

**NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY PRI-
ORITIES IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2015 INTER-
NATIONAL AFFAIRS BUDGET**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

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**NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY
PRIORITIES IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2015
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS BUDGET**

TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2014

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez, Cardin, Shaheen, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Corker, Risch, Rubio, Johnson, Flake, McCain, Barrasso, and Paul.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Mr. Secretary, welcome back to Washington. I understand you have traveled to 44 countries and logged over 855 hours in the air, which translates to an incredible 35 days of flying. So I imagine it feels good to have your feet on the ground in a familiar place like this committee that you once chaired.

We look forward to hearing your priorities for the State Department in the coming year. As the situations in the Ukraine, Syria, and Venezuela demonstrate, never has the need for American leadership and engagement in the world been greater.

We understand the limitations and constraints that govern the budgetary environment, and that getting our fiscal house in order at home is the wellspring from which our national power flows. But in this complex and rapidly changing global environment, we also know that our national security interests are priority number one and they cannot be jeopardized.

The \$40.3 billion in base discretionary funding for the Department of State and USAID, equal to the 2014 enacted level, provides solid footing after several years of uncertainty for our international efforts. And the \$5.9 billion for overseas contingency operations activities allows us to continue to address challenges in the Middle East and North Africa, including the Syrian humanitarian crisis, as well as in Afghanistan, and other frontline states.

We also need to make sure that this budget is structured so that our Nation is capable of meeting the new challenges and opportunities of today's world. We face many challenging issues—most

recently, the menacing threat by Russia in Ukraine, a challenge to its very existence. We can, and will continue to, stand with the Ukrainian people who, by right, will choose their own destiny.

In addition to authorizing \$1 billion in loan guarantees for Ukraine and other assistance to strengthen civil society and security in the region, we have also given you tools to respond to Russia in the form of sanctions. And our message to President Putin and his cronies must be robust and swift.

On Syria, as we commemorate the third anniversary of the uprising, I am pleased that the administration is prioritizing assistance, both humanitarian aid and support for the Syrian opposition. That \$1.7 billion request sends an important signal to the world and to the Syrian people of our commitment. But this leads to a broader question. We can demonstrate U.S. leadership on humanitarian assistance, but I would like to hear from you, Mr. Secretary, on how we are demonstrating, and intend to demonstrate, leadership in ending this crisis.

On Afghanistan and Pakistan, let me say that I support the administration's efforts to right-size our investments in the overseas contingency operations account, but in this year of transition, I was hoping that more of the budget could be shifted into the base budget, so we could begin to normalize the assistance for these frontline states.

We also should take special note of the elections held in Afghanistan last weekend. In the face of intimidation by the Taliban, the Afghan people demonstrated their desire to shape their destiny of their own country. The election was a historic marker in our engagement in Afghanistan, and we are hopeful that the final result will be credible and will genuinely reflect the will of the Afghan people.

Now, there is a place that I am disappointed in the budget and that is in the Western Hemisphere. The 2015 request is a \$358 million—a 21-percent decrease from the fiscal year 2013 budget. I am incredibly troubled that every other major account in the Western Hemisphere is being cut and that there is not a reinvestment of those funds where programs are coming to an end.

I do not dispute the importance of other priorities laid out in the administration's proposal, but I have seen year after year after year after year a continuous cut in the hemisphere's budget, and I believe that those cuts lead us to lack a comprehensive approach to Latin America and the necessary resources to back it up. Whether in Central America, where nations are facing a crisis of criminal violence and major challenges to governance and the rule of law, or in Honduras and El Salvador, which continue to have the world's highest murder rates, undercutting economic development and, in turn, leading to high levels of emigration that directly affect our country. And threats to democracy, freedom of expression and human rights in our hemisphere, from Cuba to Venezuela and Ecuador, should be a concern to us. As the volatile situation in Venezuela has shown, undermining democracy can lead to a political crisis and economic instability that has implications for the entire region.

So let me close simply by saying that the overall budget sets a strong proposed funding level, but along with my concerns about

Western Hemisphere issues, I am also concerned that there are significant reductions in humanitarian assistance and global health accounts. There is a nearly 5 percent cut in global health, with the largest reductions in the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and malaria.

So with those concerns—overall, I find a budget that I can support. I want to thank you, Mr. Secretary, for coming back to the committee. We look forward to hearing your views on all of these areas of concern. I am sure many members will have many questions outside of the budget as well. And with that, let me turn to Senator Corker for his remarks.

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

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I too want to extend my welcome back here. I know you have been doing a lot of traveling.

And since we do not really pass budgets or reconcile them and since we have not yet moved to authorizations, although I think we may soon, I am not going to address the budgetary issues but talk about some other policy issues, if I could.

Mr. Secretary, we all appreciate so much your willingness to serve in the capacity that you are right now. We all supported you. You had unanimous support of this committee and everybody in the Senate to do what you are doing, and you have certainly gone after it with a tremendous amount of energy.

I think there is probably not a person on this committee, in spite of their appreciation for what you are doing, that does not have concerns someplace relative to our foreign policy in Syria.

This committee strongly supported the authorization for the use of force to strike Assad for using chemical weapons. The committee passed overwhelmingly support for the Syrian opposition. And I think all of us understand today that the smartest thing Assad did for his own self-survival was to kill 1,200 people with chemical weapons. We ended up jumping in Syria's lap. We now sit in the back of the bus as Iran and Russia really drive policy in Syria.

One of your assistants was up here a few weeks ago and made some really reckless comments about a military strategy, if you will, in Syria and said that they would brief us. We have had no briefing. It has been 2 weeks. And as the chairman mentioned, instead of that, we read about something last night in the "Wall Street Journal" relative to disputes between you and the Pentagon.

I do hope today that you will lay out clearly for us in this open setting what our strategy is in Syria and hopefully it is not just allowing people to kill each other off. Since the chemical weapons were used, another 50,000 people have been killed. Barrel bombs are being dropped indiscriminately on populations there. Assad is dragging his feet on alleviating the chemical weapons because he knows that prolongs his survival and continues to allow us, Russia, and Iran to prop him up.

So I know there are a lot of concerns about our Syria policy. We have no policy from what I can tell other than, again, allowing people to kill each other off and us making commitments to the opposition that we do not honor and leaving them in refugee camps and

basically stranded without the support that we committed to on the front end.

In Ukraine, you know, here we have a 40,000 troop buildup. We know per public records Russia is basically paying people to foment violence in the eastern part of the country. I hope that you will address when we will implement the Executive order relative to sectoral sanctions. And hopefully that will be this week if they continue to have the buildup that they have. I am confused by the policy. We castigate them on one side. On the other hand, we are exchanging paper with them. I am confused about what our policy really is.

In Iran, this is the first administration ever to agree that Iran will enrich uranium. That has never happened in the history of our country, and yet this administration has agreed to that.

In Afghanistan, I am concerned that because of a monster that we have created, Karzai, and his actions which are certainly incoherent, I am afraid that we are going to pull out and not do the things that have been so strongly recommended by the Pentagon and others.

And in China, in the Senkakus, we have a situation where we have unresolved disputes. We have skirmishes that are occurring. These are the kind of things that create world wars. And yet, our allies are concerned about where our support is. Japan is continuing to move ahead with ways of creating their own abilities to defend themselves.

So, Mr. Chairman—Mr. Secretary—excuse me—I have a lot of questions. My sense is that the administration in so many ways, through rhetoric and persuasion, seems to think that people like the leaders of Russia and China and other places respond to nice rhetoric. I do not think that is the case. I am concerned about our policy, and I hope today, due to questioning that I am sure many will have, including me, I hope you will lay out very clearly what our policies are in these areas.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for calling the hearing, and I look forward to our witness.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Corker.

With that, Mr. Secretary, the floor is yours. Your full statement will be entered into the record, without objection. And we look forward to your statement and then to engaging in a dialogue.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, SECRETARY OF STATE,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Secretary KERRY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much, Ranking Member Corker and members of the committee. I am very happy to be back here and appreciate enormously the committee's indulgence to have shifted this hearing because it came at a critical moment just before I was asked by the President to meet with Lavrov relative to Ukraine.

And so I also want to thank everybody on the committee for working so hard to move the nominations, which obviously is critical. I think it is not the fault of the committee, but with the combination of the vetting process and public process and so forth and the combination of the slowdown on the floor of the Senate, I think we are averaging something like 220-some days and some people

at 300 days and some over 365 days. So I literally, only in the last month, have gotten my top team in place 1 year in, and I am very grateful to the committee. Mr. Chairman, you have worked really hard to make that happen and the ranking member. Great cooperation. Senator McCain and others helped to intervene on that. And I want to thank you all for that.

A lot of questions, Senator Corker, that you raised, and I really look forward to answering all of them because there is a cohesive approach. We are living in an extremely complicated world, unlike anything most of us grew up with. And we can talk about that here today because it really is critical to the question of how we deal as the United States in our budget, in our own politics here, and in the choices we make.

Obviously—Senator Corker just brought it up—the intense focus on Ukraine continues, and everything that we have seen in the last 48 hours from Russian provocateurs and agents operating in eastern Ukraine tells us that they have been sent there determined to create chaos. And that is absolutely unacceptable. These efforts are as ham-handed as they are transparent frankly, and quite simply what we see from Russia is an illegal and illegitimate effort to destabilize a sovereign state and create a contrived crisis with paid operatives across an international boundary engaged in this initiative.

Russia's clear and unmistakable involvement in destabilizing and engaging in separatist activities in the east of Ukraine is more than deeply disturbing. No one should be fooled—and believe me, no one is fooled—by what could potentially be a contrived pretext for military intervention, just as we saw in Crimea. It is clear that Russian special forces and agents have been the catalyst behind the chaos in the last 24 hours. Some have even been arrested and exposed. And equally as clear must be the reality that the United States and our allies will not hesitate to use 21st century tools to hold Russia accountable for 19th century behavior.

We have stated again and again that our preference and the preference of our friends and allies is de-escalation and a diplomatic solution. But Russia should not for a single solitary second mistake the expression of that preference as an unwillingness to do what is necessary to stop any violation of the international order.

At NATO last week and in all of my conversations of the past weeks, it is clear that the United States and our closest partners are united in this effort despite the costs and willing to put in effect tough, new sanctions on those orchestrating this action and on key sectors of the Russian economy, in energy, banking, mining. They are all on the table. And President Obama has already signed an Executive order to implement these sanctions if Russia does not end its pressure and aggression on Ukraine.

Now, let me make an equally important statement. It does not have to be this way, but it will be this way if Russia continues down this provocative path.

In my conversation yesterday with Foreign Minister Lavrov, we agreed to meet soon in Europe, next week, with Ukraine and our European partners to discuss de-escalation, de-mobilization, inclusivity, support for elections, and constitutional reform. And it is not in our judgment a small matter that Russia has agreed to sit in

this four-party status with Ukraine at the table in an effort to try to forge a road ahead.

Between now and then, we have made it clear that Russia needs to take concrete steps to disavow separatist actions in eastern Ukraine, pull back its forces outside the country, which they say they have begun to do with the movement of one battalion, and demonstrate that they are prepared to come to these discussions to do what is necessary to de-escalate.

So Russia has a choice: to work with the international community to help build an independent Ukraine that could be a bridge between East and West, not the object of a tug of war, that could meet the hopes and aspirations of all Ukrainians, or they could face greater isolation and pay the costs for their failure to see that the world is not a zero sum game.

Ukraine, and so many other ongoing, simultaneous challenges globally, reinforce what I said a moment ago to all of you. I think the members of this committee have long appreciated it. That is, that this is not the bipolar, straightforward choice of the cold war. We are living in an incredibly challenging time where some of the things that the East-West order took for granted most of my life are suddenly finding a world in which American engagement is more critical and in many ways it is more complicated because of nation state interests, balance of power, other kinds of issues that are on the table.

You all travel. All the members of this committee do that. And you see what I see in every place that I travel as Secretary. On issue after issue, people depend on American leadership to make a difference. That has been reinforced to me more than perhaps any other single thing in the year that I have been privileged to be Secretary, whether it is South Sudan, a nation that many of you helped to give birth to and now a nation struggling to survive beyond its infancy, or Venezuela where leaders are making dangerous choices at the expense of the people, or in Afghanistan where this weekend millions defied the Taliban and went to the polls to choose a new President, or on the Korean Peninsula where we are working with our allies and our partners to make sure that we can meet any threat and move toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. I think I have had five meetings with President Xi this year and five trips to Asia already in furtherance of our efforts to—and two of those meetings were with the President with President Xi in an effort to further our goals there.

U.S. presence and leadership does matter, and that is why our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific has been supported and welcomed by people throughout the region.

We also have great allies, great partners, but the fact remains that no other nation can give people the confidence to come together and confront some of the most difficult challenges in the same way as we are privileged to do. I say that without arrogance. I say it as a matter of privilege. We have this ability. And I hear this from leaders all over the world.

I particularly hear it about the Middle East peace process. I read some who question why the Secretary of State is engaged or as intense, as he might be, or why the United States should be doing this if the parties do not want to do this. Well, the truth is the

parties say they want to continue these talks. The truth is the parties are actually still talking to each other in an effort to try to see if they can get over this hurdle and make that happen.

But I have one certainty in my mind. I have yet to meet any leader anywhere in the world who argues to me that it is going to be easier next week or easier next month or easier next year or easier in the next 5 years to achieve a long sought after goal if the United States is not engaged now. There is no Foreign Minister anywhere that I have met with, no leader. You know, when I visited recently at the Vatican with His Eminence, the Secretary of State, Cardinal Parolin, this is first and foremost of people all over the world. Prime Minister Abe, the Prime Minister of Indonesia. They ask you, do we have a chance of making peace in the Middle East, because everywhere it is a recruitment tool, everywhere it is a concern, everywhere it has an impact. And the fact is that everybody volunteers gratitude for the fact that the United States is engaged in that effort.

So whether it was NATO this past week or the G7 last week or the Vatican itself, I have heard from minister after minister just how much the global community has invested in this effort. Japan just committed several hundred million dollars to the Palestinians for assistance. The Saudis, the Qataris, the Emiratis have each responded to our request and committed to \$150 million each to assist the Palestinians going forward.

So this is something that has an impact on everybody, and believe me, it has an impact on life in the United States, too. So we will continue to the degree that the parties want to. It is up to them. They have to make decisions, not us. They have to come to the conclusion that it is worth it.

The same is true on Iran where every country understands the danger that a nuclear-armed Iran would pose to our national security and to the security of our allies. And that is why we have been so focused, along with all of you, on forging an unprecedented coalition to impose the sanctions. From day one, this administration has made it a foreign policy goal to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. To achieve this goal, we have been clear that we will use all the elements of our national power, including direct negotiations with Iran, the very kind that we are engaged in as I speak. We are approaching these talks seriously and with our eyes wide open.

That is why, as we negotiate, we continue to enforce sanctions on Iran, not affected by the Joint Plan of Action, not just, incidentally, over its nuclear activities but also because of its support for terrorism. And we will press the case on human rights and its record wherever we can. And we will continue to urge Iran to release our American citizens, Amir Hekmati, Saeed Abedini, and we will work to help find Robert Levinson. All three should be home with their families and that is consistently raised by us with any Iranian official when we engage.

These are just some of the biggest issues that we are focused on each and every day simultaneously, my colleagues. They are not the only ones.

Senators Corker and McCain, you have both been to the Syrian refugee camps on the border. You have seen the horrors firsthand

as I have. And this committee has focused on the moral and security imperative that is Syria. And I am particularly grateful for the fact that you voted the way you did, the one body in the Congress that took that vote, and it was a courageous and important vote.

We are focused on this every single day, and we are currently routing increased assistance to the moderate opposition. I know we will talk about this in the course of this hearing. We are wrestling with these tough challenges, even as we are moving the State Department ahead to help our businesses succeed in a world where foreign policy is economic policy.

One of the things that I want to emphasize. When I became the nominee, I said to everybody on the committee that foreign policy is economic policy. Economic policy is foreign policy in today's world. And so we have set ourselves up in the State Department to be increasingly geared toward helping American businesses and toward creating new partnerships in an effort to also promote our foreign policy goals. We are focused on jobs diplomacy and shared prosperity. That is why Embassy Wellington just helped a company in New Jersey land a \$350 million contract to lay fiber optics across the Pacific. It is why our consulate in Shenyang has been so engaged to reverse tariffs against American agricultural products. It is the challenge of the modern State Department in a modern world, and that is to wrestle with the challenges and opportunities that come at us faster than ever before. It is a challenge balanced also against security in a dangerous world, which is why this budget implements the recommendations of the Independent Accountability Review Board and makes additional investments that go above and beyond what the review board recommended.

So I want to thank you, all of you, for everything you have done for the security of our missions, and I want to thank you for the way this committee stands up for an active, internationalist American foreign policy that is in our interests.

I spent enough time here in this room, as well as in the Senate, to know that you do not call anything that costs billions of dollars a bargain. But when you consider that the American people pay just 1 penny of every tax dollar for the \$46.2 billion in this request, I think it is safe—and if you add OCO, it is \$50.1 billion. I think it is safe to say that in the grand scheme of the Federal budget when it comes to the State Department and USAID, taxpayers are getting an extraordinary return on their investment.

So I thank you for your partnership in these efforts, and I look forward to our conversation today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Kerry follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN F. KERRY

Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker, thank you. Thank you for your leadership of this committee, your help in moving our nominees through toward confirmation, and thanks to all of you for your patience and cooperation in rescheduling this hearing to accommodate some urgent issues with respect to Ukraine.

Ukraine, and so many other ongoing, simultaneous challenges globally, reinforce what I think members of this committee have long appreciated—that because this is an incredibly complicated world, one more challenging than the bipolar, East/West world order we took for granted for most of my life, more than ever, this is a world where American engagement is absolutely critical.

I know many of you travel, too, so you see what I see in every place I travel as Secretary: On issue after issue, people depend on American leadership—whether it's South Sudan, a nation some of you helped give birth to, a nation struggling to survive beyond its infancy—or Venezuela, where leaders are making dangerous choices at the expense of the people—or in Afghanistan where this weekend millions defied the Taliban and went to the polls to choose a new President, or on the Korean Peninsula, where we are working with our allies and partners to make sure we can meet any threat and for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. U.S. presence and leadership matter, which is why our rebalance to the Asia-Pacific has been supported and welcomed throughout the region.

We have great allies, great partners, but this fact remains: No other nation can give people the confidence to come together and confront the most difficult challenges the way the United States can and must, and I hear this from leaders all over the world.

I particularly hear it about the Middle East peace process—where I have yet to meet anyone who has argued to me that it's going to be any easier next week, next year, or 5 years from now. But I've talked to Foreign Ministers from dozens of countries who think that this is something the United States needs to be doing. And whether it was NATO this week, or the G7 last week, or at the Vatican itself, I heard from minister after minister just how much the global community is invested in this effort—because peace would bring not only security and opportunity to the Israelis and the Palestinians, it would bring an end to one of the most intractable conflicts in the world.

The same is true on Iran—where every country understands the danger a nuclear-armed Iran would pose to our national security and to the security of our allies. That's why we've been so focused—along with you—on forging an unprecedented coalition to impose sanctions.

From day one, this administration has sought to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. To achieve this goal, we have been clear that we will use all elements of our national power, including direct negotiations with Iran of the kind we are engaged in as I speak.

We are approaching these talks seriously and with our eyes wide open. That's why, as we negotiate, we will continue to enforce sanctions on Iran not affected by the Joint Plan of Action—not just over its nuclear activities but because of its support for terrorism and its gross human rights record. We will remain vigilant in confronting Iranian illicit conduct, including any attempts at sanctions evasion. And we will continue to urge Iran to release our American citizens, Amir Hekmati and Saeed Abedini, and work to help find Robert Levinson. All three should be home with their families.

These are just some of the biggest issues we're focused on each and every day, simultaneously. They're not the only ones. Senators Corker and McCain—you have been to the refugee camps on the Syrian border—you've seen these horrors first hand, as I have. This committee has focused on the moral and security imperative that is Syria—and we are focused on it every single day.

We're wrestling with these tough, tough challenges even as we're moving the State Department ahead to help our businesses succeed in a world where foreign policy is economic policy. That is why we're focused on jobs diplomacy and shared prosperity, that is why Embassy Wellington helped a company in New Jersey land a \$350 million contract to lay fiber optics across the Pacific, and it's why our consulate in Shenyang has been so engaged to reverse tariffs against American agricultural products.

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And I want to thank you for the way this committee stands up for an active, internationalist American foreign policy. I spent enough time in Congress to know not to call anything that costs billions of dollars a bargain. But when you consider that the American people pay just one penny of every tax dollar for the \$46.2 billion in this request, I think it's safe to say that in the grand scheme of the federal budget, when it comes to the State Department and USAID, taxpayers are getting an extraordinary return on their investment.

I thank you for your partnership in these efforts and I look forward to our conversations today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for that comprehensive review of both our challenges and opportunities, and the daily mission of the men and women of the State Department.

I want to go to Iran. I read an article yesterday in the Wall Street Journal entitled, "Obama Administration Shows Optimism on Iran Nuclear Talks." And despite significant political hurdles and vastly different stated positions with reference to Iran's nuclear programs, in public comments there is the sense of progress and optimism. I am trying to glean where that is from.

I am worried when I read this and other articles where it says: "some officials who have worked on developing the Obama administration's negotiating position toward Tehran have acknowledged that major concessions are needed by both sides for a deal to be reached." The complete dismantling of Tehran's uranium enrichment facilities and the Arak reactor—the initial demand of the West—is no longer achievable. The West is unlikely to get a complete accounting from Tehran of the secret nuclear weapons work that the West believes it conducted in the past.

The article goes on to suggest that the P5+1 should instead focus on extending the time it would take for Iran to break out and produce nuclear weapons to between 6 and 12 months.

Now, I do not think that we did everything that we have done to only get 6 or 12 months' lead time because a deal that would ultimately unravel the entire sanctions regime for a 6- to 12-month lead time is not far from where we are today. And with no sanctions regime in place, and understanding that sanctions we have pursued have needed at least a 6-month lead time to become enforceable—and then a greater amount of time to actually enforce—that the only option left to the United States—to this or any other President and to the West—would be either to accept a nuclear-armed Iran or to have a military option.

So I want to hear from you, Mr. Secretary, whether that is where we believe success lies. Or is the success as outlined in a letter by 83 Members of the Senate to the President, where we say that we believe that we need to dismantle Iran's nuclear weapons program and prevent it from having either a uranium or plutonium path to a nuclear bomb. Where we believe that there are no enrichment facility needs like Fordow and Arak, and where we must get evidence of what happened in Parchin. I am trying to get a sense of these parameters because, to the extent that the administration has asked for forbearance, part of it is going to have to be based on having an understanding of the parameters.

And I would assume—and I ask you this question specifically. Does the administration, if it strikes a deal, ultimately believe that it needs to come back to the Congress for the approval of such a deal in terms of the elements of the law that exists today that would have to be repealed?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Mr. Chairman, good questions, all, and entirely appropriate for us to try to dig into that a little bit.

Let me begin by saying, first of all, I am not expressing optimism one side or the other. I remain agnostic and questioning even as we are just about halfway through. I talked with our team on the ground in Vienna yesterday. They are having serious expert, in-depth, detailed conversations about what it takes to achieve our

goal, proving that this is a peaceful program. I think it is fair to say that I think it is public knowledge today that we are operating with a time period for a so-called breakout of about 2 months. That has been in the public domain. So 6 months to 12 months is—I am not saying that is what we would settle for, but even that is significantly more.

Remember, “breakout” means that they make a decision to race, to sort of move out of the regime that has been put in place and overtly move to enrich sufficiently to create enough material for one weapon. That is what breakout means. It does not mean they have gotten to a warhead or to a delivery system or even a test capacity or anything else. It is just having one bomb’s worth, conceivably, of material but without any necessary capacity to put it in anything, to deliver it, to have any mechanism to do so and otherwise.

We have amazing capacity that is being built into this system to understand what they are doing. During just the JPOA implementation, we are inspecting in Fordow. We have never been in there before. We are inspecting in Natanz. We have not been in there. We are occasionally, I think several times a month, once or twice a month, inspecting in the Arak facility. They cannot move anything into the Arak facility to complete its commissioning. We are inspecting their storage of centrifuges. We are inspecting their mining and their milling and so forth. We have a huge track here of what they are doing.

And so the greater likelihood is at the end of this, we hope to be able to come to you with an agreement that has the most extensive and comprehensive and accountable verification process that can be achieved in order to know what they are doing.

So when we talk about the number of months, we do not know what they are yet, but if you know—I mean, you have to think about this. If they make a decision to break out, sanctions are not going to be what make the difference. If they are overtly breaking out and breaking an agreement and starting to enrich and pursue it, they have made a huge, consequential decision. And the greater likelihood is we are going to respond immediately.

The CHAIRMAN. I gather what we are doing now—I have to be honest with you—if the end result is a 6- or 12-month window for which the sanctions regime will have fallen—and if it is true that they decide to break out. The only question is: Is the reason they are at the table because of the sanctions regime? Depending on how we act, they will calculate whether or not to make that decision based on internal consequences to their economy, and based on concerns that the Ayatollah has about regime change, either from the outside—which is his constant concern—or from within, because of the economic catalyst that can be created in Iran.

And so if 6 to 12 months is where we end up—I know that you have not said that, but since you said that it would still be more significant than 2 months—the bottom line is I would hope that is not where we end up. Because with their research and development capacity still moving forward as we speak—allowing them to create more sophisticated centrifuges that close the window for them, and even more quickly with their missile development—these elements

are all worrisome. It is far different from where we started off, and what we were told, to where I believe we are heading.

And this is why so many Members joined us in staking out a ground so that the administration understands. Does the administration intend to come back to the Congress if you have a final deal for ultimately lifting some of the elements that would be needed to be lifted under law?

Secretary KERRY. Well, of course, we would be obligated to under the law, Mr. Chairman. We would absolutely have to. And so clearly, what we do will have to pass muster with Congress. We well understand that.

But let me just say very quickly all of the things you just raised are very much contemplated. I mean, these are all part of the conversation, the research, what kind of research, warheads particularly. There has to be a huge level of transparency.

Now, you mentioned the Arak reactor. We have been very clear that there is no legitimacy to a full-on heavy water plutonium reactor, none whatsoever, in any scheme that they have articulated for private sector use. So that has to be dealt with in the context of the negotiations. It will be.

The CHAIRMAN. I agree. But originally we were told that it is going to be dismantled. Now we are told that we are going to find a different purpose for it. It continues to morph into different areas.

Let me ask you one final question.

Secretary KERRY. Actually, let me just clarify, Mr. Chairman. First of all, it is written in the Joint Action Plan.

The CHAIRMAN. Nothing is agreed to—

Secretary KERRY. Correct. Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. This is a mosaic that is going to have to be put together, and I can assure you that we are going to strive to get the longest period we can get in terms of breakout. There are a number of different options as to how it can be managed. But the important thing is that it is not a heavy water plutonium reactor. That is critical.

The CHAIRMAN. One final question. The Russians—we have seen consistent iterations of a barter deal that clearly, if it was consummated, would be sanctionable. So my question is, number one, if such a deal actually comes into fruition, is it the administration's intention to sanction those actions? I look at this in our engagement with Russia. We met with Russia to broker a deal over Syria in September, and now have a worsening humanitarian disaster and the delay on chemical weapons. We also met with Russia over Iran. There is an "oil for goods" deal with Russia and Iran that sources say could be worth \$20 billion—then Russia annexes Crimea and destabilizes Ukraine.

I mean, I am beginning to wonder what it is—at what point in this relationship with Russia, particularly vis-a-vis Iran, but even beyond, is it going to be clear that there are consequences? I understand that Russia is an entity we are going to have to deal with, but by the same token, right now they seem to act in ways that are contrary to just about all of our interests.

Secretary KERRY. Mr. Chairman, the hard reality is that the relationship with Russia produces both moments of consternation

and conflict, as well as cooperation and effect. We did, in the course of the last years, the START treaty, and in the course of the last years, we have cooperated on Afghanistan. We have cooperated on Syria. We have cooperated on P5+1 on the Syria chemical weapons.

I talked yesterday to Foreign Minister Lavrov, and I also talked to the Director General of the OPCW. Currently 54 percent of the chemical weapons are out of Syria, and we have major shipments that are planned at two sites near Damascus. They should take place in the next days. But there is a general sense that we are concerned about the slowdown, but we still believe we could be on schedule or close to schedule. We are pushing for that. And the Russians have indicated they are prepared to continue to push and to try to achieve that. They have an interest in achieving it.

So, you know, there are pluses and, yes, there are minuses, obviously. We do not have the luxury as a country of being—you have got to deal at this point. In one time or another, Reagan dealt with Gorbachev. Nixon dealt with Mao. It is a reality of the world that we try to move forward even as—

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that and I understand the challenge.

Secretary KERRY. But let me say—

The CHAIRMAN. But on the barter deal—such a deal would clearly violate the regime that has been set up. And I assume that we need to make it very clear to the Iranians, as well as to the Russians, that such a deal would be sanctionable if it happened.

Secretary KERRY. Mr. Chairman, we have made it clear to both sides our deep concerns about the reported “oil for goods” deal. It would raise serious concerns, as you have said. It would be inconsistent with the terms of the P5+1 Joint Plan of Action, and yes, it could trigger U.S. sanctions against the entities or individuals that are involved in that deal.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Corker.

Senator CORKER. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your questioning and I am glad you took the time you did. I did want the Secretary to see the concerns that we have about foreign policy are very bipartisan and very sincere and very deep.

I am going to move to Syria.

I will say that it is hard for me to discern the good things that have occurred relative to our negotiations with Russia, although I hope over time we will be able to see those.

When the President talked about his redline back in August 2012, 30,000 Syrians were dead. Today 150,000 Syrians are dead. We continue to talk about this shiny object, the chemical weapons, but people daily are being killed with barrel bombs. And I would just like for you in front of everyone, since you are up here asking for a budget request—I would like for you to explain to us what our Syria policy is right now.

Secretary KERRY. Sure, I would be happy to, Senator.

Senator CORKER. And let me say this. We did not create the Syrian problem. I understand that. We did not create it. But our lack of attention in dealing with it has caused it to fester to a point where now it is a national security threat to our Nation. That is certainly what our leaders are saying in that area, that the amount of extremists, which we all said would grow, I might add—I think you even said on the front end. But I would like for you just to

explain to all of us again what our strategy toward Syria is today in detail, if you would.

Secretary KERRY. I would be delighted to explain what it is, but I also want to explain what it is not because I have heard people suggest many things. I mean, you just said the word. Inattention to it has led it to be where it is today and so forth. I just do not agree with that, Senator. I really do not agree with that.

The fact is we have paid enormous attention to it. By absolute consensus in the United States Congress last year, I do not think there was a Member here who suggested there was a military—maybe one or two who suggested there was a military solution to Syria.

Senator CORKER. No, but we did suggest arming, training—

Secretary KERRY. Senator, I am delighted. We are doing a lot of things and we are deeply engaged with the opposition. We are more engaged than we have ever been before right now and more successfully right now.

Senator CORKER. Would you be willing to tell us about that?

Secretary KERRY. Not in an open session.

Senator CORKER. Well, would you commit right now to tell us every detail of our Syrian strategy in a classified setting?

Secretary KERRY. I have always felt—as the chairman knows, in my years as chairman of this committee, I thought one of the great anomalies of the United States Senate was that the Foreign Relations Committee, which has to authorize and create foreign policy, is not part of the chain that—

Senator CORKER. So you will not commit to sharing.

Secretary KERRY. No, I will. I will.

Senator CORKER. You will commit to sharing every detail of what our strategy is.

Secretary KERRY. To the degree I am allowed to under the process of the law, I will do that. But if there are any limitations that I am aware of, I am not sure. But we always have these briefings down in CVC and I am happy to go through with you.

But let me explain what I can here in open session. I want people to understand what we are doing.

I came into this role in February, February 1st of last year. We immediately had a meeting with the Foreign Ministers of the so-called London 11 Support Group. We met in Rome. We met in Amman, and we began to coordinate our efforts with the opposition.

Then in April—I think it was April—I went to Russia, met with President Putin, met with Foreign Minister Lavrov, and made the argument that we needed together to try to work toward a political solution. At that point in time, President Assad was not faring so well, and there was a great sense of insecurity in Syria. The Russians agreed that we needed to try to negotiate this.

Subsequently, after agreeing to the concept of a Geneva II meeting where you would try to have a negotiation, the opposition began to have its own infighting, nothing we could control, just the nature of the beast. And while they began to have their infighting, large numbers of jihadists began to be attracted to the effort to get rid of Assad because he was killing Sunni, and many of them are Sunni-based.

Senator CORKER. All of which everyone said was going to happen on the front end. Very predicted.

Secretary KERRY. But what was the plan to not have that happen, Senator? I did not notice Congress racing to the barriers saying we are going to do something. I do not think the American people who are going to send American—

Senator CORKER. Well, let me ask you this. Do you agree with the President's comments on CBS just recently that the authorization for force that you asked for, that had we done that, it would have had no effect in Syria? Do you agree with those comments? It would have no effect after you came in and told us the effect that it was going to have.

Secretary KERRY. That is not what the President said. What the President said, it would not have had the effect of changing the calculation or the course of the war. It would have had an effect on precisely what he was asking for it for, which was to send a message to Assad about the use of chemical weapons.

Senator CORKER. So the authorization you asked for was not to degrade his capabilities?

Secretary KERRY. Of using chemical weapons, correct. If you go back and read it, it was precisely targeted to reduce his capacity to use chemical weapons.

Senator CORKER. Let me ask you this.

Secretary KERRY. But let me just finish the thought here. Everybody up here was saying we do not want to go to war.

Senator CORKER. Not everybody. This committee voted to go to war.

Secretary KERRY. No. They did not vote to go to war. They voted to have a limited strike for the sole purpose of degrading his capacity to deliver chemical weapons. Guess what.

Senator CORKER. Did you not share with us that that degrading would have a definite effect on his ability to carry out strikes against the opposition? You did not tell us that?

Secretary KERRY. I think it would have had some effect on that, Senator, but it would not have had a devastating impact by which he had to recalculate because it was not going to last that long. We all know that. It took 30,000 sorties and 30 days in Bosnia to have an impact. Here we were going to have 1 or 2 days to degrade and send a message.

And guess what. Senator, we came up with a better solution, to get all of them out by working through the diplomatic channel with Russia, and we have an agreement which is now working out with 54 percent removed and we are moving to more.

So what is your take? Would you rather drop a few bombs, send a message, and then have him still with the weapons and capacity to deliver them, or would you rather get all of them out?

Senator CORKER. Let me ask you this question. Instead of meeting with us and laying out strategy, I have noticed the administration is really good at leaking things to newspapers. The chairman alluded to that 2 weeks ago when one of your assistants was making the most reckless comments that have been said before this committee.

But let me just ask you. Apparently there is some debate occurring relative to military action or not. The Wall Street Journal

reports that you are for it. We got a letter from Julia sitting right behind you. It was undated, but it said we do not believe that there is a military solution to the Syrian crisis.

But I would like for you to share. Do you think there is or is not? Is there a debate that is occurring right now about military action or not? Clear it up. I would love to know whether Anne Patterson was making something up or something is actually occurring there.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, let me do that. I ask you to give me the time to do it because I do want to clear it up. But I also just want to finish quickly the notion.

If there is no military solution—and everybody at the Pentagon would tell you there is no military solution.

Senator CORKER. But apparently you think there is.

Secretary KERRY. No. I do not think there is a—I think there is a capacity to change Assad's calculation, and so does the President.

Senator CORKER. Which is what we discussed last August.

Secretary KERRY. We will discuss in a classified session exactly what those things are. But let me come back for a minute because I want to answer your question.

The reality is that if you are going to have a negotiated solution, you have to have a ripeness to the ability to be able to come. Last May, there was more ripeness. Then the situation changed on the ground. Today Assad feels fairly secure in Damascus and in some of the corridor going north to the ports, and that has been his strategy. But around him in the south particularly, in the east, and in the north, there is not that kind of security. In fact, the opposition has made some gains recently.

And so the key here is how do you get the parties to a place where they both understand that there is not going to be a military solution that does not destroy the country absolutely and totally but which ultimately could be negotiated. There has to be a recognition by both of the ripeness of that moment. It is not now. We all understand that.

So the question is can you do something in order to create that, and that is a legitimate question for the Congress, a legitimate question for the administration. And we talk about that. Of course, we do.

Senator CORKER. What is the answer?

Secretary KERRY. But there is no difference in our policy. I support the choices the President has made. We need to have a classified briefing. You need to understand where we are and what we are doing, and I look forward to having that conversation.

Senator CORKER. Well, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate you having this hearing.

And, Secretary Kerry, I guess, will tell after, when you write your memoirs, whether you support the policy of the administration or not. But we certainly get a lot of conflicting reports. I look forward to that classified—

Secretary KERRY. I am happy to be the recipient of some good advice. What do you believe would make the difference right now in order to get a negotiated solution? Or do you believe there is a military solution?

Senator CORKER. So I actually strongly supported what we passed out of committee on both occasions, which was arming the

vetted moderate opposition—I strongly supported that—with training, doing it under the Defense Department auspice not potentially other areas. I strongly supported that. I kind of thought you supported that actually.

I strongly supported the limited strike that you asked for. Instead, we took another path and we have had another 60,000 people dead there. No doubt the dynamics on the ground have changed. We have got 10,000 al-Qaeda folks on the ground, which we did not have at the time.

And yes, it is a lot more complicated now. It is destabilizing Iraq. It is destabilizing other places. And we are in a very different place. And we did not take actions at a time when we could have made a difference. So many on this committee wanted us to do that. So, yes, we are in a very complicated place.

It is interesting that we are going to end up in a place where our interests with Russia align because very soon we are going to get to a point where, because of the extremists on the ground there, it is a threat to their homeland and to ours.

But you are the Secretary of State, and I would love to hear—you have to be disappointed by what has happened there. You have to be disappointed by the lack of action. You have to be disappointed by the indecisiveness. And candidly, we keep hearing about these things that are coming forth that are going to change the dynamic.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, I would say to you the fact is we are doing more than we have ever been doing. And you do need to be briefed. I am not sure I understand why you are not. We have had all Senator briefings historically on issues of the top level security. We ought to do that. I am ready to try to make that happen. The sooner the better, because if you had that, a lot of these questions would be answered.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I very much appreciate not only you being here but the work that you are doing globally for U.S. interests.

On Syria, let me just follow up one question where I would hope there would be strong agreement. I have been very vocal in the human rights violations that have occurred in Syria. During war, people get hurt, but there has been an intentional targeting of civilians by the Assad regime; 10,000 children have already died in Syria.

At previous hearings, we have talked about the U.S. role in making sure that those who are responsible for these gross violations of international human rights are going to be held accountable. And yet, I still do not see a game plan to bring to justice those who have targeted innocent civilians for horrible outcomes, including the use of chemical weapons.

So can you just share with us what steps the United States is taking to make sure that we will have preserved the record and people will be held accountable? Because I tell you the only way that we can try to reduce this type of action in the future is to make it clear those that are responsible are, in fact, held accountable by the international community.

Secretary KERRY. I could not agree with you more, Senator. And all of those incidents are being chronicled and completely packaged, in a sense, ready for that prosecution. There are countless entities that are preparing those cases. There is no question in my mind or in anybody's mind I think who watches this closely that war crimes have been committed purposely, intentionally, ordered at the highest level. We saw that in the case of the gas, but it goes well beyond gas. The indiscriminate bombing of civilians, the use of starvation as a tool of war against civilians, blockades. The torture, documented, of more than 11,000 individuals. It is a human disaster beyond many words in the world.

The only other place I can think of on the face of the planet where things may be worse is North Korea. We had the U.N. report recently on North Korea. But that is a level that is unfathomable since the days of Hitler.

But Syria's aggression against its own people—there is no question in my mind it has to be held accountable, and we have said that we will.

Senator CARDIN. Will you keep us totally engaged on a regular basis as to what progress is being made in this area?

Secretary KERRY. Absolutely. Part of the difficulty right now, obviously, is access to the country and to those individuals. But within the course of time—that is probably one of the reasons some of them are fighting the way they are fighting. But over time, we have historically proven we can bring people to accountability and we will.

Senator CARDIN. You have spent a great deal of time in regards to working with the Palestinians and Israelis on getting the peace talks started. In the meantime, the Palestinians have taken unilateral action dealing with recognition that is contrary to the peace negotiations that makes it difficult. Yet, they will not acknowledge the right of a Jewish state.

Can you just bring us up to date as to the prognosis of where we are in regards to the peace discussions?

Secretary KERRY. Sure. First of all, you know it is our position the Government of the United States and the President supports the notion of Israel being defined as a Jewish state, and he has said that in many speeches and it is in our policy. And we believe that that should happen.

But when it happens and how it happens has to be part of the negotiation, obviously. It is not going to happen in the beginning, Senator. It is really going to be one of those narrative issues that gets resolved toward the end.

Senator CARDIN. I would just point out that the acknowledgement of a Palestinian state is up front. It seems to me that the U.S. position is a clear—as part of the outcome, the international recognition of a Jewish state. That is not a negotiable point. So I do not quite understand when you say that that will not be acknowledged up front when the establishment of a Palestinian state is acknowledged up front.

Secretary KERRY. Well, it is and it is not. They do not have a state yet. You have to have borders. You have to have a defined solution to other issues before you have a state. You have to resolve issues of demilitarization and other kinds of things.

But here is what is really important, Senator. Both sides, whether advertently or inadvertently, wound up in positions where things happened that were unhelpful. Clearly, going to these treaties is not helpful, and we have made that crystal clear. And we need both sides to find a way to create the level of compromise necessary to do what they both say they want to do, which is continue the talks because they both view it as important to the future.

Now, the irony, bitter irony, is that at this particular moment, this fight is over process. It is not over the substance of a final status agreement. It is over how do you get to the discussion of a final status agreement. So our hope is that we can work a way through this.

But in the end, the parties are going to have to make that decision. It is not our decision. We can cajole. We can leverage. We can offer one thing or another to try to be helpful. They have to make the fundamental decision. And in my judgment, both leaders have made courageous and important decisions up until now.

You know, for Prime Minister Netanyahu to release prisoners is a painful, difficult political step to take, enormously hard. And the people of Israel have been incredibly supportive and patient in giving him the space to be able to do that in exchange for the deal being kept of the release of prisoners and not going to the U.N. Unfortunately, the prisoners were not released on the Saturday they were supposed to be released. And so a day went by, day 2 went by, day 3 went by, and then in the afternoon, when they were about to maybe get there, 700 settlement units were announced in Jerusalem and poof. That was sort of the moment.

So we find ourselves where we are. My hope is the parties will find a way back. We are working with them to try to do so. Again I repeat. They have to make that fundamental decision, and I hope they will. I believe if they do, there is a way to get into substantive discussions now. A lot of groundwork has been laid over the last 8 months. We do not talk about it publicly. I am not going to go into the details here. But there has been a narrowing of differences. Are there gaps? Yes, of course, there are gaps. But the narrowing of where they are and of different options of how one might deal with them is real. And I hope the parties will be able to find a way back.

But we have an enormous amount on our plate. There are limits to the time the President and I, obviously, can commit to this, given the rest of the agenda, if they are not prepared to commit to actually be there in a serious way.

So we will see what happens in the next days. Our teams are still having some discussion on the ground. There was a long meeting yesterday between Palestinians and Israelis. And I am not going to suggest anything is imminent, but one always has to remain hopeful in this very difficult, complicated process. If it were easy, it would have happened a long time ago. Plenty of Secretaries of State and Presidents have tried to help make this happen.

Why is this moment perhaps different? Because at the back end, the consequences are more stark and clear than they have been before, and there is less space for mistakes. I hope they will make it.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I do not envy the position you are in here today. This is supposed to be a budget hearing where the American people find out what they are getting for their money. After the discussion we have had here today, I think anybody who would come in here would have an impression that after we have looked at the issues with Russia and Iran and North Korea and Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, the peace process, and all the difficulties with every one of these—I appreciate your view that there are some things happening which are positive. But I tell you you cannot help but get the impression that our foreign policy is just spinning out of control and we are losing control in virtually every area that we are trying to do something in.

You know, we have got such limited time here to talk about all of these problems, but probably what I want to talk about briefly are just a couple of them.

One of the best examples is the one that is on the front pages today, and that is the Russian issue. You know, this administration said they were going to hit the reset button, and I cannot help think that somebody hit the wrong button because things have not gone well during this administration.

You know, the Russians today are misbehaving worse than they have in decades, and nothing seems to change that. When you look at what they did in Georgia and still remain occupying part of Georgia, when they even agreed not to, what they have done in the Ukraine, what they have done in Syria and are continuing to do in Syria, plus we all know about the cheating that is going on on the treaties that have been entered into, I am very disappointed at what is going on. You cannot help but be discouraged about it.

