyond merely seeking to topple Assad that can bring the opposition together, and serve as a channel for international aid and coordination. This point is key—if we want such an interim government to have genuine influence, we should channel our support through it to the opposition. This may, at times, not be the most effective way of delivering aid to those who need it, but is important for building up a viable, nonextremist alternative to the Assad regime.

Funding

Despite the strong sanctions that the U.S., EU, and others have imposed on the Assad regime, it is reportedly continuing to receive imports of goods critical to continuing the conflict, as well as revenue for exports. A recent report by Human Rights First provides some details on the countries and international banks that are complicit in providing this financial lifeline to the Assad regime. Washington and our allies should strengthen our sanctions regime to target those governments and entities which are doing so, using the example of similar sanctions enacted against Iran and North Korea.

Funding for the opposition, on the other hand, continues to lag. On the humanitarian side, the United Nations stated recently that it has received just one-fifth of the \$1.5 billion it believes to be necessary to fund its Syria relief operations for the

first 6 months of 2013. The Obama administration recently announced an additional \$155 million in humanitarian assistance, bringing the U.S. total to \$385 million, but it is clear that our allies need to step up their support in this regard. The U.S. should be at the forefront not only of providing funding, but of the diplomatic effort to secure funding from others, as the refugee crisis implicates the security of close allies such as Jordan and Turkey and threatens the fragile stability of countries such as Lebanon, all of which are important to broader American interests in the region.

Even less impressive, however, is the assistance provided to the Syrian opposition to prevail in its fight against the Assad regime. The Obama administration recently announced that it would contribute an additional \$60 million in nonlethal support to the opposition, bringing the U.S. total reportedly to \$115 million, though this figure may exclude other forms of support being provided. This figure pales in comparison to support being provided in support of other American strategic interests in the region, few of which are as urgent as the Syrian conflict. Secretary Kerry's announcement of new aid to the Syrian opposition, for example, was closely followed by an announcement of \$190 million in budgetary support for Egypt, which has been using aid in part to defend the value of its currency. It is hard to square this discrepancy with any reasonable prioritization of U.S. interests in the region, or estimation of the return that the investment of U.S. foreign aid dollars will yield to our national security.

Material Support

Few questions have been as contentious as what level of military involvement in the Syria conflict is appropriate, if any. The best way to reach this decision is again to first consider our objectives, rather than to begin merely by debating tactics. Bringing the conflict to a quick conclusion requires breaking the rough stalemate that has developed between regime and opposition forces. This argues for degrading the regime's military capabilities, enhancing the opposition's, or both. But promoting stability in Syria after Assad's fall requires developing a professional, nonsectarian security force, which argues for direct military assistance to the opposition. With regard to both, we should seek to avoid open-ended commitments, and focus instead on discrete goals achievable in the short-to-medium term.

As the ranks of regime forces have suffered attrition, it appears that Assad has come to rely increasingly on air power and missile forces. Eliminating these would erode much of the regime's advantage over opposition forces. To this end, the United States should seek NATO support—since the U.N. route is effectively closed due to Russian and Chinese opposition—for limited air strikes in Syria against the regime's key military assets. This, too, is easier said than done, and will require significant diplomatic effort, which makes it all the more important that this effort begin immediately.

An equally important effort—and practically speaking, one which can be more quickly implemented—will be to deprive the Syrian regime of the assistance that it is receiving from abroad. While the regime appears to be receiving most of its weapons from Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah, the aforementioned report by Human Rights First details a number of countries and entities which are providing military goods to Assad, whether weapons, communications technology, or fuel. A more robust effort to disrupt this supply chain—either through sanctions or interdiction—is needed.