I am interested to hear your thoughts about this meeting coming up next week because you talked about what happened in Syria and you had a very similar meeting in Syria where you sat down with Lavrov and supposedly you forged a road forward, and that road forward has been a disaster. You have heard the people talk about how many tens of thousands of people have been killed since then. The dismantling of the chemical weapons has slowed down.

What makes you think you are going to be able to make better progress on the Ukraine? I mean, we have seen this movie over and over and over again with the Russians. They misbehave. Then we sit down at the table. We make some kind of an agreement and they misbehave even worse after the agreement. So maybe you could give us a little taste of what you are going to tell Lavrov when you meet with him next week.

Secretary KERRY. Well, let me give you what I consider a taste of reality, Senator, about our foreign policy and the realities of the world.

Georgia happened under George Bush. Georgia happened under George Bush, and he did not even bring a sanction. President Obama has brought sanctions and it is having an impact.

Senator RISCH. It is having an impact?

Secretary KERRY. Yes, it is having an impact. And the fact is that it will have a far more serious impact if they cross over or continue what is happening in east Ukraine.

Now, I do not know anybody in the United States of America that said we ought to go to war over Crimea. Is there any members of this committee who believes that? I do not think so.

So what are we doing? We are using 21st century tools, which are the tools of diplomacy to bring people together in other countries to put sanctions in place. And we now have announced the possibility of using sector sanctions. Now that is serious business. Serious business. It is banking. It is energy. It is mining. It is arms. It is other things. And if you start going down that road, it is not just them who feel it, we will feel it too. So you have to approach these things with some sense of responsibility. It is not just a speech. It is a policy and it has implications in what happens. And the fact is that we believe they take that seriously.

Now, their economy is not that strong. They do not make a lot in Russia. They extract from the ground and sell it. And so if we start changing energy policy and we start moving with respect to LNG and we start moving with respect to these sanctions, it can have a profound impact. And I think Russia knows it. It is not the preferred way to go.

But when you say, you know, something like our foreign policy is spinning out of control, those are great talking points. They make for good sound bites on TV nowadays. But I have to tell you, Senator, that is just not true. We have helped negotiate a truce in South Sudan and helped to pull that country back from the brink of civil war. We have helped to create a framework for the disarming of M23 in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. We are engaged in helping the French to quell the Boko Haram and other people in the region of Mali and elsewhere. We are engaged with the Chinese very directly in helping to change their policy, which they have done, to put greater pressure on North Korea and to deal with their route to denuclearization. We have moved vessels into the region. We have sent clear messages of our need and willingness to defend the United States of America and our interests in the region. We are the force that has been helping to bring parties together to defend our interests in the South China Sea with respect to Chinese claims in that region. We have been engaged in our peace efforts in Somalia and other parts of the world in our peacekeeping. We are engaged in Syria, as I told you, leading nation in terms of humanitarian assistance, and we are doing more than any other country with respect to what is happening on the ground now with the opposition. In the Middle East peace, we are leading the effort. In the gulf, we are leading the effort.

I just do not agree with you. We are living in a complicated world where there is more sectarianism, there is more religious extremism. There are more young people. You know, 60 to 65 percent of countries are under the age of 30; 50 percent are under the age of 21. What is the American policy for being able to help them to be able to develop jobs in the future and not go be extremists? There is so much we need to do that depends on the budget, on the Congress, on our engagement in the world, and we are more engaged than ever before, which is why my travel schedule is what it is.

Senator RISCH. Well, Secretary Kerry, the one thing I really agree with you is the results of foreign policy are not speeches. It

is the results. It is the perception of the American people. And you heard the list we have gone through of the problems we have, and I agree that you have certainly done some good things in some of the areas that you have just indicated. But the major issues, the major initiatives that affect the national security of this country are in a very desperate situation in some places, and they are deteriorating. I understand the speeches. But I am telling you the American people believe that in these areas that we have talked about, particularly in Russia, our situation has deteriorated.

Before the chairman cuts me off, I want to talk just briefly about Iran. I have got a constituent and that is Pastor Abedini who is in prison. John, you have got to do something about this. You sit across the table from these people. There is no reason he should be in prison today. You cut loose hundreds of millions of dollars to those people. You have relaxed some of the sanctions. Please help these people. Tell them you are not going to do anything more. Tell the Iranians you are not going to do anything more for them until they release him and the two other people that they are holding against all international law, against all human rights, and against any definition of morality that you have.

And my time is up, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. So much to talk about.

Let me just offer one thank you. I recently returned from a trip with Senator King to Israel, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Egypt. And in direct discussions with both Prime Minister Netanyahu and Mahmoud Abbas, their personal praise of you for your efforts in trying to put the United States in the appropriate position to try to find a difficult peace deal—they said almost exactly the same thing about you. They were very praiseworthy of your efforts, unprompted. And they comments that they made are comments that I have heard from our allies and partners in Egypt, Bahrain, the UAE, Jordan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia.

This is a very difficult thing. It is a holy grail in international diplomacy to try to find a solution to a problem as vexing as this without venturing a thought on the potential outcome. I just want to thank you for your efforts to try to do something that would be so important in the world.

I want to ask you about Syria. Syria is complicated partly because there is not a real consensus in this body about military action. When we had a debate here in August, there was a very narrow committee vote authorizing military force for a limited purpose. The odds makers basically said had that been taken on the floor of the House, it would have failed. In the Senate, it might have been close. But clearly, there was division.

But let me ask you about something where there is not division in this body, and that is humanitarian aid to Syrians. The United States is the largest provider of humanitarian aid in the world to Syrians outside Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey especially. And that is not by accident. That is because we want to do it and it is a bipartisan priority.

Now what we need to do is focus upon the delivery of humanitarian aid to the 9 million Syrians inside Syria who need it. After

many efforts to stonewall humanitarian resolutions, Russia finally acceded to one, and on the 22nd of September, U.N. Security Council Resolution 2139, which demanded that all parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, promptly allow rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access to provide humanitarian access to Syrians, including—and it is specified—access across conflict lines and across borders.

Last week, the Senate, after action by this committee, unanimously approved a Syrian humanitarian aid resolution that was sponsored by myself and Senator Rubio. And in part, that resolution indicated that the Senate—and it passed unanimously on the floor—supports the immediate and full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2139 which calls for unimpeded access of humanitarian assistance to all Syrians.

The 30-day report after the U.N. Security Council resolution says 30 days in, there is not unimpeded access. What is the United States going to do to help carry out the unimpeded access provision of the U.N. Security Council resolution that we fought for months to see pass?

Secretary KERRY. Well, we are very disappointed in that, obviously. And you are absolutely correct. It has not been successfully implemented. We are pushing in the region to see if we can get a consensus about ways in which we might approach that, and that is part of the consideration of what we should talk about in classified session.

Senator KAINE. I view that as important. Again, just to underscore the point, where you have division here over something like what is the right military step, that is going to make it complicated. But where you have unanimity that we want to be the largest provider of humanitarian access and we want to do what we can to provide unimpeded access in the country, that is a place I think where much can be done. So I look forward to that discussion.

The next question I will ask and my last question is when you were here a year ago, I asked you a question that is a budgetary matter but also a policy matter. For a number of years, the State Department had assessed that the training of embassy security personnel needed to be done in a more thorough way with better facilities and better coursework.

Prior to the horrible attack on Benghazi in September 2011, the State Department had identified a training facility on a BRACed Army base in Virginia, Fort Pickett, and it indicated that was going to be the training facility for embassy security personnel needs.

After the attack in Benghazi, the ARB report recommended as a key recommendation, recommendation 17, that security training had to be improved. The State Department in response to that recommendation said we are going to do it and we have identified the site. We have looked for it for years. It is going to be at Fort Pickett, and we are going to get moving on it.

Last winter, February or March, largely in sort of a back and forth between the State Department and the OMB, that plan to proceed in Fort Pickett was slowed down.

I asked you about it a year ago. We are here a year later, and there has not been any appreciable movement on the proposal to upgrade the security training in this instance of State Department personnel.

If an enhanced security training facility at Fort Pickett was a good idea before Benghazi, my assessment is in the aftermath of Benghazi with an ARB recommendation, it is a better idea. Why have we not moved forward on this with more dispatch?

Secretary KERRY. Well, we are moving forward. The reason it did not go forward as rapidly as you would have hoped or I would have hoped was from somewhere—I am not even sure of the details—there was a suggestion of an alternative site that had to be evaluated. It was properly evaluated. Due diligence was done. The Department is 100 percent determined that Fort Pickett is the best site. It is the site that we want to work with you to go forward on. There is no question of that. And we want to try to do that as fast as we can. There was coordination with the Defense Department and the intelligence community, et cetera. Fort Pickett is the site.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Chair, I would just say in our travels, when I see these foreign security officers like in Lebanon living on a compound and they get 6 hours a week and that is all they get off compound, and they have to be accompanied by security, I do not think we should be penny-wise and pound-foolish on security training for our FSOs. I think it is an important initiative, and the ARB report recommends with an underline and an exclamation point that we ought to be moving more quickly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I agree with the Senator. As you know from our embassy security bill, there are provisions as it relates to this. And you have been the most successful member today. You got a very direct, specific, positive answer. [Laughter.]

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for being here, Mr. Secretary. I appreciate it very much.

I also want to thank you in your written testimony for mentioning the crisis in Venezuela. I wanted to talk about that briefly.

As you know, they had elections about a year ago in Venezuela where there were credible reports of irregularities, but even leading up to the election, the government controls all the modes of communication, denying the opposition airtime, meanwhile dominating the airtime for the government. Of course, the government there has invested heavily in these armed militias called collectivos, which are basically these neighborhood groups armed by the government who go out intimidating and, in fact, shooting and killing protestors in the current protests that are going on. They have jailed members of the opposition. They control the courts. About 90 percent of the judges in Venezuela or a significant percentage of the judges in Venezuela serve on a provisional basis, which means at any point they could be removed by President Maduro if he chose to do so. In fact, they recently removed a member of their national assembly because she, according to them, had the gall of

appearing at the Organization of American States and traveling abroad to condemn what is happening within that country.

In addition, as you are well aware, in July 2009, the General Accounting Office found that the so-called Bolivarian National Guard, the Venezuelan National Guard, is deeply involved in the trafficking of illicit narcotics. And as you know, our Government has significant concerns about senior Venezuelan Government officials being involved as well in transnational criminal activities, including people like Mr. Hugo Carvajal, Mr. Henry Rangel Silva, the former Defense Minister and now is the Governor of Trujillo State. Mr. Tarek el-Assami, who was the Governor of Aragua State, a Congressman by the name of Freddy Bernal, and last but not least, the President of their own Congress, Mr. Diosdado Cabello. All of these are people we have concerns about in terms of their engagement in transnational criminal activity.

So here is my question. Why cannot we just say what is obvious to anyone who sees these facts that the Government of Venezuela is not and does not comport itself as a democracy and in fact, because of all of these activities and others and violence against their own people, have lost the legitimacy of a government? Are we prepared to say that as a matter of stated policy of the United States?

Secretary KERRY. Senator, first of all, let me thank you for, and congratulate you for, your leadership on this because it is important. I appreciate enormously the clear message in Senate Resolution 365 that deplores the repression and the violence against the people of Venezuela. And we have spoken out against it and criticized their ridiculously contrived attacks on us as somehow being engaged in doing things that we have not been engaged in and so forth.

Right now, we are very supportive of third party mediation efforts that are aimed at trying to end the violence and see if we cannot get an honest dialogue to address the legitimate grievances of people in Venezuela. Even as we are sitting here today, I think the UNASUR delegation is meeting in Caracas, and for the first time, the government and the opposition is going to be meeting today as we meet here. So this is a very delicate time in the possibility of a negotiation, and I do not think we should—I do not want to do something today that provides cannon fodder for them to use me or us as an excuse to say this is why they have to do things.

Senator RUBIO. And I understand that concern.

I mean, my bigger concern is that our interests in stability, which is what the hope of this negotiation would be, somehow takes precedent over our stated foreign policy of standing always on the side of liberty, freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, all of which are being systematically abused. And I think it is important for the people in Venezuela to know that the United States condemns these acts of violence that are going on and all the other things that I have mentioned. And I just do not understand why we cannot look to this and say, by the way, just because you had an election does not make you a democracy. There are other aspects of democracy, and this government in Venezuela does not behave like a democracy.

Secretary KERRY. They are putting that to the test. There is no question about it, Senator, and I do not disagree with you. We have

spoken out. I have issued statements personally. I called the Foreign Minister some time ago to weigh in. We have had our people, as you know, on the ground speaking out. So I do not think there is any question for the people of Venezuela where we stand.

The question is, Is there a way to protect those people and earn for them the ability to be able to get out of jail, express their rights in the political process, and fight for the future of their country? I think let us let this meeting take place. Let us see what happens. And there is time for me and you and others to work on this and see if we have to go a different road forward.

Senator RUBIO. I have one more question about another part of the hemisphere.

Last summer, the Cuban regime was caught smuggling over 240 tons of weapons to North Korea in violation of international law. The United Nations has confirmed this. In fact, it is the largest interdiction of weapons to or from North Korea since the U.N. sanctions were imposed. What has been the United States reaction to that? What have we done in reaction to this violation of U.N. sanctions?

Secretary KERRY. We are working directly with the DPRK Sanctions Committee at the U.N. in order to ensure a vigorous response, to shine a light on this activity, and to get accountability for what has happened. In our dialogue with them, we have thus far focused on the individuals who have been involved in this and the entities involved in it. So in March, along with likeminded states, we pushed to make the Panel of Experts report public on the incident. That was released. It is the first time the Panel of Experts report has been made public since June of last year. And we have made clear that this violates the sanctions, and Cuba's interpretation of the U.N. Security Council resolution is incorrect. So we intend to review the results of the U.N. process and try to see if we can get a united multilateral response.

Senator RUBIO. Would you agree that this evidence that is now out there before the public is strong evidence of the fact that Cuba remains a state sponsor of terrorism?

Secretary KERRY. Well, in this sense, they have exported weapons, and that is certainly would contribute to that judgment. But in other respects, it is a question—you know, it still does not fit the legal definition, Senator. But you and I, in a common sense point of view, would say this is—

Senator RUBIO. What about holding an American hostage like Mr. Alan Gross?

Secretary KERRY. It is an act of personal terror. It is not international terrorism under the sense of the definition that fits for the designation.

I will tell you that I think just today Alan Gross announced that he is going to engage in a hunger strike. We are deeply involved in this. I met with his family just a few weeks ago, a month ago or so. We have a number of efforts underway, which I would be happy to talk to you about privately. But we are very, very focused on trying to get Alan Gross out of there. His treatment is inhumane, and he is wrongfully imprisoned.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, let me just add—selling weapons to North Korea in violation of Security Council resolutions—the

only country in the Western Hemisphere and the largest such violation of the Security Council resolution by any country—is in my view a pretty significant terrorist act.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for being here and for all of your efforts to address so many conflicts and hotspots around the world.

I understand that nobody has yet mentioned today the recent election in Afghanistan, and while we do not have a full report in, the early reports are that that election was significant, that the turnout was over 60 percent. And it is a real tribute to the people of Afghanistan that they came out in defiance of threats from the Taliban. It is also a tribute to all of the military efforts on the part of the United States and the international community and the diplomatic efforts and the economic assistance programs that the United States has provided to Afghanistan. So let me congratulate you and everyone at the State Department who has worked so hard to support the people of Afghanistan.

One of the programs that the State Department is currently engaged in that I have worked on is the Afghan special immigrant visa program. And as we are preparing for the transition in Afghanistan, I believe that there is still a continued need for us to ensure that all of those Afghans who have helped our men and women on the ground there who are threatened—they and their families are threatened—have the opportunity to try and come to this country to rebuild their lives.

And I wonder if you can update me on the status of the program. There were some issues that were not working very well with the program last year that I know the State Department has been addressing. Can you give us an update on how those are going?

Secretary KERRY. I would be delighted to, Senator. Thank you for your comments at the beginning of your question.

Let me just say quickly about the Afghan election. I want to join you. A couple of people did mention, sort of in passing, that it happened.

But this is very significant, but I do not want to overblow it because it is the first one and you have to get through the runoff and there are still challenges. But nevertheless, millions of Afghan men and women went to the polls, and they voted for their next President. It is something that was unfathomable not so long ago. People wondered if this could be achieved.

The last couple of months in Afghanistan, there was a full and open, flourishing debate in Afghanistan as people listened to the candidates. And I think what is really important to understand is this was owned and operated, managed, run by Afghans. It was their election commission. It was their rules. They put this together. They made this happen. And I give great credit to President Karzai who appointed the commission, played by the rules, helped make this happen, to all the people who have been invested in this. And their army helped provide the security. We helped with the planning and laid out some of the thoughts about it, but they helped execute it. So it is very important. It is a critical step forward.

There will be challenges ahead. I do not want anybody to suggest this smoothes the way completely at all. There are big challenges. But this is important.

Now, on the special immigrant visas, we have improved the processing times. We have expanded the outreach to current and former employees who may be eligible. We have issued more special immigrant visas in Afghanistan and in Iraq, incidentally, than at any time in any previous year. Since October of last year, more than 2,000 Afghans, interpreters, their family members, have received special immigrant visas. There were over 700 principal applicants and more than 1,300 of their dependent family members. And in the first 5 months of this year, we have issued more SIVs to Afghans, to their dependents than in all of last year. So I think there is a lot of work being done, even as we are maintaining the standards that you want and other people want with respect to the program itself. And I think the current allocation of visa numbers, the 3,000 that are allocated, should get us through this year, but it will not be enough to handle the cases in the pipeline. We are going to have to expect that new applications are going to have to be approved as we go forward.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I certainly look forward to continuing to work with the State Department on that program.

On a note that is not so positive, last week it came to light that the State Department's Office of Inspector General has discovered that over the past 6 years, contracts worth more than \$6 billion have lacked complete, and in some cases, no records and that many of the files for contracts supporting our United States mission in Iraq could not be located. So I wonder if you could tell us what actions the State Department is taking in response to the concerns that have been raised by the inspector general.

Secretary KERRY. Well, let me begin by saying that we had not had an inspector general at the State Department for 3½ years or more. There was no inspector general.

Senator SHAHEEN. And I appreciate your swift action to try and finally get one hired.

Secretary KERRY. I decided that needed one. It is important. It is an important part of oversight. And so I hired Steve Linick who is our current inspector general who came from FHFA, but who also has been a former Federal prosecutor. He is an outstanding attorney and a good person for the job.

And I welcome the oversight. That is number one.

Number two, I began this process looking at the possible sort of liabilities. It came from my time here on the committee. When I traveled to Afghanistan, I saw the contracting and recognized the corruption that existed in Afghanistan itself and other problems. So when I first came in, I told folks we got to really get a handle on what is happening here.

What we found is and what this inspector general report confirms is there have been some problems in just paperwork management. No \$6 billion has been lost. The money is accountable. But it is keeping up with the paperwork. And part of the problem is, I have learned—and this is important to the budget process—every single entity of Government where we are managing contracting is underresourced, understaffed, and it is hard to be able to keep up

with the paper. Now, you say why not go electronic. Well, in some of these places, electronic is not exactly an option in Afghanistan or other places. But it takes people. And so we are underresourced with respect to that.

But we are on it. The Deputy Secretary of State for Management is pursuing this completely. We will have a report to the inspector general showing exactly where they are and where they are going. And this is a good process. I think people should welcome this kind of oversight and accountability. It helps us get on top of things.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, welcome back. You left this committee and took on your new role at the same time I joined this committee, and it has been a rather momentous time in history. I think most Americans would really like to concentrate on the enormous domestic challenges, but reality is pretty well smacking us all in the face. Like Senator Risch, I do not envy you or the President's tasks having to grapple with these enormous challenges, kind of evidenced by this hearing.

I would like to concentrate on what I think is right now the most pressing of all these problems, and it really is going back to Ukraine and our relationship with Russia. I was part of the bipartisan delegation that was there the day before they took the vote in Crimea. And certainly as we were meeting with Prime Minister Yatsenyuk, you could see the stress in his face. It was pretty sobering. I think we could also sense the disappointment that the United States was not even willing to offer small arms and ammunition to support the courageous people of Ukraine.

In response to my question, I was asking, well, what can we do. What can we do to support Ukraine? And Prime Minister Yatsenyuk, first of all, made the statement that Vladimir Putin will not respond to words. He only responds to action.

Now, in your testimony here, you say you have made it clear about our deep concerns and we will not hesitate to use 21st century tools. I just want to ask what are we going to do. What actions are we going to take to change the calculus of Vladimir Putin who will only respond to action? What are we going to do to make the price high for Vladimir Putin if he continues the provocations? You are saying it is a contrived crisis, contrived pretexts.

Bottom line. The reason we heard from this administration they were not willing to provide arms is we thought it would create a provocation. Well, he does not need provocation. What Vladimir Putin needs is deterrence. What are we going to do to deter Vladimir Putin from going further in Ukraine?

Secretary KERRY. Well, we are doing it.

Senator JOHNSON. Just a minute. They mocked at our last set of sanctions.

Secretary KERRY. I beg your pardon?

Senator JOHNSON. They mocked our last set of sanctions.

Secretary KERRY. The last set were not mocked. The first round met with some—because I think people's expectations were higher.

But, look, Senator, you know this, in dealing with human nature and with problems, that you want to aim before you shoot. And I

think it is clear that we have huge capacity to have an impact. You know, they are not incapable of analyzing America's capacity here with respect to banking and finance and movement of people and so forth.

So what we wanted to do initially was make it clear there is going to be action. And the Europeans have marched together with us in partnership here in unanimous form. And that has a profound impact because Europe does a lot more business with Russia than we do.

Senator JOHNSON. But Vladimir Putin, as you say, he is creating this provocation. They are moving into cities in Ukraine. He is setting up the exact same circumstances as he did in Georgia, as he did in Crimea.

Secretary KERRY. Could be, but he could also not be. And I do not have the answer to exactly what step he is going to take when. What I do know is that we are sending a signal today of the clarity of our intention to use whatever sanction is necessary if they continue. Now, that is clear. And that is taking full aim. And the question is will that have an impact or will it not.

I think given the fact that yesterday at their initiation, they called us to suggest that it was important to have a meeting to try to deal with this. I am not going to place any stock in a meeting. I am not going to place it on words. It has got to be actions. But you got to sit down and at least find out.

Senator JOHNSON. Of course, that is my point. What actions? The former Governor of your State, Governor Romney, was pretty well mocked by this President when he said that Russia was America's greatest geopolitical foe. He wrote an interesting column. I just want to read part of it. "Why across the world are Americans' hands so tied? Which kind of seems like we are. A large part of the answer is our leader's terrible timing. In virtually every foreign affairs crisis we have faced these past 5 years, there is a point when America had good choices and good options. There was a juncture when America had the potential to influence the event, but we failed to act at the propitious moment. The moment having passed, we were left without acceptable options." And he went on to say, "it is hard to name even a single country that has more respect and admiration for America today than when President Obama took office. And now Russia is in Ukraine."

If you disagree with that, can you name a country that has greater respect for America 5 years later?

Secretary KERRY. I can name lots of countries that have greater respect for us as we are attempting to move people out of Guantanamo, as we end a war in Iraq, as we are beginning to draw down in Afghanistan, as we stand up for human rights, as we are the single greatest supporter of the humanitarian effort in Syria, as we do countless things, as we save 5 million kids' lives in Africa with our program on AIDS. There are many things that people admire about what we are doing.

Are there problems? Sure, there are problems. In different parts of the world, there is greater sectarianism, greater religious extremism, greater radical Islam presence in various places. Are you going to dump all of that on the United States of America? I mean, please.

This is a complicated world, my friend. And the fact is the United States I think is doing an amazing amount with some handicaps I might add. You know, a budget that is getting smaller, not bigger, having to hold back on what we are doing in certain countries, having to cut in certain places what we have been doing to try to help people educate or change or provide health care or do some of the things we do.

So I think you need to look carefully at this kind of talk about the action that produces the differential. President Putin did not decide to do what he did in Crimea because of something the United States did or did not do. He decided to do it because he could and it was in his interest.

Senator JOHNSON. And he did not feel he would pay a price. Trust me. I totally blame Vladimir Putin. If there is blood shed, it is because of Vladimir Putin, but we have to deter.

Secretary KERRY. You have to measure price in certain ways. Is he paying a price? His oligarchs are not able to travel to various places. They are losing money. The ruble has gone down 7 percent. There is an impact in Europe. I think he has had a massive change in public opinion in Ukraine. People who once felt better about Russia do not today. He has united many Ukrainians, even those who are Russian speaking, against Russia.

Senator JOHNSON. But he is still sending in agents under the pretext for further action. He has not been deterred.

Secretary KERRY. Yes, he is. No, he has not stopped doing that. That is accurate.

But there are, I think, legitimate questions, before you pull the trigger, that need to be answered about what they may or may not be willing to do in the next days. They are willing to meet with Europe, with Ukrainians. That is a step forward. They are willing to sit with the interim government of Ukraine, with Europe, with the United States in an effort to sort of plot a road ahead. And we have made it clear the imperative to de-escalate, the imperative to demobilize, the imperative to move troops. After my meeting in Paris, they did announce the drawback of one particular battalion, not enough yet, not what we are obviously looking for, but a first signal.

And the question now is can some of their other legitimate interests be met in a way that is appropriate, which does not invite illegitimate interests to also be mixed into the batch. And that is the key. I do not know the answer to that question yet, and I do not think we will until we meet.

But I do think that given the serious implication of the sector sanctions, we owe it to ourselves and to everybody to exhaust the possible remedies that the diplomatic process might provide. We have not done that yet, and we are going to find out.

Obviously, yesterday was a step backward. No question about it. And we have spoken out loudly and clearly as a consequence of it and made clear what our determination is.

Senator JOHNSON. America must face reality, and hope is not a strategy. Thanks.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me congratulate Senator Murphy on behalf of his State. He is proudly wearing his UConn pin. I know there are other members of the committee who will not feel—but we

appreciate the excellent game of both sides, but we want to congratulate Senator Murphy, as he is beaming today. So, Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. We wear our Huskies allegiance on our sleeve and also on our lapel.

Secretary Kerry, thank you very much for being here today.

I think there are a number of guiding principles behind Putin's foreign policy. One of them clearly is to reestablish control over what he calls the "near abroad."

But one of them also is to do whatever he can to poke a stick in the eye of the United States. While I certainly understand some of the arguments and some of the interests by Members of the Senate to arm the Ukrainian military, in a lot of ways that plays directly into his hands by creating a military contest in Ukraine between the United States and Russia. And if this is ultimately just a geopolitical battle between the United States and Russia over Ukraine, we lose because we are playing in his back yard, and we are not willing to play by the same rules that he is willing to play by.

And so, Mr. Secretary, I guess I want to ask you a question about how we take steps to insert the Ukrainians back into this discussion about their future relationship with Russia. I maybe want to ask that in sort of two ways.

One, how do we shift the diplomatic conversations from conversations between you and Lavrov to conversations that truly make sure that the Ukrainians are part of that discussion?

And second, what are the things that we can do, leading up to the May 25 elections, to make sure that they come off in a free and fair manner and the Russians have no ability between now and then to try to influence that choice? Clearly, we are getting some really, really discouraging signals about some of the actions that Russians are taking on the ground today to try to intimidate candidates, perhaps to try to dissuade people from coming out to the polls. What we have heard over and over again is that this is a revolution of dignity in Ukraine, that they want control over their destiny again. How do we put them at the center of these political deliberations? How do we support the upcoming elections to make sure that they actually get to register a free and fair choice?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, thank you. Terrific question. And congratulations on the Huskies.

We have been really working—I mean, we have been very sensitive to and I think proactive in our efforts to make certain that everything is emanating from the Ukrainians. And so we have said very, very clearly that no decision will be made for Ukraine without Ukraine.

I talk to Prime Minister Yatsenyuk regularly before I have a meeting, after I have a meeting, and in between in order to make sure that we are listening very, very carefully to what they need and do not want. But they do want us engaged, and they do want us supporting them in the way that we are through these discussions.

Now, yesterday in my conversation with Foreign Minister Lavrov, I said it was really important for him to have a conversation directly with the Foreign Minister of Ukraine. And he said I

intend to call him after we have talked, and he did. And they had a good conversation from what I understand and agreed to sort of try to come to this meeting and see if we can work constructively going forward.

Now, look, I have been around long enough to know that scheduling a meeting, having a meeting, does not solve the problem necessarily, and it cannot become a camouflage for the realities that have to change on the ground. We all understand that. But if you do not talk, and you do not try, to arrive at some understanding of what the steps are that become the actions that are measurable, you are never going to get there and things spiral out of control and become worse.

So what we are trying to do is manage the process going forward with a clarity that things were professed before going into Crimea that were not upheld. Statements were made about not violating the integrity of Ukraine, and they did. And so all of these protests and/or proffers have to be taken with a grain of salt pending the process.

So we will continue to work very closely with Ukrainians. Our Ambassador on the ground, Jeff Pyatt—you guys have met him—is terrific. He is very engaged. He is listening carefully. And we are talking regularly with all of the members of the interim government.

Now, with respect to the election, it is interesting that in our last meeting in Paris, while not accepting the legitimacy necessarily, there was no effort to change the date of the election. There was no sense that that is not going to go forward. Now, yesterday raises some question marks about that, and they are concerning obviously. But we will continue to try to work.

And I might add it is not just us. All of our European partners, countless other people are invested in this notion that what has happened is a violation of the international order, a structure by which we have dealt since World War II in recognizing boundaries of countries and sovereignty and integrity of territory. And that is a serious issue. And so that is all going to have to be resolved in the days ahead going forward.

Senator MURPHY. Just a quick word, Mr. Chairman, about our Ambassador there. I do not think he has taken a day off or a half a day off or an hour off since this crisis erupted. And I will just note that he was voted out of this committee and out of the Senate expeditiously so that he was on the ground in time to know the country, learn the players so that he was ready to go when this crisis erupted, having no idea at the moment of his confirmation that he would be needed in this way. It is just another advertisement for why the Senate needs to move with all deliberate speed on nominees because you never know when they are going to be badly needed on the ground.

Secretary KERRY. Well, thank you, Senator. I appreciate that very much. And you are right.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Kerry, I watched with great interest some of your comments. May I say I think you are about to hit the trifecta? Geneva II was a total collapse, as I predicted to you that it would be. The

only tangible result is that people who went to Geneva for the Free Syrian National Council—their relatives were kidnapped. The Israeli-Palestinian talks, even though you may drag them out for a while, are finished. And I predict to you even though we gave the Iranians the right to enrich, which is unbelievable, those talks will collapse too. You can talk about Mali and you can talk about other places in the world, but on the major issues, this administration is failing very badly.

On the issue of Ukraine, my hero, Teddy Roosevelt, used to say talk softly but carry a big stick. What you are doing is talking strongly and carrying a very small stick, in fact, a twig. What has been done so far as a result of the Russian dismemberment of Ukraine in violation of a treaty that they signed and returned for the nuclear inventory of Ukraine, which was then the third-largest nuclear power, some individual sanctions, some diplomatic sanctions, suspension not removal from the G8, and now more threats to come.

I predicted that Putin would go into Crimea because he could not bear to give up Sevastopol because he is what he is. And I am now very concerned, because of our lack of response, whether he will foment discontent in the manner which he is now, which will then demand autonomy for parts of eastern Ukraine.

And when the Foreign Minister of Russia lies to your face once, twice, three, four times, I would be very reluctant to take his word for anything.

So here we are with Ukraine being destabilized, a part of it dismembered, and we will not give them defensive weapons. I take strong exception to Mr. Murphy's statement, we do not want to provoke. We do not want to provoke Vladimir Putin by giving these people the ability to defend themselves after their country has been dismembered and there are provocations going on? That I say to you, sir, is the logic of appeasement. The logic of appeasement.

I want to know and I think the American people should know and, maybe most importantly, the people of Ukraine should know why will we not give them some defensive weapons when they are facing another invasion, not the first, but another invasion of their country. It is just beyond logic. And frankly, when we do not give people assistance to defend themselves then, just as the Syrian decision, it reverberates throughout the entire world. I would like to know why it is not at least under serious consideration to give them some defensive weapons with which to defend themselves.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, let me begin with the place that you began with your premature judgment about the failure of everything. I guess it is pretty easy to lob those judgments around particularly well before the verdict is in on any of them.

Geneva II, my friend, I said will not succeed maybe for a year or two. But if the truth is there is no military solution and there is only a political solution, you have to have some forum in which to achieve it. You know, the talks on Vietnam—you know this better than anybody—went for how many years? Years. It took them a year to design the table to sit around. So I had no expectations that Assad's calculation is going to change in time for the first meeting or second meeting.

But what we learned is that the Syrian regime was completely unwilling to negotiate in any serious way, which helps in terms of the opposition, and the opposition showed itself to be quite capable and that was important. And 40 nations took it seriously enough, Senator, to come in order to make it clear you needed a political solution. Now, that is a beginning. That is all it is. I understand that.

But if Syria is ever going to be resolved, it is going to be through a political process, and that political process, Geneva II, is now in place, though the moment is not ripe because we still have to change Assad's calculation. And you know, as well as I do, because you and I have talked about that, that that has yet to happen and it has to happen.

Secondly, Israel-Palestine. It is interesting that you declare it dead, but the Israelis and the Palestinians do not declare it dead. They want to continue to negotiate.

Senator MCCAIN. We will see, will we not, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary KERRY. I beg your pardon?

Senator MCCAIN. We will see.

Secretary KERRY. Well, yes, we will see.

Senator MCCAIN. It has stopped. Recognize reality.

Secretary KERRY. We will see where the reality is as we go down the road here. There are serious problems. It is a tough issue. But your friend, Teddy Roosevelt, also said that the credit belongs to the people who are in the arena who are trying to get things done. And we are trying to get something done. That is a Teddy Roosevelt maxim, and I abide by it. I think it is important to do this. Sure, we may fail.

And you want to dump it on me. I may fail. I do not care. It is worth doing. It is worth the effort. And the United States has a responsibility to lead not always to find the pessimism and negativity that is so easily prevalent in the world today.

And finally, on the subject that you raise about Iran; we are talking. The option is you can go to war. A lot of people are ready to drop bombs all the time. We can do that. We have the ability. But this President and this Secretary of State believe that the United States of America has a responsibility first to exhaust every diplomatic possibility to find out whether we could prove what the Iranians say, that their program is peaceful. Before you ask the American people to go to war, we have an obligation to exhaust the remedies that are available to us in order to legitimize whatever subsequent action we might have to take.

Now, we are engaged in eyes-open negotiations. We have no illusions about how tough this is. I am not predicting success, Senator. I am not. But I know we have an obligation to go through this process before we decide to go to war.

So that is where we are. You declare them all dead. I do not. And we will see what the verdict is.

With respect to arming and providing assistance to the Ukrainians, the fact is that we are currently working with Ukraine to determine their requirements across the entire security sector, and based on those requirements, we are going to review the options with the Congress and find out whether or not we are in a position to provide assistance.

But let me tell you something. If we decided today to give them a whole bunch of assistance, you got to train them. You got to do things. Which is the greater deterrent?

We happen to believe right now that if the deterrence you are looking for is going to have an impact, the greatest deterrence will come from Putin's recognition of his own vulnerabilities in his economy and his recognition that if we bring sector sanctions, Russia is going to really hurt. I think that is a strong deterrent even as we consider what we do for the long term for military assistance, which will not make a difference fast enough to change this calculation.

Senator MCCAIN. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the time. But facts are stubborn things, as Ronald Reagan used to say. Geneva I, there were 50,000 dead. Geneva II, there were 100,000 and some dead in Syria. Now there are 150,000 dead. Any objective observer will tell you that Bashar Assad is winning on the battlefield from the time when the President of the United States said it is not a matter of whether, it is a matter of when Bashar Assad is going to leave. Nobody says that anymore.

Your view of what the Ukrainians need is vastly different from what the Ukrainians think they need, which is a sovereign right to try to defend themselves, which is something that we have done historically, helping people who are struggling against overwhelming odds.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary KERRY. Well, John, if I can just say to you, I just said to you we are evaluating with them exactly what their needs are, and we will come back here and ask you—

Senator MCCAIN. They have said what their needs are a long time ago, and you and I could sit down in 15 minutes, knowing what their needs are and that is defensive weapons.

The CHAIRMAN. I think you have both made your points.

Secretary KERRY. The greatest single need right now is to get their economy moving and to be economically strong because they will not survive otherwise.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Markey.

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

Mr. Secretary, you talked about the Russian-led unrest in eastern Ukraine. There has now been an announcement that they are going to try to have a referendum in Donetsk on May 11 in front of the Presidential election on May 25. Clearly, the goal of that referendum is to say that part of the country wishes to secede and go back to Russia.

Could you talk a little bit about that as it is unfolding as a strategy, a referendum strategy, in Russia and what the administration is thinking about as a strategy to deal with that?

Secretary KERRY. Well, thank you, Senator.

That may be the strategy, and if it is, it is very dangerous. And if they proceed down that road, that will be a second swing at a completely illegal, unconstitutional, internationally unsupportable effort to violate the territorial integrity of Ukraine. So nobody has any illusions about what might come with that.

Now, the call for that I believe came from some paid individual in Donetsk, not necessarily an announcement per se that that is

what is going to happen. And so I think it is unclear. There are representatives of the Ukrainian Government who have gone out there to begin to negotiate the de-occupation of the buildings and the process forward, and I think it is a moving target right now as to exactly what may or may not happen. But the issue is whether the Russians are serious in this discussion that we hope to have next week at resolving these kinds of questions.

Part of their complaint right now is that there is an inadequate representation within the constitutional reform process in Ukraine, and they allege that if there is a proper representation and listening to people in the east and the south that that is really what they are after. I do not know the answer to that. If this is camouflage for this other move, we are obviously going to watch extremely carefully, and the President is completely poised to move forward with the sector or other sanctions necessary to respond to this.

Senator MARKEY. So is the EU and the United States working together in terms of pushing for a fair and democratic process in this election? And what concerns do you have about the Russians trying to interfere with this electoral process? And what role do you think we can play with the EU to make sure this next month—

Secretary KERRY. Well, the key is to flood the zone with observers, make sure we have got OSCE. We have asked the U.N. We are trying to get as many people in there who can be the truth-tellers, the people who can inform as to exactly what is happening and allow less maneuverability for the pretexts and the contrived situations to try to provide a legitimacy. And I think that is one important thing.

The second is to work with the Ukrainians themselves to make sure that all of the instruments for a legitimate, open, free, fair, accountable, accessible election are available.

Senator MARKEY. And I would like, while you are here, just to add one more subject, and that is climate change. It is worsening. The IPCC report actually has shown a telescoped timeframe for the dangers that the planet is facing. Could you talk a little bit about that as you see this impact globally?

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, I appreciate your asking the question.

The impacts of climate change are growing enormously, not significantly, but just enormously at a pace where you know, Senator, very well because you have followed this for years and been a leader on it, all of the scientific analysis that suggested targets that we need to meet in order to hold the carbon levels such that we can hold the warming of the earth at 2 degrees centigrade—we are in excess of them. We are moving beyond them. And we are moving beyond them at a pace that shows us bringing more coal-fired power plants online, more methane being released, which is 20 times more potent than carbon, which is the consequence of the warming that is already taking place, more carbon dioxide going into the oceans, which is changing the ecosystem, more fires, more floods, more different weather patterns. I mean, there is just a profoundly impactful, clear, scientifically proven pattern taking place. And all of the predictions of the scientists are not just being met, they are being exceeded both in the rapidity with which it is happening and the level to which it is happening.

So given the most recent IPCC report by the U.N. climate panel, really we have got to respond and we have got to respond rapidly. The margin for error is disappearing. And when I hear people say to me, well, you know, some people still contest the evidence or they contest the science, without any science to contest it, by the way, but they contest it nevertheless—and they say, well, why should we take these measures? What if you guys are wrong? Well, as you know, Senator, better than anybody, if what you are proposing or countless governments across the world are starting to do is wrong, the worst that can happen is they have made themselves more energy independent, they have got cleaner energy, there is less carbon dioxide, less particulates in the air, people are healthier, there are more jobs created in the realm of new energy, alternative energy, renewable energy, all for the better. If the other guys are wrong, the people saying do not listen to it, what is the worst that can happen? The worst that can happen is life as you know it on earth is over.

And so I think people in public life have a responsibility to employ the precautionary principle that when you are weighing various concepts and they are supported by science and fact and empirical evidence, there is a responsibility to take action, and I hope we will.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you for your work on that issue, Mr. Secretary, and all the other issues that we have been discussing here today. These are tough, tough issues.

Secretary KERRY. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate it.

Senator MARKEY. They have to be resolved.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

As I call upon Senator Paul, let me say that Kentucky played a really tough, defensive, exciting game, and we appreciate them showing the Nation what Kentucky is all about.

Senator PAUL. I know your consolation is sincere, and I wish I could accept it with a better attitude. [Laughter.]

But I am still unhappy with the outcome.

Thank you, Secretary Kerry, for coming today.

One of the first things or actions that I remember as you began your office was that you reinstated the four employees that were involved and implicated by the review board in Benghazi.

It has always, to me, been more of a concern about the decisions that were made in the 6 months in advance of Benghazi than the talking points. In fact, I think the talking points have drowned out some really important decisions we made. We are all human. So these people I am not saying are bad people, but some really bad decisions were made in the 6 months leading up.

Two of the big ones that were made I think were that there was a 16-person security team led by Colonel Wood who said we wanted to stay in-country and they were not allowed to stay in-country.

And there was also a request for a plane. And apparently that evening—you know, for a DC-3 that was denied earlier, maybe about 6 months before the attack. That plane would have been important. There was a struggle that evening, you know, to get permission from the Libyans to get a plane. I think the C-30 they were trying to get on was a Libyan plane.

So there really, I think, were some bad decisions made. And this does not make the people who made the decisions bad people, but they were bad decisions that were made. There were requests for security that were turned down.

Throughout the 6 months preceding the attack on Benghazi, though, a lot of money was spent on things that I think most Americans would say are frivolous and maybe not part of the immediate mission of the State Department.

I will give you a few examples: \$100,000 was spent on sending comedians to India—it was the Make Chai Not War tour; \$100,000 was spent getting an electrical charging station in Vienna for the Ambassador so he could green up the Embassy; \$650,000 was spent on Facebook ads—these are all State Department expenses; \$700,000 was spent on landscaping for the Embassy in Brussels; and \$5 million was spent on crystal wine glasses and crystal glassware, barware for the State Department for embassies.

You can argue the legitimacy of these but it is hard to argue that in the face of the disaster in Benghazi. And it is hard to argue this in the face of people who say, well, we did not have enough money.

The other criticism I think that ought to be considered with regard to Benghazi is that—this is something I think the review board did not adequately address—is whether or not in the midst of a country coming out of war, that really the State Department should be in charge of security, whether they can adequately provide security.

And I think one of the biggest mistakes in decision—these all happened from your predecessor, not you. But the biggest decision mistake I think in Benghazi was thinking that Benghazi was more like Paris than Baghdad. And had we treated Benghazi as a fortress in the middle of a military base, I think we might have had a better chance. Nobody can predict exactly what could happen with a different outcome. But I think when we have a civil war raging, we have to consider whether or not one of the errors in decision was how we chose to protect or not protect the consulate.

Why is this still important? I think it is still important because I am concerned another attack could happen like this in other countries that are under State Department control. I know you are probably well aware of sort of the situation on the ground in Libya, but I do not know that it is perfectly stable. I am concerned whether or not we could have another attack of this magnitude in Tripoli at the Embassy. I guess we no longer have any consulate in Benghazi. Correct?

Secretary KERRY. We did not have one then, Senator. It was not a consulate. It was not a consulate.

Senator PAUL. Okay.

But anyway, my concern is whether or not we are adequately protected, whether the State Department can adequately protect, and whether or not maybe embassies in war-torn countries or countries emerging from civil war would be better off treated more as we did in the Embassy in Baghdad, you know, with a much greater military presence and a much greater military oversight of protection, and whether or not you have looked at the expenses, and if you have not, you will look at some of these expenses that many of us have seen in the press and are aghast that we spent \$100,000

sending some comedians to India, \$650,000 on Facebook ads, \$700,000 on landscaping, \$5 million on crystal ware that really, in the face of the Benghazi disaster, we need to reevaluate how we are spending our money at the State Department.

Secretary KERRY. When did the comedians go to India? I am curious.

Senator PAUL. It is all previous to your tenure. I am not blaming this on you.

Secretary KERRY. We could use a few right now. [Laughter.]

Senator PAUL. I do not want to be frivolous about sending some comedians. I mean, really, seriously. There are complaints we do not have enough money for security.

Secretary KERRY. Senator, let me answer your question. It is a good question and it is legitimate.

But let me dispel you of any—I keep hearing repeated again and again that there was, quote, “no accountability” for these people who were involved. Two of them were forced to retire. They retired. And the other two were essentially demoted and took on lesser responsibilities. That is pretty heavy stuff for career people. So this needs to end, this notion that there was no accountability, not just the lives that were changed but the lives lost and the people who were a part of that, but these people obviously paid a price and a significant one.

In addition to that, we have gone beyond what the ARB required in the 29 requirements. We have done even more with respect to our embassies. Every week I—every meeting that we have every day, as a matter of fact, we start the morning with an 8:30 meeting. If I am here, I am there. If I am not, I am informed. But we have a review of our threat levels, and we have too many places where there are threats.

We have done an incredible job under the hardest of circumstances hardening sites where they can be, taking unbelievable precautions for our people. And we have done a lot of different things. We have created a new Deputy Assistant Secretary for High Threat Posts who is responsible for making sure they get the focused attention necessary to keep people safe. We have ensured that the staff of diplomatic security go to regular bureau meetings and regional meetings communicating on security issues. We have adjusted work requirements. I am not going to go through all of it. We have got 151 new security personnel. We have got countless Marine detachments slowly going out to provide protection where we can. And all of this has budget implications, obviously.

I am puzzled by some of these expenses. I am going to look at them, and I will investigate it.

But I think there is an incredible effort underway at the State Department to both tighten the belt but also upgrade our capacity to provide security to all of our people. It is a paramount responsibility of mine and the Department.

Senator PAUL. Do you think it was a mistake to have the Ambassador in Benghazi without more significant military protection?

Secretary KERRY. Well, let me speak to—there was a request put in for additional security for Ambassador Stevens, and it was given to him. He had additional numbers of people that went out there with him. The problem is it was not adequate, obviously.

Senator PAUL. Well, and quite a bit of it was sort of unofficial militia. I mean do you think it was a good decision to have unofficial militia who basically ran when the time came?

Secretary KERRY. He actually had additional security personnel official within the Department. There was an additional, I think it was, one or two people who were assigned. So his number when he went out there met what he had requested in terms of official State Department personnel. But, obviously, it was not adequate, as we all have sadly learned, to the task of repelling what took place.

But the intelligence community has said they had no information about that kind of attack. There was nothing operative on which to be able to make a decision.

Senator PAUL. Are we still using militias, or do we have more of our own people doing protection?

Secretary KERRY. We have more of our own people. We have significantly hardened up the Embassy there. I am not going to go into the numbers, but we have a very significant increase in American personnel on the ground. We have much more significant emergency contingency plans, and we are working very, very hard with other countries to work on the overall security issue.

I was just in Algeria and Morocco for the security dialogue in the last few days of last week, and we discussed specifically the training of personnel for a rapid response force in Libya and the ability to be able to provide greater training and capacity going forward. I think everybody is concerned about Libya in the current status.

Senator PAUL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Secretary, we are almost at the end here. I know that Senator Corker has a few comments to make, and then I will close out and we will get you back to the challenges that we all collectively face.

Senator CORKER. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

And, Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here.

I would like to ask permission that the testimony on September the 3rd be entered into the record, especially as we have highlighted. It tells a very different story about why the administration was asking for the military strike, the limited military strike, that the Secretary alluded to. It is a very different story than the story that is now being told by the administration.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The September 3, 2013, testimony mentioned above can be found in the "Additional Material Submitted for the Record" section at the end of the hearing.]

Senator CORKER. And, Mr. Secretary, I want to say that I know the issues in Syria are very difficult, and I look forward to this detailed briefing we will have soon, one of many that has been promised and has not occurred. And I do not think there are easy solutions.

I do think that from a bipartisan standpoint, people are very concerned right now about United States credibility, and Syria I think was the beginning of that. I think there are concerns about Ukraine, our actual willingness to go forward and do something after we lost so much credibility around the redline issue and so much credibility on the ground with just people in the neighbor-

hood regarding not following through on commitments that were made. And I know that you know they were made.

So, look, I hope the chapter is not written, and I hope we have successes. I think everybody on this committee wants our foreign policy to be successful, and I think under Chairman Menendez's leadership, we have operated in a very bipartisan way. But I will say to you that if things do not change, you in effect could be presiding over a period of time where more U.S. credibility is lost than anyone could have imagined and a time when the world is becoming less safe as a result.

So I wish you well. I really do. I am very genuine in my thoughts that I am glad you are in a position to try to affect these things, and I have said that over and over again. But I will tell you I think there is genuine concern here about where we are on both sides of the aisle. I think you sensed that today. I do hope that somehow the people that we are dealing with get a sense that we are really willing to do the things that are necessary.

And I hope the President will soon—we had a good conversation a few weeks ago—look at sectoral sanctions. If we end up having the troops on the border there much longer, it seems to me that would be a good place to start.

But again, a lot of concerns. I thank you for your work and I hope things turn around because I do believe that right now our foreign policy efforts are not yielding the kind of results that you would like to see or we would like to see, and yet, we all want them to be successful.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, if I can comment. Having spent 29 years on this committee, I started way over there in that far end seat and worked my way up to where Senator Menendez is. So I have seen the ups and downs. I have seen the merry-go-round and the rollercoaster of American foreign policy up close and personal.

And I will tell you that we are living in a different time. I know the expectations are very high, but at the end of World War II, there was only one country standing, so to speak, and we were magnanimous enough to rebuild Germany and Japan. People opposed it. Many people. Truman had the courage with Marshall to make it happen. The fact is that we could make mistakes either in policy choices or in economy and still win, and we did for a long time.

And ultimately in 1990–1991, things changed with the Soviet Union, and that released an enormous amount of pressure in places like what was then Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic and Slovakia. It unleashed all kinds of forces everywhere.

And so today we are living with a far more, almost 19th century/18th century diplomatic playing field where interests and in some cases mercantilist interests, in other cases just security interests or territorial interests, other kinds of things are raising their head in ways that they did not during the cold war because they were suppressed.

And now with the rise of radical Islam and massive numbers of young people who are filled with aspirations because they are in touch with everybody in the world through the media, the social media, they know what is happening everywhere. I mean, if you look at what happened in Tunisia, it was a fruit vendor who was

tired of being slapped around by the police and the corruption in the country and so he self-immolated, and that ignited a revolution and a dictator of 30 years left.

In Tahrir Square, that was not the Muslim Brotherhood. It was not religiously driven. It was young people looking for a future.

Syria, the same thing. Young people were looking for a future, and when their parents came out to protest, the way they were put down, Assad started shooting them. And that has brought us to where we are today.

You know, the United States has power, enormous power, but we cannot necessarily always dictate every outcome the way we want, particularly in this world where you have rising economic powers, China, India, Mexico, Korea, Brazil, many other people, who are players. You know, 11 of the 15 people who used to receive aid from IMF are now donor countries. We are living in a changed world. And governance is not doing very well in many places. Might I add also here, regrettably.

So we need to do—all of us—a job of looking into the future and trying to figure out how we are going to stand up for America's interests and promote them more effectively. And that includes in the budget for foreign policy and in the options that we can put on the table.

Now, one final word, if you will permit me. On Syria where we hear this notion that somehow there was a redline and then it was not enforced and somehow it is a sign of weakness. I beg to differ. Facts are stubborn things. The President of the United States made his decision. He said I am going to use military force but he listened to people on the Hill who said if you are going to do that, you ought to come to Congress. Now, maybe some of them were—you know, there were some crocodile tears in that particular plea because when he came to the Congress to accede to the constitutional process of our country and get them to affirm his prerogative to do what he decided to do, there was a resounding reluctance and you fought it. This committee was the sole exception. We know what the Senate floor might have done, and we know what the House would have done. So the President made his decision to use force.

But out of my discussions with Lavrov—and, might I add, President Obama's discussions with Putin at the summit that they had, they talked about an alternative way of doing it without use of force. And so we came to an agreement to remove all of the weapons, not just to degrade some of his capacity over 1 or 2 days or whatever it was going to be.

Now, that would have had an impact, yes, on people's thinking, but it would not have changed the fundamental course I believe of what was going to happen. It might have had an impact, though.

But I have to tell you the President made his decision, and he was ready to use force. And we actually came up with a better solution, which is to get all of the weapons out, all of them out. And that still leaves us with other options, folks.

So I think we need to depoliticize this a little bit and try to find a way forward for us to—

Senator CORKER. Yes. I do not think when you have a bipartisan concern that anybody is politicizing. I take tremendous offense at

you making a comment that I have concerns as some kind of political implications when both sides of the aisle have expressed concerns.

But let me just say—

Secretary KERRY [continuing]. When I say depoliticize—

Senator CORKER [continuing]. Well, well, let me finish.

Secretary KERRY. Senator, I am not directing that at you personally. When I say depoliticize, I mean this whole notion that—you know, I think there are some politics involved in this notion that we are not pressing in enough places on enough things. And I just think that the United States interests are better served by us trying to find the common ground to move forward on these things rather than falling prey to some of these, I think, sort of stereotypes.

Senator CORKER. I do not think the President made the kind of effort that most Presidents would make in shaping opinion within Congress, but we will let that go.

And I will just say in general I cannot imagine that you would feel differently that our move to work with Russia in the way that we did has certainly changed the dynamics in many places. And certainly Iran has been the beneficiary of that. Russia has been the beneficiary of that. We have created an air of permissiveness. There is no question. And I do not see how you can debate that. I mean, scholars on both sides of the aisle understand that to be the fact, and facts are hard to overcome.

So, look, you got a tough hand. You have been dealt a tough hand. And I do not know what kind of support you get or not support you get from the White House. But we wish you well. We want to be successful in our foreign policy.

But right now I will say I think the steps that we took in Syria have affected us in Iran. They have affected us in the peninsula. They have affected us in Ukraine. China is watching us. It has affected us there. And I hope that somehow during the remainder of your tenure, you are able to turn around our foreign policy in such a way that the statements that have been made are not true but that we have some successes because I think all of us are very concerned.

Secretary KERRY. Well, Senator, look, you have been a terrific help in keeping this committee working with the chairman and cooperating in so many different ways. And I thank you for that. And I know this comes from a genuine concern. I am not suggesting otherwise, I promise you.

But I would say to you that I think Russia, with all due respect, is not acting out of strength. I do not believe that Russia has particularly helped itself. Have they accomplished a goal to protect Sevastopol for the time being and to, quote, “secure Crimea” at least in a military concept if not legitimately in international law? Yes, but at great cost. At great cost.

And over time, if you look at Russia’s economy, there are real challenges. They are running the risk clearly of isolating themselves further and of losing friends around the world. They have already lost them in Ukraine where people who were once more supportive now feel threatened and frankly abused by what has happened.

And if Russia were to come in, I tell you Ukrainians, I believe, will fight over the long term. That will not be a pretty picture, and I suspect that President Putin understands that.

So this is not a hand of strength, and I think we need to, all of us, stay focused on a strategy, on a long-term strategy and recognize that Russia also has far closer ties to Ukraine and far greater interests other than our interests in democracy and freedom, which are huge, but in terms of history, that is where Russian religion comes from. That is where Russian wars of liberation were fought. And they have interests that they are trying to assert, I think, in the wrong way, but we have to, obviously, counter that and we are. So my hope is that we can write a better chapter going forward, but I am not sitting here telling you naively that that is automatically going to happen.

Senator CORKER. Yes, I would agree with you that Russia has tremendous weaknesses. And I think our hopes are on this committee that their move into Crimea ends up being one of the biggest geopolitical mistakes they could possibly have made. I think our concern is will the administration carry out policies to ensure that that is the case.

Secretary KERRY. I think you heard me pretty clearly today, and I do not doubt this President's resolve one iota. He is clearly going to—he will continue. He has in the last weeks been conversing with all of the leaders personally on the telephone, building the support for this current level of sanctions and for what has yet to come. And we hope it will not have to come because I think that is a challenge for all, but it is something we are ready to effect if we need to.

Senator CORKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. I have listened with interest to the dialogue between you and Senator Corker, and since I gathered the desire to engage in such a dialogue, I let it go on for a while. And I appreciate that.

I have one final question and then a closing comment.

Mr. Secretary, I said at the very beginning of this hearing that the one part of the budget that most worries me is the Western Hemisphere. Year after year after year after year, we have seen cuts to the hemisphere even though it is our own front yard. In doing so, I think we undermine taking advantage of the economic opportunities; underestimate the security challenges stemming from international criminal organizations; and do not do enough to promote development, educational exchanges, and the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law. When I look at Central America and the crime rate; when I see what is happening in Venezuela, in Ecuador, in Bolivia; and when I see the challenges in Argentina, I say to myself that there is an enormous agenda here to pursue.

So, would you commit to working with me to figure out how we can better position the Western Hemisphere in our budgetary priorities, sir?

Secretary KERRY. I would be delighted to, Senator. Some of the change is a reflection of shifting circumstances, like Colombia is much more capable today and is doing things it was not able to—

The CHAIRMAN. I recognize that in Colombia and Mexico it is a fact. The problem is that we do not reinvest that money back in the hemisphere. We send it somewhere else.

Secretary KERRY. That is a fair comment. That is true. There are choices that have been made in the overall budget allocation process.

There are other places like, for instance, in Haiti there were some reductions, but that is a reflection of money in the pipeline. When the money in the pipeline gets used, we will be right back here asking for the same level or more.

So there are challenges, and nobody knows it better than you do. And we are happy to sit down and work with you.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, let me close the hearing by just making an observation.

I think, as you well know, Mr. Secretary, from your service here that the members on this committee are passionate about the wide range of views that they have. And these views, I think, are generally held in very principled positions. We may not always agree as to them, but they are held in very principled positions. I would hate for the hearing to end without putting that in context.

This committee, on a bipartisan basis, has passed virtually every nomination that the administration has sent us, from the Secretary all the way on down in a timely basis—what happens on the floor is another challenge—but in a timely basis overwhelmingly.

Now, this committee took one of the most significant steps that any Member of the Senate could ever take, which is to vote in a bipartisan way for the authorization for the use of force in Syria. I think we all acknowledge that this was critical for the President to get Russia to change Assad's calculation on the use of chemical weapons.

This committee, in the aftermath of Benghazi, passed embassy security legislation in a bipartisan way.

This committee passed OAS reform, PEPFAR reauthorization, previous Iran sanctions that have been vigorously pursued by the administration, and most recently, legislation on Ukraine.

So even though there are very passionate views here in the midst of partisanship on the floor, I am happy to say that we have had a wide breadth of bipartisanship within the committee on the critical issues of the day, working with the administration.

And so let me close by saying I have one disagreement with my colleague who said that our foreign policy is spinning out of control. We are facing some of the most intractable challenges. And you, Mr. Secretary, and the administration have sought to go after some of the most intractable challenges that others could have just simply walked away from. Instead of walking away from them, you sought to try to change the course of events for the better.

So from the chairman, I want you to know that I have every confidence in your intellect, in your tenacity, in your capacity to try to meet these challenges. That does not mean we will be successful every time, nor does it mean that we will necessarily agree every time on how to get there, although generally we agree on what we want to get to.

So with the gratitude of the committee for your service and for the time you spent with us here today, I am going to leave the record open until the close of business on Thursday.

And the hearing is adjourned.

Secretary KERRY. Mr. Chairman, could I just say you know what a fan I am of this committee, and I appreciate enormously the bipartisan efforts. I really do. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:40 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEDEZ

Question #1. Venezuela.—In the past 2 months, the political unrest in Venezuela have left at least 39 dead—including antigovernment protesters and members of the state security forces. Amidst this turmoil, there is evidence that should outrage the international community that Venezuelan security forces and armed supporters of the government have detained, beaten, tortured, and killed protesters. Furthermore, the Venezuelan Government has also used its legal system to arrest and silence its political opponents, as well as remove Colombian television station NTN24 from the air. The recent visit to Caracas by Foreign Ministers from South American countries suggests the potential for greater regional engagement, but didn't deliver any concrete results.

- ◆ What steps can the United States take to end violence in Venezuela and facilitate a peaceful, mediated solution to the country's political crisis?
- ◆ How can we promote greater international consensus about the ongoing deterioration of democracy, governance, and the rule of law in Venezuela?
- ◆ Finally, what steps can we take to defend civil, political, and human rights in Venezuela; and, is the administration considering individualized sanctions to hold responsible those complicit in human rights abuses?

Answer. Our immediate focus remains to bring an end to the violence and encourage authentically inclusive dialogue to address the Venezuelan people's legitimate grievances. We have been actively engaging international partners to find a peaceful solution. We are encouraged by what we have heard so far of the UNASUR-led initiative with Vatican participation involving meetings between the government and many parties within the political opposition. We hope this effort will lead to an end to the violence and promote honest dialogue.

We believe the OAS, as the region's premier multilateral institution, must assume a greater role to help find a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Venezuela, consistent with its mandate to promote peace, democracy, and respect for human rights in member states, as expressed in its Charter and in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

We have consistently called on the Venezuelan Government to release those it unjustly jailed, lift restrictions on freedom of the press, respect freedoms of assembly and association, tone down its inflammatory rhetoric, and engage in an authentically inclusive dialogue with Venezuelans across the political spectrum. The Venezuelan Government has an obligation to protect fundamental freedoms and the safety of its citizens, including those who engage in peaceful protest.

The U.S. Government supports a wide range of civil society organizations that promote and defend fundamental freedoms, democratic processes, and nonviolent advocacy. We are studying a range of diplomatic tools, including sanctions, to address human rights violations that have occurred over the past few weeks. As I said last month, we will consider all available options to help foster a peaceful solution.

Question #2. WHA Counternarcotics/INCLE Funding.—While I fully understand that gravity of the threats that our country faces around the world, I would also note that some of the most pressing challenges we face on a daily basis—including the trafficking of narcotics, arms, people and contraband—arrive at our borders after passing through countries in the Western Hemisphere. Additionally, the threat posed by transnational criminal organizations undercuts governance and the rule of law in several countries throughout the hemisphere, and has fueled a sharp rise in criminal violence that means today many of the countries with the highest per capita homicide rates are located here in our hemisphere. This year, the administration

has requested \$220 million in cuts to International Narcotics and Law Enforcement funding for Latin America and the Caribbean, with reductions scheduled for Central America, Mexico, Colombia and the Caribbean.

- ◆ What is the administration's assessment of security challenges in the Western Hemisphere and does our reduced budget prepare us to fully address these challenges?

Answer. We recognize the full range of citizen security challenges facing our regional partners. Crime and violence, much of it fueled by drugs and gangs, undermine our efforts to help promote economic opportunity and strengthen democracy. We remain firmly committed to building practical partnerships with governments, the private sector, and civil society throughout the region to promote citizen security. We continue to place a strong emphasis on citizen security programs to advance U.S. interests, which account for just under half of the total request, and include other funds in addition to INCLE.

We believe these to be the resources we need to meet our top citizen security objectives for FY 2015 in Mexico, Colombia, Central America, and the Caribbean. Our budget requests reflect programmatic needs rather than a decrease in priority. Our requests for citizen security reflect shifting circumstances and prior achievements, such as Colombia's increased capacity to support its security and development goals. In some countries, such as Mexico, our request reflects an assistance pipeline in some accounts. We are working to plan for and spend down existing pipelines.

Question #3. Embassy Security, Construction, and Maintenance.—The administration's FY 2015 budget request, under the description of the Capital Security Construction Programs and MCS Major Rehab Program, calls for work at several posts throughout the Western Hemisphere, including Asuncion, Paraguay; Belmopan, Belize; Guayaquil, Ecuador; Nuevo Laredo, Mexico; Tijuana, Mexico; Matamoros, Mexico; Mexico City, Mexico; Paramaribo, Suriname; and Georgetown, Guyana.

- ◆ Please provide an overview for work at each of these facilities. What is the total funding request scheduled for this work?

Answer. Only three of the projects listed are included in the Department's FY 2015 budget request (Asuncion, Matamoros, and Mexico City). The other projects were funded in FY 2013–2014 and are in various stages of design or construction.

FY 2013

Georgetown—Chancery compound major rehabilitation (\$50.8M).

Paramaribo—New Embassy Compound (\$165.8M) including chancery, warehouse, support facilities, community facilities, utility building, and compound access pavilions.

FY 2014

Belmopan—Marine Security Guard residence (\$18.1M).

Guayaquil—Marine Security Guard residence (\$30.4M).

Nuevo Laredo—New Consulate Compound (\$156.0M) including consulate office building, support annex, Marine Security Guard residence, utility building, compound access pavilions, community facilities, and parking.

Tijuana—Marine Security Guard residence (\$17.4M).

FY 2015

Asuncion—New Embassy Compound (\$213.3M) including chancery, Marine Security Guard residence, shops, warehouse, community facilities, parking garage, and compound access pavilions.

Matamoros—New Consulate Compound (\$178.1M) including chancery, Marine Security Guard residence, shops, limited warehousing, community facilities, parking garage, and compound access pavilions.

Mexico City—New Embassy Compound (\$763.5M) including chancery, Marine Security Guard residence, shops, warehouse, parking garage, and five compound access pavilions.

Question #4. The Economic Statecraft Initiative within H.R. includes \$9.1 million for 23 new positions in Foreign and Civil Service worldwide. What is the anticipated amount intended for Western Hemisphere Foreign and Civil Service posts?

Answer. The following are FY 2015 Costs for the four Western Hemisphere Economic Statecraft Foreign Service Overseas positions. No Civil Service WHA positions are requested for Economic Statecraft.

American Salaries—\$370,455
Bureau Managed—\$1,389,355

Total—\$1,759,810

The four Foreign Service positions will be deployed to Mexico, Panama, and Brazil (one each to Mexico and Panama and two to Brazil) toward the Department's Economic Statecraft goals. These positions will focus on the energy market given Brazil's recent oil discovery, as well as other trade and tourism activities. We expect new positions to start in mid-March 2015.

Question #5-6. Public Diplomacy and Educational and Cultural Exchanges.—(a). What is the estimated outlay intended for public diplomacy and educational and cultural exchanges in the Western Hemisphere? What was the final enacted amount for FY 2013?

(b). The FY 2015 request for Fulbright (\$204 million) and International Visitors Leadership (\$90 million) programs intent to focus resources on South East Asia and sub-Sahara Africa from the Western Hemisphere and Europe. What is the expected adjustment of funds for the Western Hemisphere? How does it compare to FY 2013 enacted amount and estimate for FY 2014?

Answer.

WHA/PD or .7 Funds (in thousands):

FY 2013 Actual—44,134
 FY 2014 Estimate—43,495
 FY 2015 Request—44,312

ECE Funds (in thousands):

FY 2013 Estimate—80,000
 FY 2014 Estimate—80,000
 FY 2015 Estimate—75,000

The FY15 ECE funding request for the Western Hemisphere allows us to maintain our traditional educational and cultural programs, such as the International Visitor Leadership Program and English language programs. We are building on those exchanges through regional and bilateral initiatives that bring together government, academia, and civil society to foster regionwide prosperity. The FY15 budget also includes a new budget line called Exchanges Rapid Response (ERR) that enables ECA to quickly scale up exchange programs to respond to significant events. This funding could be used for programming in Latin American and Caribbean countries, if needed.

Through the 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative launched by President Obama in 2011, we are focusing on promoting increased international educational exchanges in the Americas. This initiative focuses attention on the importance of increased international study throughout the Western Hemisphere to address common challenges including citizen security, economic opportunity, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. We are, in fact, seeing an increase in the exchange of students between the United States and Latin America and the Caribbean countries. Between academic year 2011–12 and 2012–13, student exchanges to the United States from Latin America and the Caribbean increased by 3.8 percent. The number of U.S. students studying in Latin America and the Caribbean increased by 11.7 percent between academic years 2010–11 and 2011–12.

Our bilateral dialogues throughout the region complement 100,000 Strong in the Americas. For instance, on her first trip abroad, Assistant Secretary of Educational and Cultural Affairs Evan Ryan cochaired the working group on the promotion of student mobility at the U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Innovation, and Research in Mexico City. This forum, along with similar bilateral strategic dialogues with Colombia and Brazil, serve as models for engaging all sectors of society to expand the economic gains of the past decades through educational and cultural exchanges.

In partnership with governments throughout the region, the United States supports the Fulbright Program and other educational exchanges for students, scholars, and teachers. We are providing students with accurate, comprehensive, and current information about opportunities to studying in the United States through our EducationUSA advising network. And, we are providing opportunities for students to learn languages. Over the past decade, Fulbright cost-shares from foreign governments and the private sector have almost tripled in the region—from \$11 million in 2000 to over \$27 million in 2012.

*Question #7. Global Health Initiative.—*What percentage of the FY 2015 budget request for State Department PEPFAR worldwide will be allocated to the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. PEPFAR has played a significant role in the Western Hemisphere. For more information on the State Department's FY 2015 request for GHP-State funding for HIV/AIDS programs in the region, please see Table 13h: Country/Key Interest: HIV/AIDS—FY 2015 in the Congressional Budget Justification: Foreign Assistance Summary Tables for Fiscal Year 2015 at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/224071.pdf>.

Since its inception, PEPFAR programs have been implemented in the Caribbean, with Haiti and Guyana designated as focus countries. Since that time, work has expanded to include a country program in the Dominican Republic (DR), as well as two regional programs with governments in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

The national HIV responses in general in the Latin America and Caribbean region have been extremely strong. A 2013 analysis by the Pan American Health Organization noticed that "All of the Latin America and the Caribbean countries offer free services for HIV care and treatment, financed for the most part by national resources." A key focus of PEPFAR in this region is improving the sustainability of these programs by reducing costs and working with countries to increase country resources that are used to finance HIV.

While PEPFAR will continue to invest in the LAC region with the aim of reducing costs, decreasing dependence on external funders, and promoting the needs of key populations, many of the governments in the region are able to address their epidemics without significant PEPFAR investment in direct services. Overall prevalence in Latin America is 0.4 percent, and has dropped significantly in the past decade. PEPFAR maintains country programs in Haiti and Guyana, and works in the Dominican Republic to address both the needs of the country as well as the health needs of Haitians who seek care in the DR.

Question #8. What percentage of the FY 2015 request for USAID Global Health Initiative will be assigned to countries in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. Three percent of the FY 2015 request for USAID's Global Health Initiative will be assigned to countries in the Western Hemisphere. Overall, there has been significant progress on key health indicators in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region in recent decades. Since 1990, infant mortality in LAC has declined by more than half, from 43 to 19 deaths per 1,000 live births. Estimates indicate that maternal mortality has declined from 140 deaths per 100,000 live births to 85. Fertility rates have fallen from over 4 to 2.2 children per woman since 1980. In addition, malaria and tuberculosis infection rates have declined, and progress has been made in controlling the HIV/AIDS epidemic among key populations. As the largest health donor in the region since the 1960s, USAID has been a major contributor to the impressive health strides in the region. As a result, we have graduated numerous country health programs.

However, at the same time, we recognize that health progress in LAC has not been universal and we remain committed to undertaking key health assistance in this important region. To adapt to the contracting of our bilateral health programming, cost-effective regional platforms have been established, which allow us to maintain assistance in maternal and child health, family planning and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria control.

USAID has also greatly expanded the number of partnerships and alliances it has successfully built over decades to sustain and extend our successes in health. For example, to ensure the continuation of voluntary family planning programs, we are working with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and UNFPA on logistics, procurement, and service quality issues. Further, to address the health disparities in the region, we are working with a consortium of international health organizations—including UNICEF, PAHO, IDB, World Bank, UNFPA and UNAIDS, along with ministries of health, civil society, faith-based organizations, and the private sector under the umbrella of "A Promise Renewed for the Americas." In addition, working through the regional office of the World Health Organization, we have expanded our reach to ensure that new developments in global health are both learned from and shared throughout the region, as part of the new South-to-South collaboration.

Question #9. Global Climate Change Initiative.—What percentage of the FY 2015 budget request for State Department GCCI worldwide will be allocated to the Western Hemisphere? Under this amount, what are the estimated outlays for Clean Energy, Sustainable Landscapes, and Adaptation?

Answer. The administration's FY 2015 request for the Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCI) for the Department of State and USAID is \$506.3 million. Of this amount, the Department of State request is \$157.8 million. The Department of

State's GCCI programming, requested for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) and the Bureau of International Organizations (IO), generally has a global focus, with many countries in the Western Hemisphere benefiting, for example, from the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (Clean Energy), Initiative for Sustainable Forest Landscapes (Sustainable Landscapes), and the Special Climate Change Fund (Adaptation). Mexico, Chile, Colombia, and Brazil are members of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition.

The administration request includes \$348.5 million for USAID, of which \$72.6 million, or 21 percent, is for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The \$72.6 million includes \$27.5 million for Adaptation, \$15.5 million for Clean Energy, and \$29.6 million for Sustainable Landscapes.

Question #10. Security Assistance.—What is the estimated reduction in Western Hemisphere funding for Foreign Military Financing? How does this amount compare to FY 2013 and estimate FY 2014? What specific programs and countries are scheduled for reductions under the FY 2015 budget request?

Answer. We remain firmly committed to partnership in the Western Hemisphere. Our Foreign Military Financing (FMF) request reflects budget realities and our focus on strengthening the security capabilities of our regional partners.

The State Department requests \$47.1 million in FMF for the Western Hemisphere in FY 2015. The FY 2015 Request is a 20-percent decrease from the FY 2013 653(a) level (\$59.2M) and a 22-percent decrease from the FY 2014 estimate level (\$60.2M). The FY 2015 request includes a \$3.8M decrease for Colombia from FY 2013, which results from Colombia's ability to increasingly support their military to provide security throughout the country. The request also includes a \$1.6M decrease for Mexico from FY 2013, which demonstrates an appropriate level of support to begin development of maintenance and logistics systems for the UH-60Ls and technical training and professional military education. Additionally, the request includes a \$4.5M decrease in FMF funding for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) from FY 2013. CBSI FMF is shifting focus from prior years when we procured equipment, such as boats, toward developing maintenance and logistics systems to maintain these assets long term. As such, our FY15 request reflects this lower cost programmatic shift. Finally, due to complications in implementing assistance and political challenges, the FY 2015 request does not include funding for Ecuador and Nicaragua, which also reduced the overall FMF level.

Question #11. Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.—Under the FY 2015 budget request for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), what amount of funding is targeted for the Western Hemisphere, and what percentage of global DRL funding does this account for?

Answer. DRL does not attribute funding by regions in our annual budget request. Instead, DRL uses its annual global appropriation to react in real-time to changing political situations by funding low cost programs targeting democratic opportunities or challenges as they arise in addition to addressing ongoing deficiencies in human rights or democracy. Many of DRL's programs operate in difficult environments and provide crucial support to human rights defenders and civil society activists both through regional and country specific programs as well as global rapid response mechanisms and thematic programs. DRL supports regional and country priorities through programs that strengthen civil society, labor unions, political parties, election and watchdog organizations, access to justice, and independent media. In addition, DRL supports broader global thematic programs in all regions including for international religious freedom, Internet freedom, labor rights, and the human rights of members of at-risk populations, which includes women, youths, persons with disabilities, religious and ethnic minorities, and LGBT persons. For example, for Fiscal Year 2013 Human Rights and Democracy Funds (HRDF), DRL has around 53 percent of total HRDF available for specific regional and country priorities, of which approximately 8 percent of this, or around \$3 million, is for the Western Hemisphere.

The remaining FY 2013 HRDF is for our global rapid response programs and thematic programs, some of which also support activities in the Western Hemisphere. For example, DRL's S.A.F.E. (Securing Access to Freedom of Expression) Initiative is a global program that promotes journalist digital and physical safety in difficult environments. In the Western Hemisphere, S.A.F.E. has assisted media actors in the region to operate more safely through the provision of trainings, tools, and individualized threat-mitigation plans. Beneficiaries also have access to help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for emergency situations and receive basic assistance for coping with high stress and emotional trauma. This initiative compliments region-

specific programming that improves the capacity of journalists to produce fact-based, data-driven analysis of crucial issues such as corruption and human rights.

Question #12. Populations, Refugees and Migration.—Under the FY 2015 budget request for the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), what amount of funding is targeted for the Western Hemisphere, and what percentage of global PRM funding does this account for?

Answer. The President's FY 2015 request includes \$2.0 billion for the Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA) account, which is managed by the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. The FY 2015 MRA request includes \$45.4 million in funding targeted for the Western Hemisphere which equates to 2.2 percent of the total FY 2015 MRA request.

Question #13. Ukraine.—Mr. Secretary I'd like to ask you about the economic consequences for Russia's military intervention in Ukraine, annexation of Crimea and, continued intimidation of its neighbors. Today's Russian economy is obviously more interconnected with the world than it was under communism. In response to internationally coordinated sanctions there have been comments in Russia about retaliating by not paying loans, seizing hard assets, and not using the dollar. There has been an outflow of investment and a lack of foreign direct investment in Russia for some time, which will only be exacerbated by this sort of talk.

Answer. The goal of our sanctions is to persuade Russia to de-escalate the situation. The President has stated that Russia must pay an economic cost for its illegal occupation of Crimea, and he has made clear that Russia will pay a still greater cost for any further escalation of the situation. We have made—and continue to make—every effort to calibrate the sanctions to Russia's actions, while to the extent possible limiting the spillover impact on U.S. companies and the U.S. economy. To date, the administration has imposed targeted sanctions on three tranches of persons most directly involved in destabilizing Ukraine and those who have provided material support to Russian leadership. We have also designated members of Putin's inner circle, a medium-sized bank controlled by a number of them, and a company involved in the misappropriation of Ukrainian state assets. We have not imposed sanctions on economic sectors or large Russian companies. We cannot predict what actions are still to come, since what we do will depend on what takes place on the ground. If the Russian Government decides to escalate its intervention in Ukraine, then we will escalate our sanctions. At the same time, we have provided Russia an off-ramp if it is prepared to de-escalate.

Question #14. All of this must be having a very punitive effect on the Russian economy, how badly are they hurting themselves by scaring investment away? Is there any business or civic society pressure that could result from the hit the Russian economy is experiencing as a result of the military intervention in Ukraine and annexation of Crimea? What do you think the longer term impact of this pressure will be on Russian foreign and economic policy?

Answer. Sanctions and the threat of further sanctions weigh on Russia's economic growth. The World Bank has warned that Russia's economy could shrink by 1.8 percent this year. International ratings agencies have downgraded the Russian economy, including a significant number of state-owned firms, from a stable to negative outlook. The Russian currency remains under pressure: between March 3 and April 14, the Central Bank of Russia spent \$26.7 billion to stabilize the ruble, and as capital exits the country, it has resorted to emergency rate hikes. Furthermore, Russia's actions in Crimea have caused deterioration in foreign and international investors' confidence in Russia, whose economy is already stagnating from a lack of investment and reform. Stability, respect for international law, and integration in the global economy are extremely important to investors and market participants. Russia's actions raise doubts about its commitment to all three, and you can see that investors are already worried.

Question #15. Ukraine and IMF Reform.—Lately we have all been singularly focused on the crisis in Ukraine, and as events play out there it is increasingly evident that we need a strong IMF to play the central, anchoring role in stabilizing Ukraine's economy. Could you please update the committee on the latest economic developments in Ukraine, how the pledges of assistance by the United States, EU, and other multilateral institutions will help the country, and what the role of the IMF will be in addressing the crisis? Could you also speak to how Russia's announcement that they are raising the price of gas for Ukraine will affect the size and timing of IMF assistance?

Answer. While the Ukrainian economy has potential, unsustainable economic policies under previous administrations have left Ukraine with high current account

and budget deficits, financial sector instability, expensive nontargeted energy subsidies and noncompetitive industries. As part of its engagement with the IMF, Ukraine has now initiated reforms to avoid a debilitating financial crisis. To succeed, the Ukrainian Government is working to secure sizable external financing to help put these reforms in place. The IMF estimates those needs will approach \$27 billion in external financing over the next 2 years. Financing of continued gas purchases from Russia and new purchases from European companies via reverse-flow are critical short-term actions, while fundamental institutional reform and improved efficiency are ultimately necessary.

The United States is working closely with international partners to develop an assistance package to ensure Ukraine has sufficient financing to restore financial stability and return to growth. Thanks to support from Congress and this committee, the administration signed a \$1 billion loan guarantee agreement with Ukraine on April 14, which will complement the Government of Ukraine's IMF reform program. By guaranteeing the principal and interest payments on Ukrainian bonds, the loan guarantee will support Ukraine's access to capital markets on favorable terms (lower interest rates) and, as part of a broader international package of economic assistance, send a strong signal of international support. This loan guarantee will bolster the Government of Ukraine's ability to provide critical services as it implements reforms, while protecting the most vulnerable Ukrainian households from the impact of the necessary economic adjustment.

Beyond the loan guarantee, we also are providing technical assistance to support Ukraine as it undertakes reforms to restore economic stability and growth. Technical advisors from the United States Treasury have been on the ground in Kyiv since March 9 helping Ukrainian authorities manage immediate market pressures. USAID technical advisors have also been working with Ukraine's National Bank, Finance Ministry, and Deposit Guarantee Fund. In addition, USAID, the State Department, and the Justice Department provide assistance in areas such as energy tariff reforms, anticorruption legislation, and private sector development that will also support the IMF program. This assistance contributes to a broader international assistance effort, which includes \$2.2 billion from the EU in near-term budget support, up to \$11 billion in medium-term project finance from the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to enhance Ukraine's private sector and infrastructure, \$3 billion from the World Bank in budget support and development assistance, as well as a loan guarantee from Canada of \$200 million.

Ukraine is in the process of finalizing a Stand-by Arrangement program with the IMF, which will be at the center of international assistance efforts and is best placed to support Ukraine's implementation of robust and market-oriented reforms. The goal of the financing and reform package agreed to by Ukraine and the IMF is to restore macroeconomic stability and put the country on the path of sound governance and sustainable economic growth while protecting the vulnerable in the society. The program will focus on reforms in the following key areas: monetary and exchange rate policies; the financial sector; fiscal policies; the energy sector; and governance, transparency, and the business climate. The price of imported Russian gas is considered by the IMF as it evaluates Ukraine's financing needs and develops its reform program.

Question #16. Afghanistan.—At \$1.5 billion, the administration's Afghanistan assistance request remains among the largest in the 150 Account. I support this funding and sustained engagement by the U.S. in Afghanistan and the region, but accountability for these funds will continue to be an important concern of this committee. In the past, we have incentivized a portion of our assistance tied to specific Afghan reforms as agreed to in the 2012 Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. This seems to be a good model for how we provide assistance in a country plagued with corruption and weak governmental capacity.

- ◆ Should the U.S. incentivize more of its assistance to Afghanistan as a way toward encouraging Afghan reform and strengthening the confidence of the international community and U.S. taxpayer?

Answer. We agree on the importance of incentivizing positive change in Afghanistan as called for under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF). A \$175 million, 2-year bilateral incentive fund linked to the TMAF reforms is one part of our broader strategy to increase accountability in our relationship with the Afghan Government. We also support incentives offered by multilateral institutions including the Incentive Program of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund and conditions included in the Expanded Credit Facility provided by the International Monetary Fund. Further, we continue to include various reform benchmarks in our direct assistance programs with Afghan ministries, and encourage policy implemen-

tation with programs like the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement's Good Performers Initiative and Governor Led Eradication that only disburse project funds after Afghans take action to control illicit narcotics.

Incentive programs and regular international monitoring of TMAF reform indicators have both helped to establish a transparent and constructive dialogue with the Afghan Government on its reform agenda. This dialogue has produced some notable results including the passage and implementation of an improved electoral framework that has so far served Afghanistan well in the first round of the Presidential election. Accountability will be a critical part of our relationship with the new government that will come to power this year, and we plan to continue to use all tools at our disposal to encourage improved governance in Afghanistan.

Question #17. Secretary Kerry, current Appropriations legislation dictates that the administration provide a spending plan for Afghanistan programs before relevant committees allow funds to be obligated. The current spending bill makes clear that future programming should be directed toward efforts to strengthen rule of law and civil society and promote women's rights and women's health. The legislation specifically demands cuts to large scale infrastructure projects, many of which were (in the past) beset by waste and corruption.

Answer. We strongly believe a continued partnership between Afghanistan and the United States is critically important to U.S. national security and sustaining the hard won gains of the past decade. Per the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed by Presidents Obama and Karzai, our foreign assistance programs will continue to support better governance and economic growth including increased opportunity for women.

Assistance from the United States has led to major improvement in nearly every significant indicator of Afghanistan's development. Examples of progress facilitated by U.S. assistance includes:

- Education: In 2002, there were only 900,000 Afghan children in school, and virtually none of them were girls. Today, approximately 8 million children are registered to attend school and more than one-third of them are girls.
- Health: Life expectancy has increased from 42 years to over 62 since 2001; the maternal mortality rate has declined by 80 percent from 1,600 deaths to 327 per 100,000 births; and child mortality decreased from 172 to 97 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- Energy: In 2002, only 6 percent of Afghans had access to reliable electricity. Today 18 percent do. In addition, USAID assistance has helped put the Afghan national power company (DABS) on a path to become fully self-sustaining. DABS collected \$220 million from the sale of electricity in 2012, an increase of 67 percent from 2010.
- Mobile Technology: In 2002, there were few fixed telephone lines in Afghanistan, and making an international call required a satellite phone. Today, the combined phone network covers 90 percent of the Afghan population. Eighty-five percent of women have access to a mobile phone. The telecommunications sector is Afghanistan's greatest source of foreign direct investment, largest remitter of taxes to the government, and biggest licit employer, providing jobs for 100,000 Afghans.
- Women: Today, there are over 3,000 women-owned business and associations; almost 20 percent of Afghans enrolled in higher education are women; and women are active participants in the Afghan political process, with three female members of the Afghan Cabinet, 68 Members of Parliament (of the 249 seats), and three women Vice Presidential candidates.
- Infrastructure: Prudent investment in Afghanistan's infrastructure including roads, schools, dams, and other projects with careful measures to protect U.S. funding played a critical enabling role in Afghanistan's development gains.

The priorities for our future assistance efforts are well aligned with congressional guidance. We have already greatly reduced our budgets for large-scale infrastructure projects and will continue to strengthen our focus on building the capacity of the Afghan Government and private sector to maintain existing investments and facilitate inclusive private sector-led economic growth. We will continue to support Afghan civil society and media organizations in their efforts to reduce corruption and advocate for improved governance in a variety of sectors. We also remain focused on improving the ability of formal and informal Afghan justice institutions to sustainably provide services to all Afghans.

The United States remains committed to implementing robust measures to prevent corruption and waste of U.S. assistance funds. For example, USAID is utilizing a multitiered monitoring approach that includes, as appropriate, independent monitoring contractors; observation by U.S. Government staff; reporting by implementing

partners, local nongovernmental organizations and civil society; and use of technological tools, such as time- and date-stamped photos. The United States also maintains stringent oversight and accountability procedures for direct assistance projects with the Afghan Government, such as requiring the establishment of a noncommingled, separate bank account for each project, disbursement of funds only after a performance milestone has been achieved, or the United States has verified accrued costs, as well as full compliance by Afghan ministries of mitigation measures identified by the U.S. Government prior to and through the disbursement process. If Afghan ministries fail to adhere to these measures, the agreements are subject to immediate suspension or termination.

In addition, the United States will continue to seek progress on issues affecting women as a fundamental tenet of U.S. policy in Afghanistan and essential to Afghanistan's security, governance, and development. Afghanistan made strong commitments in our Strategic Partnership Agreement regarding ensuring and advancing the essential rights of Afghan women. In support of Afghan efforts to abide by those commitments, USAID will launch this year its standalone women's empowerment program, "Promote," and programs in health, education and many other areas will continue to focus on expanding the gains made by Afghan women over the last 12 years. The Department of State will continue to support Afghan-led initiatives that increase awareness and strengthen enforcement of the Elimination of Violence Against Women law, particularly support to women's shelters and Violence Against Women prosecution units. The United States will also begin this year a program to increase awareness of the problem of trafficking in persons in Afghanistan and build the capacity of civil society and government to combat the problem.

Question #18. Can you pledge that the State Department, as it crafts the 2014 spending plan and a more detailed budgetary description for fiscal year 2015, will protect—and not cut—vital support to women's rights groups, women's shelters, schools, and other relevant funding for civil society? Can you pledge that the cuts will be focused elsewhere? Can you pledge that cuts will not be made "across the board" but will, as required by the legislation, focus on the big ticket infrastructure programs that have, in the past, been so associated with waste and corruption?

Answer. Global stability, peace, and prosperity depend on protecting and advancing the rights of women and girls around the world. Research shows that progress in women's employment, health, and education can lead to greater economic growth and stronger societies. Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment is a policy across U.S. foreign assistance. The Department of State has mandated that gender equality and women's empowerment be integrated into strategic and budget planning; programming; monitoring and evaluation; and management and training. Therefore all of these processes must and do prioritize gender, as called for by the Secretary of State.

Question #19. The Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program has provided an important lifeline for endangered Afghan employees of the USG in Afghanistan. How many Afghans that worked for the State Department have been granted SIVs? How many total SIVs have been granted in Afghanistan since the beginning of the program? How many remain in the pipeline? Please describe how the State Department works to ensure that the knowledge and expertise of Afghans who receive SIVs is captured before their departure from the country? How can this process be improved to ensure that institutional memory and key local relationships do not suffer as a result of the SIV program?