Regarding the opposition forces, it has been widely noted that while they are receiving arms and other forms of military support, that support seems to be disproportionately benefiting extremists who in the long term may represent as much of a threat to U.S. interests as does the Assad regime. Given our strong interest in helping to establish a stable, moderate, and democratic government in Syria after Assad's fall, we should seek now to build a professional, friendly security force that can not only hasten the regime's demise but assume security responsibility afterward. While various reports suggest that the U.S. is already providing a limited amount of training and other assistance to opposition forces, realistically speaking our influence will be limited if we are not also providing lethal assistance, including arms. While this certainly creates a risk—both of small arms proliferation in the region and of fueling a post-Assad civil conflict among opposition factions—the risk of not doing it, and leaving the field strictly to the extremists, appears greater.

It would be far preferable if no international military involvement were required in the Syrian conflict. It is likely that had we taken bolder action earlier in the conflict, such measures would not be necessary or would have entailed fewer risks. Having passed the strategic inflection point at which Syria's peaceful uprising became an increasingly fragmented armed conflict, however, we must contend with the reality that confronts us today.

For this three-pillar strategy to be effective, it cannot and should not be carried out by the United States alone. Rather than simply implementing it unilaterally, we should seek support from our allies both inside and outside the Middle East. In particular, it is important that we strive to build a consensus among our regional allies, who have had starkly different approaches to the conflict. Some of these differences stem from diverging interests and ideologies, but they are also in large part the result of the United States failure to stake out a strategy and exercise leadership.

I do not make these proposals lightly; bolder action carries risk, and of course may be less effective than I hope. But while the outcome of a different policy is as yet unknowable, the consequences of passivity and inaction must now be regarded as clear—a conflict which is deepening, not abating, and which is drawing in the region, rather than remaining contained. This is precisely the sort of crisis which on both a moral and strategic basis calls for American leadership; if we decline to exercise such leadership, the consequences—for the Middle East and for our position there—may be grimmer still.

Senator CASEY. Thanks very much for your testimony, both of you.

I have a couple of questions before we turn to Senator Johnson.

I, just for the record, wanted to highlight part of the legislation that Senator Rubio and I will introduce today. It is section 5 of the bill, which says that, and I am quoting in pertinent part here, “The President is authorized to furnish assistance and make contributions in order to,” and then it is itemized from there—one, two, three, four, five. No. 3 is the following, and I am quoting, “Provide nonlethal equipment and training, including training and equipment related to chemical weapons, and equipment such as body armor, night-vision equipment, communications equipment, to vetted members of the Free Syrian Army,” and goes on from there.

So, I think that there is at least a measure of bipartisan support for that kind of action. We could talk at length about something beyond that, that involves lethal force. But, I think we are at least at a point now where we have pretty broadbased support for that kind of assistance, in addition to the other assistance we outline in the legislation.

I wanted to get a sense, from both of you, but I will start with Mr. Malinowski, about the influence of extremist groups within the Syrian opposition. We all have a sense of that, but I am not sure we have a full and complete understanding of the extent of the influence of those extremist groups within the opposition, and the extent to which they affect the provision of assistance, what we are here to talk about today. Could you comment on that, or just give us the benefit of your insight into that?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Sure. I did not see too much of it when I was there. Perhaps if I had, I would not be here.

Senator CASEY. Right.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. But, people were talking about it. It is clear that there was much more of it than, say, 6 months or a year before. There was a very, very overwhelming sense, among the people I met, that one reason for this—and they stressed this with great passion—was that there was a perception that they were not getting help from anybody else. So, people would say it was—

Senator CASEY. So, kind of, the bad guys filling a void.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Filling the void.

Senator CASEY. Yes.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. So, people who were very secular would tell me, you know, “Look, we don’t like al-Qaeda, we don’t like

al-Nusra, we don't want to be ruled by these people. We know that they're a threat. But, you know what? You didn't help us, and they helped us." And they would get very passionate about this. And you can understand, in that situation, why people could hold those contradictory thoughts at the same time.

One person, one elderly man, said to me, "You created al-Nusra by not helping us, and now you use their existence as an excuse not to help us." Again, this is very visceral, and it is not fair to say we created al-Nusra. But, you know, I am just sort of explaining to you the kinds of things that people will say inside.

Clearly, I think, although that is an exaggeration, there is a relationship between the popular perception in these areas of how much the international community is helping them and the ability of these other groups to fill the void, because they distribute humanitarian aid. And, to the extent we are seen as helping—to the extent that the moderate opposition bodies—the civilian council—are able to deliver things that people need, they have greater authority, they have greater respect. And so, strengthening those institutions is critical.

Senator CASEY. How would you, if you could—and we do not need numerical or percentage precision, here—but, if you had to kind of break down the extremist influence within the opposition, what percent, if you can, would you assign to al-Nusra, al-Qaeda? And how would you kind of itemize those?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I cannot give you percentages. I think, among the general population, there is not enormous support for them. Again, some of it is this sort of, "They're the only people doing certain things, and therefore, we have to tolerate them." That is the attitude.

Among the frontline fighters—I was not on the front line, but one is told that they are among the best fighters, and so they are often sort of at the front edge of the spear.

Senator CASEY. Is there one extremist group just among the fighters—that is predominant, or is it a kind of a mixed bag?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. One hears al-Nusra, but, again, I do not have—I cannot give you a direct knowledge of that, in the sense that I can of other things. But, I do think that most of the ordinary people you talk to do not profess to support those groups. Most of them claim that they recognize the dangers that they pose. But, then you get the other side of the coin.

Senator CASEY. Mr. Singh, I do not know if you have a comment on this or—

Mr. SINGH. I agree fully with Tom. I think, though, the one question we need to ask, that, frankly, should be posed to the administration, is, Why don't we know more about the composition of the opposition? I think General Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said, yesterday, that there is no opacity to the opposition, that he feels that's increased over time.

You know, at the same time, this civil conflict has been going on for 2 years. And so, I would think this would be a high-priority intelligence target. And obviously, we have done a good job, in the United States, of understanding extremist networks elsewhere. And I think the question has to be asked, why we have not had the same success here.

Senator CASEY. I want to, in the interest of time, turn it over to Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I mean, I am highly concerned. I think America needs to be highly concerned about the perception of the Syrians. I mean, perception is reality. And if there is a growing resentment because we are not doing enough, that does not bode well for us, long term.

I heard a rather chilling story, Mr. Chairman, about a mother in a refugee camp, generally supportive of America, but who was telling about her son, who believes we should be doing more, and her basic comment was, "He is your enemy for life." And that's not good.

Mr. Singh, do you believe it is enough, in terms of bringing this conflict to an end—because I think that is the solution. I mean, we are simply not going to solve this humanitarian crisis without really toppling the Assad regime—is it enough for the United States not to stand in the way of other countries providing arms? I mean, can we get by with that strategy? Does that have any chance of success?

Mr. SINGH. You know, I do not think that is a policy, personally. I think not opposing others doing something is essentially saying, you know, "No comment on that." I do not think that is a position the United States can take, in this region. This is the most—in a sense, you know, one of the most important, most urgent national security problems in this region. Our allies in this region look to us for leadership. And I think simply saying, "We're not going to oppose what others are doing," is not providing leadership.

Senator JOHNSON. I mean, I will be the first to admit, I do not envy anybody the task, making these decisions. These are enormously complex situations. Can either of you explain why the administration has not been more forward, more helpful, in terms of the military? I mean, what has been the underlying reluctance?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I hesitate to speak for the administration.

Senator JOHNSON. In terms of what you have seen in the ground, I mean, what is the danger of greater U.S. involvement? I mean, it is really a legitimate question.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I believe there should be more U.S. involvement, obviously. I have made the case to you all that I do not think humanitarian aid is going to be enough; it is certainly not going to be enough to convince Syrians that the United States is on their side, if that is the goal that we want to pursue.

It is an incredibly difficult, dangerous, and complicated situation, so I do not blame anyone who looks at this and fears the uncertainties and the consequences of going in. You might be able to save a lot of lives, but then you have to think, if you are the President, What is the step that comes after that, and after that?