Answer. Through FY 2013, 2,718 Afghans and their family members had been issued visas under the SIV program authorized by section 602(b) of the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009, as amended. In FY 2014, through April 15, we have so far issued 3,902 SIVs to Afghans and their dependents, including 1,457 SIVs to Afghan principal applicants. This is more than in all the previous years combined and more than double the total number of Afghan principal applicants issued in FY 2013 (651). Attached are issuances through the second quarter of FY 2014, available on our public-facing Web site, travel.state.gov.

As of April 16, 10,862 Afghans and their family members have applications pending, including 5,752 principal applicants.

Afghan Locally Employed (LE) Staff employed by the Department of State have received 196 SIVs since 2012. The vast majority (172) have been issued since October 2013. To date, 714 LE Staff have submitted SIV application letters, which represents 82 percent of the currently encumbered 868 positions. In CY 2013, we had a total of 111 LE Staff who left the mission because of the SIV program. This year, we anticipate another 200–250 LE Staff out of a roughly 1,000-strong LE Staff complement will leave the U.S. mission as a result of this program.

To ensure that the knowledge and expertise of Afghans who receive SIVs is captured before their departure from the country, the mission double-encumbers positions so that there is overlap between the departing and incoming employees. The mission also promotes Portfolio Continuity, an IT-based solution for maintaining and passing on institutional knowledge. Post utilizes American and third-country national staff to bolster Embassy technical and administrative capacity, but in terms of local contacts and knowledge, there is no equal substitute for locally engaged personnel. Since anyone we employ—whether directly or through a contracted organization—is eligible to apply for the SIV program after 12 months of employment between October 7, 2001 and December 31, 2014, this limits mitigation options available to the Embassy.

Question #20. The FY14 appropriations bill also called on the State Department to begin planning for the transition of the office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan into the Bureau of South and Central Asia Affairs. This seems to be an important bureaucratic step in order to better coordinate U.S. policy-making in the region.

◆ Have any steps been taken to prepare for the folding of SRAP into SCA?

Answer. The Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) was created in 2009 as a unique stand-alone office given the critical importance of Afghanistan and Pakistan as pivotal countries during a critical period for the United States and the world. The course of events over the past 5 years has necessitated the sustained focus of the SRAP office, particularly as we surged our military and civilian presence in Afghanistan. During this period, the SRAP office has fostered coordination throughout the interagency and within the Department, particularly with the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA), to meet U.S. strategic goals in the region. It has also played the lead role in engaging NATO and other key partners around the world who have supported these efforts.

SRAP and SCA have worked together closely to ensure the best possible coordination to advance U.S. goals in Afghanistan and Pakistan. From SRAP's inception, its principal deputy was also dual-hatted as a DAS in SCA, and has shared a common EX for all management issues and common public diplomacy team with SCA. Another SCA DAS attends all of SRAP's senior staff meetings with the Special Representative, typically three times per week, to ensure alignment with SCA. Additionally, the principal deputies of both offices meet at least biweekly to discuss common concerns, as well as regular meetings between the SCA Assistant Secretary and the Special Representative. There are many areas of joint effort regarding policy development. We share a common communications team.

We have spent the past year working on the first FY15–18 Joint Regional Strategy for internal purposes, as a collaborative resourcing effort by SCA, SRAP, and USAID, which presents a cohesive strategy for the entire region. On key topics such as the role of India in the region, or regional economic connectivity, we have developed working groups that meet regularly and have jointly drafted policy papers. Representatives from SCA and SRAP regularly visit each other's countries to brief on current issues (most recently in late June, when a Deputy Special Representative traveled to Central Asia for Afghan consultations), jointly host meetings with Embassy staff in Washington of their countries of jurisdiction, brief the Hill together, cochair trilateral meetings jointly, participate in the Strategic Dialogues of the other bureau's countries, and clear all their relevant policy papers with each other.

In short, many steps have already been taken to prepare for the eventual folding of SRAP back into SCA. When the time is ripe for a full integration of the two, it will not be difficult to complete. However at this moment, with more than 30,000 U.S. troops still in Afghanistan and the drawdown specifics still being formulated, billions of dollars of civilian assistance still flowing to both countries which requires careful oversight, a fragile elections process still underway in Afghanistan, the continued robust engagement of the International Contact Group for the over 50 international partners that have also appointed SRAPs to facilitate their relationships in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the sustained efforts to partner with Pakistan on core counterterrorism concerns, there is still a critical need for an SRAP office that exclusively focuses attention on this region and coordinates U.S. Government policy. As long as SRAP exists, it will continue the efforts to integrate Afghanistan into the broader region, working closely with SCA colleagues until the Secretary decides that the time is appropriate to formally integrate the two offices.

Question #21. The 2012 Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework provides an important foundation for discussion with the incoming Afghan Government on the accountability of our assistance. In the past, we have incentivized a portion of our

assistance tied to specific Afghan reforms as agreed to in the 2012 Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. This seems to be a good model for how we provide assistance in a country plagued with corruption and weak governmental capacity.

- ◆ Should the U.S. incentivize more of its assistance to Afghanistan as a way toward encouraging Afghan reform and strengthening the confidence of the international community and U.S. taxpayer?

Answer. We agree on the importance of incentivizing positive change in Afghanistan as called for under the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF). A \$175 million, 2-year bilateral incentive fund linked to the TMAF reforms is one part of our broader strategy to increase accountability in our relationship with the Afghan Government. We also support incentivization through multilateral institutions including the Incentive Program of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund and conditions included in the Expanded Credit Facility provided by the International Monetary Fund. Further, we continue to include various reform benchmarks in our direct assistance programs with Afghan ministries, and encourage policy implementation with programs like the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement's Good Performers Initiative and Governor Led Eradication that only disburse project funds after Afghans take action to control illicit narcotics.

Incentive programs and regular international monitoring of TMAF reform indicators have both helped to establish a transparent and constructive dialogue with the Afghan Government on its reform agenda. This dialogue has produced some notable results including the passage and implementation of an improved electoral framework that has so far served Afghanistan well in the first round of the Presidential election. Accountability will be a critical part of our relationship with the new government that will come to power this year, and we plan to continue to use all tools at our disposal to encourage improved governance in Afghanistan.

Question #22. Has the State Department decided on its footprint for its diplomatic presence in Afghanistan? What is the current thinking on the scope and size of the U.S. diplomatic presence in Afghanistan post-2014?

Answer. The President continues to review options regarding the size and scope of our post-2014 military presence, a decision that will influence the scale of the State Department's activities in Afghanistan, the size of its footprint, and the resources the Department requires to secure its facilities and personnel post-2014. We continue to plan for the various options under consideration to ensure we are prepared for whatever option the President may choose. The Department has adjusted its footprint to correspond with each phase of the planned reduction in the overall U.S. presence. As of April, our diplomatic presence includes the Embassy in Kabul, consulates in Herat and Mazar-e Sharif, and six other field platforms, down from a total of 49 field platforms in January 2013. There are approximately 770 direct hire employees and some 850 locally employed staff positions.

Question #23. Pakistan.—The U.S. incentivizes a portion of its “on-budget” assistance in Afghanistan. Would the administration also consider incentivizing a portion of its assistance to Pakistan? What would be the implications of incentivizing a portion of “on-budget” assistance to Pakistan?

Answer. The administration is already achieving the objective of incentivizing assistance through a variety of means. A key goal of U.S. assistance in Pakistan is to strengthen the capacity of the civilian government and to support the Government of Pakistan's economic reform efforts in close association with the IMF. The IMF program has specific reform requirements which Pakistan must meet to receive each tranche of funding. The United States and other major donors are all coordinate to ensure their programs help the Government of Pakistan meet those reform requirements.

We currently allocate approximately 35 percent of U.S. civilian assistance to Pakistan through “on budget” mechanisms. The Government of Pakistan has consistently asked that we increase this amount as much as possible as it helps with the balance of payments, and because they prefer that donor funds be spent on their priority programs.

“On budget,” or government-to-government, assistance in Pakistan is typically provided via project-specific agreements for infrastructure and/or services, such as schools, roads, energy projects, etc. These projects include a series of associated management improvements or reforms such as standing up project management units to ensure agencies can properly manage funds transparently, developing standardized methods for monitoring and evaluating projects, policy or structural changes that will make the project more effective or sustainable, and improving financial management systems. These projects are often accompanied by specialized

technical assistance to help the government implement policy reforms relevant to the given sector, and to improve management structures and practices.

The World Bank does not have a multilateral trust fund in Pakistan like it does in Afghanistan. Their “incentivized” on-budget support comes in the form of a Development Policy Credit which requires specified reforms to be negotiated with the government before the funds are disbursed. The Asian Development Bank, JICA and DFID participate in the Development Policy Credit.

In Afghanistan, our strategy to build accountability into our engagements with the government has multiple layers. The first level of conditionality occurs on a project-by-project basis, consistent with what we described above. In addition, as you note, we designed a separate, limited “incentive program” in Afghanistan that links the disbursement of a portion of our overall assistance to progress on reform benchmarks included in the Tokyo Frameworks. Incentive funds are disbursed to the World Bank-managed funding mechanism that finances certain recurring government civilian expenditures after progress is verified. Our bilateral Afghan incentive program takes advantage of the World Bank mechanism and the agreed upon set of basic governance and economic reforms that the Afghan Government and the International Community agreed upon at the Tokyo Conference in 2012.

We regularly review and assess options for how U.S. assistance could be better utilized to support reform and build host government capacity in Pakistan. However, given that no analogous mechanism to the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund exists in Pakistan and the fact that we do not provide direct budget support in Pakistan, we have not imposed policy-based conditions on our bilateral civilian assistance to date.

Question #24. Central Asia.—The FY14 appropriations law authorized the administration to spend up to \$150 million in Afghanistan funding for programs that support regional economic connectivity, with a focus on Central Asia. This authorization seems to align with the administration’s stated goal of strengthening Afghanistan’s economic links with its neighbors. Does the administration have specific plans to use FY14 appropriated Afghanistan funding for programs that promote regional connectivity in Central Asia? I understand that the administration is conducting a review of U.S. policy in Central Asia. Please describe how the Central Asia policy review process will take place within the State Department and among the inter-agency. In what ways does the administration plan to involve the relevant congressional committees in the review? How will the results of the review, once completed, be integrated into the policymaking process?

Answer. The Department of State and USAID are currently developing plans for the use of FY 2014 foreign assistance funding in Afghanistan, including programs to support Afghanistan’s economic integration into the broader South and Central Asia region. We continue to support constructive regional cooperation and mutually beneficial links between Afghanistan and its neighbors as part of our strategy to help Afghanistan achieve sustainable stability. We appreciate the flexible authority provided in the FY 2014 appropriation that will allow us to use a portion of the resources allocated to Afghanistan for regional activities. We fully expect that, as in years past, a portion of our FY 2014 assistance portfolio in Afghanistan will be focused on increasing Afghanistan’s trade with the region and on facilitating the transit of goods and resources across Afghan territory. For instance, we expect FY 2014 funds will support the continuation of the Afghanistan Trade and Revenue Project that is working to finalize Afghanistan’s accession to the WTO and facilitate increased trade, including through improved coordination with Central Asia. In addition, we are actively considering whether funds allocated to Afghanistan will be used to support regional initiatives, such as those developed by the multilateral Istanbul Process or USAID’s Almaty Consensus.

The Department is reviewing strategy on Central Asia as part of a larger inter-agency process. We welcome continuing consultations with Congress as that process moves forward.

Question #25. How does the recent annexation of Crimea impact the perception of Russia among the countries of Central Asia? Does this provide an opening for greater U.S. engagement with the countries of Central Asia?

Answer. Central Asian states welcome greater U.S. engagement, but at the same time are vulnerable to varying degrees to Russian political and economic pressure. Each country has a unique relationship with Russia and will likely view Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea in light of its own specific national interests.

In the weeks since Russia annexed Crimea, we have sought to counter the Russian narrative on events in Ukraine by increasing our public messaging. We translated several op-eds by independent analysts into Russian and procured the rights

to release the op-eds in Central Asia. Central Asian media outlets have also translated and published State Department press releases, including a recent fact sheet outlining Russia's false claims about Ukraine.

In our interactions with our Central Asian partners, the United States underscores our strong support for Central Asian independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, including our belief that the region is best served by broad partnerships with the United States, Russia, China, EU, India, and others. The United States objective is to provide the Central Asian states with the space necessary to make their own political and economic decisions while reiterating the United States enduring commitment to the region and its long-term democratic and economic development post-2014. We have emphasized to our partners in Central Asia that that this is not a zero-sum game between East and West. We will continue to support the Central Asian states in areas of mutual cooperation to promote each country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while reinforcing the importance of respecting fundamental human rights within their borders.

Question #26. India.—Has the State Department conducted an internal review on the arrest of Indian diplomat Devyani Khobragade? What are the interagency standard operating procedures for arrest practices for those persons accorded status under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963? What lessons did the State Department learn from this incident? Were any reforms in this process instituted following this incident?

Answer. The State Department conducted a thorough review on the arrest of Devyani Khobragade, including the applicability of the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations to the case.

Under international law as stated in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963, foreign diplomatic and consular personnel are under a duty to respect U.S. laws and regulations. At the time of her arrest, Dr. Khobragade enjoyed immunity only for official acts undertaken in her role as Deputy Consul General at India's Consulate General in New York. Consequently, she did not enjoy immunity from the charges against her at the time of her arrest, which related to her private employment of a domestic worker.

Persons enjoying immunity under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations cannot be arrested consistent with the Convention. The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, on the other hand, provides that consular officers can be arrested only with a warrant and for a grave crime, which we have long interpreted to be a felony. Consular officers can be arrested by federal authorities or state and local authorities. There are no set procedures applicable to the arrest of consular officers or other members of the consular post; rather, as with any arrest, how the relevant authorities proceed depends on the circumstances in a particular case. The Department is committed to improving communication and coordination with the Department of Justice and the U.S. Marshals Service regarding the arrest and processing of consular officers, and has been discussing that topic with those agencies in recent months.

As the Department reflects on the period following the arrest, we are encouraged that, even during the toughest moments, our two countries kept open the lines of communication. We knew then and know now that the U.S.-India partnership is too important, and too strong, to be defined by one event. We are carrying that very important lesson forward as we get back to the vital business at hand.

Question #27. MENA Reform.—Then State Department's FY15 request does not seek funding for the Middle East and North Africa Incentive Fund. Instead, funding for political and economic reform will be drawn from the overall Economic Support Funds account.

- ◆ Do you anticipate negative impacts to the effectiveness of U.S. efforts in promoting political and economic reform by moving funding into ESF rather than a stand-alone, specific account?
- ◆ Will this limit flexibility to respond to quickly changing circumstances?
- ◆ \$225M is allocated specifically for MENA reform. How does this break down by country and program? What State Department priorities for the MENA region are addressed by the programs to be funded under this account in FY 15?
- ◆ How will the MENA Transition Fund reinforce and align with the programs funding with the \$225M in ESF, and how will you work to avoid redundancies?

Answer. Given the ongoing volatility in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the importance of continued, active U.S. engagement, we believe it remains critical to request funding in anticipation of future contingencies and reform opportuni-

ties. These requested funds would provide us, in consultation with Congress, the ability to respond rapidly and flexibly to emerging needs and opportunities. The FY 2014 request for the MENA Incentive Fund proposed the creation of a new account. The FY 2015 request for the MENA Initiative instead requests funds within existing accounts, utilizing the authorities available in the Foreign Assistance Act and annual appropriations bills. We have identified and selected those accounts based on experience and lessons learned over the past 3 years, and an internal review of the areas of intervention—such as supporting private sector development and job creation—in which U.S. assistance can advance our national interests and support positive change in the region.

Moreover, by requesting centrally managed money for reforms we retain the flexibility to implement those funds regionally as well as in countries with the strongest need and greatest opportunity. We are confident this mechanism will give us the ability to direct foreign assistance where it can have the greatest impact. The FY 2015 MENA Initiative request also represents a shift from a focus on national governments to working with and empowering citizens around the region on key transition challenges: jobs, security, democratic governance, and human rights.

The \$225 million in ESF that we have requested will focus primarily on reforms on a regional scale. This includes \$50 million for USAID's MENA Investment Initiative, \$50 million for USAID's MENA Water Security Initiative, \$70 million for economic reform programs, \$40 million for governance and civil society programs, and \$15 million for programming in human rights and rule of law. We are not breaking down MENA Initiative funding by country, which ensures it is available for use across the entire region in response to developments on the ground.

The MENA Investment Initiative aims to create jobs and spur private investment by providing financing for startup and early-stage companies and technical support for business development services. The MENA water security initiative aims to combine economic entrepreneurship opportunities with the development of "water-smart" technologies to improve long-term, sustainable access to water. Economic reform funds will support efforts to reduce trade barriers, change policies, and regulations that suppress private investment, and improve revenue management. The \$70 million in MENA economic reforms request includes \$10 million for a potential U.S. contribution to the Deauville Transition Fund. The United States sits on the Deauville Transition Fund Steering Committee, which decides whether to approve or reject project proposals. Steering Committee decisions are made by consensus, which allows the United States to determine whether proposed projects are consistent with U.S. policy objectives and legal requirements. The U.S. position on each proposal is decided through an interagency process, which allows the opportunity to deconflict U.S. Government reform initiatives.

Programming in human rights and rule of law will include funds to counter violent extremism and support security sector reform. Governance funds will include support for elections and political process reforms, strengthening media and internet freedom, and the engagement of civil society with emerging leaders and democratic institutions across the region.

Question #28. Israel.—The President's budget includes \$3.1 billion in security assistance for Israel in line with the U.S.-Israel MOU on assistance. During his trip to Israel last year, President Obama committed to negotiating a new aid agreement with Israel as the current MOU expires in a few years.

- ◆ Can you update us on where talks with Israel stand on a new MOU?
- ◆ How are State and DOD ensuring Israel's Qualitative Military Edge (QME) considering huge sales of sophisticated weaponry to other partners across the region? Are Israeli officials concerned by continued U.S. sales of sophisticated weapons platforms to other countries given the high degree of instability, violence, and sectarianism sweeping the region?

Answer. Discussions with Israel are underway on a new FMF Foreign Military Financing (FMF) MOU. Teams from Israel and the United States and Israel have met several times over the past year both in Israel and Washington on this issue. As we continue these discussions, we are mindful of the mounting fiscal constraints on U.S. foreign assistance allocations.

Israel remains, by a significant margin, the leading recipient of FMF, and the Israel Defense Forces enjoy privileged access to the most advanced U.S. military equipment, such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and the V-22 Osprey. The United States also provides substantial financial and technical assistance to help Israel develop a comprehensive air and missile defense system to protect against rockets, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles.

With regard to Israel's Qualitative Military Edge (QME), this administration has consistently reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining Israel's QME. The adminis-

tration regularly assesses the capabilities of the region's militaries and nonstate actors, and closely monitors regional developments. U.S. and Israeli officials meet regularly to discuss both regional security and U.S. defense cooperation throughout the region.

The sale of sophisticated defense equipment to the Middle East is critical and a key part of an extensive U.S. effort to ensure our partners in the region have credible military capabilities to respond to potential regional threats. The administration does not proceed with the release of U.S. defense articles or services that would threaten our allies and partners including Israel, or compromise regional security in the Middle East.

This administration regularly assesses the capabilities of the region's militaries and nonstate actors and closely monitors regional developments to ensure Israel maintains its QME. We are also taking full advantage of the consultative and political mechanisms currently in place to respond to and act on Israel's concerns. U.S. and Israeli officials meet regularly to discuss both regional security and U.S. defense cooperation throughout the region.

Question #29. Iran.—The administration has said that as part of a final deal with Iran a significant portion of its nuclear infrastructure will have to be dismantled. Meanwhile, Iran is saying “no” to any dismantlement and this week announced that it wants to postpone discussion on the possible military dimensions of its program.

- ◆ How will you address these issues that suggest Iran is not negotiating with the P5+1 in good faith?
- ◆ Do we have a set of hard requirements—a bottom line—that we will insist upon in order to reach an agreement? What can you tell us about these minimum requirements?
- ◆ You and the President have said that we must make it impossible for Iran to get a nuclear bomb. Will we demand that Fordow be closed (not just that there be no enrichment there)? Will we insist that Iran cannot have a heavy water reactor? Do we have a figure in mind for the number of centrifuges Iran can maintain? Can they have any advanced centrifuges?
- ◆ You have indicated that a bad deal is worse than no deal. What, in your view, would constitute a bad deal?
- ◆ Given the increased responsibilities the IAEA is taking on to monitor the Joint Plan of Action, are we providing sufficient funds to that organization to do what it needs to do?

Answer. The administration is working with the P5+1 and EU to reach a comprehensive solution to the international community's concerns with Iran's nuclear program. Our goal remains to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and ensure that its nuclear program is exclusively peaceful. Our negotiations with Iran to date have been respectful, professional, and intense.

All of the things on which we will have to reach agreement in the course of the negotiations are addressed in the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA). We are looking to ensure that we have the right combination of measures in place to ensure Iran cannot acquire a nuclear weapon. Moreover, any long-term comprehensive solution will have to demonstrate to the international community in a meaningful and verifiable way that Iran's nuclear program will be used for exclusively peaceful purposes. This is why we agreed in the JPOA that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed in a comprehensive solution. All members of the P5+1 must agree on any final decision, so we will be able to ensure that an agreement meets our needs. Anything that falls short of meeting our needs would be a bad deal.

The IAEA continues to play an essential role in verifying the nuclear-related understandings contained in the JPOA, and we commend the Director General and the Secretariat for their objective and impartial effort in this enhanced verification role. The IAEA Director General has discussed the need for extra-budgetary contributions to support the Agency's JPOA-related activities, most recently during the March meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors, when he noted that a shortfall still remains in the necessary additional extra-budgetary funding. The United States is committed to working with other IAEA Member States to provide the Agency the resources it needs for carrying out this JPOA-related work.

The United States made a contribution of 750,000 euros in extra-budgetary funding to the IAEA in support of the JPOA and is prepared to contribute additional funding to ensure the Agency has the necessary financial resources to complete its verification under the JPOA. It does not appear that the IAEA will ultimately face a large shortfall, but we will ensure that the IAEA has the funding it needs to finish the job under the JPOA.

Question #30(a-f). Egypt.—The Egyptian Government is making progress in its self-identified roadmap for a Constitutional Referendum and elections. However, media repression, activist intimidation, exclusionary politics, and continued inability of the security services to refrain from using deadly force against protestors are troubling signs. The March 7 joint declaration by the U.N. Human Rights Council underscores international concern about human rights abuses in Egypt. These dynamics will not enable a sustainable, genuine democratic transition and will likely only lead to further instability.

- ◆ (a). When will the State Department certify that Egypt is taking steps to govern democratically in order to release the FY14 assistance? What indicators and benchmarks will you use to make this certification?

Answer. We are not yet in a position to make the 6(A) and 6(B) certifications required by section 7041(a) of the FY14 Appropriations Act and do not have a specific timetable for doing so. However, we have consistently expressed, publically and privately, that the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms is a required benchmark of any peaceful democratic transition. As such, we have expressed grave concern over the politicized arrests, trials, and sentences of civil society activists in Egypt and have urged the government to redress unjust verdicts and provide full and transparent due process to all accused. We continue to urge the Egyptian Government to uphold these democratic principles, many of which are articulated in the new Egyptian Constitution, and to build an environment free of threat and intimidation in order to create a stable and secure country for all Egyptians. As we monitor the situation in Egypt, we will continue to review Egypt's progress toward meeting the 6(A) and 6(B) certification requirements. We will continue to consult with Congress as Egypt's political transition proceeds.

- ◆ (b). The Senate Foreign Relations Committee's bipartisan Egypt Assistance Reform Act of 2014 called for a strategic reassessment of security and economic assistance provided to Egypt in light of new realities on the ground. Is the administration undertaking its own review of U.S. assistance to Egypt? If so, what is the timeline for completing this review and will you engage Congress on your findings?

Answer. The administration undertook a careful and deliberate review of assistance to Egypt in the aftermath of the events of early July and is continuing to review U.S. assistance as the situation evolves. We will continue to hold certain forms of assistance from the Egyptian Government pending credible progress on their political roadmap toward an inclusive, sustainable transition to a civilian-led, democratic government through a free and transparent process. We will continue to engage Congress over developments in Egypt.

- ◆ (c). The administration has also placed policy holds on a number of weapons systems scheduled for delivery to the Egyptian Armed Forces. Egyptian military leaders believe the delivery of Apache helicopters is particularly urgent for continuing Egypt's counterterrorism campaign in the Sinai. Do you agree with the assessment that the Apache helicopters will help fight terrorism in the Sinai? What about the other deliveries currently on hold?

Answer. Egypt faces a persistent and growing threat from extremist groups. Consistent with our policy, our assistance to the Egyptian military will continue to support our national interests in maintaining regional peace and stability and countering transnational threats. This includes aiding border security and supporting counterterrorism operations. Undoubtedly, weapon systems like Apache helicopters are significant tools in Egypt's counterterrorism campaign in the Sinai. We believe these helicopters will help the Egyptian Government counter extremists who threaten U.S., Egyptian, and Israeli security. We will continue to work closely with the government to ensure that our shared security priorities are protected, while we also push the government to take credible steps to improve the democracy and human rights environment.

- ◆ (d). The Egyptian military campaign in the Sinai has been criticized as heavy-handed with numerous civilian casualties, which risks radicalizing extremist groups further. Do you agree? What specific U.S. assistance, equipment, and guidance are Egyptian Security Forces receiving? Is this a counterterror campaign or a counterinsurgency campaign?

Answer. We have seen reports of possible excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the Egyptian military during the current campaign in the Sinai. We are looking into those reports and discussing them with the Egyptian Government. We take allegations of any misuse of our assistance or broaching of the standards of the Law of Armed Conflict very seriously, and we continually review our security assistance

to ensure that it fully complies with U.S. policy objectives. Our military assistance in Egypt is directed toward enabling the Egyptian military to secure the country's borders and counter legitimate terrorist threats, including in the Sinai.

- ◆ (e). Please characterize the Egyptian Armed Forces' efforts to close the tunnels into Gaza and to stabilize the Sinai.

Answer. The Egyptian military is placing a greater priority on border security responsibilities, nonproliferation and counterterrorism—a focus that we strongly support given its importance to the U.S. and Israel's national security priorities. This stronger commitment to border security has manifested itself in the past several months as an Egyptian military campaign of tunnel destruction to limit the flow of weapons and militants into the Sinai from Gaza, steps Israeli officials have welcomed.

- ◆ (f). The actions that the Egyptian military and interim government has taken to suppress the Muslim Brotherhood—especially designating it a terrorist organization—seem guaranteed to lay the foundation for years of insurgency, unrest, and perhaps terrorism. They are validating the contentions of extremist groups that elections and democracy in Egypt and elsewhere are a dead end. Can the Egyptian military, and a military-backed government, really suppress its way to a stable democracy? What are the long-term implications of the policies undertaken by this interim government?

Answer. Our message to the Egyptian Government regarding politicized arrests and the designation of the Muslim Brotherhood has been clear: the government has the responsibility to ensure a comprehensive, inclusive, and peaceful political transition to a civilian-led government that respects the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Egyptians. We believe that stability and prosperity in Egypt can only be achieved through this approach, as a wholly security-focused approach risks increasing radicalization and instability. Our full provision of aid is dependent on credible progress being made toward these goals, and we remind them of this consistently at high levels. We will continue to urge the interim government to follow through on its commitments to uphold democratic principles and to ensure that all Egyptians have the ability to exercise their universal rights and freedoms without fear of intimidation or retribution. We have stressed that this is not only an aspiration of the Egyptian people, but also a necessary component for long-term partnership with the United States and for Egypt's long-term stability.

Question #31 (a-e). Iraq.—Iraq is due to hold national elections at the end of April, but the violence particularly in western Iraq shows no signs of stopping and bombings continue to be a daily occurrence.

- ◆ (a). Given the current level of violence, can Iraq's elections be held on time throughout the country? What are the prospects for any post-election coalition to be able to effectively govern Iraq given the deep ethnic and sectarian tensions and distrust? Will security be further undermined if there is a prolonged government formation period?

Answer. We expect that Iraq will hold its April 30 national elections on time throughout the country, including at polling stations in secure areas of Anbar province. Iraq's Independent High Election Commission (IHEC) has taken steps to ensure that people displaced by the violence in Anbar province can vote in other provinces in Iraq. We continue to support efforts by IHEC and the U.N. Assistance Mission in Iraq to ensure that Iraqi citizens will be able to exercise their right to vote in a secure and fair environment in spite of security threats posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). At the highest levels we continue to impress upon all of Iraq's leaders the importance of coming together quickly after the elections to form a government.

- ◆ (b). In the FY15 budget request, Iraq is still defined as a "front line" state receiving funding for both U.S. operations and assistance in the Overseas Contingency Account. The administration envisions this funding as a downward "glide-path" as Iraq becomes more stable and prosperous and is better able to fund its own development and defense. Given the current state of affairs in Iraq, is providing such a large amount of U.S. assistance still in the U.S. national interest? When will Iraq be able to fund its own security requirements?

Answer. Providing robust assistance to Iraq is not only in the best interests of the U.S., but in our national security interest, as well. Given the critical nature of our strategic relationship in an increasingly volatile region, it is crucial that we provide the necessary support to build Iraq's capacity in securing its borders, combating nonstate-based terrorist and criminal interests, and promoting regional stability.

However, as Iraq's internal capabilities have improved, the U.S. has consistently reduced our levels of direct support. For example, from FY 2013 to the FY 2015 request, Iraq's bilateral FMF account level has seen a \$221.32 million dollar decrease (-46.96 percent). Over the same period, the combined values of the NADR, INCLE, and IMET accounts have been reduced by 20.78 percent (-\$9.51 million). Iraq still needs our help.

- ◆ (c). You have requested \$250 million in security assistance for Iraq in FY15. What is your confidence level that the Iraqi Security Forces will use U.S.-funded equipment responsibly and effectively?

Answer. Since 2005, Iraq has received FMS equipment, training, and support valued at \$15.5 billion; more than 75 percent (\$11.8 billion) of which has been funded by the Iraqi Government. The Iraqi Security Forces are engaged in a daily battle against an ISIL threat that now resembles more of a professional army than a terrorist organization. The ISF are suffering significant casualties (over 1,000 dead in 2013) and battle damage—over 50 percent of their helicopters have suffered combat damage and several have been shot down. In recent years, the U.S. has based its decisions to reduce Iraq assistance levels on projections based off steadily increasing oil production, exports and revenues. However, for 2013 and 2014, the projections for increasing oil revenue are proving to have been overly optimistic. Iraq has already spent a substantial amount to modernize its forces.

Although Iraq's host-nation funded FMS program is significant at \$15.5 billion, nearly all of Iraq's available defense spending is focused on supporting the immediate and substantial needs for the counterterrorism fight. Over the past 6 months, Iraq has paid \$250 million in FMS to fund an urgent request to expedite, with the help of Congress, deliveries of small arms, ammunition and other munitions.

- ◆ (d). I remain concerned about the safety and security of the residents at Camp Liberty, who continue to be in danger from rocket attacks and already survived a horrific attack at Camp Ashraf last summer. The Iraqi Government has reiterated its commitment to their protection while we continue to work on resettlement outside of Iraq.

Answer. Our Foreign Military Financing (FMF) request for FY 2015 of \$250 million is a critical piece of the ISF's defense funding strategy. While FMF provides specific counterterrorism and niche needs, the bulk of the program focuses on longer term professionalization and logistics capacity-building efforts. We take end-use monitoring of all U.S.-provided equipment seriously. OSC-I works closely with senior Iraqi MOD leadership to stress the importance of responsible use and stringent management of all weapons systems, and the GOI continues to strengthen its relevant security procedures. OSC-I regularly conducts inspections on U.S.-provided systems already fielded in Iraq and thus far have found no end use violations.

- ◆ (e). i—Has the Iraqi Government completed the installation of T-walls at Camp Liberty? If not, what is the timeline for completion and what actions is the U.S. Government undertaking to hasten this progress?
- ◆ (e). ii—The U.S. is contributing \$1 million to a United Nations trust fund for the resettlement of MEK members outside of Iraq. Please provide an update on (1) status of this funding, (2) status of Iraqi Government donations to the trust fund, and (3) next steps and timeline for resettlement of MEK members outside of Iraq.

Answer. We continue to work with the GOI and the U.N. to ensure the protection of those currently residing at Camp Hurriya. U.N. monitors also visit the camp daily in accordance with the MOU to assess human rights and humanitarian conditions at the camp, which meet and exceed international humanitarian standards.

T-wall installation at Camp Hurriya, in accordance with a mutually agreed plan between the GOI and the residents, is ongoing. Currently, there are over 1,488 large T-walls, 520 bunkers, nearly 700 small T-walls and 95,000 sandbags in the camp.

On March 20, Congress cleared the Congressional Notification for the U.S. Government's \$1 million grant to the United Nations trust fund for the resettlement of Camp Hurriya residents outside of Iraq. The funds will soon be available so that NEA can finalize the grant agreement with the U.N.

The Iraqi Government pledged \$500,000 to the United Nations trust fund for the resettlement of Camp Hurriya residents outside of Iraq. The transfer of funds is still in process, keeping in mind that the GOI has not yet passed its 2014 budget.

We intend that an interagency interview team will begin evaluating candidates for U.S. resettlement in May 2014. Our initial goal is to identify at least 100 qualified individuals for U.S. resettlement, subject to security conditions, cooperation of the MEK, and availability of interested candidates. However, we cannot predict how many candidates will successfully complete the interview vetting and robust secu-

rity vetting process. The earliest possible date that fully cleared candidates for U.S. resettlement may arrive in the United States is summer 2014. We will continue to keep Congress informed of the results of the interviews and security vetting.

The Senior Advisor for MEK Resettlement will continue to hold discussions with a number of countries, primarily in Europe, regarding the possibility of accepting Camp Hurriya residents.

The timing of complete relocation of Camp Hurriya residents depends on how quickly countries will agree to offer places for relocation, process individual cases, and issue entry permits as well as continued cooperation.

Question #32(a-j). My committee provided the administration with Authorization for Use of Military Force last year. It is clear that a credible military threat paved the way for a deal on Syria's chemical weapons stockpile. Now, 6 months later, the Assad regime continues to miss deadlines for the removal of its chemical weapons, the Geneva 2 process has failed to realize the goal of transitional governing body, and a stalemate on the ground in Syria persists between Assad and rebel forces. Meanwhile, Syria is a magnet for violent extremists and millions of Syrian inside and outside the country are in critical need of humanitarian aid. The current policy is not working.

♦ (a). Do you agree with this assessment? What can be done to shift the stalemate on the ground in Syria?

Answer. We share your deep concern that the conflict in Syria continues to worsen. While we have already taken important steps across multiple lines of effort, we must do more. We are looking at what more we can do and also at what our international partners can do to support the moderate opposition more effectively and to change the realities on the ground, but we must reiterate that a political solution—and not a military solution—offers the best means to resolve the Syrian crisis.

♦ (b). What is the administration's strategy for ending the Syrian war?

Answer. Our policy in Syria is to isolate and degrade violent extremist networks and to facilitate an orderly, negotiated end to the conflict, through a clear transition to a new, competent, and representative authority. We have identified and are working to advance the following six specific policy interests: (1) countering violent extremism and preventing the establishment of a terrorist safe-haven in Syria; (2) avoiding the collapse of the Syrian state and its institutions; (3) preventing the transfer or use of chemical weapons (CW); (4) providing support to Syria's neighbors; (5) alleviating humanitarian suffering resulting from the conflict; and (6) helping foster a negotiated transition leading to a representative government that is responsive to the needs of the Syrian people.

Our strategy for achieving these policy goals is to leverage pressure on the regime so that it views a political agreement with the moderate Syrian opposition as its only viable exit plan.

We have made some important progress. Over the past few months the State Department and USAID have stepped up efforts to channel resources from the \$260 million in our nonlethal assistance programs directly to local and provincial governments and civil society groups, as well as to the Syrian Opposition Coalition (SOC). In towns and cities under opposition control, we are beginning to provide stipends to local law enforcement and teachers to help them stay on the job rather than ceding the ground to extremist groups. We continue to train local councils and civil society organizations in administration and local governance. We are also providing equipment and supplies to help them provide basic services, including heavy equipment such as generators, cranes, trucks, and ambulances. This assistance includes \$80 million in nonlethal support to the Supreme Military Command (SMC). Providing this support to groups engaged in a highly fluid battle zone has been challenging, but remains an important part of our strategy nonetheless.

We recognize that our nonlethal assistance will not directly determine outcomes on the battlefield nor will it, on its own, force Assad to change his calculus about trying to hold on to power. However, our assistance does provide needed equipment and supplies, while sending a signal both to those inside and outside Syria of our strong support for the moderate opposition. Our assistance also helps maintain basic administrative institutions, helps prevent the formation of vacuums in services and security that extremists exploit, and helps create relationships with moderates who can, when this conflict is over, form the basis of a transitional government.

As the situation in Syria remains dynamic, so too must our approach. We are assessing our tools to better achieve our policy goals. We are working more closely with regional partners to maximize the impact of our collective assistance at the same time that we are improving our own assistance channels. Importantly, we

share a common understanding with our gulf partners regarding the importance of ensuring that extremists not benefit from external assistance.

- ◆ (c). The FY15 budget request includes \$155 million for support to the Syrian opposition. Please describe the types of support that this funding will provide. How will this assistance directly contribute to shifting the stalemate on the ground?

Answer. The FY 2015 request of \$155 million will continue ongoing opposition support efforts, including support to national- and local-level opposition groups as they strive to achieve and implement a negotiated political solution. As negotiations progress, and should a transition occur, U.S. nonlethal assistance will help consolidate the political transition, support democratic processes, strengthen criminal justice institutions within Syria, and enable reconstruction and recovery efforts, in coordination with the other international donors. Some of these funds may also be used to help mitigate the economic, security, and infrastructure impacts this ongoing crisis and its refugee flows have on neighboring countries.

- ◆ (d). The Syrian Opposition Coalition (SOC) performed admirably at Geneva, but lacks street credibility and key local relationships with communities on the ground. What is the administration doing to help the SOC develop these links and gain credibility?

Answer. We share your assessment of the importance of strengthening ties between the SOC and communities inside Syria. We are addressing this issue diplomatically in senior-level meetings with SOC leadership and through our foreign assistance programs. We seek every opportunity to involve the SOC in public fora with Syrian civil society leaders and local media and have successfully facilitated multiple SOC meetings with local councils, media outlets, and grassroots organizations over the past year.

We have pledged \$10 million to support local councils across Syria, an initiative that is implemented in close coordination with SOC's Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU)—and we have provided approximately \$700,000 to help the ACU strengthen its ability to respond to the needs of Syrians and conduct outreach inside Syria. With our help, the SOC's ACU has taken a lead role in determining the distribution of \$17.5 million in USG-purchased and SOC/ACU-branded equipment, such as fire trucks, water bladders, ambulances, food baskets, and winterization and school supplies. In January 2014, the State Department finalized a \$2 million grant to the SOC that provided operational support and resources to increase their connectivity to local actors. These funds supported their participation in the Geneva II process and will allow for SOC leaders to host townhall meetings, travel regularly to Syria, and open offices across Syria.

- ◆ (e). What new initiatives and assistance is the administration planning to provide to the Syrian opposition as a direct result of President Obama's visit to Saudi Arabia?

Answer. President Obama's recent trip to Saudi Arabia was intended to enhance our consultation with regional allies regarding the Syria conflict along with other issues. We are actively evaluating what more we can do and what our partners can do to support the moderate opposition more effectively and to change the realities on the ground. The President and King Abdullah discussed Syria extensively, including our shared objectives of bringing about a political transition, supporting the moderate opposition, and isolating violent extremists. Our cooperation on these efforts continues to improve.

- ◆ (f). How will the U.S. Government respond if Assad fails to implement the legally binding requirements set out in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2139?

Answer. Under Resolution 2139, the Security Council intends "to take further steps in the case of noncompliance." We are working with our like-minded countries on the Security Council on what further steps are available to ensure full implementation of the resolution's provisions. As Ambassador Power recently said, "we are obliged to pursue action not just by the seriousness with which we approach our Security Council mandate and the commitments we make, but also, of course, out of a basic sense of decency."

- ◆ (g). What are the prospects that Assad will run in Syria's elections projected to take place in June 2014? Will he win?

Answer. As we noted in our joint press release with London 11 partners on April 3, "recent actions by the Assad regime to pave the way for Presidential elections in the coming months, including the promulgation of a new electoral law, have no credibility. Bashar al-Assad intends these elections to sustain his dictatorship. They

would be conducted in the midst of a conflict, only in regime-controlled areas, and with millions of Syrians disenfranchised, displaced from their homes, or in refugee camps.” A sham electoral process led by Assad, who has overseen a regime that the independent international commission of inquiry has concluded has committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, mocks the innocent lives lost in the conflict.

If the Assad regime goes forward with this display of elections, it will announce Bashar al-Assad as the winner and that most of the international community will recognize the absurdity and invalidity of this exercise.

- ◆ (h). Recent reports out of Iran suggest that voices within the Iranian Government, academia and society may be in the early stages of conflict fatigue, questioning the wisdom of supporting Assad in a long conflict. Do we have any evidence that the Iranians may now view Assad as expendable, while remaining supportive of the regime?

Answer. Iranian politicians, academics, and other private citizens, have made public statements voicing their criticism of Iran’s Syria policy or support to Assad at various times since the conflict began. Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Amir Abdollahian, who oversees the Syria portfolio in Iran’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is cited in April 2 media reports as saying that Iran does not want Assad to stay in power indefinitely.

After Iran announced the sending of 30,000 tons of food aid to Syria, many Iranian citizens voiced opposition to the move, pointing to the contradiction of Iran sending food to Syria when domestic food needs were unmet.

- ◆ (i). Most accounts now hold that the Assad regime is no longer fully cooperating with the agreement on removing their chemical weapons, certainly doing the barest minimum to comply.
 - Please provide an update on the status of this agreement and its implementation. What consequences will Assad face for not living up to the agreement?

Answer. As of April 8, 2014, just over 54 percent of all declared chemicals have been removed from Syria, and 93 percent of the regime’s stockpile of isopropanol (a binary component of the nerve agent sarin) has been destroyed in country. In addition, the OPCW has verified the functional destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons production, mixing, and filling equipment. Still, much work remains to be done.

We continue to work with the international community to maintain pressure on the regime to deliver all of the remaining chemicals for removal by the international community as urgently as possible. We believe the Syrians are fully capable of fulfilling their obligation to complete the removal effort by late April, and, if they do, we believe the June 30 target date for the complete elimination of the program remains achievable.

We continue to monitor the regime’s compliance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, UNSCR 2118, and related OPCW Executive Council decisions closely. Those obligations are clear, and we will continue to underscore the importance of the Assad regime’s continued cooperation. The Security Council decided in UNSCR 2118 to impose measures under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter in the event of noncompliance with the resolution.

- ◆ (j). Russia continues to undermine efforts to reach meaningful progress and a negotiated transition in Syria. What actions is the U.S. prepared to take to counter Russia’s continued supply of weapons and support to Syria?

Answer. We are very concerned about Russia’s arms supplies to the Assad regime, as they serve to reinforce the regime and make a negotiated political solution more elusive. What is clearly needed is for Russia to push harder on the Assad regime and to recognize what’s at stake is not just for Syria but for the whole region. We have made this clear to the Russians. We continue to evaluate all available options that would exert strong pressure on the regime and countries that support it to bring about an end to the violence and enable a democratic transition. I assure you that we continue to work in coordination with our international partners to force a shift in the regime’s behavior.

Question #33 (a-b). Jordan.—Jordan is a reliable partner and a stabilizing presence in a difficult region. It is one of only two Arab countries to have signed a peace treaty with Israel and establish full diplomatic relations. At the same time, Jordan faces serious economic strains made worse by an ongoing wave of Syrian refugees who are taxing Jordan’s infrastructure and competing with Jordanians for jobs.

- ◆ (a). What impact is the flood of Syrian refugees having on Jordan’s political and economic stability? How is U.S. assistance specifically supporting Jordan in hosting such a high level of refugees?

Answer. Jordan currently hosts approximately 600,000 Syrian refugees; approximately 85 percent live in host communities with access to subsidized food, energy, health, and education. The influx of Syrian refugees into Jordanian communities has strained government-provided services, and generated complaints from host communities directed at the government. Schools are overcrowded, even with double-shifting of classes. Already grappling with water conservation issues prior to the influx, municipalities in northern Jordan are unable to meet increased demands on water and sanitation systems. Refugees from Syria represent 9 percent of health needs in northern Jordan, leading to shortages in medical supplies and medications.

Jordanian authorities are also concerned about the potential for the export of extremism from Syria into Jordan.

The United States has provided more than \$268 million in humanitarian assistance to international organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to support refugees from Syria and related host country needs in Jordan since the start of the Syria crisis. For example, USAID has built five new schools in northern Jordan, is expanding 67 existing schools to accommodate the influx of Syrian children and youth, and is supporting teacher training to prepare educators for the challenges of crowded classrooms and students with very different educational and psychosocial needs. Additionally, USAID has expanded programs for water conservation, water catchment and storage, and water infrastructure repair and maintenance.