So, I do not blame people for hesitating and for asking really tough questions of proponents of getting more deeply involved, but I do think one has to ultimately consider, What are the consequences of not getting involved?

The thing that Mr. Guterres said that really struck me, because I had not focused on it enough yet, is this rapid acceleration of the refugee flow to other countries. If it is, indeed, going to be a million per country, as he suggested, that is not sustainable. It is just not

sustainable. And so, I think the question policymakers need to consider is, If we are not going to solve this crisis entirely by then—which I think is unlikely—can there at least be an area inside Syria that can be safe enough for people to be able to stay there, or to go back there and to survive there, so that you do not have a burden on Lebanon and Jordan and Turkey and Iraq that is going to create mayhem throughout the region?

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Singh, do you believe, if the United States got more involved—let us say we directly supplied arms—I mean, could this conflict be brought to an end by supplying the opposition forces with arms, or is this going to require air support or greater involvement by NATO or some other first-world power?

Mr. SINGH. You know, in my view—look, first, I completely agree, this is a very hard problem, and, you know, having been in the position of having had to make recommendations to a previous President on problems like this, I do not envy my colleagues in the administration now who have to do this. And obviously, committing any kind of military force is a tremendously weighty decision that requires a lot of careful thought.

My own view is that, look, we should be aiming to end this conflict quickly, as quickly as possible, I think, because I think the longer it drags out the worse the consequences will become, and the harder it will be to salvage anything stable and peaceful afterward. You know, we cannot forget that Syria was known for being a more tolerant, cosmopolitan society before all this. And there is a danger of losing that. And that would be a real loss, I think, for this region and for us.

So, I would say we should look at doing both sides of this, at seeing what we can do to degrade Assad's forces—and I do think that means addressing his air power and his missile forces, which is what he is increasingly relying upon—and that probably means some kind of airstrikes inside Syria. I also think we should be looking at bolstering the opposition forces, but obviously not just willy-nilly. Obviously, we want to be helping to build a security force, or security forces, which will be useful after Assad leaves, as well, to secure the country and ensure that all the minorities are protected and that any kind of sectarian bloodletting is avoided.

Senator JOHNSON. OK. So, again, the concern, in terms of consequences, are not only just more bodies, but also spilling over into the greater Middle East and just having a far larger problem than what we have right now. Is that, basically, your concerns?

Mr. SINGH. That is absolutely right. I think you worry about the spillover into other regions. And obviously, we saw, yesterday, missiles being fired in northern Lebanon. You worry about the economic consequences. Some of these economies in the region are very fragile right now, like Jordan's.

I think you also worry about the radicalization of the population in Syria, as well as the disintegration of Syria, and the attendant conflicts that could give rise to in the region.

Senator JOHNSON. Well, a failed state is another real consequence, there, as well as now—we just heard reports of apparent chemical-weapons use, and that is another real problem, unless we bring this to a close sooner rather than later.

You know, that is all I have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both.

Senator CASEY. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

We are almost ready to wrap up, and we appreciate your testimony today, and your patience.

Just one final question I had, on sanctions, if either of you would comment on the use of sanctions as one of the tools to create even more pressure on the regime.

Mr. SINGH. You know, we have obviously put a lot of sanctions in place against the Assad regime. I think that was the right thing to do, and I think those sanctions should be strengthened, to the extent we can. Obviously, we have already done quite a bit.

I think, though, at this point, it looks like the Assad regime is fighting for its survival, essentially, that Assad is fighting for survival. So, more sanctions may not be sufficient to get him out, in a sense.

I think what we can hope is that maybe those sanctions can convince people in his inner circle or on the fringes of his regime to switch sides. And it is possible that more sanctions could do that.

Senator CASEY. Mr. Malinowski.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. I agree. There are ways in which you can tighten the sanctions regime, and every little bit can help, but we should remember that the main supplier right now is Iran, and I am not sure if Iran is going to be too respectful of yet another U.N. Security Council resolution. And, as Michael said, this is a fight for survival right now. And I fear—I hope I am wrong—but I fear that, as long as he has the means to fight—and he does have a lot of means to fight within the arsenal that he has—the regime will continue to fight.

There is no good outcome, here. There is a bad outcome, and there is a much worse outcome. And I think we need to have the discipline to try to work as hard as we can for that not-so-awful outcome in the end. But without illusions.

Senator CASEY. Mr. Malinowski, thank you.

Mr. Singh, when I was introducing you, I truncated the name of your organization, I said The—The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. I did not add that. And we are grateful for that.

We will keep the record open until close of business on Friday for questions for the record, so both of you should expect some questions.

We are grateful you are here today, and thanks for your presence and your testimony and answering some questions.

We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:13 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY ANNE C. RICHARD TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. We have long been aware that gender-based violence pervades the conflict in Syria.

- Please outline the programs that the U.S. funds that work to meet the needs—psychosocial and otherwise—of Syrian refugee women who have been victims of, or witness to, GBV.
- In a society where discussions of a sexual nature are taboo, reaching out to GBV victims presents significant challenges, exacerbated by any cultural dis-

connect between the refugees and aid workers. What steps are being taken, or are under consideration to be taken, to bridge this gap and provide care in the most effective way?

Answer. We are very concerned by reports of sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) in Syria, and are working closely with humanitarian partners to strengthen protection for vulnerable refugees, particularly women and girls there. Our humanitarian funding helps support programs to prevent and respond to GBV, including by providing assistance to GBV survivors and working with communities to prevent GBV.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has received over \$111 million in U.S. Government funding for its Syrian response thus far, provides GBV services and coordinates protection and GBV services provided by other U.N. agencies and implementing partners. UNHCR also works with host governments to develop capacity to help GBV survivors. The U.S. Government also supports NGO and International Organization (IO) partners to complement UNHCR's programming and activities, providing over \$4 million to programs throughout the region to address GBV prevention and treatment.

In Jordan, UNHCR works in partnership with the Family Protection Department (FPD), affiliated with the Jordanian Public Security Department (PSD), to strengthen its capacity to address GBV and provide psychosocial support services in the northern part of the country (Irbid, Ramtha, Mafraq, and Zaatari camp). PRM supplements UNHCR's efforts by supporting a program through a nongovernment organization (NGO) partner, which provides direct services for women and children in Ramtha, Mafraq, Irbid and the Zaatari refugee camp. This project will assist over 20,000 refugees through direct case management for survivors (including male and child survivors of GBV), individual therapy, group therapy, supplemental psychosocial activities, health services (including reproductive health and care for survivors of sexual assault), and referrals. Another U.S.-funded NGO program is working to educate the refugee population on GBV and to build the capacity of health workers to better identify and respond to GBV cases they encounter.

In Lebanon, UNHCR, UNICEF, and other agencies are identifying gaps in GBV programs, providing technical training to Ministry of Social Affairs workers dealing with GBV survivors, and expanding referrals for survivors to receive specialized services. Recognizing that refugees in Lebanon are not in camps and are geographically spread across the country, the United States is complementing UNHCR's efforts by funding a nongovernment organization to map local agencies that specialize in assisting women and girl survivors of violence in the north and Bekaa and conducting intensive GBV capacity development training for two clinics so they can appropriately receive and manage GBV cases. Syrians also access gender-based violence services provided through a separate NGO program targeting primarily Iraqi refugees.

In Turkey, the Government is the primary service provider to Syrian refugees through its Disaster and Emergency Planning Agency (AFAD) with UNHCR serving in an advisory capacity on camp services. The U.S. Government is funding the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to support GBV prevention and response in refugee camps, as well as reproductive health services. We are also funding an NGO for primary health care, mental health, and psychosocial support in both urban and camp environments that includes medical treatment and counseling to GBV survivors.