In addition to significant amounts of bilateral development and economic assistance, the United States provided an additional \$300 million in direct budget support to mitigate costs associated with the Syria crisis. We have also provided a \$1.25 billion, 7-year sovereign loan guarantee to Jordan. Additionally, the administration announced its intention to provide Jordan with a follow-on \$1 billion loan guarantee in 2014. These guarantees strengthen the Government of Jordan's ability to maintain access to international financing, while enabling it to achieve its economic development and reform goals—even while addressing the costs of hosting 600,000 refugees from Syria.

♦ (b). Is the assistance that we are providing to Jordan to secure their border with Syria sufficient?

Answer. The administration is committed to enhancing Jordan's border security, particularly in light of threats stemming from the Syria crisis. Both the Departments of State and Defense have committed funding to these efforts and we believe that, once completed, these programs will contribute substantially to strengthening Jordan's capability to defend its borders. The main effort driven by the State Department is the Jordan Border Security Program (JBSP), which is a three-phase project designed to secure Jordan's borders with Syria (Phases 1 and 2) and Iraq (Phase 3). This program has provided critical support to Jordan's border security, including by providing detection equipment along the border, to enable security forces to identify and respond to threats.

Question #34 (a-e). As Deputy Assistant Secretary Lawrence Silverman stated on February 26, "the February 15 formation of a government by Prime Minister Suleiman after 10 months of gridlock, is a welcome development for the Lebanese people, and an opportunity for the United States and Lebanon to work together to achieve shared goals."

♦ (a). What are the U.S.-Lebanon shared goals? How has U.S. assistance contributed to advancing these shared goals?

Answer. Our shared goals are the sovereignty, security, stability, and independence of the Lebanese state as it plays a constructive role in achieving regional peace and prosperity. We share the goal of the development of Lebanese democracy and economic growth. The Lebanese people are rightly proud of their long democratic tradition since independence in 1948. This democracy has been tested through war and conflict, but with our assistance the state has demonstrated an ability to represent the interests of all Lebanese people, even in the face of entities that threaten the state's sovereignty, including but not limited to Hezbollah. U.S. support strengthens Lebanon's state institutions, including the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the Internal Security Forces (ISF), which not only helps stabilize Lebanon, but also provides the mechanisms for the Lebanese to address the country's political, economic, and social future collectively. We also support democracy in Lebanon by encouraging the functioning of the processes outlined in the Lebanese Constitution, exemplified by the recently formed Cabinet, and now the call for a Presidential election on time free of foreign interference.

- ◆ (b). Lebanon hosts more Syrian refugees than any other country in the region. Last week that number passed 1 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon. What impact is the flood of Syrian refugees having on Lebanon's political and economic stability? How is U.S. assistance specifically supporting Lebanon in hosting such a high level of refugees?

Answer. There is not a single Lebanese community that has not been affected by the refugee crisis; the Syrian refugees reside in 1,600 communities in Lebanon. With refugee arrivals continuing unabated, the sheer volume of need has overwhelmed the ability of the central government and local municipalities to respond to the enormous challenge of providing public services to this large and growing population. The United States is the single-largest contributor of humanitarian assistance to the Syria humanitarian response, providing more than \$1.7 billion to date, of which more than \$340 million supports humanitarian organizations assisting those in need in Lebanon. International agencies and nongovernmental organizations use contributions from the United States and other major donors to provide food, clean water, emergency shelter, health care, and education for refugees. These contributions help keep refugees safe and help alleviate the burden on communities generously hosting refugees.

We are directly assisting host communities that bear the burden of the refugees. For example, we provide support via U.N. agencies to 27 Ministry of Social Affairs Social Development Centers serving both local communities and refugees. These centers, which provide primary health care, education, vocational training and activities for Lebanese children in local communities, have been designated as focal points for refugee service delivery as well. Beyond serving as platforms for programs, these centers bring local residents and refugees together to build a sense of community and reduce social tensions. In addition to our humanitarian assistance, the United States provides Lebanon with annual development and economic assistance that supports Lebanon's long-term development priorities and addresses needs in communities that are hosting refugees from Syria.

- ◆ (c). What actions has the State Department taken to mediate the maritime boundary dispute between Israel and Lebanon?

Answer. The most promising economic sector in Lebanon in the medium- to long-term is the hydrocarbons industry. Lebanon may have substantial reserves of offshore natural gas and maybe even oil deposits. However, the lengthy political stalemate of the last caretaker government, as well as an unresolved maritime boundary with Israel, has prevented Lebanon from further exploring its offshore resources. No exploration has taken place, and any potential finds would take a number of years to begin producing, but U.S. companies are interested in this potential new sector.

The United States engages both the Lebanese and Israelis to encourage an arrangement, without prejudice to competing claims over maritime boundaries, whereby international petroleum companies can have the confidence to explore and develop Lebanon's resources. We hope the new government will continue efforts to find such an arrangement, and we hope the Lebanese people will be able to enjoy the benefits of these resources. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Amos Hochstein has been engaged with Lebanese officials and was in Beirut earlier this month for discussions with the new government. We continue to make progress toward a mutual understanding between Israel and Lebanon and continue to encourage both sides to avoid activity in the disputed area.

- ◆ (d). The Government Accountability Office reported in March 2013 ("Security Assistance: Evaluations Needed to Determine Effectiveness of U.S. Aid to Lebanon's Security Forces" (GAO-13-289) that State had evaluated only one of its security assistance programs for Lebanon (the INCLE program); neither State nor DOD had completed plans or established timeframes to evaluate the other programs. State's evaluation policy requires that certain programs be evaluated periodically. Without such evaluations, State and DOD have little objective evidence to show that the programs have been effective or what the proper mix of programs should be.

- What steps have State and DOD taken since March 2013 to evaluate the effectiveness of its security-related assistance programs in Lebanon?
- Without such evaluations, how do State and DOD assess that their security-related assistance programs are achieving their goals?

Answer. The Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM) is in the process of contracting a program evaluation of State-funded military grant assistance programs in Lebanon. The 6-month evaluation is expected to start in the spring of 2014. As we noted in our formal response to the GAO, State relies on feedback from our DOD implementers and the Lebanese Armed Forces to shape our

military assistance programs. PM uses this feedback, in concert with planning documents from Embassy Beirut and DOD, to direct security assistance funding allocations each year. Additionally, State relies on the annual Performance Plan and Report, which assesses all State-funded assistance to Lebanon, to provide additional information on program success. Many of our individual programs have evaluation criteria and indicators built into their implementing mechanisms. In short, State uses all available information to inform the direction of our assistance and adjust the programs if found to be deficient. We believe that this information provides a limited, but significant, evaluative role in determining the effectiveness of our assistance.

- ◆ (e). Press accounts at the end of 2013 reported that Saudi Arabia is promising to provide Lebanon with \$3 billion for the purchase of weapons and equipment from a third party.
 - Does such a large increase of funding complement or conflict with the much smaller total of U.S. security-related funding of \$671 million allocated for Lebanese security forces from FY09–13?
 - Can the Lebanese Armed Forces effectively absorb the amount of equipment such funding would provide?

Answer. We have long encouraged our partners who are interested in a secure and sovereign Lebanon to support the LAF, a key national institution and a guarantor of Lebanese stability. We are talking with Saudi Arabia and France about how their assistance can best help enhance LAF capabilities. Saudi Arabia's announcement of a \$3 billion package, to be dispersed over several years, does not replace and should not preclude U.S. efforts to bolster the LAF. U.S. FMF is being used to underwrite part of a 5-year \$1.5 billion Capabilities Development Plan developed by DOD and the LAF, with defined priorities from the Joint Capabilities Review. We have consulted closely with our partners who have an interest in supporting Lebanon's stability to ensure that all of our assistance is complementary. We recently participated in a meeting of the International Support Group for Lebanon in Rome that focused the attention of donor countries on Lebanon's security sector needs, in order to ensure that assistance is complementary and focused on enhancing the LAF's capabilities.

In general, our FMF assistance has been essential to rebuilding the LAF from a broken institution after the civil war into the military force it is now—we provide equipment and training to help the LAF become a stronger force. We are a trusted partner for the LAF.

U.S. security assistance is also crucial to help the LAF achieve its long-term objective to become the sole legitimate defender of Lebanon's sovereignty as called for by UNSCR 1701. Our sustained support—through FMF, 1206, and IMET, among other funds—is critical to maintaining and improving the LAF's ability to respond to threats, including increasing extremist violence in Lebanon. Already this year, several suicide bombs have detonated around the country, and violence from Syria continues to spill over and threatens to destabilize Lebanon. The LAF is the best state institution to counter this threat.

Question #35. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).— The U.S.-Gulf relationship is rooted in decades of cooperation and partnership as Deputy Secretary Burns recently noted.

A pillar of U.S. engagement with gulf countries has focused on building a capable, unified, and effective regional security architecture. A new U.S. initiative announced by Secretary Hagel in December is Foreign Military Sales to the GCC as a collective. Please provide an update on this initiative. How have gulf countries responded to this initiative? How will the recent recall of Saudi, UAE, and Bahrain's Ambassadors from Qatar impact this initiative? What about the impact on other regional policies, such as coordination on Iran and Syria?

Our gulf partners have made clear that Iran's illicit nuclear program is only one concern. A potentially greater threat is Iran's destabilizing asymmetric activities and support for terrorism across the region. How is the administration responding to security concerns raised by gulf partners? What are we doing to reassure gulf partners in light of these concerns?

Answer. The President's December 16 designation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as an international organization eligible to procure U.S. defense articles and services complements U.S. foreign policy goals to promote security and stability throughout the gulf. Our objectives include enhancing the military professionalism of key U.S. allies, strengthening multilateral ballistic missile defense cooperation with all six Gulf States, and improving the collective GCC capacity to deter terror-

ists and address humanitarian emergencies. The regional response to the designation itself has been positive, though no new cases have been developed at this time.

Recent intra-GCC tensions have not altered our overarching foreign policy objectives in the region. To cite one recent example, counterterrorism and border security experts from the United States and all six Gulf States met in Riyadh on April 3 to discuss expanding multilateral cooperation. Likewise, Secretary of Defense Hagel will convene a U.S.–GCC Defense Ministerial in the region this spring. That said, we have encouraged our GCC partners to work out their policy differences. They have made good progress in doing so, and agreed on a set of principles recently to manage the issues in question.

We share the Gulf States' concerns regarding Iran's destabilizing regional behavior. The administration regularly briefs senior gulf officials on the status of P5+1 negotiations. These conversations and senior-level travel to and from the region, most prominently the President's March 28–29 visit to Riyadh, demonstrate our sustained commitment to the security of the gulf region.

Progress on the nuclear issue does not change our resolve in pushing back against Iranian support for terrorism, threats against our friends and partners, and violations of human rights. As the President said on November 23, 2013, "As we go forward, the resolve of the United States will remain firm, as will our commitment to our friends and allies—particularly Israel and our gulf partners, who have good reason to be skeptical about Iran's intentions."

Question #36. The system of kafala, or employer sponsorship, is prevalent in many GCC countries. Foreign workers under the kafala system are often subject to abuses such as wage theft, substandard housing and dangerous working conditions. I have written letters to you, Mr. Kerry, and International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) President Sepp Blatter highlighting my concerns.

- ◆ I am particularly worried by the deaths of 44 Nepalese workers in Qatar last year. How is the State Department engaging with the Qatari Government to ensure that protections for workers under Qatari law are enforced and that workers building infrastructure for the 2022 World Cup are not subjected to the same conditions that led to the deaths of those 44 Nepalese?
- ◆ How is the State Department engaging with other GCC countries to ensure that rights of foreign workers are protected?

Answer. Advancing the protection of labor rights, particularly for migrant workers, is a priority of our diplomatic engagement with the governments of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The Department's annual Human Rights and Trafficking in Persons Reports discuss these challenges, highlighting both progress and areas where additional action is needed by the governments of the GCC countries. The sponsorship system binds foreign workers to their designated employers, giving them the unilateral authority to cancel residency permits, deny workers' ability to change employers, and deny permission to leave the country. This leaves workers vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, some of which amounts to human trafficking.

We carefully followed the reports of Nepalese worker deaths in Qatar last summer with great concern. We engage the Government of Qatar regularly on these issues, and the U.S. Ambassador has consistently raised concerns about the restrictive nature of the sponsorship system and encouraged more robust enforcement of the labor and antitrafficking laws with senior Qatari officials. Over the past year, the Government of Qatar has taken steps to strengthen its legal framework and improve protections for foreign workers, but clearly more needs to be done. We will continue to urge greater Qatari efforts to enforce its laws vigorously and to reform existing laws and practices to ensure the thorough protection of workers' fundamental labor rights in Qatar. Our Embassies undertake similar discussions in each of the GCC countries, pressing for enforcement of existing labor and antitrafficking laws and reforms to those laws in cases when they do not provide sufficient protections.

Additionally, we are working with international organizations to increase awareness in countries of origin about workers' rights and the risks associated with working abroad, including human trafficking. Addressing the problems along the migration trajectory, in origin and destination countries, is critical to protecting human rights of migrant workers wherever they are.

Question #37 (a-d). Tunisia.—In another hopeful sign for an inclusive, peaceful democratic transition, on March 6 the Tunisian President lifted the State of Emergency which had been in effect since the initial revolution began in 2011. The State Department has now lifted its Travel Warning as well. Tunisia remains perhaps the best hope for successful democratic transition in the MENA region, but serious economic challenges lie ahead.

- ◆ (a). What are the U.S. political, economic, and security interests in, and goals for, Tunisia? How does the U.S. strategy for engagement and assistance align with these objectives?
- ◆ (b). What types of U.S. assistance, security and otherwise, have been most effective since 2011 in addressing Tunisia's security challenges and promoting economic and political reform, and an active civil society?
- ◆ (c). Tunisian officials tell us they would like a public declaration of support for the eventual start of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations. What is the administration's position on a U.S.-Tunisia FTA?
- ◆ (d). The FY15 request for bilateral ESF to Tunisia is \$30 million, which also includes \$20 million in support of the Tunisian-American Enterprise Fund. Tunisia was not a recipient of a significant bilateral assistance package from the U.S. prior to 2011; as a result, funds had to be mobilized from a variety of other accounts to support Tunisia's transition. Secretary Kerry noted recently that "since the revolution began, the United States has committed more than 400 million in foreign assistance for the transition."
 - However, the FY15 request of \$30 million is far below the administration's FY14 request of \$61 million for bilateral assistance to Tunisia. Given the extremely important and significant political progress Tunisia has achieved in the past few months, why is the administration decreasing Tunisia's bilateral aid package?

Answer. We are working closely with the Tunisians to support their democratic transition and help them become a stable and prosperous country. Tunisian Prime Minister Jomaa led a high-level delegation to Washington to hold the first-ever U.S.-Tunisia Strategic Dialogue on April 3 to discuss our strategic bilateral priorities in the areas of economics and investment, security, and governance and partnerships over the next year. President Obama and Prime Minister Jomaa met at the White House on April 4 to further these discussions.

The United States is providing more than \$400 million in assistance intended to support Tunisia's democratic transition and includes security, economic, and governance components. Our security assistance bolsters Tunisia's capacity to address internal and external threats, particularly on countering regional terrorist groups, including improving the Tunisian Military's ability to obtain and maintain equipment necessary to secure its borders and locate terrorist suspects. Our Foreign Military Financing and International Military Education and Training programs provide leadership and counterterrorism training to Ministry of Defense officials. Similarly, International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE)- and Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA)-funded programs have been effective in supporting leadership development and police reform at the Ministries of Interior and Justice. Specifically, the assistance provided to date has been effective in improving the capacity of the police to respond to hostage-rescue situations, provide crowd control support in a safe and humane manner, and improve corrections management and emergency response.

The Government of Tunisia continues to face daunting economic challenges. The estimated 2.8-percent growth rate for 2014 is not expected to reduce the overall unemployment rate of 16 percent. The United States prioritizes our economic assistance to support Tunisia's fiscal needs as well as provide for overall economic growth and job creation, particularly in the small and medium enterprise sector.

For example, our Information and Communications Technology Development program generated more than 2,600 Tunisian jobs and assisted in Tunisian Tax Code reform. Other U.S. programs have focused on developing Tunisia's small and medium sized enterprises and creating the market space for this sector to flourish, including facilitating loans to small enterprises. To respond to Tunisia's near-term fiscal challenges and support a reform agenda, the administration announced its intention, pending congressional approval, to provide Tunisia with a second loan guarantee allowing the government to raise approximately \$500 million from international capital markets at favorable rates.

Governance programming also remains an assistance priority. During 2014, we plan to provide assistance to support Tunisia's upcoming Presidential and parliamentary elections. U.S.-funded activities will include nonpartisan domestic election observation and parallel vote tabulation, as well as international observation conducted through our partners the National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute. U.S. assistance to Tunisia has also furthered our partnership with Tunisian civil society and advanced the rule of law and human rights. We remain actively engaged with Tunisian civil society and are providing capacity-build and civic engagement trainings.

The United States and Tunisia seek to broaden and deepen trade and business relations. We have conveyed to Tunisia that, while we are ready to deepen our engagement, raise the visibility of our relationship, and pursue concrete outcomes, we are not in a position to enter into or announce FTA negotiations at this time. To that end, the bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council is scheduled to meet in June in Tunis. The Council plans to address specific issues aimed at facilitating trade and investment, including in the areas of market access, entrepreneurship, information and communication technology services, and intellectual property. We will also discuss how to build a more robust bilateral trade and investment relationship and liberalize the exchange of goods and services.

Our FY 2015 request for Tunisia represents an increase—not a decrease—from the administration’s FY 2014 request. The total FY 2014 request for Tunisia is approximately \$62 million, including ESF and other bilateral security assistance accounts, and the FY 2015 request is approximately \$66 million. While both requests include \$30 million in Economic Support Fund (ESF)—of which \$20 million is for the Tunisian-American Enterprise Fund—the FY 2015 request includes an increase in security assistance reflecting the prioritization of and increased need for U.S. security assistance to Tunisia.

Question #38. Algeria.—Algeria is the Maghreb’s economic, energy and security powerhouse, with tremendous potential. Yet an ailing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika is seeking an unprecedented fourth term in the April 17 elections, which could undermine others seeking greater political and economic reform.

- ◆ What are the U.S. political, economic, and security interests in, and goals for, Algeria? How does the U.S. strategy for engagement and assistance align with these objectives?
- ◆ What steps is the State Department pursuing to encourage greater political and economic openness in Algeria?

Answer. Algeria has a very important role to play in working to improve security in North Africa and the Sahel and one of the principle objectives of my visit to Algiers last week, and of the Strategic Dialogue that I cochaired there with Algerian Foreign Minister Lamamara, was to identify ways that the United States and Algeria can work together to assist other partners in the region to secure their borders, strengthen rule of law, and build strong and stable democratic institutions. We look forward to continuing our programs to build capacity among Algerian security services, including providing training on judicial reform, terrorist investigation, crisis management, border security, and countering terrorist finance through reforms to the legal system. Working together, we can ensure that the Algerian security services have the tools and training they need to defeat Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and other terrorist groups. Algeria and the United States have been strong partners together in the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, which unites like-minded countries in the fight against terrorism and violent extremist organizations. Algeria is also a member of the U.S. Government’s Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), which is a program focused on improving the individual and collective capability of its member states to defeat terrorist organizations.

U.S.-Algerian cooperation goes beyond the traditional realm of security cooperation as we work to enhance political and economic ties across a range of issues. We look forward to Algerian participation in the U.S.-Africa summit scheduled for later this year. Through the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), we have expanded support for Algerian citizens’ engagement on political and economic reforms. For example, MEPI launched a training program for new women parliamentarians elected in 2011 and is providing employment skills training for youth at universities across the country. Algeria has committed to registering the National Democratic Institute (NDI) which is one step toward improving freedom of association in Algeria, and will advance civil society and the U.S.-Algerian relationship. We look forward to continuing to work with Algeria to advance political and economic reforms.

On the economic front Algeria is one of United States largest trading partners in the North African region. We are working with Algeria to enhance the business and economic climate by encouraging reconsideration of certain regulations on foreign direct investment. The U.S. Government is encouraged by the Government of Algeria’s continuing interest in joining the World Trade Organization (WTO). We believe that the added predictability, transparency, and openness associated with WTO compliance will make the Algerian market more attractive for business.

Question #39(a-c). Libya.—At the Rome conference you attended in March, you noted that Libya is at a “pivotal moment” and pledged U.S. support for the country going forward. Some experts, however, would say the country is closer to collapse,

given that security has deteriorated in several parts of the country while arbitrary detention, unlawful killing, and kidnapping have reached alarming levels.

- ◆ (a). What are the U.S. political, economic, and security interests in, and goals for, Libya? How does the U.S. strategy for engagement and assistance align with these objectives?
- ◆ (b). The FY15 budget includes Libya as an eligible country for the “MENA Transition Fund” and the administration has already agreed to support a Foreign Military Sale (FMS) to help train and support a General Purpose Force for some 5,000–8,000 Libyans. But those two programs alone don’t seem sufficient to help move the country toward national reconciliation while addressing persistent instability and impunity. With the Prime Minister just recently ousted by a no-confidence vote in Parliament, could you clarify what role you see the administration playing and what other types of support will be involved to help Libya walk back from the brink of collapse?
- ◆ (c). Please provide an update on the effort to train and develop a General Purpose Force (GPF).

Answer. The United States has a strategic opportunity to forge a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with this country that is now emerging from decades of oppressive, authoritarian rule. Libya, regional stability, our battle against extremism, and our support for democracy would lose from a further slide toward violence and instability there. Indeed, protracted instability in the Sahel and Maghreb region risks making the region a staging ground for attacks by terrorists and other extremists on our allies and U.S. interests. Transitions to democracy are notoriously difficult endeavors. It is in our interest to remain engaged with the Libyan Government as it pursues its transition to a more open, democratic, tolerant society.

We have two strategic goals in Libya: (1) to support the government in developing a capability to secure its own borders and maintain stability in the face of internal and regional challenges; and (2) to maintain progress on Libya’s transition to a sustainable, inclusive democracy accountable to the Libyan people. To that end, we are focusing our diplomatic engagement and assistance to support four lines of effort: Libya’s security and stability; its transition to a democratic and effective government; the strengthening of Libyan Government institutions; and the development of a robust and diverse economy.

Libya has asked a number of countries, including the United States, for assistance training its armed forces in order to better protect the Libyan people. The Government of Libya committed to fund the training, and Turkey and Italy are already training troops for this General Purpose Force (GPF). We expect the U.K. to begin its training regimen shortly. A small U.S. team is in Libya to work with the Ministry of Defense on this GPF effort, in line with our shared strategic goals for Libya. U.S. training is scheduled to begin later this year, outside Libya. We are coordinating this training mission closely with not only the Government of Libya, but with our partners in the U.K., Italy, and Turkey as well.

U.S. policy is to support Libya’s democratic institutions. That support is not tied to any particular leader, so long as that individual leads on the basis of the country’s legitimate political processes and respects the values of the Libyan people and our own. I met with the new, interim Prime Minister, al-Thanaie, at the Rome Ministerial March 6, when he was serving as Defense Minister, and Ambassador Jones is in frequent contact with him and his staff in Tripoli. However, we are concerned by the difficulty Libyan leaders have had in achieving needed political agreements to build consensus and keep the country on track. We are considering how we could take a more proactive role in engaging a range of Libyans to push for constructive political dialogue, working closely with counterparts from the EU, U.K., and Arab League.

*Question #40(a-f). Support to Palestinian Authority.—*The FY15 budget request includes \$370 million in economic assistance for the West Bank and Gaza which supports economic development, humanitarian needs in Gaza as well as increasing the capacity of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to meet the needs of its own people through budget support.

- ◆ (a). What are the prospects for the Palestinian economy’s near-term improvement?

Answer. The prospects for the Palestinian economy’s near-term improvement depends heavily on the continued implementation of reforms by the PA, the easing of Israeli restrictions on the movement and access of goods and people, and the exploitation of natural resources in the West Bank. These issues are tied to the status and outcome of the ongoing negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians. Economic growth was weaker than expected in 2013, in part due to the uncertainty of

individuals and businesses regarding the prospects for peace. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently revised downward its forecast for real GDP growth in 2014 from around 4 percent to now around 3 percent.

◆ (b). What have Arab States contributed to help the PA in recent years?

Answer. Between 2007 and 2013, members of the Arab League have contributed on average 36 percent of the donor budget support received by the PA—compared to 40 percent for the EU and EU member states and 13 percent for the United States.

BUDGET SUPPORT TO THE PA (2007-2013)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Saudi Arabia	\$127,704,197	\$234,053,786	\$241,056,731	\$145,633,071	\$179,693,900	\$100,000,000	\$260,265,649
United Arab Emirates	\$110,000,000	\$134,221,750	\$173,930,947	\$42,906,703	\$42,500,000	\$85,486,120	\$50,000,000
Arab League	\$0	\$99,895	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Oman	\$0	\$0	\$2,909,431	\$0	\$10,000,000	\$0	\$5,000,000
Algeria	\$52,799,969	\$62,943,959	\$25,969,871	\$29,574,309	\$52,799,920	\$26,400,000	\$26,399,982
Kuwait	\$33,415,814	\$80,000,000	\$0	\$50,000,000	\$50,000,000	\$50,000,000	\$50,000,000
Iraq	\$10,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$25,000,000	\$28,749,980
Egypt	\$0	\$14,628,676	\$17,831,750	\$7,895,200	\$5,014,828	\$3,175,861	\$0
Qatar	\$110,076,873	\$0	\$0	\$9,658,120	\$0	\$30,000,000	\$8,999,982
Arab League	\$443,996,853	\$525,948,066	\$461,698,730	\$285,667,403	\$340,008,648	\$320,061,981	\$429,415,593
EU and EU Members	\$522,256,300	\$749,735,298	\$510,780,986	\$492,407,663	\$303,787,960	\$327,128,287	\$347,850,320
United States	\$4,705,897	\$302,261,822	\$275,000,000	\$222,864,771	\$50,000,000	\$0	\$348,000,000
Other Donors	\$41,069,651	\$185,475,653	\$100,709,599	\$144,457,229	\$67,898,799	\$178,867,227	\$125,699,960
TOTAL	\$1,012,028,701	\$1,763,420,839	\$1,348,189,315	\$1,145,397,066	\$761,695,407	\$826,057,495	\$1,250,965,873
United States as % of Total	0%	17%	20%	19%	7%	0%	28%
EU/EU Members as % of Total	52%	43%	38%	43%	40%	40%	28%
Arab League as % of Total	44%	30%	34%	25%	45%	39%	34%

- ◆ (c). Given that the PA has grown more capable over the years and is the governing institution for important services in the West Bank, what do you see as the continued role of UNRWA operating schools and clinics in the West Bank?

Answer. The status of Palestinian refugees is one of the most sensitive final status issues confronting Israel and the Palestinians. The Department of State does not support any action that would circumvent final status issues, including phasing out the role of UNRWA by transferring services to the PA. Such action would damage confidence between the parties at a particularly fragile time, undercut our ability to act as a mediator and peace facilitator, and generate strong negative reaction from Palestinians and from our allies, including Jordan.

UNRWA provides essential humanitarian and education support to refugees in the PA-controlled West Bank that is simply beyond the financial and organizational capacity of the PA at present. While UNRWA has faced funding shortfalls, the PA faces a deeper fiscal crisis and does not have the resources to take on responsibility for the 174 installations UNRWA operates nearly 750 or the more than 725,000 registered refugees that UNRWA supports in the West Bank.

We look forward to the day that UNRWA is no longer needed, but the need will continue absent resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue in the context of a negotiated peace deal. Decreasing international community support, including U.S. funding to UNRWA, could signal a diminution of support for the Palestinian people, and could raise host country concerns that international support for UNRWA elsewhere is also decreasing. While host governments in the region have been generous in hosting Palestinian refugees, these governments cannot bear the burden alone.

- ◆ (d). The President requested \$70 million for security assistance for the Palestinian Authority to provide training, equipment, and infrastructure support to the Palestinian security forces.
 - Can you provide an update on the status of Vice Admiral Paul Bushong's efforts to train Palestinian security forces? Have his efforts been successful to date? How many personnel have been trained and are capable of imposing order?
 - What equipment will be provided to the security forces and under what safeguards?

Answer. To date, nine full National Security Force (NSF) Special Battalions, with approximately 500 personnel each, and two Presidential Guard (PG) Battalions, with approximately 400 personnel each, have been trained at the Jordan International Police Training Center (JIPTC). With the completion of initial battalion training in September 2012, Vice Admiral Bushong and his team have transitioned to sustaining and maintaining improvements in the performance of the Palestinian security forces. U.S. assistance provides refresher training for select companies, advanced training for small groups, and individual basic training for new personnel recruited due to attrition. More than 6,643 NSF and 2,116 PG personnel have received U.S.-funded training. In addition, 897 members of the Palestinian Civil Defense (PCD), including firefighters and other emergency service personnel, have been trained at the Jordanian Academy of Civil Protection. Members of all Palestinian security services have participated in joint leadership and specialized courses, chiefly at the Central Training Institute (CTI) in Jericho.

The NSF battalions that have been trained and equipped by the United States have been instrumental to the Palestinian Authority's ongoing law-and-order campaigns, by conducting operations in restive cities and refugee camps and by successfully managing popular demonstrations and other activities in the West Bank. According to Israeli data, there has been a dramatic decline in the number of terrorist attacks emanating from the West Bank since the beginning of U.S. assistance to the PASF, and Israeli security officials have praised the PASF's professionalism and commitment to fighting terrorism. Moving forward, we will increase our assistance to the Palestinian Civil Police and the justice and corrections sectors, to ensure that the Palestinian Authority can effectively and transparently prosecute those responsible for terrorism and serious crime, in accordance with the rule of law.

The United States has provided nonlethal equipment to the Palestinian security forces. This includes vehicles, riot shields, helmets, office equipment, and other nonlethal equipment a battalion needs to be operational. We conduct regular end-use monitoring visits to PASF facilities across the West Bank and have assisted the Palestinian Authority's development of a monitoring database that tracks the location and use of donor-provided equipment and will serve as the foundation for a comprehensive inventory management system. We have also worked with the PA to develop transparent disposal procedures for depleted equipment. Israeli authorities review all proposed U.S. provision of equipment to the Palestinian security forces.

PASF are predominantly trained by Jordanian and Palestinian personnel with U.S. oversight. The U.S. does not pay PASF salaries; the PA pays them directly through a combination of tax revenue and non-U.S. foreign assistance.

- ◆ (e). For many years, U.S. assistance was provided to the PA knowing that Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad had a reputation of fighting internal corruption, building responsible governing institutions and working closely with Israel on security cooperation. Has the new Palestinian leadership similarly proved its willingness to confront corruption?

Answer. Under the leadership of President Abbas and Prime Minister Hamdallah, the Palestinian Authority continues to make significant strides in reforming its institutions to better serve the Palestinian people, and the PA remains committed to and continues to promote and support full transparency and anticorruption efforts.

The U.S. Government supports these efforts in myriad ways, including under the Palestinian Justice Enhancement Program (PJEP). By developing the capabilities of the High Judicial Council and the Ministry of Justice, improving legal education for judges and future lawyers, and increasing public understanding of the justice system by raising public awareness of legal rights and responsibilities and how the justice system operates, PJEP strengthens public confidence and respect for justice sector institutions and the rule of law in the West Bank. This program complements the efforts of the United States Security Coordinator to strengthen the Palestinian justice sector by building the capacity of public prosecutors and criminal investigators.

- ◆ (f). In the FY14 Omnibus appropriations bill, new language was included linking disbursement of economic aid to a certification by the Secretary of State that the PA is acting to counter incitement of violence against Israelis and is supporting activities aimed at promoting peace, coexistence, and security cooperation with Israel. Can you please update us on whether the PA is in fact countering incitement of violence?

Answer. The Palestinian Authority (PA) is taking steps to condition the environment for peace and to counter incitement to violence. President Abbas regularly speaks publicly in support of tolerance and nonviolence. In mid-February, Abbas hosted 300 Israeli students in Ramallah, where he emphasized the need for a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In his remarks, which were later broadcast on Palestinian television, he discussed several final status issues including Jerusalem, borders, recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, and refugees.

Abbas also appointed Mohammed al-Madani to serve as the head of the "Palestinian Committee for Interaction with Israeli Society." Al-Madani facilitated the first visit of Palestinian officials to the Knesset in July 2013, and recent meetings between Fatah and Israeli officials in Ramallah and Budapest.

The impact of the PA's effort is visible throughout Palestinian society. For example, in the education sector, the PA has made significant progress in the past two decades by revising official PA textbooks in order to remove instances of incitement to violence. As part of the post-Oslo process, between 1996 and 2005, the PA began introducing new textbooks that included many references to promoting values of reconciliation, human rights, religious tolerance, respect for the law, diversity, and environmental awareness, and has replaced textbooks for all 12 grades. A succession of studies has found that the new textbooks represent a significant improvement and constitute a valuable contribution to the education of young Palestinians, and in general, concluded that the new textbooks eliminated a number of negative references to Israel and Jews and made attempts to promote tolerance.

The PA also monitors the content of Friday sermons delivered in over 1,600 West Bank mosques to ensure they do not endorse incitement to violence. The PA Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs prohibits speech that is likely to lead to incitement to violence.

The PA leadership, under President Mahmoud Abbas, remains committed to non-violence and a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has recognized the existence of the State of Israel since 1993, and in international fora and in bilateral contacts the PA leadership has insisted on recognition of Israel even while others have sought to delegitimize Israel. Abbas stated in his September 2012 speech at the United Nations General Assembly that "The two-State solution, i.e., the State of Palestine coexisting alongside the State of Israel, represents the spirit and essence of the historic compromise embodied in the Oslo Declaration of Principles."

Question #41. Yemen recently concluded a National Dialogue and embarked on the process of drafting and ratifying a new constitution and preparing for elections. Yemen still faces considerable hurdles, from combating Al Qaeda in the Arabian

Peninsula (AQAP) to the continued alienation from the central government of Houthi rebels in the North and separatists in the South. Moreover, chronic economic problems, resource shortages, and significant unemployment will challenge the central government. It is estimated that Yemen may run out of groundwater by 2025.

◆ Yemen has set an ambitious timeline to hold a constitutional referendum within 12 months of the end of the National Dialogue and elections within 21 months. Is this timeline achievable? What assistance are providing to help the Yemeni Government keep to this timeline?

◆ How is U.S. assistance helping Yemen cope with its water shortage?

Answer. The U.S. Government has provided nearly \$39 million to train National Dialogue delegates, previously disenfranchised groups, including women and the youth, and strengthen civic engagement. The outcomes from this conference are currently guiding the work of the constitutional drafting committee, which will produce a new constitution for referendum. The transition will conclude with national elections.

We are in close coordination with the Yemeni Government and international partners to encourage transition progress. Technical preparations for the upcoming referendum and national elections are ongoing, and we are supporting the government's efforts to update the voter registry and prepare for upcoming election. We will also conduct civic education and get-out-the-vote activities, and will support elections monitoring. President Hadi has signaled a strong commitment to advancing the political transition and timely elections in Yemen.

Water scarcity is one of the most important natural resource issues facing Yemen. There have been several reliable estimates predicting Yemen's water resources will run out before 2035. Much of Yemen's water problems trace back to poor agriculture management practices, which account for 90 percent of water use. USAID works cooperatively with the Yemeni Government and local entities to improve water management techniques in individual and agricultural use through a combination of modern and traditional methods.

The U.S. Government allocated more than \$100 million in FY 2012 and FY 2013 toward economic growth and development in Yemen, including projects to support sustainable agriculture. We have also brought Yemeni leaders to the United States to study water resource management, and hosted a Yemeni trade delegation that explored business opportunities in alternative energy and water.

Question #42 (a-b). Mauritania.—Mauritania is a key counterterrorism partner, but ranked number one on 2013's Global Slavery Index for the systemic persistence of various forms of slavery and human trafficking. It has consistently been in Tier 3 in the State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons report. I sent a letter in February to President Abdel Aziz, cosigned by 11 of my colleagues, urging more aggressive action to implement their 2007 antislavery law and provide support to antislavery NGOs. This month, we see the government has released a roadmap to address these concerns.

◆ (a). What are the primary goals and geographic focus areas for our CT cooperation with Mauritania? How would you assess this cooperation?

Answer. Through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and related initiatives, the United States supports regional efforts to contain, degrade, and ultimately defeat al-Qaeda and its affiliates and allies in the Sahel and Maghreb regions of Africa. Mauritania is a TSCTP member and has demonstrated strong will to counter terrorism.

The Mauritanian military has effectively countered Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and other extremist groups in the past. It has been well over a year since the last terrorist attack in Mauritania. Mauritania's two tactical defeats of AQIM, using U.S. and French training and equipment, stymied AQIM aspirational goals in Mauritania. We continue to work to enhance Mauritania's military and law enforcement capabilities to detect, deter, degrade, and disrupt terrorist operations and secure Mauritania's borders, particularly its long eastern border with Mali. We also continue to provide assistance for regional efforts to build resilience and counter violent extremist messaging and recruitment throughout the Sahel. Our assessment of the partnership is that it is effective to the extent that the Mauritians consistently demonstrate the will—if not always the wherewithal and technical expertise—to confront regional terrorist threats.

◆ (b). Has there been any significant improvement in the Mauritanian Government's efforts to address slavery issues since late 2013?

Answer. On March 6, 2014, the Government of Mauritania adopted the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Contemporary Forms of Slavery's "roadmap" to hasten an end to slavery in Mauritania. While this is a positive step, what matters most is imple-

mentation of the report's recommendations. The government has not yet taken concrete action in key areas. Legal authorities, for example, have not pressed charges against any accused slaveholders or made efforts to improve victims' protection.

Question #43. Burma.—Please list all programs or activities which involve dialogue or other interactions with Burmese military or police officials or personnel, including programs outside of Burma—specific requests (for instance, regional programs.) Please explain the goals and purposes of such programs and detail what pledges or deliverable reforms, if any, were requested from Burmese authorities in exchange for these military-to-military interactions.

Answer. All programs or activities which involve dialogue or other interaction with Burmese military or police officials or personnel, including programs outside of Burma, are as follows:

- Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS): The Department of Defense (DOD), in coordination with the State Department, sent a Defense Institute of International Legal Studies (DIILS) delegation to Burma in July 2013 for a scoping visit and conducted initial exchanges on law of armed conflict and international humanitarian law in August 2013 and February 2014 with the Burmese military's judge advocate corps. The team has repeatedly met with opposition leaders, ethnic groups, and civil society representatives to discuss this engagement and the current human rights situation in Burma. DIILS' engagement is designed to promote knowledge of, and respect for, human rights and rule of law—a shared U.S. Government and GOB objective. Aung San Suu Kyi, Generation 88, civil society, and ethnic representatives widely indicated their support for the engagement. The DIILS program is funded by DOD Title 10 funding.
- Human Rights Dialogue: In October 2012, the United States held the first-ever Human Rights Dialogue (HRD) in Naypyitaw, led by then-Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Michael Posner. The large delegation included then-Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense (DASD) for South and Southeast Asia Vikram Singh and then-Lieutenant General Frank Wiercinski, Commander, U.S. Army, Pacific. The dialogue included an exchange between DOD representatives and their Burmese counterparts as part of a broad interagency discussion of human rights and reform. The next dialogue is planned for late 2014.
- Diplomatic Meetings: In order to begin a dialogue with the Burmese military on issues related to human rights, rule of law, and civilian control, Department of Defense officials have met with Burmese officials on the margins of multilateral forums. Secretary of Defense Hagel engaged in a 10-minute pull aside with his Burmese counterpart Lieutenant General Wai Lwin on the margins of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus in Brunei in 2013, where he relayed the U.S. desire to see the reform movement continue and to establish contact ahead of Burma's 2014 chairmanship of ASEAN. The Secretary subsequently hosted the Defense Ministers Meeting in Honolulu in April 2014. In addition, then-Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs Mark Lippert and DASD Singh met with their Burmese counterparts at the Fullerton Forum in Singapore in February 2013 and January 2014, respectively. Finally, DOD officials have working-level contacts with members of the Burmese Embassy Defense Attaché's Office in Washington. In late 2012, DOD officials began attending relevant Burmese Embassy receptions.
- The Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS): APCSS is a Department of Defense academic institute in Honolulu, Hawaii. APCSS addresses regional and global security issues, inviting military and civilian representatives of the United States and Asia-Pacific nations to its comprehensive program of executive education and workshops, both in Hawaii and throughout the Asia-Pacific region. APCSS has invited a small number of Burmese participants to multilateral workshops (e.g., "Water Future of South Asia") While most of the Burmese participants have been GOB civilians, two military officers have taken part in APCSS workshops. The purpose of these multicountry APCSS workshops is to promote the Government of Burma's exposure to internationally respected counterparts and to discuss nontraditional security issues, improve civil military relations, and promote human rights and civilian oversight.
- USPACOM's Joint Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Command (JPAC): Though a humanitarian rather than military engagement, the Government of Burma and the Burmese military respect U.S. efforts to locate, recover, and identify the remains of missing U.S. personnel from World War II and other conflicts. JPAC resumed operations in Burma in 2013 and completed three successful bilateral investigations. To aid investigations, JPAC initiated

an “Outreach” program which placed ads in Burmese newspapers from March to May 2013 and established a call center in Rangoon. The call center received over 1,200 calls yielding over 370 potential leads. In April 2012, JPAC and Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office representatives visited Burma to discuss resuming World War II accounting operations. In August 2012, an eight-person Burmese military delegation visited JPAC to learn about U.S. remains recovery techniques and discuss recovery operations in Burma.

- **Cobra Gold:** Thailand invited two Burmese Armed Forces officers to observe humanitarian aspects only of the multinational Cobra Gold exercise in 2013 and again in 2014. The Burmese spent 1 day observing peace enforcement, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and medical portions of the Cobra Gold exercise, which the United States cohosts with Thailand. Burma self-funded their participation in this observer program. The intent of inviting Burma to the observer program is to expose the Burmese military to internationally respected military counterparts and demonstrate how these militaries inculcate international standards—especially the respect for human rights—into their planning and operational execution.
- **International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA):** The State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) supported training for 42 senior counternarcotics officials at ILEA in Bangkok in 2013. In 2014, INL is introducing basic, yet targeted training opportunities for Burmese police officials at ILEA.
- **Humanitarian Landmine Action:** Embassy Rangoon, with the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, frequently consulted with senior Burmese Government officials in the Burmese Army Engineering Corps (the Burmese military office responsible for landmine removal) on best practices for mine risk education and survivor assistance as part of a pilot initiative to support humanitarian landmine action and build trust between and within disparate communities in Burma’s conflict-affected Kayah State. These conversations also served to expand civil society’s limited contacts with the Burmese military.

In pursuing the President’s strategic objective in Southeast Asia, the U.S. Department of Defense has attempted to strengthen its ties with ASEAN and other multilateral fora. In that multilateral context, DOD regularly engages its ASEAN counterparts to discuss regional security issues and identify new cooperative activities that support stability and interoperability in the region. Burma is the chair of ASEAN in 2014. The following multilateral programs or activities involve dialogue or other interaction with Burmese military or police officials or personnel:

- **ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Relief Exercise:** Biennially the ARF holds a disaster relief exercise to improve the capacity of regional states and actors to reduce risk, prepare for and respond to disasters and crises. The next exercise will be held in Malaysia February 2015. As this is a joint civil-military exercise, and Burma is a member of ASEAN, its military and civilian sectors will be invited and will most likely participate.
- **ASEAN Regional Forum meetings and the ASEAN Regional Forum Defense Officials Dialogue:** The ASEAN Regional Forum is a security forum where civilian agencies normally lead the discussion but military members are often present and have a voice. Topics generally discussed include, but are not limited to, maritime security, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, nonproliferation and disarmament, space security, cyber security, counterterrorism, and international crime. In addition, ARF hosts defense officials three times a year for a strategic dialogue on the Asia-Pacific region at the ARF Defence Official’s Dialogue. This regional discussion of the 26 member nations plus the EU ranges from peacekeeping to the region’s most pressing security issues. As Burma is the chair of ASEAN this year, Burma chairs this discussion along with the EU.
- **ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting Plus:** The ADMM-plus is a platform for ASEAN and its eight Dialogue Partners to strengthen security and defense cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region. The ADMM-plus conducts exercises and has expert working groups on maritime security, counterterrorism, humanitarian assistance/disaster management, peacekeeping, military medicine, and humanitarian mine action.
- **Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combatting Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP):** This is a regional government-to-government agreement to promote and enhance cooperation to combat piracy and armed robbery in Asia. The ReCAAP’s Information Sharing Center (ISC), located in Singapore, is an international organization that serves as a platform for information exchange among contracting parties. The ISC improves incident response and facilitates capacity-building efforts to enhance the capability of con-

tracting parties to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships in the region. Through its periodic reports to the shipping community, the ISC helps ships in the region avoid and deter piracy and armed robbery attacks. The ISC has a Governing Council, composed of 19 contracting parties, including Burma, which typically sends an official from their navy as a representative at the annual Governing Council Meeting. The United States is an external participant seeking membership to ReCAAP and currently shares information with the ISC through established channels in the DOD and attends open sessions of the annual Governing Council Meeting. U.S. participation in ReCAAP improves our ability to share and receive information and allows for U.S. representation on the Governing Council and participation in ReCAAP's various capacity-building events. U.S. participation and membership also aligns with the U.S. Government's goal of strengthening regional organizations, signals our commitment to long-term cooperation in this organization, and strengthens our efforts to counter piracy and robbery at sea.