In Iraq, UNHCR is working with the refugee population to raise awareness of GBV and through its partners, is providing social counseling and legal support to survivors.

In addition, the United States has provided funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to support both its humanitarian response to the Syrian conflict as well as the development of a gender-based violence referral system for Palestinian refugees, including those affected by the conflict. UNRWA is working to ensure GBV survivors have access to necessary support from UNRWA staff and external medical services and to increase community awareness of this issue. UNRWA has included Palestinian refugees from Syria that are displaced in Lebanon in its GBV programming and is currently developing a referral system for Palestinian refugees inside Syria, despite the operational challenges.

Protection is at the heart of what PRM's work and we will continue to work with partners to monitor GBV risks in refugee host countries as the situation evolves.

We work with our partners, tapping into their expertise, to determine the best way to deliver assistance in a culturally sensitive manner. For example, one of our NGO partners conducted assessments to inform their GBV programming. Although GBV is a sensitive issue, NGO representatives expressed surprise at how readily

interviewees shared stories and fears. The assessments included not only female refugees but men and boys as well as service providers. The NGO noted that it was not easy to determine if participants were speaking about personal experiences, situations they witnessed or stories they heard. As a result, the NGO concluded that GBV is prevalent in the Syrian crisis; the NGO is continuing to develop relationships and gather data to understand the scope of the problem. During the assessments, the refugees indicated that they preferred to obtain GBV-related services in a location that would not identify them as a survivor. For this reason, the NGO has incorporated GBV programming into medical service provision.

The U.S. Government partners incorporate protection, in this case GBV education and support to survivors, as a component of a wide range of assistance programming including health, education, psychosocial, economic, and water, sanitation and hygiene assistance. Programs are designed to protect those most at risk and prevent violence.

Question. There are troubling news reports about the rise of survival sex utilized by refugees who are desperately low on resources.

- What livelihoods programs is the United States supporting to counter this trend and to offer alternatives to refugees who do not have the means to fend for themselves, including and especially those in the urban centers?
- What monitoring and protection measures are our U.N. and NGO partners taking to address concerns of sex trafficking, early child marriage, and forced labor?

Answer. As the Syrian crisis enters its third year, we are very concerned about reports of refugees who have exhausted their limited resources and are turning to dangerous coping mechanisms for survival. The constantly expanding scope of the crisis has kept attention on emergency relief, but we are cognizant of the need to support all refugees and work with our partners to develop a variety of responses to assist, in particular, urban refugees.

The Syrian refugee populations in Lebanon and Egypt, as well as 75 percent of the refugee population in Jordan and 50 percent of the refugee population in Turkey are residing outside camps in host communities. Many of these refugees are struggling to make ends meet. Urban refugees are more difficult to target with assistance and face additional challenges including high rents. UNHCR and their implementing partners are meeting refugee basic needs by providing food, supplies, and money for rent, as well as facilitating access to schools and health care. UNHCR is working to identify the most vulnerable to ensure their participation in these programs.

UNHCR in Jordan counsels urban refugees with specific needs on the availability of social services including health, education, legal, and financial services provided by response partners. Vulnerable families or individuals are provided with urgent cash assistance directly by UNHCR or through referrals to an NGO partner. Partner organizations conduct home visits to identify and follow up on the most vulnerable including women at risk. In Lebanon, UNHCR and partners work to expand the provision of vocational training, remedial classes, and agriculture-based projects to provide alternatives and training to unemployed adults and out of school youth.

One NGO partner recently began a program in northern Jordan to build beneficiaries' confidence and lower levels of economic stress and vulnerability to exploitation. The project selects 10 female "champions" from the refugee populations in two Jordanian cities for an 8-day training on household finances, savings, existing humanitarian assistance programs, and rotational savings groups. These women will establish community groups of 20 additional women each. They will then share their knowledge by hosting discussion groups and setting up women's rotational savings groups in their communities for a total of 200 women, which will in turn help participants enhance family savings.