Goals and Purposes

U.S. engagement with Burma's military is intended to support our broader policy objective of ensuring the success of the country's democratic transition and building appropriate institutions. Our goal is to cultivate a professional military under civilian control that operates in accordance with international law, as well as with standards of transparency and accountability; that ends the unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers; that withdraws from politics and the economy; that severs arms-related ties with the DPRK and that supports Burma's peace process. Absent efforts to reform, the Burmese Armed Forces have the potential to hinder the peace process, good governance, protection of human rights, a successful transition to democracy, and equitable economic growth.

Through all of our engagements, we underscore the need for Burma's military to undertake meaningful reforms in order for our engagement to continue and expand over the long term. Indicators of a strengthening military commitment to reform might include:

- Increased professionalism/transparency (e.g., establishing and consistently applying a military code of conduct based on international best practices, creating a transparent process for military procurement, etc.);
- Implementation of, and compliance with, international law, including international humanitarian law (e.g., creating and implementing a training plan for all military troops and commanders on applicable treaty obligations, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions; ceasing the unlawful recruitment and use of children; ending abusive tactics, etc.), and granting international monitors full access to military installations to monitor implementation of processes for the identification and demobilization of child soldiers, as agreed upon in the U.N. Child Soldier Action Plan;
- Nonproliferation (e.g., avoiding all engagement with North Korea on military procurement and fully adhering to all U.N. Security Council Resolutions, etc.);
- Supporting the peace process (e.g., completing work on and signing a mutually acceptable nationwide cease-fire agreement with the ethnic groups that leads quickly to a political dialogue on core issues; repositioning troops away from villages and religious sites in regions controlled by such ethnic groups, and withdrawing from conflict zones, etc.);
- Stepping back from politics (e.g., constitutional reform that ends the requirement that the military hold 25 percent of the seats in Parliament and key ministry leadership positions, as well as supports greater local autonomy rights for ethnic nationalities, etc.);
- Disengaging from an active role in the economy (e.g., bringing all off-budget military revenue streams formally into the Union budget and adjusting military appropriations accordingly; divesting from businesses that compete with private enterprise in a transparent and legal manner, etc.)

Question #44. Multilateral Investment Fund.—Further to the disappointment I have already mentioned over the fact that the current budget request calls for significant cuts to Western Hemisphere programs, I noticed that the administration did not request funding to pay our \$29 million in arrears to the Inter-American Development Bank's Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF). This lack of funding is sure to undermine the MIF's operations. The MIF does critical work in promoting private sector-led economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean and I believe it deserves the full support of the U.S. Government.

- ◆ Could you please explain why the administration did not request any funding at all for the MIF?

Answer. In last year's budget, Treasury requested and Congress appropriated \$6.3 million to clear a portion of the outstanding U.S. arrears to the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF). While the administration would like to have requested additional funds in FY 2015, we were unable to include funding for the MIF in the budget request given the very difficult budget environment and numerous competing development priorities. The U.S. continues to be an active and vocal supporter of the MIF. We were the primary force behind its creation in 1993 and remain its largest shareholder. We continue to strongly support the MIF's critical work and valuable contributions to development in Latin America.

Question #45. Economic Statecraft.—I announced recently during my trip to Mexico that I am developing an Economic Statecraft initiative aimed at boosting U.S. jobs and exports by empowering our export and investment promotion agencies so they can level the playing field for U.S. companies operating abroad. A key component of this initiative is to increase funding to these agencies and enhance their coordination in support of our international economic priorities. I applaud the administration's continuing efforts to increase American exports, and a critical element of this is devoting adequate resources to our export and investment promotion agencies, which create thousands of American jobs, support billions of dollars of exports, further U.S. foreign economic policy goals, while also returning hundreds of millions of dollars per year to the Treasury.

- ◆ Given the tremendous importance of exports in generating American jobs and economic growth, could you please explain the status of the State Department's Economic Statecraft initiative, your efforts to improve coordination with all the agencies that promote U.S. exports and investment, and what concrete steps the Department plans to take over the coming year to elevate the importance of economic issues in our diplomatic engagement?

Answer. Secretary Kerry has placed a high priority on supporting U.S. jobs and exports, and has made supporting U.S. business an important part of his work in Washington and his overseas trips. Under the policy leadership of Catherine A. Novelli, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment, the Department of State is fully committed to utilizing economic diplomacy to generate American jobs and economic growth. Both Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs (EB), Charles Rivkin, and Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs, Scott Nathan, are specifically engaged on improving coordination between the Department of State and the Commerce Department, and more broadly all the agencies that promote U.S. exports and investment.

The prior initiative known as Economic Statecraft, has been expanded and rebranded as the Shared Prosperity Agenda (SPA). Led by Senior Advisor to the Secretary (SRA) David Thorne, the SPA is working to elevate economic approaches to foreign policy challenges throughout the Department of State. The SPA task force convenes several cross-functional working groups focused on specific economic diplomacy related issues including but not limited to the following: Human Capital, Knowledge Platforms, Jobs Diplomacy, Public Diplomacy and Entrepreneurship.

Officers at all levels in E, EB, ENR, and the regional bureaus are implementing the Secretary's vision for commercial advocacy and elevating economics in U.S. foreign policy through multiple lines of activity, including the following:

- The Department of State is taking a more focused and systematic advocacy effort with the Department of Commerce on behalf of U.S. companies. This approach was launched at last year's United Nations General Assembly meetings and continued at the recent World Bank-International Monetary Fund meetings. As part of this, the Department of State advocated for \$15 billion in U.S. export content on behalf of over a dozen of our firms. Additionally, we facilitated direct advocacy by the Commerce Department at the APEC Ministerial, where cases totaling \$19 billion in U.S. export content were raised.
- The State-Commerce Department Partnership Post program allows State Department personnel to provide commercial services in 60 countries. These services, such as the popular Gold Key Matching Service, are marketed to American companies by personnel from domestic Department of Commerce U.S. Export Assistance Centers. Commerce and State organize interagency trainings (including Ex-Im, OPIC, and USTDA) to equip State officers to provide high-quality services and promote the range of U.S. Government resources available to companies. Such training is conducted by region with the last major session for 23 sub-Saharan Africa posts in Johannesburg, South Africa, in March 2014.
- The State Department is working to assure that U.S. firms, which are leaders in cutting edge energy technologies, benefit from global investment needs in the power sector that exceed \$17 trillion dollars by 2035.

- Promoting and institutionalizing a regional trade and investment framework with market-oriented rules that promote open, transparent, and fair trade is our primary economic objective in the Asia-Pacific region. State officers are co-leading BIT talks with China, India, and other key countries, which offer an avenue for increasing access for U.S. firms to large and significant foreign markets.
- State officers, domestically and in the field, including Ambassadors, are working closely with USTR to finalize the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, which will increase U.S. export opportunities in Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam and Japan.
- The U.S. coordinating office for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which is within State, works with the interagency to achieve U.S. priorities that help facilitate trade and investment with the Asia-Pacific region, such as improvements in regional supply chain performance; reduction in tariffs on environmental goods; and work to address the pervasive problem of corruption.
- Under the U.S.-ASEAN Expanded Economic Engagement initiative, we are working on specific cooperative activities to expand trade and investment ties between the United States and the ASEAN countries, including through more efficient trade flows and supply chains, as well as to create new business opportunities and jobs on both sides.
- In cooperation with the interagency, we are maximizing investment opportunities through the U.S.-Asia-Pacific Comprehensive Energy Partnership, which provides up to \$5 billion in export credit financing from Export-Import Bank of the United States and up to \$1 billion in Overseas Private Investment Corporation financing. This financing increases access to American technology, services, equipment, and investment, in support of projects providing access to cleaner and more reliable sources of energy in the region. In addition, the State Department is funding the Asia-Pacific Clean Energy Program, which will collocate OPIC and U.S. Trade and Development Agency personnel at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok to better identify regional energy projects that could benefit from U.S. financing and investment.
- Launched in 2011, the New Silk Road vision is an integral part of U.S. policy in Afghanistan and Central Asia, reflecting growing regional support for closer economic cooperation and connectivity. We have embraced these policy goals as a way for countries in the region to strengthen economic linkages, reduce regional instability, promote foreign investment, and increase access to energy resources. The New Silk Road concept was first envisioned as a means for Afghanistan to integrate further into the fabric of the region via the resumption of traditional trading routes and the reconstruction of significant infrastructure links, broken by decades of conflict. Today, Afghanistan and its neighbors are championing the New Silk Road vision, creating new North-South transit and trade routes that complement vibrant East-West connections across Eurasia. The region is leading efforts to reduce barriers to trade, invest in each other's economies, and support international development and cross-border projects.
- In June 2013, during the President's trip to South Africa, he announced his intention to host a summit in Washington with African heads of state. The U.S.-Africa Leaders summit will take place August 5–6, 2014, in Washington, DC. This summit, the first of its kind, will be the largest event that any U.S. President has ever convened with African heads of state. The summit is intended to catalyze USG and other efforts in sub-Saharan and North Africa—to advance economic growth, trade, and investment; good governance and strong democratic institutions; inclusive development; youth engagement; and peace and security.
- The State Department is working with the private sector and our European partners to spur needed investments in energy conservation and efficiency there, as well as on energy infrastructure investments that can foster greater energy diversity. The U.S. is working closely with European partners to help achieve a secure energy future. We will not let any country use energy as a political weapon. Diversification, transparency and private investment are key. We need to work with European partners to create the conditions—including controlling corruption—to attract the private investment needed for expansion of energy production.
- The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and its overseas posts engage frequently with foreign governments to promote policies advantageous to U.S. businesses through bilateral dialogues as well as multilateral engagements, among which the North American Leaders summit, the Summit of the Americas, and the Pacific Alliance. Priority issues for 2014 include deepening regu-

latory cooperation, accelerating regional integration, easing barriers to trade for small and medium enterprises, promoting increased public-private consultations, and improving regional energy market efficiency.

- Chiefs of mission and economic and commercial teams at U.S. embassies and consulates in the Western Hemisphere work collaboratively to assist U.S. businesses to export and invest. Commerce's Advocacy Center has 23 pending infrastructure projects in Latin America and the Caribbean, with total project value of \$57 billion, including \$17 billion in U.S. export content. State coordinates closely with Commerce to assist businesses as they bid on these projects. Through 18 Direct Line webinars and conference calls in 2013, State provided market information to nearly 1,000 U.S. companies interested in doing business in the Western Hemisphere.
- The Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) and its posts abroad work closely with interagency partners to promote the U.S. exports to the Middle-East and North Africa region, aligning with the goals of the National Export Initiative. For example, in 2013, in collaboration with the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, and other stakeholders, Mission UAE helped organize and support the participation of more than 200 U.S. businesses in two large trade shows, the "Arab Health" and "Gulfood" trade shows. At the "Arab Health" trade show, U.S. companies signed contracts worth \$196 million in sales—five times more than the year before, while the "Gulfood" show generated an additional \$106.7 million in onsite sales.
- NEA is working with USTR to revise and establish new trade and investment protocols and accords in the region. For instance, we are currently supporting the enactment of a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with the Gulf Cooperation Council, while also strengthening discussions with Tunisia, Iraq, and others under the TIFA framework.

As the above examples demonstrate, the Department of State is fully committed to deepening our alignment and coordination with the Department of Commerce to advance our commercial interests abroad. We are specifically exploring shared technology platforms to reduce duplication of efforts in the field, and to equip State's economic officers to serve as effective commercial officers at posts which do not have a Department of Commerce presence. The development of these systems will provide a mechanism for sharing business leads and economic information among all interagency partners focused on supporting U.S. exports, including the Foreign Agriculture Service, the Ex-Im Bank, OPIC, and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency.

Question #46(a-c). USIP.—For more than 10 years, the U.S. Institute of Peace has produced detailed analysis and ideas for mitigating the effects of the internal armed conflict that Colombia has suffered for more than a half century.

- ♦ (a). As the Colombian Government is negotiating with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), what role does USIP play in influencing the U.S. Government's posture toward these negotiations; what role can it play in providing technical support to the Colombian Government and the Colombian people; and what role will it play in defining how U.S. policy could support a potential peace agreement? Given the scale of the \$9 billion the U.S. has invested in Colombia in security, intelligence, development, governance assistance over the past 15 years, what role do the much more modestly resourced USIP programs play in helping to leverage and support a possible agreement and the hope of a lasting peace?

Answer. The State Department views the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) as an experienced and helpful resource as we support President Santos' efforts to bring an end to decades of conflict in Colombia. USIP's expertise in helping nations move toward a post-conflict phase of rebuilding and transformation is especially relevant to Colombia. Its sponsorship of the Colombia Peace Forum provides a valuable opportunity for policymakers from across the U.S. Government and civil society to discuss the link between human rights and the peace process. This is particularly true as the Colombian people begin to seek out justice for past abuses and reconciliation.

USIP has looked toward supporting a post-peace agreement for Colombia, and offered candid analysis of common pitfalls and challenging issues surrounding peace negotiations, transitional justice, demobilization and reintegration, truth commissions, etc. The State Department looks to USIP to generate creative, expert ideas of how the United States can play a constructive role in ensuring that a potential agreement in Colombia leads to a durable peace.

USIP has carried out a number of valuable programs to support Colombia's search for peace and efforts to address the conflict and the needs of its victims over the years, including workshops on long-term conflict mitigation and community-based

reconciliation. In particular, we appreciate USIP's sponsorship and participation in the Department of Arauca's first International Forum on Peace and Reconciliation in May 2012, which launched Citizen Commissions for Reconciliation—a model and replicable tool to help mitigate violence, strengthen local peace-building processes, and engage communities living in conflict zones in the search for nonviolent solutions.

- ◆ (b). As the United States “rebalances” toward the Asia-Pacific, how is this reflected in USIP's programming and activities?

Answer. The State Department views the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) as an experienced and helpful resource in the Asia-Pacific region, especially with regard to our ongoing rebalance to this dynamic region. With higher risk of conflict in the Asia-Pacific region and the region's growing significance for U.S. security, economic, political and diplomatic interests, USIP activities are having a meaningful impact in line with the Institute's mandate to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflict.

The USIP provides a useful forum for policymakers from across the U.S. Government and civil society to discuss how to maintain peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. USIP also brings Northeast Asian and U.S. officials together to discuss conflict prevention at the Track 1.5 level. Since 2012, USIP has also been working in Burma to strengthen rule of law community projects that support tolerance and mutual understanding. This work is in the beginning stages and USIP plans to augment it through programing in crisis management, conflict prevention and reconciliation strategies in the Asia-Pacific, in order to better address rising regional tensions.

- ◆ (c). With the political and security transition in Afghanistan this year, how will USIP's programming contribute to the work of the High Peace Council and the reconciliation process?

Answer. The United States Institute of Peace is not a part of the U. S. Department of State, but rather an independent institution created and funded by Congress that has been advancing U.S. interests and fulfilling its congressional mandate to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflict around the world for nearly 30 years. For specific questions regarding their programming and activities, we would refer you to USIP directly. Our USIP colleagues have provided the following information:

The United States Institute of Peace has played an important role in Afghanistan for more than 10 years. The Institute's work ranges from improving peaceful dispute resolution mechanisms, to strengthening civil society organizations' efforts to advance the rule of law, to promoting peaceful elections like the one just held. USIP also convened the Afghanistan Working Group led by now White House Chief of Staff John Podesta and USIP Board Chair and former National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley.

USIP is poised to contribute to the work of the High Peace Council (HPC) and the reconciliation process in several ways. The Institute maintains a permanent office in Kabul with three expatriate staff and 10 local professional staff. This office serves as a point of contact in Afghanistan between USIP and HPC representatives. USIP has relationships with key members of the Council, including the Chairman of the HPC Secretariat, Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, who was a fellow at USIP from 2007 to 2009, and the Chairman of the Council, Salahuddin Rabbani.

USIP continues its congressional mandate to produce applied research on promoting peace. The Institute's wide-ranging research agenda includes issues that are directly relevant to the work of the Council. Previous research on this topic, including proposed designs for a peace process and suggestions on post-negotiation institutional arrangements, was compiled in a volume published in 2013, *Getting it Right in Afghanistan*. This volume includes an essay by Mr. Stanekzai that became the blueprint for the reintegration program now being implemented in Afghanistan.

USIP has issued a standing invitation to the HPC to make use of the institute's training capacity for negotiations. Until now, the peace process has mostly been characterized by delicate negotiations, often conducted through quiet contacts and the search for confidence-building measures. Should the process reach the phase of structured, face-to-face negotiations, USIP expects to play a role in supporting the HPC members who conduct those negotiations. It is worth noting that the HPC was a creation of President Karzai, and is not a constitutional body. The next government may wish to pursue negotiations with the Taliban, but using a different mechanism.

USIP also supported the 2014 Afghan election process in several ways. USIP and the Center for American Progress, under the cochairmanship of

Stephen Hadley and John Podesta, organized three working groups bringing together principals from the State Department, the NSC, the Pentagon, and USAID, along with Afghanistan experts, to offer advice on how to ensure that policy was coordinated between the election and reconciliation processes. The working group focused attention on the electoral process, recommending funding for preelection polling and strengthening efforts to increase voter participation—factors that proved critical to the perceived legitimacy of the result and limiting the potential impact of fraud.

To increase participation, USIP's Peaceful Education Campaign reached out to young and old voters in Afghanistan, in rural and urban areas, with a variety of techniques, for example, sponsoring Afghanistan's national soccer tournament, hosting a 1-minute film competition as well as an election anthem competition, promoting traditional and popular poetry readings in rural areas, and a number of other innovative methods. This program was implemented through USIP's office in Kabul with full-time Afghan and international staff who are generally able to move around the country. USIP also produced numerous research publications in the lead-up to the election providing timely analysis based on inputs from the field across the country. USIP intends to conduct a Peaceful Election Campaign for next year's parliamentary election, as well as continue its election-related research and advisory activities.

USIP is committed to remaining in Afghanistan after the U.S. troop drawdown and to working with the new Afghan Government and with USIP's Afghan partners to promote peace and reconciliation and build on the significant progress Afghanistan has made since 2001.

Question #47. International Monetary Fund.—As we all know, just a few weeks ago this committee passed a bill with a strong bipartisan vote, which in addition to providing aid to Ukraine, authorized U.S. acceptance of the 2010 IMF reforms. When that bill ultimately reached the Senate floor, however, the IMF reform provisions were removed due to the opposition of some members who apparently disagree that these reforms are in the interest of the United States.

- ◆ Could you please state for the record the administration's position on why approving the 2010 IMF reform package is in our national interest, and what you think the impact of our failure to approve the reforms would be to U.S. credibility and international leadership and to the IMF's ability to respond to global financial crises?

Answer. The Administration supports IMF reform because it would give the IMF greater flexibility and resources to respond to crises of geopolitical and economic significance, preserve the U.S. veto over important institutional decisions, and do so without increasing the U.S. financial commitment to the IMF. In 2010, G20 Leaders and the IMF membership decided on a set of quota and governance reforms designed to strengthen the IMF's role and effectiveness. The 2010 reforms increase the permanent resources of the IMF and modernize its governance structure to better reflect countries' economic weights in the global economy and keep emerging economies anchored in the multilateral system that the United States helped design and continues to lead. The reforms would put the IMF's finances on a more stable long-term footing, which would provide the institution with more financial flexibility in lending additional resources to countries in economic crisis such as Ukraine. We are the last major economy to act and our approval is the only remaining step for these important reforms to go into effect. We appreciate the committee's support for these forms.

U.S. leadership in the IMF promotes American core interests in three ways: protecting the U.S. economy with the IMF as the first responder when financial crises abroad threaten jobs and growth at home; strengthening our national security; and designing and promoting rules for an open global trade and financial system. The IMF promotes financial stability and economic growth abroad, which in turn supports U.S. jobs and exports, foreign direct investment in the United States, and America's economic health and prosperity. The IMF reforms are necessary to maintain our strong leadership position and influence in the IMF and to maintain the integrity of the IMF's financial structure.

Inaction on quota reform has caused other IMF members to question our commitment to the institution and to the multilateral system that we helped create. At the IMF spring meetings this year, an increasing number of countries called for identifying ways to move forward on IMF quota and governance reforms without the United States.

As the United States has delayed approving the 2010 reforms, other countries have sought to increase their influence in the institution, outside of the IMF's quota-

based financial and governance structures in which the United States exercises its leadership role. Furthermore, if Congress does not authorize acceptance of the 2010 reforms, it could harm our influence and overall credibility not only at the IMF, but also at the G20 and with emerging economies. A failure to reform the IMF could also give new momentum to regional alternatives such as a BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) development bank and currency support arrangements. These would divert resources from the IMF and exclude the United States. Congressional approval of U.S. support for the 2010 reforms is necessary to reaffirm the U.S. leadership position and reinforce the IMF's central position in the global financial system, at a time when emerging economies explore establishing new and parallel financial institutions.

Question #48. Intellectual Property.—We have an economy increasingly driven by innovation, and this has created millions of jobs, spurred stronger economic growth, and enabled the United States to remain among the most economically competitive countries in the world. However, I have serious concerns about the inadequate protection of property rights in a number of important emerging economies, and even by some of our closest allies. The administration has made an effort to encourage stronger IP protections, including direct interventions by the President and Vice President, multiple Cabinet Secretaries and, of course, yourself. However, many American U.S. companies continue to struggle with unfair treatment in many markets around the world.

- ◆ Given the increasing importance of innovative sectors of our economy, is the administration considering a whole-of-government strategy to ensure the fruits of American innovation are properly protected?

Answer. Protecting the fruits of American innovation is a high priority for the administration, and we use a whole-of-government strategy with this aim. The State Department partners with other U.S. Government agencies and works with international organizations, including the World Intellectual Property Organization and the World Trade Organization, to promote laws and enforcement of laws that protect patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets around the world. In coordination with the Office of the Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, the State Department is facilitating Intellectual Property Enforcement Working Groups at 17 key embassies to bring together all agencies at post to better coordinate U.S. Government resources devoted to protected U.S. intellectual property. This coordination is also evident in State's funding of intellectual property rights enforcement and technical assistance training provided by the Department of Justice, Customs and Border Protection, and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. We encourage businesses to use the tools available to register their intellectual property, and we advocate for them when their rights are violated. We also conduct public diplomacy campaigns, often with content stakeholder support, to spread the word that respecting intellectual property is in everyone's interest if they want a world that benefits from innovation and creativity.

Question #49. Global Health.

- ◆ Over the past few years, PEPFAR has emphasized the country ownership model, whereby partner countries commit to investing in their own health care systems. Please give some examples of steps countries have taken to demonstrate political commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS and investing in national HIV/AIDS plans. What is the United States doing to encourage and facilitate the development of policies that strengthen health systems in recipient countries?
- ◆ PEPFAR funding is essential to the development and strengthening of health care systems worldwide. What do you anticipate will be the impact of the reduction? Are these reductions tied to the country ownership model?

Answer. Greater country ownership is key to ensuring that the PEPFAR investments, systems, and capacities that have been established in the program to date continue in the long-term. Through our partnerships, we have saved millions of lives, and our paramount responsibility is ensuring that those to whom we provide treatment and care continue to receive treatment and care during our transitions.

Under PEPFAR we have learned that political leadership, local management and technical capabilities, supportive public health institutions and communities, and mutual accountability are factors that affect the degree to which countries are ready to assume responsibility for the prevention, treatment, and care of people dependent on services that the United States has been providing. With our partner countries, we need to share the common goal of using scientific data with adequate financing to invest in proven interventions and key populations to achieve continued progress toward an AIDS-free generation.

In countries where PEPFAR funds have been used to provide support for direct service delivery in prevention, care, and treatment programs, PEPFAR teams have delivered transition successes in conjunction with their country counterparts. Health care workers previously trained and funded by PEPFAR are now funded by the government. Delivery of clinical services has transitioned from international NGOs to the Ministry of Health, local NGOs, and faith-based local providers. National procurement and delivery of commodities are funded by domestic resources. In all cases, these successes have been possible due to strong partnerships and sustained because of strong political will and commitment. In addition, across multiple countries, PEPFAR has registered successful transfers of responsibilities for the care of key populations—groups that may have difficulties accessing health and support services—to local civil society.

Across former focus countries, district- and provincial-level government and non-governmental entities have assumed the role of direct service provider, enabling efficiencies and maintaining or improving performance. We are monitoring the use and impact of evidenced-based scientific interventions through our newly launched quality strategy. To optimize the impact of investments, expand population coverage, and retain more patients in care, PEPFAR is developing, in partnership with host countries, strategies for strengthening the quality of clinical services with a focus on improving linkage, engagement, and retention in care. These strategies are rooted in sound international standards and locally relevant strategies for quality management so that the best possible results are achieved from PEPFAR and domestic investments.

PEPFAR is also monitoring the readiness for and impact of transitions through a series of joint assessments with countries that will be taking on additional responsibility. These assessments focus on identifying what additional capacities are required for local partners—governments, research, development, and academic institutions, NGOs, the private sector, and civil society networks and communities—to lead, manage, and monitor internal and external efforts to address HIV/AIDS in country. Part of this process includes supporting a country's ability to drive the process to identify, source, and manage ongoing capacity-building efforts as a sustained government-led effort to target change, facilitated by capacity-building frameworks and indicators developed by PEPFAR in conjunction with our partners.

Our health partnership with South Africa is a model we are learning from, and continue to evolve with our partners in other countries, for transition to greater country ownership. Throughout the evolution of all of our partnerships, we have never lost sight of our shared goals: to enable more people in need of HIV/AIDS services to receive them, and ensure that those who already receive these services continue doing so. Strong partnerships with many diverse stakeholders are vital to achieving these goals. Where we face challenges, we work jointly to address them. For example, as some patients move from one facility to another, they can get lost in the system. Preventing this "loss to followup" is a challenge in any health system, including within the United States. PEPFAR continues to work closely with our South African partners to support the rollout of monitoring systems to ensure patients are properly tracked over time and retained in care.

As PEPFAR moves from an emergency to a sustainability response, we are extremely cognizant of the challenges that partner nations face as we make this transition. Every country is situated at a different point on the continuum of country ownership, with a different range of needs and strengths. Advancing sustainability in a way that is tailored to each specific circumstance will require time and careful planning. PEPFAR is committed to ensuring that the eventual transfer of program management, implementation, and ownership to the host country occurs smoothly and at a pace appropriate to the local context. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to country ownership. The eventual transition of PEPFAR program activities to host countries will occur in a step-wise manner, at a pace appropriate to their local context. In all countries, PEPFAR's goal is to support the country in achieving an AIDS-free generation, increasing the impact of core interventions, as well as protecting our investments and the patients on the ground.

*Question #50. Gender Based Violence.—*Gender-based violence remains a rampant problem in many of the world's conflicts, including Syria, Burma, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Please provide an update on implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security.

- ◆ How, if at all, has implementation of the Administration's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security made a difference in these countries?

Answer. The Department of State is devoted to supporting the United States unqualified commitment to protect and empower women in countries threatened and affected by war and conflict, violence and insecurity. Through the Department's

leadership role in U.S. diplomatic engagement, its foreign assistance programming, and robust relationships with civil society actors across the globe, during fiscal year 2013 we built on longstanding efforts to integrate women's views and perspectives into our diplomatic, security and development efforts in Syria, Burma, the DRC and dozens of other countries. In line with the protection and relief and recovery pillars of the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, in 2013, the State Department and USAID launched a new initiative, Safe from the Start, to strengthen the humanitarian system's capacity to prevent and respond to gender-based violence from the onset of an emergency. Safe from the Start was launched with an initial commitment of \$10 million. The first partners to receive funding were UNHCR and ICRC in 2013. This funding will go toward hiring specialized staff, launching new programs, and developing innovative methods to protect women and girls at the onset of emergencies worldwide.

Syria

- Guided by the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which articulates a link between protection and prevention, the Department and USAID are working to support a resolution to the conflict in Syria in which women can be active participants in peace-building in Syria. Toward this end, the Department and USAID continue to support a range of efforts aimed not only at protecting these vulnerable populations, but ensuring all Syrians have the opportunity to participate in conversations about the future of their country.
- The Department continues to advocate for the protection of vulnerable populations, including women and girls, in this and all other situations by working with our partners to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual violence. Through our support to U.N. agencies and NGOs, the Department and USAID are providing assistance to gender-based violence survivors in Syria and to those who have fled to neighboring countries. Both our U.N. and NGO partners work with refugee hosting governments to develop capacity in the health sector, to increase awareness of gender-based violence and to meet the specific needs of survivors.
- Protecting and supporting women in meeting their unique needs is an important component of the National Action Plan's commitment to women becoming active participants in conflict resolution. We continue to incorporate women with Department-funded training and workshops related to peace processes, local governance, civil society capacity building, and countering violent extremism. Working with Syrians and several international actors, the Department played an important role in advocating for the inclusion of women at the negotiations table at the Geneva II conference in January.
- Lastly, the National Action Plan articulates a link between prevention and protection in holding perpetrators of mass atrocities, including GBV, accountable. An integral part of the Department's investments in accountability is supporting documentation of violations committed by all sides for use in future Syrian led transitional justice and accountability processes.

Burma

- The Department continues to engage the Government of Burma, civil society and particularly women's groups to support greater women's representation in the peace process. Our activities include small grants to women's organizations to fortify trust across religious and ethnic divides, strengthen community resiliency, and increase agency to more directly contribute to the nationwide peace process.
- These efforts are often paired with localized outreach to women's civil society groups gauging women's views and concerns about their role in public life. Additionally, the Department elevated women's participation in conflict resolution and political leadership through a small grants program supported by the Abbot Fund's partnership and the Secretary of State's International Fund for Women and Girls.
- The Department, under the leadership of the Trafficking in Persons Office, engaged with international partners to develop common policy frameworks for combating human trafficking. For example, diplomatic efforts led by Ambassador CdeBaca and a U.S. delegation to the inaugural bilateral dialogue on human trafficking with Burma in August allowed an open exchange of ideas and best practices as well as funding for technical assistance to the Government of Burma's newly established antihuman trafficking division.

DRC

- We remain concerned about the continuing epidemic of gender-based violence (GBV) throughout the DRC, including sexual violence and the use of mass rape

as a tactic of war. The U.S. Government is committed to preventing and responding to GBV through diplomatic and foreign assistance initiatives, pursuant to both the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and the U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally.

- For example, democracy and governance programs seek to fight impunity, including through national-level legal reforms, while community awareness activities educate and mobilize local communities to promote women's rights and protection for the entire community. USAID has allocated millions to respond to and prevent GBV across the DRC, providing care and treatment services for GBV survivors, including access to medical care, counseling and family mediation, social and economic reintegration support, as well as legal aid. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is also investing significantly in the DRC to address GBV across HIV prevention, care and treatment platforms.
- In addition to direct services for survivors, the United States is working to strengthen institutions and promote rule of law through our contributions to U.N. peacekeeping operations. The Department continues to highlight the security of vulnerable populations, including protection from GBV, as a core component of civilian protection mandates in U.N. missions. Furthermore, the Department led international efforts to ensure successful implementation of the U.N.'s policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse by U.N. personnel. In an effort to improve the effectiveness of the databases used to screen personnel, our Department funded the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (MONUSCO) profiling project, which compiles data on perpetrators of human rights abuses in DRC.
- The Department emphasized the relationship between prospects for justice and accountability for GBV and women's participation in conflict resolution and judicial processes. In the DRC, the Department, led by the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes and backed by the Office of Global Criminal Justice, engaged with signatories to a peace declaration outlining specific limitations on amnesty for sexual violence crimes. The agreement set a clear international marker ensuring that accountability for sexual violence crimes constitutes an integral part of peacebuilding and conflict resolution.
- In addition to providing specialized training for law enforcement and judicial actors, the Department assisted the DRC in establishing specialized judicial infrastructure to address GBV and developed tools to strengthen the capacity of these initiatives. Our Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) supported the American Bar Association's mobile courts program which has provided legal counseling to 2,275 survivors of SGBV and filed 1,930 cases with local authorities, resulting in 461 trials and 378 convictions in the North and South Kivu provinces. The program also included medical support for victims and reinforced the link between access to services and access to justice by training medical and legal professionals on the documentation of evidence for prosecution.

Question #51. Gender Based Conflict.—What is the breakdown of resources the Department has obligated and disbursed toward the implementation of the Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally for the remainder of FY 2014 given the \$150 million appropriation in the FY 2014 Consolidated Appropriations bill? Does the Department plan to allocate similar funds in FY 2015 to maintain the work?

Answer. Based on our current allocations, we expect to exceed \$150 million for gender-based violence programming in FY 2014. Our FY 2015 Request includes \$139 million to continue these programs that implement the Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally. Maintaining the commitment to respond and reduce gender-based violence is a strategic priority for U.S. foreign assistance.

Question #52. Trafficking.—NGOs report that exploitation and abuse of domestic workers brought to the U.S. by diplomats and consular officials is commonplace, and the Khobragade case is just the tip of the iceberg. For example, a new civil case was just filed against the Consulate General of Bangladesh for similar abuses. What strategies is the Department of State developing to help prevent trafficking, both labor and sex exploitation, of workers coming in on nonimmigrant visas, specifically domestic workers by their diplomat employers?

Answer. The State Department takes very seriously its responsibility to prevent the abuse of domestic workers employed by diplomats and consular officials and its obligation to address allegations of abuse of these workers. The Department has im-

plemented safeguards to prevent abuse, including requiring foreign missions to “pre-notify” the Office of Protocol or the United States Mission to the United Nations (USUN), of any prospective domestic worker who may accompany or join a diplomat. This ensures that the Department has an up-to-date record of all domestic workers working for diplomatic personnel in the United States. Before domestic workers are issued A-3 or G-5 visas, they must be interviewed by a U.S. consular officer abroad, and are required to present a written contract in a language the domestic worker understands. At the visa interview, they are given a “Know Your Rights” pamphlet, which provides them with information on how to contact an assistance hotline in the United States. We have also recently released a “Know Your Rights” video to be shown in consular waiting rooms worldwide, initially available in 39 languages, with additional translations to follow.

In recent years, the Department has prohibited cash payments of wages to domestic workers of diplomats and consular officials. These domestic workers must be paid by check or direct deposit into a local bank account to which only they have access. Wage deductions for any expenses, including meals and lodging, are also now prohibited.

The Department immediately responds to allegations of abuse of domestic workers. We place an immediate hold on the employing diplomat’s file so that he or she may not obtain any subsequent A-3/G-5 employees until the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of the Department. The Department’s Office of Protocol and USUN take allegations of abuse very seriously, conveying concern about each and every serious allegation in writing to the chief of the respective diplomatic mission and requesting a timely reply to the issues raised. The trafficking experts within the Bureau of Diplomatic Security’s Criminal Investigations Division, working closely with Protocol or USUN, will initiate an investigation into such allegations, often requesting that the Chief of Mission make available the subject of the investigation for a voluntary interview. In the conduct of these investigations, the State Department works closely with the Department of Justice.

The Department of State monitors allegations of abuse with an interbureau internal working group comprised of representatives of the Office of Protocol, the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, USUN, the Office of Foreign Missions, the Office of the Legal Adviser, the Bureau of Consular Affairs, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, and representatives of regional bureaus with active allegations. The Bureau of Consular Affairs regularly trains consular officers and periodically updates the Foreign Affairs Manual to provide consular officers with education and support in order to better recognize human trafficking indicators, and the Office of Protocol sends circular notes to the diplomatic community regarding their obligations with respect to the employment of domestic workers.

In addition, the Office of Protocol provides annual briefings to the Deputy Chiefs of diplomatic missions on the issue of trafficking in persons and the legal and policy requirements for the employment of domestic workers by foreign mission personnel. USUN recently conducted such a briefing for the heads of missions to the United Nations. The Office of Protocol launched its first briefing of domestic workers in the Washington, DC, area in 2012 and will provide such briefings annually to ensure that domestic workers understand their rights and responsibilities, as well as the resources available to them should they suffer abuse or mistreatment. The Office of Protocol has also engaged nongovernmental organizations in discussions about the Department’s requirements related to the employment of domestic workers by diplomatic personnel.

Questions #53, #54, #55.

- ◆ 53. Civilian Security.—There are reports that indicate evidence of official policies of persecution by the Government of Burma against the minority Muslim Rohingya ethnic group and warning signs of genocide. Are you concerned about the risk of genocide in Burma and what is the administration doing to address the concerns around ongoing persecution of Muslims and other ethnic minority groups in Burma?
- ◆ 54. Human Rights Watch and other NGOs have reported on evidence of official policies of persecution by the Government of Myanmar or Burma against the minority Muslim Rohingya ethnic group and warned about red flags for possible atrocities and ethnic cleansing. Are you concerned about the risk of mass atrocities against the Muslim Rohingya in Myanmar? What is the administration doing to address the concerns around ongoing persecution of Muslims and other ethnic minority groups in that country?
- ◆ 55. The Rohingya.—The Rohingya, a Muslim minority long resident in Burma, are essentially stateless, and lack basic rights, including the rights to work, travel, and marry. They routinely suffer forced labor, confiscation of property,

arbitrary arrest and detention, and physical and sexual violence. In addition, several hundred thousand reside in squalid conditions in Bangladeshi camps. Please describe recent efforts by the Department to address the multiple crises facing the Rohingya, and the concrete results of those efforts.

Answer. This answer addresses QFR numbers 53, 54, and 55 on the Rohingya. The administration has long been active in pressing the Government of Burma to address the problems surrounding discrimination toward ethnic minorities including the Rohingya. While we continue to assess that Burma's overall reform efforts are positive, the situation in Rakhine State is deteriorating. We are greatly concerned about the risk for further violence, and are using all the tools at our disposal to try to prevent further violence. The departure of INGOs in particular greatly concerns us, not only because of the dire humanitarian implications, but also because the absence of eye and ears on the ground increases the risk of violence.

The situation was exacerbated when ethnic Rakhine mobs attacked U.N. and INGO offices and warehouses on March 26–27, resulting in the departure of U.N. and INGO staff from Rakhine State, extensive damage to humanitarian assets, and the temporary suspension of nearly all humanitarian operations throughout Rakhine State. Despite the recent return of U.N. and INGO staff, humanitarian access remains limited and U.N. and INGOs have not been able to resume full operations to provide life-saving services to vulnerable populations in Rakhine.

The humanitarian situation is compounded by the government's overall inadequate management of Rakhine State. The stateless Muslim Rohingya, who are largely regarded as illegal immigrants, have for decades been targeted with discriminatory laws and practices, including birth limitation policies, restrictions on freedom of movement, and stripping of citizenship. The central Burmese Government has failed to address the underlying issues related to discrimination, security, access to justice, provision of humanitarian assistance, and reconciliation. The increasingly segregated local communities each view the other as a threat. Conditions in camps for over 140,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other vulnerable people in Rakhine State are worsening, as many lack access to life-saving medical services, as well as sufficient water, sanitation, and food. Burma's monsoon season begins in May exposing tens of thousands of vulnerable populations to additional risk from incoming cyclones and torrential rain.

We are very concerned the limited humanitarian space and poor conditions in the IDP camps raise the risk of violence. The situation in Rakhine State is also exacerbating nationalist anti-Muslim sentiment elsewhere in the country, which could intensify as 2015 election campaigning ramps up.

We raise our concerns with the highest levels of government at every opportunity, travel regularly to Rakhine State, and are in constant communication in Washington and in Burma with INGOs and the U.N. For example, EAP Assistant Secretary Danny Russel recently met with President Thein Sein to discuss the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine State in depth, and urged the central government to take full responsibility of the crisis, hold accountable those individuals responsible for the violence, and to take immediate steps toward providing necessary security to facilitate the full return of INGOs and resumption of aid delivery. Under Secretary for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman likewise raised concerns about the situation in Rakhine State and the status of INGOs and delivery of aid in all of her government meetings during her March visit. In Rangoon, Ambassador Mitchell regularly chairs diplomatic roundtables to help align positions among international community representatives in the field. We are pressing the government to strengthen the rule of law and to articulate a clear plan for achieving durable solutions, to include implementing a path to citizenship for the Rohingya.

The State Department, through PRM, supports the work of two primary partners in the region, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). UNHCR continues to work toward resolving the protracted situation of Burmese refugees and asylum seekers in Thailand, Rohingya in Bangladesh, and other vulnerable Burmese populations in Malaysia, China, India and elsewhere throughout the region. Durable solutions include voluntary return and reintegration, local integration, and third country resettlement.

State/PRM also supports the International Organization for Migration to improve the capacity of governments to protect and assist vulnerable migrants by drafting a national trafficking action plan with the Burmese Government, establish bilateral standard operating procedures for repatriation and reintegration of victims of trafficking between Burma and neighboring countries, and train Thai Government officials on trafficking victim identification and counseling.

In 2012–2013, USAID's Office of Food for Peace and Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance provided nearly \$15 million in humanitarian assistance to support the

populations displaced by conflict in Rakhine State. This assistance was used to deliver food, water, sanitation and nutritional supplies to displaced populations. In FY 2013, PRM provided over \$39.2 million in humanitarian assistance for Burmese IDPs in Burma and Burmese refugees and asylum seekers, including the Rohingya, in neighboring countries in the region.

Question #56. CSO.—A recent Inspector General report on the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations highlighted some key challenges. What's being done to follow up on the report's recommendations, including the lack of clarity surrounding the CSO Bureau's strategic direction?

Answer. CSO submitted its official response to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) on April 23, 2014.

CSO takes the OIG inspection seriously and is addressing the report's recommendations. CSO developed detailed action plans for each of its 35 assigned recommendations and has already implemented 18 of the 35 recommendations. CSO is working with our partners in the State Department to implement the recommendations assigned to them.

CSO is committed to professionalizing the Bureau's administrative practices. Since October 2013, CSO has hired experienced Human Resources and Finance Directors who have been charged with aligning Bureau policies with Department regulations. CSO has brought on board an experienced IT advisor to correct our IT deficiencies.

CSO has taken several steps to clarify and refine its mission. During the time of the inspection, CSO developed its Functional Bureau Strategy, part of a regular State Department planning process. This update of CSO mission and goals involved extensive consultations with the staff of the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights (J), the J bureaus, the regional bureaus, Ambassadors stationed in conflict countries, and State Department leadership. To further integrate our mission into the broader State Department mission, CSO participated in the drafting of the Fragile States section of the State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan and is working with J on the development of a strategic plan for the J family of bureaus. Finally, CSO created an internal working group to build consensus around CSO's mission, capabilities, and operations.

CSO is committed to working with the interagency and expanding our capacity to deploy experts to conflict areas. In the coming months, CSO and J will consult with the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, the Office of the Legal Advisor, and the National Security Council to refine our understanding of the "whole-of-government" approach to conflict prevention and response, and will further clarify CSO's responsibilities related to interagency coordination. CSO will develop and implement action plans to address CSO's coordination and surge responsibilities as dictated by the defined "whole-of-government" approach.

As these efforts bear fruit, CSO will execute a strategic communications plan to explain its mission, capabilities, and operations within the State Department, to Congress and to the public. CSO would welcome your ideas on our strategic direction and would be pleased to provide you or your staff with more information or a briefing.

Question #57. Atrocity Prevention.—This month marks the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide and 2 years since the establishment of the Interagency Atrocities Prevention Board. Since the Atrocities Prevention Board's inception, what reforms has the Department of State undertaken to strengthen its capacity to prevent mass atrocities and how was this reflected in your FY 2015 budget request to Congress? Moving forward, what other key reforms must be institutionalized and how can Congress best support you in fulfilling U.S. commitments with regard to preventing mass atrocities and protecting civilians?

Answer. Since the inception of the Atrocities Prevention Board (APB), the Department of State has identified its existing political, economic, diplomatic tools relevant to atrocity prevention work, and has worked on implementing and, where relevant, enhancing these tools for effective atrocity prevention. The State Department has also taken steps to expand the pool of civilian expertise to identify and enhance tools and assess and respond to risks of mass atrocities within the U.S. Government.

The State Department developed a Diplomatic Engagement strategy, which centers on increased collaboration with the multilateral, regional, and civil society organizations, as well as partner governments. Conversations on enhancing prevention work have begun with the United Nations in both Geneva and New York, with the European Union, and dialogues will take place later this year with NATO, the OAS and the AU. We have also enhanced partnerships with the Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, the Office of the High Commissioner for

Human rights, the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Justice Rapid Response, and the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative.