While these programs are a start, we recognize access to livelihoods and longer term self-sufficiency are areas that need additional focus in the near term. We will continue to work with our international organization and NGO partners to find ways to support urban refugees carry out livelihoods programs as part of the response to the larger emergency.

We are deeply concerned about allegations of exploitation of Syrian refugees through early marriage, forced labor, and sex trafficking. Protection of vulnerable populations is a core component of the broader international humanitarian response to the crisis.

UNHCR, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and other humanitarian partners are working in coordination with host governments to boost protection mechanisms for Syrian refugees. These include additional security screening of persons entering camps, increasing the number and reach of gender-based

violence prevention and response sessions in camps and host communities, and a media campaign on the dangers of early marriage.

In situations of early marriage, UNHCR undertakes a Best Interest Determination to review the situation on behalf of the minor. UNHCR works with local authorities and religious leaders to prevent early marriage. UNHCR will support refugees who need access to the Jordanian legal system.

The U.S. Government is funding an NGO in Jordan to work with UNHCR to address protection concerns associated with the “bailout” system in Zaatari camp. Partners are working with the Government of Jordan to increase the protection of women and children by enhancing its capacity to monitor the bailout system and ensure that children are not bailed out to unrelated adults, nor single women to unrelated men. Additionally, this program will ensure that all persons bailed out have information on protection services available in urban areas.

Question. The United States provides humanitarian assistance in coordination with international partners because it is the right thing to do, not to receive credit for its aid. At the same time, there are growing concerns that the Syrian people believe the United States has abandoned them because there are few, if any, signs to convey that the provision of aid is possible due in large part to U.S. contributions. The elements that complicate branding inside Syria do not seem to be present in the refugee camps and communities in the neighboring countries.

- What efforts, if any, are being made to brand assistance to Syrian refugees in an attempt to communicate U.S. support to those that have escaped the violence?

Answer. As the Syria crisis continues to deteriorate, it is critical that the Syrian people understand that the United States stands with them in this time of need. The United States has asked the international groups that we fund to ensure that U.S. contributions are publicly acknowledged in places where Syrian refugees and the local people can see it. International partner organizations include the U.S. flag and recognition of U.S. funding in all appropriate publications, printed descriptions, and project site locations. For example, in Jordan, UNHCR and UNICEF have displayed large placards bearing the U.S. flag emblem outside assistance distribution areas in Zaatari refugee camp, where UNHCR estimates 100,000 Syrian refugees are living. WFP includes the U.S. flag on posters where food vouchers are distributed and redeemed.

Meanwhile, we are amplifying our message of support to the Syrian people through intense local and regional media engagement by U.S. ambassadors and other U.S. officials during regional visits; regular dialogue with Syrian diaspora groups in the United States; and a U.S. Government-wide push to communicate directly to the Syrian people.

While receiving credit for our assistance is important, we must be careful not to jeopardize the lives of aid recipients and humanitarian workers delivering assistance if their association with the provision of U.S. funding puts them at further risk. In Lebanon, for example, several NGO partners have requested exceptions to not “brand” or label assistance with the U.S. flag to avoid sparking local tensions.

We work with partners receiving U.S. funding to determine what level of recognition is appropriate in these situations and to implement acceptable alternatives. In Jordan, for example, one NGO partner does not use the flag logo, but instead uses “Gift of the U.S. Government” on its signs posted in program areas.

RESPONSES OF ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR NANCY E. LINDBORG TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEDEZ

Question. More than half of U.S. humanitarian assistance is helping those in need inside of Syria. Despite significant U.S. contributions thus far, there are growing concerns that the Syrian people believe they do not have our support, as there are few, if any, signs to convey that the provision of aid is possible due in large part to U.S. contributions. In your testimony, you spoke about “amplifying our message of support” and utilizing a broader communications strategy, given concerns that obviously branding U.S. aid could jeopardize the safety of aid workers and assistance recipients in such a volatile security environment.