The State Department introduced a new tool in the War Crimes Rewards legislation that the President signed in January. Acting on this new authority, the State Department recently designated Joseph Kony and other senior leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army, as well as Sylvestre Mudacumura from the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, for rewards of up to \$5 million.

The Atrocities Prevention Board interagency provided policy guidance on resource reallocation to six main priority areas, which is also reflected in the Department's FY 2015 budget submissions. These priority areas include work related to: (1) promoting early warning of atrocity threats; (2) isolating perpetrators of atrocities; (3) surging specialized skills and expertise to address emerging atrocity threats; (4) strengthening local and regional processes and institutions that address core grievances and mitigate potential threats; (5) building capacity in multilateral organizations and institutions; and (6) ensuring training and learning within the U.S. Government. Most bureaus incorporated work related to atrocity prevention in their bureau strategy, and U.S. embassies did the same in their integrated country strategies. Staying in line with the APB's function outlined in Presidential Study Directive 10, the FY 2015 requests did not reflect additional requests for funding but rather re-allocated existing Bureau and Department funding to efforts related to atrocity prevention.

In 2013, the Atrocities Prevention Board and partners completed the first National Intelligence Estimate on Global Risks of Mass Atrocities and Prospects for International Response. The National Intelligence Estimate guides the interagency's prevention and response efforts in medium risk countries, high risk countries, and countries where atrocities are already taking place.

The Department has developed an atrocity assessment framework in conjunction with our USAID colleagues, which highlights the need to identify and understand the means and motives of potential perpetrators, targeted groups and third parties. The Department developed a monitoring tool that helps country watchers systematically track an escalation of short-term atrocity risks over time. Finally, the Department developed ways to target U.S. leverage for atrocity prevention, including use of early warning, economic leverage, diplomatic engagement, community outreach, as well as accountability and reconciliation efforts.

Question #58(a-e). South Sudan.—The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has been essential to the negotiation process thus far, and is now proposing the deployment of a regional stabilization force to enforce the cessation of hostilities.

- ◆ (a). What is your assessment of this stabilization force? How will it complement or complicate the work of the IGAD monitoring mission in South Sudan?

Answer. We deeply appreciate the leadership of IGAD in seeking a peaceful resolution to the crisis in South Sudan. We welcome the region's work to support implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) agreement in South Sudan, including through IGAD's proposal to deploy a force to South Sudan comprised of troops from IGAD and other regional states. We believe that this force must deploy under the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to provide force protection for the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM) and to reinforce UNMISS's protection of civilians mandate. IGAD and the U.N.'s Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) are finalizing agreement on the deployment of this force under UNMISS.

- ◆ (b). Last month, the African Union announced the formation of the Commission of Inquiry, to be headed by former Nigerian President Obasanjo. As you know, many of us in Congress are very concerned about the issue of accountability for human rights abuses. How does the administration plan to support the work of the Commission? Is such support taken into account as part of the FY15 budget request?

Answer. The United States welcomes the creation of the African Union (AU) Commission of Inquiry (COI). The AU's announcement sets forth ambitious and commendable goals for the COI that include determining the causes of the current conflict, establishing the facts regarding possible violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, and making recommendations for justice, accountability, and reconciliation. We will closely watch how the COI moves forward in fulfilling its mandate.

The U.S. Government stands ready to support COI efforts to carry out its goals. We have offered an array of tools to support to the COI, including providing technical experts with experience in international criminal investigations and the collection, preservation, and analysis of forensic evidence; identifying and sharing infor-

mation relevant to the COI's mandate; providing advice and support to the Commission on engaging in public outreach; and facilitating the inclusion of South Sudanese civil society voices into the work of the COI which could be supported within the administration's FY15 budget request.

We strongly believe that the investigation and prosecution of atrocity crimes is fundamental to dealing with a legacy of mass abuses, preventing future violence, and establishing a lasting peace. We welcome this announcement as a key step in opening space for inclusive discussions on justice that will help address deep grievances in South Sudan. We will also continue to support efforts that seek to bring peace, justice and reconciliation to the people of South Sudan.

- ◆ (c). According to the U.N. officials, independent human rights monitors, and even the State Department's own recent annual Human Rights report, grave human rights abuses have been attributed to South Sudan's security forces, both in the context of the current conflict and prior to the outbreak of hostilities in December. In the context of these allegations and the apparent lack of accountability under President Kiir's administration, under what conditions would the State Department propose to resume security assistance, now halted, for the country's security forces?

Answer. The State Department will not consider resuming military assistance to South Sudan until: a peace agreement has been signed and implemented; the parties have demonstrated that the conditions underlying the current fighting are being addressed; and there is commitment to ending human rights abuses, violations and atrocities, and holding perpetrators accountable. If or when military assistance resumes, proposed recipients will be vetted for gross violations of human rights in accordance with the Leahy Law and State Department Leahy Law implementation policy. We value a security partnership with South Sudan that is based on mutual commitments to peace, human rights, and democracy.

- ◆ (d). Given the numerous responsibilities of UNMISS and the increasingly negative view of the mission in country, what do you believe is the proper role of UNMISS moving forward? What role, if any, should UNMISS play in monitoring the cessation of hostilities agreement and why?

Answer. The United States has begun negotiations within the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) on a revised UNMISS mandate that emphasizes protection of civilians, in response to recommendations in the U.N. Secretary General's March 6, 2014, report. UNSC members broadly agree that the mission should reprioritize its activities around the protection of civilians, supporting the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and human rights monitoring and investigation. In addition, IGAD and other countries from the region likely will deploy forces to UNMISS that, in addition to supporting the core tasks of the mission described above, will provide force protection for the MVM in its activities related to implementation of the CoH.

- ◆ (e). It seems that negotiations in Addis Ababa are at a standstill. What is the status of talks and what pressure should the U.S. consider applying to encourage meaningful progress?

Answer. The President's Special Envoy is in Addis Ababa pressing all sides involved in the conflict to respect the Cessation of Hostilities agreement and to seriously engage in good faith in the IGAD-led peace process immediately. Additionally, we are engaging and coordinating our efforts with our partners in the region and with our Troika and EU partners to further increase pressure upon all parties for meaningful progress. In the Secretary's recent trip to South Sudan, he pressed President Kiir and subsequently Riek Machar, by phone, to travel to Addis Ababa themselves.

*Question #59. Central African Republic.—*The U.S. response to the humanitarian, political, and security crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR) has increased dramatically in recent months, particularly as the crisis in CAR has become more desperate. While the response to the immediate crisis has been critical, the protracted nature of the situation in CAR will require sustained United States and international support.

- ◆ The FY15 request sets aside \$150 million to respond to unanticipated requirements of peacekeeping missions. Would this amount be sufficient should a U.N. mission be established in CAR? Do we have any sense of what a mission such as that proposed by the U.N. Secretary General might cost?
- ◆ As I understand it, BINUCA—the U.N. political mission in the Central African Republic—is still acquiring the appropriate staff and resources to function effectively. The mission will no doubt be integral to the interim government as they

reestablish law and order in the country. What is the status of BINUCA's operations and what specifically is the mission's focus over the next 6 months?

- ◆ The number of women, adolescents, and children in the CAR and South Sudan that have been killed, injured, subjected to gender-based violence, and/or forcibly recruited into armed forces and groups is astounding. What is the U.S. Government doing to urge all armed forces and groups in CAR and South Sudan to immediately cease grave violations against civilians, especially women and children?

Answer. Based on preliminary estimates, the annual cost of the new U.N. peacekeeping operation in CAR, once it reaches full operating capacity some time well into 2015, could cost between \$1 billion to \$1.2 billion. The U.S. assessed share at the current rate of 28.36 percent would therefore be roughly \$283 million to \$340 million per annum. The \$150 million Peacekeeping Response Mechanism (PKRM) request is intended to address urgent and unanticipated requirements, whether assessed or voluntary, where funding is urgently needed in response to new or changing requirements. Some of the startup costs or initial assessments associated with the U.N. peacekeeping operation in CAR might be met appropriately with the PKRM. However, in determining whether and how to use the PKRM, the Department would need to consider a range of future needs, inclusive of U.N. missions and African-led regional operations.

Pursuant to UNSC resolution 2149 (April 2014), BINUCA was immediately subsumed into the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA). MINUSCA is tasked with supporting the transitional government to reestablish law and order and to take the leading role in assisting the transitional government with the political transition and the electoral process, as well in mediation and reconciliation processes. The mission will also continue to monitor and report on the human rights situation. On September 15, 2014, when its military component will be deployed, MINUSCA will begin to implement its mandated tasks, including the protection of civilians, facilitating access for humanitarian assistance, supporting the creation of local policing capability, and developing and implementing security sector reform and Disarmament, Demobilization Reintegration (DDR) and Repatriation (DDRR) processes.

The Security Council has requested that the U.N. Secretary General accelerate the deployment of MINUSCA civilian personnel, including the deployment of Child Protection and Women Protection Advisors. Moreover, the U.N. Security Council has also authorized the deployment of contractors as well as U.N. military enablers prior to September 15, with the purpose of preparing the groundwork for the full deployment of MINUSCA so that the mission will be up-and-running on time.

The United States believes that the quickest and most effective way to prevent further atrocities, improve the security situation, and increase humanitarian access is to support the African Union-led International Support Mission in CAR (MISCA) and the French forces during this interim period leading to the deployment of MINUSCA's military component. The United States has committed up to \$100 million to transport French forces and to transport, to equip, and to train MISCA forces in order to restore security and end the dire humanitarian crisis that jeopardizes the lives of millions throughout the country. We have airlifted Burundian and Rwandan troops to Bangui and will continue to transport, equip, and train additional troops that are identified. In early April, we delivered to MISCA the first tranche of vehicles to improve mobility of MISCA's elements.

The United States also strongly supports targeted U.N. and U.S. sanctions against those who threaten the peace, stability, and security of the Central African Republic, including through human rights violations and abuses. We believe that sanctioning these individuals sends a strong message that supporting violence in CAR will not be tolerated by the international community. We will continue to work with our international partners to hold accountable all individuals responsible for atrocities committed in CAR.

We also continue to support efforts to mitigate conflict and to promote reconciliation between the varied communities, ethnic groups, and religions in CAR. We have supported activities to promote religious tolerance, including the April 8 visit by an interfaith delegation of U.S. religious leaders to Bangui, which concluded with the signing by CAR Government and religious leaders, civil society, and representatives of the armed groups of a declaration supporting efforts to promote reconciliation and peace in CAR and denouncing the use of violence. We welcomed a delegation of CAR religious leaders to the United States, which followed up on a State Department-hosted interfaith dialogue in January, making clear our strong support for efforts by CAR residents to encourage interfaith dialogue and oppose religious violence.

Of course our humanitarian efforts continue, including an emphasis on addressing the health consequences of widespread gender-based violence as well as efforts to combat such violence in the first place.

Question #60. Democratic Republic of the Congo.—What kinds of bilateral military assistance are planned for FY 2015? What conditions has the administration placed on military aid to DRC, for example regarding the demobilization of child soldiers and the prosecution of human rights abusers within the DRC armed forces?

Answer. In FY 2013 and 2014, Foreign Military Financing and Sales to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Government were restricted due to Presidential Determinations under the Child Soldiers Prevention Act (CSPA) and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). Partial waivers of restrictions in the CSPA and TVPA were granted on the basis of U.S. national interest in both years, which resulted in continuation of International Military Education and Training (IMET), nonlethal Excess Defense Articles, issuance of licenses for commercial sales of nonlethal defense articles, and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) funding. In 2013, the administration recognized the important steps the DRC Government has taken to prevent the recruitment of and demobilization of child soldiers, like signing and implementing a national action plan. The administration notes that the DRC Government has also begun to take steps to hold human rights abusers within the DRC Armed Forces accountable for their actions. We continue to work with the government to strengthen its efforts.

In FY 2015, in the absence of CSPA and TVPA restrictions, military assistance would support institutional reform and professionalization of the DRC Armed Forces. This includes building the capacity of the military justice system, assisting in the development of the military training and logistics systems and capabilities, and conducting training to improve command and control of the military and relations between the military and the civilian population.

Question #61. Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).—Over the last year, the U.N. peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has seen two important innovations: the deployment of an “Intervention Brigade” with a strong mandate to neutralize armed groups in eastern Congo; and the deployment of unarmed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to help improve the situational awareness of peacekeepers on the ground, potentially enhancing their ability to protect civilians.

- ◆ What are the potential implications of these recent innovations for MONUSCO and U.N. peacekeeping in general? What is your view regarding the U.N.’s willingness to adapt new strategies and technologies?

Answer. MONUSCO is a critical part of the effort to stabilize the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and to create the security conditions in eastern DRC necessary for lasting stability. In January 2013, the U.N. Security Council approved the use of force multipliers such as UAVs to improve MONUSCO’s situational awareness, and to promote force protection and advanced analysis and surveillance capabilities. The administration strongly supported this effort. While the U.N. has a learning curve with respect to this innovation, the introduction of the UAVs has already helped MONUSCO respond to threats to the civilian population and to the mission itself.

The administration also supported the U.N. Security Council’s approval of the Intervention Brigade (IB) within MONUSCO tasked with neutralizing and disarming armed groups. MONUSCO has long had the authority within its mandate to use force to protect civilians from the predations of armed groups. U.N. Security Council Resolution 2098 (March 2013) did not change that authority or the mission; instead, it made it more explicit, by adding a brigade that is trained, organized, and equipped to deal specifically with the array of armed groups and other threats to civilians unique to eastern DRC. The Intervention Brigade played a key role in the DRC military’s and MONUSCO’s joint defeat of the M23 rebel group last fall.

The deployment of UAVs and the creation of the Intervention Brigade are examples of the U.N.’s willingness to embrace new ideas and new technologies to better protect civilians and to give missions the capabilities needed to carry out their mandates more effectively. The U.N., with full U.S. support, is seeking to use technologies and capacities in a more efficient way. To this aim, it created a Capabilities Steering Group that is exploring new solutions, such as intermission cooperation, to address challenges posed by new threat environments and financial shortfalls.

Question #62 (a-b). Somalia.—We have heard repeated reports that al-Shabaab is on its last legs, yet the number and boldness of the organization’s attacks have increased over the past several months. The assault on Villa Somalia and the intimidation of Internet service providers in their areas of control are especially troubling.

- ◆ (a). What is your assessment of al-Shabaab's strength?

Answer. While al-Shabaab has lost territory and the ability to govern most urban areas in Somalia, it remains a lethal terrorist group with the intent and capability to attack civilians, government officials, and U.S. interests in Somalia and the region.

Al-Shabaab continues to exploit divisions within Somalia and commit asymmetric attacks to destabilize the country. In 2013, al-Shabaab executed a wide spectrum of attacks in Mogadishu and throughout Somalia, including sophisticated, asymmetrical attacks and assassinations, and destruction of property.

Somalia remains a safe haven for al-Shabaab and the group continues to plan and mount operations within Somalia and in neighboring countries, particularly in Kenya. However, despite its successes, al-Shabaab continues to face pressure from AMISOM and the Somali National Security Forces and experience internal leadership disputes.

Working with our African partners to defeat al-Shabaab remains one of our top priorities.

- ◆ (b). How does the administration plan to support AMISOM in its combined efforts to eradicate al-Shabaab in theater? What measures does the administration plan to take in order to prevent a security and service-provision vacuum once AMISOM has cleared an area?

Answer. The United States provides nonlethal equipment, food, fuel, and training advisors to support AMISOM and Somalia National Army (SNA) soldiers. Since 2007, the United States has obligated over \$512 million in support of AMISOM. In October 2013, the Department of Defense established a Military Coordination Cell in Somalia to provide planning and advisory support to AMISOM and to coordinate with the SNA.

As AMISOM and the SNA work together in their offensive against al-Shabaab, the Federal Government of Somalia, with support from the international community, is implementing a stabilization plan that provides interim governance and paves the way for humanitarian assistance in areas free from al-Shabaab's control. The United States will continue to coordinate with the Federal Government of Somalia and international donors on stabilization efforts, specifically supporting community driven quick impact activities in areas identified by the stabilization plan.

Question #63. Cuts to Humanitarian Assistance.—Congress provided robust funding for the humanitarian accounts, including the Migration and Refugee Assistance Account in the FY 2014 appropriations bill as the world faces unprecedented crises in Syria and the Middle East. However, the FY 2015 request cuts the Migration and Refugee Account by 33 percent from the FY 2014 enacted levels. Recognizing there may be some carry over from FY 2014 into FY 2015, we are still facing a protracted crisis in Syria, simmering conflict in South Sudan, a humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic and huge uncertainty in Afghanistan.

- ◆ The budget requests notes the USG will be able to respond to the Syrian crisis with this requested level, but what about other crises around the world like the Central African Republic?
- ◆ Are you confident that there are sufficient funds to respond to a natural disaster or new emergency in FY 2015?

Answer. The administration remains dedicated to providing robust support for humanitarian programs worldwide. The President's FY 2015 request includes \$2.097 billion for the Migration Refugee Assistance and the Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance accounts and \$1.3 billion for the International Disaster Assistance (IDA) account. The Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development plan to carry over significant FY 2014 funding into FY 2015 to support humanitarian assistance needs. Taken together, we anticipate having the funds needed to support our humanitarian assistance goals in Syria, Africa, and elsewhere. The President's FY 2015 request reflects the administration's ongoing commitment to humanitarian programs, while taking into account the current constrained budget environment.

Question #64. United Nations.—What is the current status of the Palestinian effort to seek international recognition as a state in U.N. fora? Please comment on recent reports that Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has submitted letters of accession for 15 multilateral treaties or conventions.

- ◆ Do you anticipate that the Palestinians will continue efforts to pursue such recognition? How is the United States working to address this issue?

Answer. The Palestinians have not pursued any additional recognition efforts since President Abbas submitted letters of accession to various conventions and treaties on April 1, 2014.

The United States continues to strongly oppose unilateral actions that seek to circumvent or prejudice the very outcomes that can only be negotiated. We believe the only way to a two-state solution is through direct negotiations between the two sides.

We are disappointed by unilateral actions by either side and seek to maintain an atmosphere conducive for ongoing negotiations. There is still room for the Israelis and Palestinians to engage with one another, and we are encouraging all sides to make the hard decisions necessary to move negotiations forward. Meetings between the negotiators continue, and the parties are engaging in serious and intensive efforts.

Question #65. According to Admiral Mike Mullen, former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "United Nations peacekeepers help promote stability and help reduce the risks that major U.S. military interventions may be required to restore stability in a country or region. Therefore, the success of these operations is very much in our national interest."⁹

◆ Do you agree with this statement? From a diplomatic perspective, why is it important for the United States to continue to support U.N. peacekeeping?

Answer. I agree wholeheartedly with Admiral Mullen. We cannot nor should we respond unilaterally to every crisis around the world. When it is appropriate, the United States supports sending U.N. peacekeepers as part of an agreed to, and cooperative multilateral strategy for, restoring peace and stability. Under the right circumstances, a U.N. peacekeeping operation may indeed be the best and the only response to a crisis. In addition, U.N. peacekeeping helps spread the costs as well as the risks. For example, a 2006 GAO study concluded that the cost to the United States of conducting its own peace operation in a low-threat environment like Haiti would be nearly eight times as much as what we pay through U.N. assessments.

As one of the five Permanent Members of the U.N. Security Council, we play a key role in formulating the Security Council's responses to international crises. In many cases U.N. peacekeeping plays the right role. However, it is not the only option. For example, the U.N. Security Council currently has 16 sanctions regimes.

From a diplomatic perspective, our participation in, and support for, U.N. peacekeeping operations means that we are working with 192 other member states to promote and maintain international peace and stability. This close cooperation is integral to building mutual respect and understanding, and to forging better relationships with a wide range of partners.

Question #66. Maintaining stability in Sudan and South Sudan is a key priority for the United States. Currently, we support three separate peacekeeping missions in the region, but all are underfunded. Due to the legislative cap on peacekeeping contributions that is currently in place, the United States has not paid its full assessed rate for any peacekeeping mission in fiscal years 2013 or 2014. This has amounted to a shortfall of nearly \$80 million for all three peacekeeping missions currently operating in Sudan and South Sudan. The President's FY 2015 request calls for Congress to allow us to pay our peacekeeping dues at the full assessed rate of 28.3 percent.

◆ How important is full funding to the missions in South Sudan and elsewhere? And what does it say to troop contributing countries when we don't fully pay for missions we voted for in the Security Council?

Answer. Peacekeeping missions are critical tools to maintain international peace and security, and to advance U.S. interests around the world in places such as Haiti, Liberia, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Mali. The U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is currently sheltering over 68,000 civilians in the midst of a conflict that has displaced over 1 million people, and is supporting the delivery of humanitarian assistance in an environment of severe food insecurity. Full funding of U.S. contributions is essential to support mission operations and deployments, to curb accumulation of funding shortfalls and potential arrears, and to allow continued U.S. leadership in U.N. peacekeeping activities. Any reduction strains vital U.N. peacekeeping operations and causes delays in reimbursements to troop contributing countries that can affect future troop rotations. In South Sudan, such shortfalls would significantly undermine efforts to reinforce the mission during its greatest time of crisis.

The U.N.'s current assessment rate for the United States for calendar year 2014 is 28.36 percent. However, at present, the Department only has the authority to make payments from appropriated funds at the calendar year 2012 assessed rate

of 27.14 percent. Due to the difference in the amount assessed and the amount authorized to pay with appropriated funds, the United States has already accrued \$117 million in new arrears stemming from FY 2013 assessments. Additional arrears will continue to accrue for FY 2014. We are looking at potential options to reduce or mitigate those arrears before they impact mission operations, as well as to encourage the U.N. to further pursue cost saving measures and efficiencies. However, budget shortfalls strain vital U.N. peacekeeping operations and can cause delays in reimbursements to troop contributing countries that affect future troop rotations. As they accumulate over time, arrears will begin to affect overall mission effectiveness and erode U.S. negotiating strength in U.N. peacekeeping budget deliberations.

Question #67. U.N. Peacekeeping.—The President's FY 2015 budget requests a sizable increase in funding for U.N. peacekeeping missions next year. The FY 2014 omnibus appropriations bill significantly underfunded our peacekeeping commitments by: (1) failing to provide any funding for the U.N.'s new peacekeeping mission in Mali; (2) including no language allowing the U.S. to pay its peacekeeping dues at the full assessed rate. The combined effect of these and other shortfalls left us at least \$350 million short on our peacekeeping dues in FY 2014. As a result, while the FY 2015 budget request does get us much closer to fulfilling our financial obligations to U.N. peacekeeping, we still have a good amount of ground to make up. The United States is now suggesting there be a new mission in the Central African Republic (CAR).

- ◆ How do we do that if we are not fulfilling our financial obligations to peacekeeping operations that are already in the field, such as the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)?

Answer. The FY 2014 appropriations act creates challenges for the United States to pay our anticipated U.N. peacekeeping assessments on time and in full, to which the President and the administration remain committed. We expect additional assessments during FY 2014 as a result of the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) troop surge in response to the ongoing crisis there. Additionally, because the President's FY 2014 request was submitted to Congress prior to the creation of the MINUSMA, it did not include a request for CIPA funds for the mission. Accordingly, Congress did not appropriate any such funds in the FY 2014 appropriations act.

Similarly, on April 8—after the President submitted his FY 2015 budget request to Congress—the U.N. Security Council authorized the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Due to the timing of the U.N. authorization, the FY 2015 Budget does not include a request for CIPA funds for MINUSCA. However, the President's FY 2015 Budget Request for State and Foreign Operations does include \$100 million in FY 2015 CIPA funds to help offset FY 2014 MINUSMA assessments. The budget also includes a \$150 million request for a proposed Peacekeeping Response Mechanism (PKRM), an account that would ensure the United States has the ability going forward to respond to urgent and unexpected peacekeeping requirements involving U.N., regional security organizations, or coalition efforts, either assessed or voluntary, without impacting ongoing, planned peacekeeping activities—exactly the circumstance presented by MINUSMA for FY 2014 and MINUSCA for FY 2015.

Given the critical role that U.N. peacekeeping missions play in protecting civilians under threat of physical violence, facilitating the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance, and helping create the conditions for lasting peace in countries emerging from conflict, U.S. leadership demands that we continue to meet our treaty obligations to pay in full our U.N. peacekeeping assessments and so avoid any damage to mission operations and the risk that would pose for civilian protection and international peace and security. We hope that Congress will fully fund the President's FY 2015 request, including the establishment and funding of the PKRM.

Furthermore, we continually press the U.N. to pursue cost saving measures and new efficiencies in peacekeeping missions as well as keep missions under regular review to determine where we may be able to close or downsize them as appropriate.

Question #68. In addition to funding traditional peacekeeping-related accounts, the administration's FY 2015 request also calls for the establishment of a \$150 million Peacekeeping Response Mechanism (PKRM) "to support initial urgent and unexpected requirements of new U.N. and non-U.N. missions without compromising support for existing U.S. peacekeeping commitments." This mechanism would give the United States the financial flexibility to respond quickly to emerging crises around the world that fall outside of the normal budgetary cycle. While the PKRM is not tied to a specific country or region, the serious funding challenges that have

faced the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA) demonstrate the wisdom of creating a mechanism for flexible peacekeeping funding. Last year, as the President's budget did not include a request for MINUSMA, Congress declined to fund the mission in the FY 2014 omnibus, leaving a hole of nearly \$250 million in our U.N. peacekeeping commitments. Clearly, crises requiring the authorization of new or expanded peacekeeping operations can arise at any time, without regard to our normal budgetary procedures. Failing to adequately fund these missions, which we vote for as a permanent member of the Security Council, can have a negative impact on U.S. strategic interests.

- ◆ As a result, please discuss the importance of having a source of flexible funding to address unanticipated peacekeeping needs that emerge outside of the regular budget cycle?

Answer. The purpose of the Peacekeeping Response Mechanism is to ensure that the United States has the ability to respond to urgent and unexpected peacekeeping requirements without impacting ongoing, planned peacekeeping activities. There are numerous historical examples when the Department has had to shift funding between programs to meet requirements (e.g., Darfur, Somalia, Mali, and the Central African Republic) and experience indicates that the time required to identify and reprogram funding is an impediment to responding quickly and effectively. Delays in financing the startup of new missions or emergency expansion of existing ones not only endangers lives of vulnerable civilians during the critical initial period of mission deployment, but it might also lead to the need for a more costly and lengthier intervention than might otherwise be the case if the response is quicker.

The PKRM would be assessed on an as-needed basis as requirements are identified. All relevant bureaus would coordinate to determine requirements and use of PKRM funding would be subject to a determination by the Secretary that additional resources are necessary. Additionally, the use of PKRM funds would be subject to existing congressional notification procedures, and we would consult with committee staff on the use of this mechanism.

Unexpected peacekeeping requirements often arise in a timeframe that does not allow us to address them through the normal budget process. In some cases we are able to cover such costs without impacting ongoing peacekeeping activities. However, we cannot assume this will always be the case, especially as overall requirements for U.N. peacekeeping have been increasing. At the same time, our own budgets are decreasing, leaving less space for tradeoffs and transfers from other accounts. Over the past 2 years, we have transferred more than \$200 million in Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding from other accounts into the Peacekeeping Operations Account in response to unanticipated or rapidly changing peacekeeping requirements. The PKRM would help to ensure that we have funding available to respond rapidly to urgent and unexpected requirements without the risk of impacting critical, ongoing, budgeted peacekeeping efforts.

Question #69. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security.—In December 2011, the White House released the United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAP) with the goal of empowering women as equal partners in preventing conflict and building peace in countries threatened by conflict and insecurity. This plan represents a government-wide strategy, led by the Department of State, Department of Defense and the U.S. Agency for International Development, under the guidance of the National Security Advisor. Implementation relies on proactive engagement with partner governments and civil society to ensure women's inclusion in all aspects of conflict-prevention and peace-building.

- ◆ What is the status of the 2013 annual review of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security and the Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally, and will any results be made publicly available?

Answer. The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues takes the lead for the Department in coordinating input from all relevant offices and bureaus, as well as with our embassies in the field, for both the National Action Plan and Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally. These reports enable the Department to reflect on progress, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations for moving forward.

In 2015, the National Security Council Staff will lead a process to update this National Action Plan, based on inputs provided by implementing agencies and in consultation with Congress, international partners, and civil society.

As for reporting on implementation of the National Action Plan for calendar and fiscal year 2013, the Department of State annually reports to the National Security Council staff on its implementation of the National Action Plan, in accordance with

Executive Order 13595. The Executive Summaries of both reports will be made available for the public.

Question #70. How is the Department “advocating for the integration of women and gender perspectives” in peace processes in which the U.S. is involved, such as the Geneva negotiations on Syria or the Middle East peace talks, as mandated by the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security?

Answer. Recognizing that peace and security outcomes are more resilient when women are afforded an equal seat at the table, the Department is committed to integrating women’s meaningful participation in peace processes and conflict resolution. As I noted in Montreaux in January, the journey of Syrian women is one of courage and perseverance. They are rallying civil society to the cause of peace, negotiating cease-fires, delivering relief, advocating for detainees, and countering extremism. We have seen the women of Syria working to bring about a political transition and envisioning a new future for a pluralistic, free and democratic Syria. These stories carry a simple message: No country can succeed if it leaves half its people behind. Women bring important perspectives to conflict resolution, and no peace can endure if women are not afforded a central role.

In Syria, the Department has played a sustained role in integrating women into its efforts to support of the opposition and civil society actors. Moreover, in our diplomatic engagement we have actively integrated women as participants and agents of change in resolving the conflict in Syria by providing Syrian women’s groups with training and diplomatic support to prepare for future peace processes and promote their involvement in track one negotiations.

Question #71. Despite the fact that policewomen have proven to greatly increase the operational effectiveness of police forces and are critical assets in efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism, women currently comprise only 1 percent of Pakistani forces.

- ◆ What efforts has the United States undertaken to increase the recruitment and retention of policewomen in Pakistan and how does the U.S. intend to highlight this issue in the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue’s Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism Working Group?

Answer. Advancing the status of women and girls is a central element of U.S. foreign policy under the Obama administration. The United States has strategic interests in supporting the Government of Pakistan’s efforts to improve security, working conditions, and professional standards for policewomen in Pakistan through adequate recruitment, training, equipment, and infrastructure assistance.

Since 2011, the Department of State’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has renovated women’s police stations in Islamabad and Karachi and a women’s police barracks outside of Islamabad. INL also has provided equipment and vehicles to women police officers and police stations in Islamabad, Sindh, and Balochistan. INL-supported training, conferences and exchanges for policewomen, including a conference in Islamabad on March 25, 2014, in celebration of International Women’s Day, are advancing the skills and opportunities for women police. To improve the quality of cases brought to trial, promote the importance of women in the criminal justice system, and expand skill sets, INL has also supported two women-only police-prosecutor trainings for female police and prosecutors from all over Pakistan during the past 6 months.

We continue to work with the Government of Pakistan to set a date for the Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism Working Group. We plan to raise this issue as part of our broader discussion on law enforcement training, assistance, and reform during the 2014 session.

Question #72. Power Africa.—Why wasn’t the Power Africa Initiative given its own line item in the budget? Without such a line item it is very difficult to determine what resources are being sought for the effort and as a result it seems as if the initiative is less important than other initiatives that have received their own line item.

Answer. Consistent with other Presidential Initiatives, funding is sourced from a combination of bilateral and regional development assistance funds. We justify and report on Presidential Initiatives and key areas of interest in the Congressional Budget Justification, including a specific funding breakdown of where the funds are located (bilateral or regional) and accompanying narratives that explain program priorities and what the requested funding will accomplish.

Question #73. I would like to better understand the plan to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa as part of the Power Africa Initiative. The initiative is described as a private sector, transaction-based program, but, at least at this

point, there are few opportunities for U.S. businesses to invest in transmission and distribution services in Power Africa countries.

- ◆ How does the initiative plan on creating private investment in transmission and distribution? If private investment in distribution infrastructure is unlikely, how can the initiative support rural cooperatives or other mechanisms to bring power to rural areas? Finally, how does the initiative plan on supporting the growing, but capital constrained, off-grid lighting and power sector in sub-Saharan Africa? Success of the Power Africa Initiative cannot just be measured in megawatts, but also must be measured in the number of people getting access to power.

Answer. Power Africa anticipates that over 100 million Africans will benefit from the Initiative's efforts by 2020. Power Africa plans to do this by facilitating public-private partnerships and unlocking investment potential through host government policy reforms. Instead of taking years or even decades to create an enabling environment for energy sector investment, Power Africa takes a transaction-centered approach that provides incentives to host governments, the private sector, and donors. These incentives galvanize collaboration, producing near-term results and driving systemic reforms that pave the way to future investment.

To achieve these ambitions, Power Africa includes:

- An interagency Transactions Solutions Team to provide the catalysts needed to bring power generation, transmission and distribution investments to fruition. The team does this by leveraging financing, insurance, technical assistance, and grant tools from across the U.S. Government and our private sector partners.
- Field-based Transaction Advisors to help governments prioritize, coordinate, and expedite the implementation of power projects, while simultaneously building the capacity of existing host government ministries to deliver results. These Advisors have already begun their work in each of Power Africa's partner countries.

Increased Efficiency through Privatization

Nigeria

In addition to working on facilitating new generation transactions that will lead to higher availability of power, and thus enable greater access, Power Africa has also been working in selected countries to improve transmission and distribution services. Most notable of these is Nigeria, where USAID has been involved in assisting the Government of Nigeria in its landmark power sector privatization program after power sector assets were unbundled into a series of successor companies. As a result of the privatization, 10 distribution companies (DISCOs) were successfully privatized and their assets transferred to the private sector in late 2013. The new owners are now sizing up the strengths and weaknesses of these companies and are planning major management improvements and capital expenditures to help reduce technical and financial losses. As these distribution companies are operated in a more efficient manner, their financial viability will improve significantly, allowing them to extend their services to many more customers.

The weak state of Nigeria's transmission system has emerged as a major risk to the bold power sector privatization and reform initiative in Nigeria. The government has appointed Manitoba Hydro International (MHI) of Canada as a management contractor for the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) in 2013, which is considered a step in the right direction to commercialize TCN. However, the contract is undersized relative to the challenges. USAID-funded experts have bolstered the management ranks and are helping implement critical priority initiatives. Additionally, the experts will help develop and implement a network expansion blueprint; assist in financial and economic planning, modeling, budgeting, and development of a cost-reflective transmission tariff and a corporate business plan; conduct power system reliability and other studies; and assist with responsibilities for transitional electricity markets.

Ghana

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) is a key Power Africa implementation agency. As a part of its second compact negotiations, MCC is actively engaged with the Government of Ghana to encourage it to induct the private sector in its power distribution sector, in particular the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG). MCC is offering an incentive in the form of grant assistance to the Electricity Company of Ghana for this purpose. MCC has already engaged the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, to perform a private sector participation options analysis for ECG and the Northern Electricity Distribution Company (NEDCO), a small distribution entity in Ghana.

Rural Electrification

Regarding rural electrification, USAID supports community consultation on projects as well as models for communities owning, operating, and maintaining power systems. For example, in Liberia, Power Africa is supporting the establishment of local community cooperatives to own and operate renewable energy microgrids. Through the U.S. African Development Fund and GE's Off Grid Challenge, Power Africa awarded six \$100,000 grants to support sustainable renewable power generation initiatives at the community level. For example, Kenyan suppliers will expand delivery of pay-as-you-go lighting options to households in rural areas, while TransAfrica Gas and Electric will power cold storage facilities with solar systems for farmers and fishermen. Afrisol Energy's bio-digester will produce electricity for small businesses in Nairobi's urban settlements. The Off Grid Challenge has enabled a high level of innovation and community participation, and will be expanded to all six Power Africa countries later this year with USAID support.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY KERRY TO ADDITIONAL SET OF QUESTIONS CONCERNING
NORTHERN IRELAND SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MENENDEZ

NORTHERN IRELAND PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PROCESS

Beginning in 1986, the United States has provided assistance for the peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland through the International Fund for Ireland, and most recently through the Economic Support Fund for Europe and Eurasia. This assistance helped support economic regeneration and social development projects in those areas most affected by the instability in Northern Ireland. Over the years, focus has shifted from supporting economic development programs toward programs that promote community reconciliation.

A. How has the State Department directed these funds to support the goal of reconciliation in Northern Ireland and where have the funds had the greatest impact?

B. How is the United States Government working with our partners in the European Union and England to leverage the resources we provide to the effort?

C. In FY15, what changes will be made to State Department's goals and programming in Northern Ireland?

Question A. How has the State Department directed these funds to support the goal of reconciliation in Northern Ireland and where have the funds had the greatest impact?

Answer. Since 1986, the United States has provided over \$500 million in assistance to the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), which has supported remarkable progress in Northern Irish society:

- *Full Implementation of the "Good Friday Agreement"*—The implementation of the "Good Friday Agreement" was completed with the devolution of policing and justice powers from the central U.K. Government in London to the Northern Ireland Executive in 2010.
- *Northern Irish Economy Strengthened*—At the height of the "Troubles," the unemployment rate for Catholic males in Northern Ireland was 30 percent, leaving a sizable proportion of the population vulnerable to paramilitary recruitment. Thanks, in part, to the 55,000 jobs the IFI helped create over its lifetime, the unemployment rate in Northern Ireland today is nearly identical to what it is in the United States. During the period from October to December 2013, the Northern Ireland unemployment rate averaged 7.3 percent, and the U.S. unemployment rate averaged 7.0 percent.
- *Education Reform Mainstreamed in Northern Ireland*—In response to the success of past IFI programming, the Northern Ireland Executive recently committed to making integrated education opportunities available to all interested Northern Ireland students. Access to cross-community (Catholic/Protestant) educational opportunities is a critical component of the U.S. Government's commitment to a "Shared Future" for Northern Ireland.

Question B. How is the United States Government working with our partners in the European Union and the United Kingdom to leverage the resources we provide to the effort?

Answer. The State Department works closely with the U.K. Government to support the Northern Ireland peace process. Recently, during St. Patrick's Day events in March in Washington, the State Department's Director of Policy Planning David McKean met with U.K. Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Theresa Villiers to discuss ways to encourage cooperation among Northern Ireland leaders following the

conclusion of the All-Party Talks. He also met with Sinn Fein President and member of the Irish, Dail Gerry Adams, while officials from the Bureau of European Affairs met with political and community stakeholders.

Working closely with the Department of Commerce, U.S. Embassy London and U.S. Consulate General Belfast provided assistance for the U.K. Government's G8 investors' conference in Northern Ireland, held October 2013. Forty-four U.S. companies traveled to Belfast to build the investment linkages needed to create jobs for Americans and the people of Northern Ireland.

Both the United Kingdom and the European Union are leveraging the resources the United States provides to the International Fund for Ireland (IFI). Throughout the duration of the IFI's "Strategic Framework for Action (2012-2015)," the British Government will contribute roughly \$400,000 per year toward the administrative costs of the programming the United States supports through its Economic Support Funds. The IFI Board also expects the IFI will receive an additional payment of €3 million (\$4.1 million USD) from the EU sometime during calendar year 2015.

Question C. In FY15, what changes will be made to State Department's goals and programming in Northern Ireland?

Answer. Supporting the Northern Ireland peace process is a U.S. foreign policy priority. Helping the people of Northern Ireland achieve the goal of a lasting and prosperous peace, the State Department continues extensive diplomatic engagement through the U.S. Consulate General in Belfast and the U.S. Embassies in London and Dublin. We promote economic development through fostering of public/private partnerships and the advancement of science and innovation collaboration. Northern Ireland civil society leaders and government officials also benefit from State Department cultural and educational exchanges. The administration did not request financial support for the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) in FY 2015 because of significant budget constraints and the need to focus scarce resources on the highest priorities globally. With the funding it expects to provide from Fiscal Years (FY) 2011-2014, the Department is confident the United States will be able to fulfill the U.S. commitment of \$7.5 million toward the IFI's "Community Transformation: Strategic Framework for Action" for Calendar Years 2012-2015. We will also review additional assistance if the situation on the ground warrants. (All of the assistance that the United States has committed toward the "Strategic Framework for Action" for Calendar Years 2012-2015 is being provided in the form of a grant of Economic Support Funds to the IFI for specific activities that reduce sectarian differences and foster economic revival, targeting those communities in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland that have not realized the benefits of the peace process.)

In January 2014, Special Representative O'Brien chose Northern Ireland as the first location for the new Partnership Opportunity Delegations initiative. Representative O'Brien led a delegation of U.S. investors, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, members of the Irish diaspora, and representatives from academia and civil society to identify potential partnership opportunities to boost Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics education, promote entrepreneurship, and increase overall economic growth. This visit has already yielded promising partnerships between U.S. and Northern Ireland institutions to bring educational and entrepreneurial opportunities to disadvantaged communities.

The U.S.-Ireland Research and Development Partnership furthers economic development in Northern Ireland. The Partnership encourages research collaboration among scientists from the United States, Ireland, and Northern Ireland in five priority areas: health, sensor technology, nanotechnology, telecommunications, and energy and sustainability. The Partnership Steering Committee will hold its next meeting in Belfast in September 2014. In November 2013, the Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Bureau Assistant Secretary Dr. Kerri-Ann Jones, who serves as U.S. cochair of the Partnership Steering Committee, traveled to Belfast to meet with government officials and discuss opportunities to further economic growth and cross-community youth development in Northern Ireland through science and technology cooperation.

Hundreds of students and scholars from the United States and Northern Ireland also participate in the Fulbright Program. Senior public sector employees from Northern Ireland benefit from the Fulbright Northern Ireland Public Sector Award. In addition, Northern Ireland students, civil society leaders, legislators, artists, and activists, participate in State Department educational and professional exchange programs.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

Question. Since Secretary of State Clinton announced in 2011 that the U.S. would join the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), the State Department (which oversees the Foreign Assistance Dashboard) has not published any data, either on the Dashboard or to the IATI Registry.

- ◆ Please provide the plan for meeting the U.S. commitments, including timeline and specific steps. What steps will you take specifically to ensure that the data is of high quality and is able to be accessed and used by both domestic and partner country stakeholders?

Answer. The Department of State has been publishing data to ForeignAssistance.gov and the IATI registry since December 2010. Additional data is being phased in over time, with Department of State financial data and additional data for PEPFAR scheduled for release in mid-2014. Gathering large amounts of data from systems not designed to gather that data presents technical challenges, but we are working to overcome those hurdles to publish greater quantity and quality of data with improved access, usability, and in compliance with all U.S. transparency commitments. Because of the complexity of this challenge, a more detailed discussion of specific steps and timelines can best be achieved through briefing of relevant staff, which State Department stands ready to provide.

Question. There are currently 16 United Nations peacekeeping operations worldwide. Many of them have existed for decades, and the mission in Cyprus just “celebrated” its 50th anniversary. The President is requesting a billion dollars more this year for CIPA and the Peacekeeping Response Mechanism.

- ◆ What is the administration’s plan to reduce the number of U.N. peacekeeping missions and reduce the burden of supporting those missions?

Answer. The United States supports U.N. peacekeeping operations to address crises and to help countries emerge from violent conflict. By nature, these missions are challenging and their number and costs fluctuate depending on the crisis. First, for FY 2014 appropriation for Contributions to International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA) account provided less than the requested amount, which reflected known requirements at the time the budget request was submitted to Congress. The appropriation also did not include funding for the new U.N. Multidimensional Stabilization for Mali (MINUSMA), which was established by the U.N. Security Council after the President submitted his FY 2014 budget request, or for the reinforcements of the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in response to the ongoing crisis that started on December 15, 2013. The President’s budget request for FY 2015, however, reflects funding necessary to make up some of these shortfalls.

Second, unexpected peacekeeping requirements often arise in a timeframe that does not allow us to address them through the normal budget process. In some cases we are able to cover such costs without impacting ongoing peacekeeping activities. However, we cannot assume this will always be the case, especially as overall requirements for U.N. peacekeeping have been increasing. At the same time, our own budgets are decreasing, leaving less space for tradeoffs and transfers from other accounts. Over the past 2 years, we have transferred more than \$200 million in Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding from other accounts into the Peacekeeping Operations Account in response to unanticipated or rapidly changing peacekeeping requirements.

The Peacekeeping Response Mechanism (PKRM) would help to ensure that we have funding available to respond rapidly to urgent and unexpected requirements without the risk of impacting critical, ongoing, budgeted peacekeeping efforts. The PKRM would be accessed on an as-needed basis as requirements are identified. Additionally, the use of PKRM funds would be subject to existing congressional notification procedures, and we would consult with committee staff on the use of this mechanism.

Through both our mission to the U.N. in New York and at State in Washington, we continually press the U.N. to pursue cost saving measures and new efficiencies in peacekeeping missions as well as to keep missions under regular review to determine where we may be able to downsize, close, or transition them to a peace-building arrangement, as appropriate. We have succeeded in having the U.N. establish the equivalent of an inspector general for U.N. peacekeeping forces that will help insure troops are meeting established standards and performing at acceptable levels, thereby improving a mission’s ability to fulfill its mandate. Not satisfied with relying only on assessments and recommendations of the U.N. Secretariat on such matters, we have developed a more rigorous approach and have started conducting our own field visits to U.N. missions to help inform interagency considerations

regarding whether and how to best adjust a mission's mandate and performance when it comes up for renewal.