- Could you please outline specific measures that the U.S. Government and its partners are taking to “brand,” as is most feasible, the aid that reaches vulnerable populations inside Syria?

Answer. Wide-spread branding of U.S. Government assistance inside Syria is not an option at this time due to the ongoing violence and threats to aid workers. However, we are focused on ensuring the people of Syria understand that the American

people are standing with them through a variety of channels. Our USAID team meets each week with the Syrian Opposition Coalition's Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) and together reviews detailed reports of where U.S. Government-supported relief supplies and medical care are reaching, down to the district level. In opposition-held areas of northern Syria, where it is safe to do so, our implementing partners inform relief councils and local leaders that the assistance they are delivering is from the U.S. Government, and—when feasible—our partners are verbally telling aid recipients the aid is from the United States Government. USAID staff in Washington, DC, meet regularly with the Syrian diaspora so it can use its connections inside Syria to spread the message of our support that the United States is the leading donor and most proactive provider of humanitarian assistance. We continue to heavily engage with local, regional, and international media, both traditional and digital, to reiterate that U.S. Government humanitarian assistance is reaching a wide range of areas inside Syria.

Question. We have long been aware that gender-based violence pervades the conflict in Syria.

- Please outline the programs that the United States funds that work to meet the needs—psychosocial and otherwise—of Syrian women who have been victims of, or witness to, GBV.
- In a society where discussions of a sexual nature are taboo, reaching out to GBV victims presents significant challenges. What steps are being taken, or are under consideration to be taken, to provide care in the most effective way?

Answer. To assist Syrians in working through trauma they have suffered or witnessed, USAID is providing psychosocial support inside and outside the country. All emergency response programs must ensure that emergency response staff and volunteers are prepared to address the specific protection needs of women and children, including those affected by gender-based violence. In addition, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) and the Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) require all emergency programs to use the principles of protection including consultation, participation, accessibility, and equity. This applies to all of our humanitarian sectors including health, food, relief supplies, and water and sanitation activities.

These efforts include ensuring that:

- Health facilities have appropriate staff and equipment to meet the needs of women and children. This includes ensuring age and gender-specific medicines and medical equipment, including for emergency reproductive health services, are available as well as recruitment of female health staff.
- Protection-specific training, including for the identification, referral, and treatment of women and children, is incorporated into capacity-building training for local staff and volunteers.
- Relief commodity distributions include supplies specific to meet the needs of women and children in hygiene and household kits.
- Assistance distribution, in terms of site locations and length of time waiting in line, does not add to the vulnerability of women and children for whom assistance is particularly targeted.

In addition, USAID/OFDA has provided \$1.2 million in support of stand-alone activities that aim to help both women and children. This funding supports psychosocial programs including women's support groups, child-friendly safe spaces, and youth empowerment groups and training. With U.S. Government support, UNICEF continues to provide psychosocial support to more than 32,000 children in Damascus, Rif Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo governorates, including in conflict locations. In 2013, UNICEF aims to reach 300,000 children throughout the country.

U.S. Government-funded field hospitals are providing emergency care and emotional support for children, women, and men who have suffered sexual- and gender-based violence. The hours and days following rape are critical to treat injuries related to the assault, prevent infection, and receive the emotional support that will help survivors recover and resume a full life.

Through the Special Program to Address the Needs of Survivors, USAID's Office of Democracy, Rights and Governance (USAID/DRG) has provided \$1 million to the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) to serve Syrian refugees who have been tortured or suffered the debilitating effects of war, including victims of sexual violence. CVT provides physical therapy and training for specialists with the goal of aiding physical and psychological recovery and reintegration into society.

Additionally, USAID/DRG recently transferred \$700,000 to the USAID/Jordan mission for a program that will focus on vulnerable populations and develop an awareness campaign to reduce or prevent early marriage, human trafficking, child labor, and sexual- and gender-based violence among vulnerable populations within the Syrian refugee community.