With exception of the small peacekeeping missions in Cyprus (UNFICYP), which is partly funded by the governments of Greece and Cyprus, and Western Sahara—both of which are still needed pending a political solution to their respective crises—most U.N. peacekeeping missions are dynamic. In recent years, the U.N. missions in East Timor and Sierra Leone have closed altogether. The peacekeeping missions in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Liberia (UNMIL), Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), and Darfur (UNAMID) are undergoing Security Council-directed structured drawdowns in line with the security and political situation on the ground. In some cases, we have had to temporarily raise the troop levels to address crises—such as in UNMISS—or to take advantage of opportunities to create security conditions that promote a political solution, such as deployment of the Intervention Brigade in the U.N. mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and its successful operations against armed groups.

Overall, U.N. peacekeeping is a cost-effective tool for the United States to contribute to international peace and stability. As one of the five Permanent Members of the U.N. Security Council, we play a key role in formulating the best possible U.N. Security Council responses to international crises. In certain circumstances, a U.N. peacekeeping operation may indeed be the most efficient and the only functional response. U.N. peacekeeping helps to spread the costs as well as the risks. A 2006 GAO study concluded that the cost to the United States of conducting its own peace operation in a low-threat environment like Haiti would be nearly eight times as much as what we pay through U.N. peacekeeping assessments. However, U.N. peacekeeping is not the only option. In many cases, peace operations led by regional security organizations such as NATO and the African Union, or coalitions are better suited to the challenge.

Question. What type of action would the Kremlin have to pursue to trigger sectoral sanctions against the Russian economy?

Answer. What we do next depends on what Russia does to end the crisis in Ukraine. It is in Putin's hands. If Russia decides to escalate its intervention in Ukraine, then we will escalate our sanctions. We have been consistently clear, in the event that Russia does not take steps to de-escalate tensions in Ukraine, the United States, working in tandem with the EU and G7 partners, is prepared to launch additional sanctions affecting certain sectors of the Russian Federation economy, including the defense, energy, and financial sectors. At the recent April 17 Quad talks in Geneva, Russia agreed to diplomatic options to de-escalate the situation in Ukraine. We are watching very closely to see whether Russia meets its commitments to use its influence to get pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine to disarm and abandon public buildings they had seized. If it does not, we will impose great cost on Russia in response.

Question. Because of the close cultural links between Ukraine and Russia, I believe that a free, democratic, and prosperous Ukraine would demonstrate to the Russian people that similar change is possible in their country. In addition to supporting Ukraine's democracy, how can we more effectively help stimulate positive change in Russia? How is this objective reflected in the President's budget?

Answer. The U.S. Government's commitment to democracy and civil society in Russia remains firm despite the enactment of laws and practices in Russia that restrict fundamental freedoms and the ability of Russian NGOs to receive international support. The U.S. Government has made clear our concerns about these restrictions, conveyed our support for a legal framework that does not restrict fundamental freedoms, and underscored that democratic principles and a vibrant civil society are essential to Russia's development. We continue to support the Russian people's aspirations to live in a modern country with transparent and accountable governance, a free marketplace of ideas, free and fair elections, and the ability to exercise their universally recognized human rights without fear of retribution.

Although the traditional routes for support in these areas have been challenged, Russian organizations, universities, and individuals continue to express a desire to engage with the United States. As a result, the U.S. Government is developing new ways to increase direct interactions between Russians and Americans, including by establishing peer-to-peer and other regional programs that support exchanges of best practices on themes of mutual interest. Further opportunities for interaction include educational and cultural exchanges that provide opportunities for Russians to have firsthand experiences in the United States or attend events with Americans that travel to Russia through U.S. Government sponsored programs.

The State Department will continue to consult key congressional committees on further efforts.

Question. State Department Management and Accountability.—In recent conversations surrounding statutorily required reports to Congress, my staff was told that the State Department observes a policy that limits the overall length of reports sent to Congress to 10 pages or fewer. Is there a Department policy that places a limit on congressional reports, and if so why?

Answer. Effectively and fully communicating with Congress, including through congressionally mandated reports, is one of the Department's most important responsibilities. Each year, the Department submits several hundred legislatively required reports to Congress. Supporting this critical function consumes significant resources that we have an important responsibility to conserve by keeping reports streamlined, concise and avoiding redundancy while, above all, ensuring that the information provided is relevant and useful to Congress.

Therefore, as a general matter, the State Department strives to maintain a concise reporting format, aiming to keep Congress informed in a more effective and timely manner while prudently managing the resources that go into report preparation and consistent with our shared interest in using taxpayer resources wisely. Our approach strives to avoid repeating the content of previously reported information, to include links to previously reported information, and to cross-reference to congressional budget justification materials and other reports. There are general exceptions for certain highly regarded global reports on human rights, counter terrorism international religious freedom, and trafficking in persons.

These efforts are part of a broader report reform initiative aimed at providing the most relevant and useful information while ensuring taxpayer resources are effectively used by State and USAID for both its important programmatic functions as well as for reporting on the same. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss legislative initiatives which would assist us working together to eliminate outdated and duplicative reports.

Question. Diplomatic Security Abroad.—Given the State Department's global footprint and the expense associated with providing adequate security for the State Department's global workforce, has the State Department ever conducted an internal feasibility review or other planning process of the possibility of reducing the number of U.S. consular facilities worldwide?

If the State Department has not attempted any such study or review to date, please provide a list of all consular facilities that are in high-risk, high-threat countries, and an assessment of whether elimination of any number of these consular facilities might improve the State Department's ability to better manage the security needs of State Department personnel in the absence of additional funding.

Answer. In today's 21st century world, diplomacy and development are more important than ever in protecting U.S. interests at home and abroad. Relationships with our overseas partners promote peace, foster economic growth, support security cooperation, and encourage environmental security, which all lead to greater prosperity and safety in the United States. Diplomacy, by nature, must be practiced in dangerous places.

Following the cold war, the United States diplomatic presence expanded overseas, and the principle of universality has been adhered to since the time of George Shultz, Secretary of State for President Reagan, and by all administrations since then. We have looked at our presence within a country, and closed some locations that are no longer needed, e.g., Lille, France in 2008; Cluj-Napoca, Romania in 2007.

With regard to high-threat, high-risk posts, the United States has consulates at the following such posts: Lagos, Nigeria; Basrah, Iraq; Erbil, Iraq; Alexandria, Egypt; Lahore, Pakistan; Peshawar, Pakistan; Karachi, Pakistan; Herat, Afghanistan; and Mazar-e Sharif, Afghanistan (located on military base).

Hard decisions must be made when it comes to whether the United States should operate in dangerous overseas locations. To manage the balance between risk and advancing core U.S. national interests at our most dangerous posts overseas, the Department has developed an institutionalized, repeatable, transparent, and corporate process to ensure we have the ability and resources required to mitigate risk to an acceptable level. This process will also address the personnel and resources required to maintain a post while taking into account the importance of U.S. programs and mission in that location. We can provide a briefing on this process in an appropriate setting.

Question. Last week, Congress passed (and the President signed) S. 2183, which seeks to ensure that both the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

increase their radio and other broadcasts into Ukraine, Moldova, and other Russia-influenced areas. Please provide a summary of some of the Russian-led efforts to prevent external broadcasts (including broadcasts of the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty) from reaching people in Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, and other regional neighbors.

Answer. An integral part of Russia's strategy in and around Ukraine is an expanding propaganda campaign to justify its actions to local residents, its population back home, and the world. This has included undermining independent media by intimidating the leadership of and, in some cases, taking over the facilities of Ukrainian TV and radio stations. An array of VOA and RFE/RL programs remain available on some of the leading media in the region, but on April 8 Crimean authorities acting on orders from Moscow shut down the Crimea-based transmitter for RFE/RL Ukrainian affiliate Radio Era.

There have also been numerous incidents in which journalists working for VOA and RFE/RL have been threatened, assaulted, and arrested by armed forces wearing Russian uniforms; these incidents have included forcing a reporter who was covering a demonstration to kneel and kiss a Russian flag, seizing video cameras, and severe beatings. Additionally, journalists covering Crimea and Eastern Ukraine have received explicit warnings, both officially and anonymously, to stop this coverage.

Within Russia, there has been a recent escalation of a years-long campaign to intimidate and censor U.S. international broadcasting. In late March, the information agency Rossiya Segodnya (Russia Today) abruptly ended a contractual arrangement for VOA programs in Russian and English-language lessons to be heard on a local AM station, the last vestige of VOA radio programming broadcast on Russian soil. The move comes amid a fast-moving campaign to target opposition and independent media. Lists of "traitors" have been circulating in Moscow, among them RFE/RL's Russian Service, Radio Liberty. Beginning in 2006, Moscow forced a substantial number of Radio Liberty and VOA radio and TV affiliates to stop carrying such programs or face the loss of their licenses. In 2012, Russian authorities forced Radio Liberty off its last remaining domestic radio outlet in Moscow.

Question. Funding for democracy support in Venezuela is to be cut by \$800,000 in FY 2015, and USAID has had to withdraw from Ecuador. At a time when civil society is under increasing pressure, why doesn't the budget submission provide support for a coherent strategy in Western Hemisphere countries where democracy is threatened?

Answer. Our commitment to support human rights and democracy, including in challenging environments of the Western Hemisphere, remains strong.

Our assistance request reflects no decrease in priority toward these areas. We have the resources we need to advance U.S. objectives and support democracy and human rights in countries of concern.

For Venezuela and Ecuador, the U.S. Government will support ongoing assistance for civil society to push for public accountability, defend human rights, and increase the public's access to independent information. We will continue to monitor events and circumstances closely.

Question. I was surprised to see that the budget justification does not include any allocation of funding to at least plan for support of the implementation of the peace process in Colombia. What role do you foresee the U.S. playing in the peace process and have you calculated the magnitude of resources we might wish to commit?

Answer. The United States has been strongly engaged in support of peace in Colombia, both as an advocate for negotiations and in laying the groundwork for a negotiated settlement.

In his December meeting with President Santos, the President praised the "bold and brave efforts to bring about a lasting and just peace inside of Colombia."

Our ongoing foreign assistance has helped the Colombian Government initiate talks and prepare for a peace agreement, and laid the groundwork to sustain an agreement once it is finalized. Counternarcotics programs have reduced cocaine production, thereby reducing illicit funding to terrorist groups, including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). U.S. programs engage government, civil society, and the private sector to strengthen Colombia's ability to implement a sustainable and inclusive peace. This includes initiatives to support conflict victims, reduce impunity, develop rule of law, bring government services to rural areas previously controlled by the FARC, and improve land tenure and livelihoods in rural areas. By supporting efforts by the Colombian people to secure justice and good governance, we help lay the ground work for the accountability, stability, and reconciliation necessary for any peace deal to be successful.

We are in regular, close contact with the government about the status of peace talks and have encouraged the government to inform us of possible assistance the United States may offer in support of a final peace agreement. We will stay in contact with the Committee as we receive requests from the Colombian government and develop proposals to respond. Assistance to Colombia has declined in recent years due to both budgetary constraints and Colombia's success in improving security. In the event of a peace deal, we should be prepared to increase funding to demonstrate our commitment to the Colombian people. Our programs should continue to promote justice and strengthen the security so the people of Colombia quickly see the benefits of peace, and so organized crime is not strengthened as the FARC demobilize.

Question. Do we have a policy to persuade China to pursue constructive rather than antagonistic relations with its neighbors in the Asia-Pacific?

Answer. The United States welcomes a stable and prosperous China that plays a responsible role in regional and world affairs and adheres to international law and standards in its activities and relations with its neighbors. There are some security concerns in Asia that require our consistent engagement with China. These concerns include the importance of de-escalation of tensions among China and its neighbors over territorial and maritime disputes and the restoration of healthy Chinese relations with U.S. allies Japan and the Philippines. Our most senior leaders consistently and frankly discuss these issues with Chinese leaders. Positive relations between China and its neighbors are beneficial not only to our Asian partners, including China, but also to the United States.

Question. When the President travels to Tokyo and Seoul next month, what message will he deliver to two of our most important allies on the U.S. commitment to the Asia-Pacific?

Answer. We are firmly committed to the rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific, and the President's visit demonstrates our continued engagement with our allies and partners in the region. Our rebalance strategy stems from the recognition that the Asia-Pacific region is not only important now but that it will become increasingly vital to U.S. security and economic interests as the center of global politics and economics continues to shift toward this dynamic region.

We have a broad, productive, and important agenda with Japan and the Republic of Korea. Our alliances with Japan and the Republic of Korea are stronger than ever. Japan has long been the cornerstone of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2013, we celebrated the 60th anniversary of our alliance with the Republic of Korea, the linchpin of peace and prosperity in the region. We see the President's visit as an opportunity to reaffirm our increasingly comprehensive, global cooperation with Japan and the Republic of Korea and discuss a wide range of bilateral, regional, and global issues of mutual interest.

The United States remains firmly committed to the defense of the Republic of Korea and of Japan. We will enhance our close coordination with both countries on responding to the threat from the DPRK, including our common approach to denuclearize the DPRK. One of the key messages that the President will reiterate in both capitals is the importance of trilateral security cooperation.

We also remain intently focused on North Korea's deplorable human rights situation. All three countries cooperated to cosponsor the most recent U.N. Human Rights Council resolution on the DPRK, which condemned the DPRK for its ongoing human rights violations and highlighted the work of the U.N. Commission of Inquiry, which we helped establish. The President and other senior U.S. officials will continue to engage their ROK and Japanese counterparts on this growing issue of international concern.

We will work with the Republic of Korea to enhance our economic partnership, invest in a future of shared prosperity, and fully implement the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA). The President will also work to strengthen our economic ties with Japan, encourage continued structural reforms, and seek to advance our critical Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement negotiations. We will highlight our increasingly global partnership, from cooperation on climate change to humanitarian assistance, and we will underscore the critical role of people-to-people ties, including educational and cultural exchanges, in supporting the alliances between the United States and Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Question. What message have you delivered to Chinese leadership on the declared ADIZ over the East China Sea and any future potential declarations over the South China Sea? Have you affirmed that the United States neither recognizes nor accepts China's declared ADIZ?

Answer. Since the Chinese first made their provocative declaration of an East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ), U.S. officials at the highest levels, including during Vice President Biden's December 2013 trip to China, have publicly and privately raised our deep concerns. The United States does not recognize and does not accept the ADIZ, which we believe was a provocative and destabilizing measure. We have called on China to not implement the ADIZ.

Publicly and in private discussions with Chinese officials, we have also made clear to China that it should refrain from taking similar actions elsewhere in the region, including in the South China Sea. We have encouraged China to work with all of its neighbors to address the dangers its recent declaration has created, to deescalate tensions, and to support crisis management procedures that could manage incidents if and when they arise in the East China and South China Seas.

Question. Would you agree that any Chinese claim to maritime rights not based on claimed land features is inconsistent with international law?

Answer. Yes. While the United States does not take a position on which country or countries enjoy sovereignty over land features in the South China Sea, we do take a position on whether maritime claims are in accordance with international law and on how countries pursue their claims. We strongly oppose the use of coercive measures by any party to advance their territorial and maritime claims. All claims to maritime space in the South China Sea, such as China's Nine-Dash Line, must be derived from land features in the manner set out under the international law of the sea, as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention. Any claim to maritime space in the South China Sea not based on land features, in accordance with the maritime zones accorded to such features under the international law of the sea, would not align with international law. The international community would welcome China to clarify or modify its ambiguous Nine-Dash Line claim to make it consistent with the international law of the sea.

We also continue to urge the Senate to ratify the Law of the Sea Convention, which, among other things, would boost U.S. diplomatic efforts to ensure that countries around the world properly implement their international obligations.

Question. Given that all three frontrunners in the Afghan election have made clear they support signing the BSA, will the President still wait until September to firmly establish the appropriate policy toward our national security interests in Afghanistan? Will the President publicly acknowledge and support the recommended 8,000–12,000 U.S. forces recommended by our military commanders in Afghanistan? Does the State Department support those levels?

Answer. The White House has made clear that we are leaving open the possibility of concluding a BSA later this year with a committed Afghan Government. However, the longer we go without a BSA, the more challenging it will be to plan and execute any U.S. mission. Should we have a BSA and a willing and committed partner in the Afghan Government, the administration has been clear that a limited post-2014 mission focused on training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces and going after the remnants of core al-Qaeda could be in the interests of the United States and Afghanistan. The President is reviewing options regarding the size and scope of our post-2014 presence and has not made a final decision. The State Department is working closely with the White House to ensure that the President has a range of options and to ensure that we are prepared to support whatever option he may choose.

Question. What is our strategy for countering Iranian influence in the Middle East? How do military support, State, and USAID programs provided in the Middle East serve to counter the influence of Iran and its proxies?

Answer. The United States strategy to counter Iran's destabilizing regional activities involves a number of elements designed to disrupt and deter threats from Iran by working in close concert with our regional partners. We prioritize efforts to uncover and expose the malign activities of Iran and its proxies, and to share this information with our regional partners. We also dedicate diplomatic, military, intelligence, and law enforcement resources to assist and enable our regional allies to counter aggressive actions by Iran or its proxies. We implement sanctions and designate individuals and entities to impede Iran's movement of illicit material or money. In all these dimensions, the State Department works closely with our colleagues at the Departments of Defense and Treasury to make sure our strategies to counter the influence of Iran and its proxies are synched. Below are two examples of recent steps we have taken:

- In March 2014, we worked with Israeli naval forces to interdict the *Klos C* cargo ship in the Red Sea along the border of Sudan and Eritrea. The *Klos C* was

carrying Iranian weapons and explosives, including long-range M-302 rockets, likely destined for Palestinian militant organizations in Gaza.

- In February 2014, the Department of Treasury announced a number of new terrorism-related designations linked to Iran. Among these were various entities and individuals linked to Mahan Air, a private Iranian airline that was designated in October 2011 for its support to the terrorist activities of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp-Quds Force (IRGC-QF). Also designated were various IRGC-QF individuals associated with Iran's activities in Afghanistan. Finally, an individual known for supporting al-Qaeda's facilitation network in Iran was also designated.

Similarly, our State and USAID programs counter the Iranian Government's negative policies by providing capacity-building training to Iranian civil society activists to hold their government accountable to international standards and Iran's international commitments. Since 2004, the administration has supported projects to help Iranian civil society make its voice heard in calling for greater freedoms, accountability, transparency, and rule of law from its government. Additional efforts provide access to uncensored information to Iranians, allowing Iranian citizens to make informed decisions about their government's policies and actions.

Question. Does this budget request reflect a hard look at the \$1.3 billion in FMF and what it gets us? How? Have you considered how we might take steps to modernize the Egyptian military and restructure our relationship over the long-term? What are our "shared security interests" and how does your budget refocus FMF around those interests?

Answer. We continue to assess FMF to Egypt as part of the ongoing assistance review that was directed by the President last August. Our request for \$1.3 billion in FMF supports our shared security interests in maintaining regional peace and stability and countering transnational threats. This includes aiding border security; countering terrorism; weapons and contraband smuggling, including in the Sinai; promoting secure passage through the Suez Canal; and preparing Egyptian forces to participate in peacekeeping operations. Additionally, FMF serves to support the Egyptian military with modern equipment and training.

We remain deeply concerned about the serious security threats Egypt faces and their potential to destabilize the region. Our assistance is a critical factor in ensuring safety and security for Egypt and the region at large, which is a key U.S. national security interest.

Question. Do you anticipate being able to certify that the Government of Egypt "is supporting a democratic transition," as the latest appropriations act requires? What does the reduction in ESF say about our ability to influence the progress of democracy and governance in Egypt?

Answer. The Egyptian Government is well aware that certification and continued aid depends on credible progress toward an inclusive, peaceful, and democratic transition to a civilian-led government by way of a free and transparent election process. We have serious concerns about restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly and association, as well as abuses by security forces that have not been held accountable, and an ongoing lack of inclusivity in the political process. We have reiterated these concerns at high levels consistently in public and private, and we will continue to urge Egypt to make progress on these fronts. While a timetable has not been tied to certification, we continue to evaluate whether the interim government is taking steps to meet the conditions outlined in the Appropriations Act.

As conditions in Egypt continue to change, we have continued to reevaluate how assistance best supports our objectives. While the dollar amount of assistance is often seen as the primary metric by which our commitment to our goals is measured, a better approach is to focus on what our assistance can accomplish and where U.S. support is most effective. We have retargeted our economic assistance to support the Egyptian people more directly in areas of economic growth, education, health, democracy promotion and improved governance. We believe that with this targeted approach, the prior year resources available to us for economic assistance, combined with the FY 2015 request, provides us sufficient resources to achieve these objectives in the near term. The decision to request a reduced amount from the Economic Support Fund (ESF) pipeline for Egypt in FY 2015 was budgetary, and reflects constraints on our economic assistance writ large. We will continue to press for democratic progress in Egypt and believe our FY 2015 request is a sufficient funding level.

Question. What are you doing to coordinate interagency efforts for the Power Africa initiative in order to avoid redundancies, use government resources to the best possible effect, and provide a clear line of accountability for outcomes?

Answer. As the Secretariat, USAID coordinates the efforts of the Power Africa Working Group, which is comprised of all 12 of the Power Africa U.S. Government agencies. Together, we work to identify strategic power generation projects and coordinate efforts based on agency core competencies. Each power generation project requires various inputs. For example, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency has provided extensive support for feasibility studies for potential distribution and transmission lines that can connect remote villages. OPIC and EX-IM have considerable financing power; a necessary component to achieving long term infrastructure development. Additionally, USAID has been instrumental in providing technical assistance in host governments to encourage policy reforms. This combined effort helps advance projects toward financial close and commissioning.

Regarding accountability, USAID chairs the monitoring and evaluation sub-working group, coordinating performance monitoring and developing shared indicators. The common metrics reflect the initiative's whole-of-government approach. Over the last year, USAID has worked extensively with partner agencies to develop these metrics and a common reporting platform to maintain consistency in data collection across the U.S. Government.

Question. Is the addition of 23 new positions for the Department's "Economic Statecraft" initiative representative of a broader trend to raise the importance of economic statecraft within the State Department, and if so, specifically how will these new positions support that goal?

Answer. The Department has placed a high priority on elevating the importance of economic and commercial issues in our foreign policy, including supporting U.S. jobs and exports, and has made supporting U.S. business an important part of both his work in Washington and his overseas trips. We are convinced that foreign policy is economic policy. The U.S. economy is increasingly dependent on exports, and we need to strengthen economic relationships across the world. United States foreign policy must reflect a world in which economic concerns and economic power cannot be separated from political and strategic imperatives. Furthermore, as we have seen in the Middle East, lack of economic and social opportunities can breed continuing and broader instability that threaten U.S. national interests. It is thus in the interests of the United States to leverage our economic toolkit to work with governments and societies abroad to bolster job growth and economic stability in their respective countries. Renewing the U.S. economy at home must go hand in hand with enhancing U.S. economic leadership around the world. Across a wide range of foreign policy challenges, the Department must harness markets and economic forces to create the stability and prosperity globally that would allow advancement of our strategic and political goals.

The 23 new positions for the "Economic Statecraft" initiative, will support our broad Economic Diplomacy efforts, and the "Shared Prosperity Agenda,"—the expanded and rebranded "Economic Statecraft." These new positions will increase the number of officers throughout the Department who are implementing our critical economic policy work through multiple initiatives, including:

- A more focused and systematic advocacy effort with the Department of Commerce on behalf of U.S. companies;
- Promoting and institutionalizing a regional trade and investment framework with market-oriented rules that promote open, transparent, and fair trade in the Asia-Pacific region;
- Working closely with the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to finalize the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, which will increase U.S. export opportunities in Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam, and Japan;
- Supporting expanded domestic U.S. employment and economic growth through increased U.S. exports under the auspices of the National Export Initiative; expanded facilitation of foreign direct investment in the United States through the SelectUSA program, and promotion and facilitation of tourism to the United States.

To better equip the State Department to effectively implement our economic priorities abroad, the majority of the 23 new positions would be assigned to embassies in key locations around the globe. Many of the issues the new positions will focus on include:

- **Boosting Trade and Investment:** Officers will negotiate to reduce regulatory and tariff barriers to trade in order to level the playing field for U.S. companies and help U.S. exports reach foreign consumers.
- **Commercial Advocacy:** Officers will identify specific export opportunities and provide assistance to U.S. exporters facing challenges in foreign markets, com-

plementing the efforts of the foreign commercial service (FCS) where they are present and serving as a primary commercial liaison where FCS is absent.

- Market Analyses: Officers will monitor business and regulatory conditions abroad and provide general guidance to potential U.S. exporters new to overseas markets.
- Foreign Direct Investment: New officers will facilitate investment into the United States by foreign individuals and companies, creating more jobs for Americans and expanding the tax base.
- Internet Freedom: Engage with foreign regulators, multilateral agencies and civil-society to ensure that the Internet remains free from undue governmental control and restrictions and that there is wider access to new technologies and to the digital economy.
- Entrepreneurship: Encourage public-private partnerships that catalyze and coordinate nongovernmental partners around activities that create jobs and improve economic conditions and political stability worldwide.
- Open Skies: Negotiate air transport agreements that link American cities with the rest of the world; work to alleviate burdensome measures on U.S. air carriers; and create more competition in the airline industry, resulting in lower airfares.
- Intellectual Property Rights: Increase public understanding and government enforcement of intellectual property rights concerns.

In Africa, the new Economic and Commercial officer will support our mission in Tanzania's increased engagement under the Partnership for Growth, the Power Africa initiative with the Tanzanian energy sector and also contribute to the realization of the Trade Africa initiative.

The additional Foreign Service officers requested for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) will help further the critical economic policy priorities at our missions in the region. NEA and its posts abroad work closely with interagency partners to promote U.S. exports to the Middle-East and North Africa region. In addition, the shared economic prosperity that will benefit these countries shall provide viable and productive alternatives to the lure of extremism. In the UAE, for example, extra officers will be critical to help facilitate and boost economic and commercial engagements in a market that attracts approximately \$22 billion in U.S. exports and in which over 1,000 U.S. companies operated in 2013. In other countries, increased numbers of economic officers are required to adequately cover economic developments and promote progress on economic reforms that help boost jobs and stability. Creating greater economic opportunity will help cement democratic change and enhance confidence in local governments, thus increasing stability and reducing the attractiveness of extremism.

Four overseas positions will be assigned to various missions in Europe. The recent events in Ukraine have highlighted the importance of economic diplomacy in assuring a secure energy future and in preventing the use of energy as a political weapon. The United States is working closely with European partners to help Ukraine achieve energy security, for which, diversification, transparency, and private investment are key. We need to work with Ukraine to create the conditions—to control corruption—to attract the private investment it needs to double its gas production by 2020.

The addition of four Foreign Service economic positions in the Western Hemisphere will enhance the Department's ability to take advantage of new opportunities in the region. The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs and its overseas posts engage frequently with foreign governments to promote policies advantageous to U.S. businesses through bilateral dialogues as well as multilateral engagements, including the North American Leaders Summit and the Summit of the Americas. Priority issues for 2014 include deepening regulatory cooperation, accelerating regional integration, easing barriers to trade for small and medium enterprises, promoting increased public-private consultations, and improving regional energy market efficiency.

Positions will be added to missions in key trading partners, such as Mexico, Brazil, and India. Domestically, new positions will enhance the Office of the Chief Economist; strengthen our ties with international organizations; and strengthen the regional bureaus' ability to support the Secretary's broad vision of shared prosperity.

Question. Last week, Ugandan police reportedly raided the PEPFAR-supported Makerere University Walter Reed Project in Kampala, forcing it to suspend its operations. What is the current diplomatic strategy to ensure the implementation of this law does not undermine U.S. efforts to reach all Ugandans who need access to HIV/AIDS treatment?

Answer. Uganda's decision to enact the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) runs counter to universal human rights and dignity. Now that the law has been enacted, we are looking closely at its implications. At the same time and where appropriate, we are adjusting some of our activities and engagements to ensure intended goals.

None of this diminishes our commitment to the people of Uganda, and in particular our commitment to promoting regional security and justice and accountability for perpetrators of atrocities like the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and ensuring that lifesaving treatment for HIV/AIDS continues to be effective and can reach those in need.

We have expressed our deep concern over this legislation and have been in touch with senior Ugandan Government officials and LGBT leaders since this legislation was first introduced in 2009. Since the AHA's enactment, we have sought—though yet to receive—unequivocal assurances from the highest levels of the Ugandan Government that nondiscriminatory HIV services provision for all individuals will continue. It is critical that Uganda's leaders recognize that support to all individuals with HIV/AIDS must continue in order to be effective so that lifesaving services are not interrupted for those who depend on the United States for medications and treatment.

Passage of the law complicates our ability to provide these and other services effectively to those in need and to support efforts to control the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Uganda. Where necessary and appropriate we will take steps to ensure that our programs can still be effective and conducted in a nondiscriminatory manner, fully cognizant of our ethical responsibility to the patients that depend on U.S. assistance for their survival. We want our efforts to advance our policy objective, which is to promote and protect the universal rights and fundamental freedoms of all Ugandans, including LGBT individuals.

At the same time, we will not shy away from expressing U.S. Government views on this law, and on the importance we place on ensuring respect for human rights—including those of members of the LGBT community. We will continue to make clear our view that this abhorrent law should be repealed.

Question. Last year, the Democratic Republic of the Congo suspended its issuance of Exit Letters for international adoptions. This decision has put in jeopardy over 100 adoption cases of Congolese children by American families, including 54 cases which have been fully finalized by the DRC courts, the DRC Government authorities, and the U.S. Embassy. Unfortunately, this is a situation that is not unique to the DRC and has happened in too many countries over the years.

♦ (a). What is the State Department's plan to rectify this situation in the DRC?

Answer. While several countries have suspended adoptions for a variety of reasons in recent years, the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) decision to implement a 1-year suspension on exit permit issuances is unique in that it is the first country in which the national government has opted to review the work of its lower adoption offices and courts after the adoption decrees are issued. The DRC is also the first country in which the courts continue to grant adoption decrees in new cases, even though the adopted children will not be allowed to leave the country during the exit permit suspension. The DRC has indicated that the purpose of the suspension is to allow the national government to investigate press reports of abuses and re-homing of Congolese adopted children in receiving countries, as well as to conduct a review of all internal adoption processes after the discovery of some cases that DRC authorities believe involved fraud, corruption, and potential child-buying. To address this challenge in the DRC, the Department of State has taken a multipronged approach, including engagement with the Congolese Government, efforts to address the root causes for the suspension, and thorough information-sharing with U.S. families, adoption service providers, and congressional offices.

The announcement of the suspension on exit permit issuances for adopted Congolese children was followed by extensive engagement by U.S. Government officials, including Ambassador Swan, with the most senior officials in the various Congolese Ministries responsible for the decision. When it became clear that the DRC Government would not lift the suspension immediately, Embassy Kinshasa sought concessions for the families who already had their adoption decrees and U.S. immigrant visas for the children. Following high-level meetings, Embassy Kinshasa was able to secure an agreement by the Congolese Government in October to grandfather in those families who had received a *bordereaux* letter certifying the validity of the adoption from the Congolese Ministry of Gender and Family's interministerial adoption committee prior to September 25, 2013. Thirteen children adopted by U.S. families benefited from this concession before Congolese immigration authorities (the General Directorate of Migration, DGM) discovered an allegedly backdated *bordereaux* letter submitted by a U.S. family in November. Since then, the DGM

has subjected the remaining grandfathered cases to increased scrutiny and has not issued exit permits to any adopted children.

The U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa's staff has also raised the suspension with prominent local NGOs and with embassies of other countries in the DRC affected by the suspension. USAID in Kinshasa continues to engage with Congolese officials and local NGOs on child welfare issues. Additionally, high-level engagement by the Department with the DRC's Ambassador in Washington led to a reversal last fall of the DRC's decision to suspend tourist visas for adoptive families wishing to travel to the DRC to visit their children.

The second prong of the strategy to resolve the suspension on exit permit issuances has been to address the root concerns about intercountry adoptions held by the Congolese Government. By assuaging these concerns in relation to U.S. adoptions specifically, offering assistance and expertise in intercountry adoptions to Congolese authorities, and actively encouraging Congolese authorities to increase their capacity to process ethical and transparent adoptions, we are striving to accelerate the lifting of the suspension.

On March 10, the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) sent a delegation to Kinshasa to discuss the U.S. adoption process, to highlight how intensely Embassy Kinshasa investigates an adopted child's background in order to verify that the child is an "orphan" prior to issuing an immigrant visa, and to encourage Congolese authorities to end the suspension. The delegation also discussed the U.S. Pre-Adoption Immigration Review program, which, if adopted by the DRC, would ensure that Embassy Kinshasa would conduct its investigations prior to adoptions being finalized in Congolese courts. The program may help provide Congolese authorities greater confidence in the validity of adoptions to the United States.

The Department also invited Congolese authorities to send two delegations to the United States on Department-funded Voluntary Visitor programs April 11–May 2 and April 16–26. The Congolese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DGM, Ministry of Social Welfare, and Children's Court participants were scheduled to meet with U.S. federal and state officials regarding the U.S. intercountry adoption process and U.S. child welfare protections for adopted children. The Department arranged additional meetings with U.S. families with children adopted from the DRC living in the United States, U.S. adoption service providers, and U.S. stakeholder organizations. These meetings were designed to address the Congolese authorities' concerns about the intercountry adoption process and the welfare of children adopted from the DRC by U.S. citizen parents. Unfortunately, Embassy Kinshasa was informed by the Congolese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on April 15 and 16 that the delegations' visits would need to be postponed due to several urgent issues in the DRC. The Department remains convinced of the value of the programs and looks forward to rescheduling the DRC authorities' visits to the United States.

The third prong of the Department's strategy entails thorough information-sharing with adoptive parents, prospective adoptive parents, the United States Congress, adoption service providers, and the public. The Department has published six adoption notices, most recently on April 16, promptly advising all parties about new developments related to the suspension on exit permits since September 2013. The Department has also held at least nine telephone and in-person briefings for adoptive parents, adoption service providers, and congressional members and their staffs since the suspension on exit permit issuances. Embassy Kinshasa staff, including Ambassador Swan, have personally met with adoptive families in the DRC and with adoption service providers to brief them on the situation and what the Department is doing to address the suspension. Further, on April 18, the Special Advisor for Children's Issues and officers from the Office of Children's Issues met with families who adopted from the DRC.

Despite these efforts and some successes, the suspension remains in place, and the prospect for it ending is uncertain. The issue of intercountry adoptions is a very sensitive subject for the Congolese people and government, who perceive child welfare as a fundamental issue of national sovereignty. The Congolese Government has asked all affected countries to give it the time necessary to review its adoption policies and processes following an unprecedented rise in the number of adoptions since 2008 and growing Congolese concerns about potential fraud, corruption, and child-buying in the adoption process. Given these sensitivities and concerns, Congolese Government officials have not responded favorably to perceived foreign pressure. We are aware of families from other receiving countries who were prohibited from remaining in the DRC with their children and who have not been allowed to visit the children after their governments took a more aggressive stance on the issue of adoptions. Despite these challenges, we will continue to press actively for the lifting of the suspension, independently and in coordination with the 14 other affected coun-

tries, so that adopted children may travel to join their families in the United States. We plan to send another delegation to the DRC in May or June of 2014.

- ◆ (b). What is the State Department's overall strategy to improve the international adoptions process and provide a consistent policy on international adoption that American families can rely on as they go through the process?

Answer. The Department of State supports intercountry adoption as an essential part of a fully developed child welfare system. We promote ethical and transparent adoption processes for prospective adoptive parents, birth families, and children involved in intercountry adoptions, a process that tries to ensure that an adoption is completed when it is in the best interests of the child and when a domestic placement in the child's home country is not possible. The Office of Children's Issues, within the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs, engages bilaterally with foreign governments and collaborates with stakeholders in the adoption community and with our interagency partners on intercountry adoption to promote these policy objectives. The Hague Adoption Convention (Convention) is an important tool in support of this goal. Ninety-three countries are currently party to the Convention, including the United States.

Working with our partners at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Congress, and other stakeholders, the Department helped to create innovative means to further ethical adoption practices and to prepare non-Convention countries to move seamlessly to Convention implementation with no disruption in adoptions. Two such innovations are the Universal Accreditation Act (UAA) and the U.S. Pre-Adoption Immigration Review (PAIR) program. UAA adds protections for families adopting in countries that are not parties to the Convention. Under the UAA, all U.S. adoption service providers (ASPs) providing adoption services in Convention and non-Convention cases must be accredited, approved, supervised, or exempted from the requirement. An accredited or approved ASP must act as a primary provider in each case covered by the UAA. After July 14, 2014, the conduct of all ASPs must meet the same standards of practice and will be subject to the same accountability provisions that now apply in Convention cases. Right now, more than half of all U.S. intercountry adoptions fall under non-Convention processes.

Through the PAIR process, State and USCIS provide U.S. citizens with a method of processing intercountry adoptions that incorporates a Convention-like procedure for establishing the child's adoptability and likely immigration eligibility prior to the issuance of an adoption decree. Choosing to participate in this process can ease the transition for partnering countries toward implementation of a Convention system. PAIR serves as a precursor to the eventual implementation of a Convention-compliant system by the foreign government.

On September 1, 2013, Ethiopia implemented PAIR. PAIR represents a joint effort between the U.S. Government and the Government of Ethiopia to help ensure that every adoption by a U.S. family is ethical, transparent, and in the best interests of the child. The Ethiopian Government has a long-term plan for joining the Convention. The Department is working closely with Ethiopian counterparts to emphasize the importance of gradual implementation of Convention principles prior to accession, improving safeguards for intercountry adoptions while preserving the ability for intercountry adoption to proceed in the interim. There were 1,567 adoptions from Ethiopia to the United States in FY 2012, and 993 in FY 2013.

Another example of our efforts to ensure that U.S. families have a consistent intercountry adoption process is our work with the U.S. clients of the ASP International Adoption Guides (IAG) following the indictment of several IAG employees. The Office of Children's Issues established and maintained a dialogue via e-mail and conference calls with U.S. clients of IAG who sought answers to their questions when the ASP essentially folded overnight as a result of the indictment and arrests. Due to the large number of adoptions IAG was processing in Ethiopia (affecting approximately 50 U.S. families, with more families interested in initiating new cases), consular officers at U.S. Embassy Addis Ababa, as well as the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia, immediately engaged with the Government of Ethiopia to request guidance for affected families on whether and how they could proceed with their adoptions. Through our coordination with the Government of Ethiopia, the Office of Children's Issues and the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, we were able to provide clear guidance to families and to address Ethiopian concerns about the indictment. Our intervention persuaded the Minister of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs to allow families to continue with a new ASP, preventing any impact from the indictment on Ethiopian intercountry adoptions as a whole.

As the U.S. Central Authority for the Convention, the Department of State must certify that each adoption from a Convention country was made in compliance with the Convention and the Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000. If a country's adoption

system does not uphold the safeguards of the Convention, adoptions finalized in such country would not be considered compliant. It is therefore instrumental for the Department to assess each country's ability to implement procedural safeguards and governing structures consistent with Convention standards.

The Department reviews laws, procedures, practices, and infrastructure to assess each country's ability to implement procedural safeguards consistent with Convention standards. Our Web site provides a thorough description of our approach (http://adoption.state.gov/hague_convention/overview.php). If the Department determines that a country does not meet the required standards, it will strongly encourage the country to first implement the necessary legal framework and procedures to uphold the Convention's standards and principles before becoming a party to the Convention. The Department will also encourage the country's officials to consider establishing procedures to allow adoptions initiated prior to the Convention's entry into force to be completed through the pre-Convention procedures. The Department's goal is to prevent a disruption in adoptions and ensure that there is no unnecessary delay in processing pending adoptions due to the Convention entering into force.

Haiti is a great example of the Department's success in encouraging a country to transition to the Convention while preventing interruptions to processing so that intercountry adoption by U.S. families remains an option for Haitian children. The Department and U.S. Embassy Port-au-Prince have worked closely with officials in Haiti since 2010 to encourage Haiti's smooth transition to the Convention. Working in coordination with other receiving countries, we encouraged the Haitian Government to sign the Convention and to develop implementing legislation. We reviewed Haiti's proposed legislation in draft form, and the guidance we provided ensured that there would not be problems once the Convention's entry into force was imminent. We provided answers to Haitian officials' questions and worked with the Hague Permanent Bureau to encourage the Haitian Government to seek resources there. Senior State and USCIS officials have traveled to Haiti several times to raise the importance of intercountry adoptions through the Convention. In February, Special Advisor for Children's Issues Susan Jacobs and Chief of USCIS' International Operations Joanna Ruppel met with the Director of Haiti's Central Authority, UNICEF representatives, and diplomatic officials from the French Embassy in Haiti to discuss Haiti's capacity to implement the new adoption law (which Haiti passed in November 2013), to receive updates on child welfare projects in Haiti, and to discuss challenges that Haiti currently faces and ways to best address its needs. The Convention entered into force in Haiti on April 1, 2014. In light of Haiti's progress, the Department announced in March on the adoption.state.gov Web site that consular officers will be able to verify on a case-by-case basis that an intercountry adoption case from Haiti conforms with the Convention and the Intercountry Adoption Act.

The Department's efforts in Vietnam are also noteworthy. Resuming adoptions with Vietnam has been among State's highest priorities, and Special Advisor for Children's Issues Susan Jacobs has traveled to meet with Vietnamese adoption officials four times since 2010 to encourage the development of successful reforms. Though the Convention entered into force on February 1, 2012, Vietnam has only recently trained its central and provincial adoption officials on the Convention and Vietnam's new law. USAID support for UNICEF on adoptions has been instrumental in improving Vietnam's legal and regulatory system. Currently, the Department is working toward establishing a limited adoption program for children with special needs, children aged 5 and older, and children in biological sibling groups. The Government of Vietnam is currently vetting U.S. adoption service providers and has indicated that it plans to authorize two. (For more information, please see our September "Adoption Notice.") The Department is hopeful that we will be able to announce our ability to issue Hague Certificates for adoptions from Vietnam later this year.

Question. In the administration's Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for the Arctic Region, the State Department is listed as the lead agency for six programs: Promote International Law and Freedom of the Seas; Prevent Unregulated Arctic High Seas Fisheries; Develop a Robust Agenda for the U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council; Accede to the Law of the Sea Convention; Delineate the Outer Limit of the U.S. Extended Continental Shelf; and Resolve Beaufort Sea Maritime Boundary. The Department was also designated as a supporting agency for numerous other projects. The intent of having multiple agencies involved is to avoid duplication, make the Federal Government's role in the Arctic more efficient and effective, and enhance the potential for government support by showing the interest across agencies.

- ◆ Could you tell me what funding is included in your Department's budget request for the six projects the State Department is the lead agency for as well as any other projects the Department is involved in for the Arctic region?
- ◆ What is the United States agenda for its chairmanship of the Arctic Council?
- ◆ When do you anticipate naming a Special Representative to the Arctic Region?
- ◆ What do you expect the Special Representative's role and authority to be within the State Department, within the Federal Government as a whole, and within the international Arctic community?

Answer. The FY 2015 budget request for the Arctic Council Chairmanship and the Extended Continental Shelf project is \$2.622 million. The U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council spans fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017. Future budget requests will be made for fiscal years 2016 and 2017. Regarding the four other leadership areas and other Arctic activities, there is no budget request other than travel funding to attend meetings.

The agenda for the U.S. Chairmanship is still under development. We expect that the agenda will align with objectives identified in the National Strategy for the Arctic Region and its Implementation Plan.

The Special Representative for the Arctic Region will be named within the coming weeks and will play a critical role in advancing American interests across the Arctic. The role and authority of the Special Representative are still being refined and will take into account the current Arctic governance structures within the State Department, the Federal Government, and the international community.

Question. Do you or do you not support increasing military training for the vetted, moderate opposition in Syria?

Answer. As you know, our support to the moderate armed opposition is limited to nonlethal equipment. We have worked with Congress to provide this assistance through the regular notification process, and we greatly appreciate your support in these areas. We continue to look for ways to bolster moderates and will consult with the Congress, including with this committee, as we move forward.

Question. Do you believe that increase training for the rebels would change the situation on the ground in Syria for the better?

Answer. The conflict in Syria must ultimately be resolved by the parties through negotiations. The State Department provides training to the civilian leaders of Syria's moderate opposition to support them as they govern liberated areas and fight a two-pronged war against the regime and extremists. With this in mind, we continue to look for ways to bolster moderates and will consult with the Congress, including with this committee, as we move forward.

Question. Have you met with Salim Idriss's replacement as the head of the Syrian opposition's Supreme Military Council and what is your assessment of him and his leadership potential?

Answer. Assistant Secretary of State Anne Patterson, Special Envoy Rubinstein, and other Department officials have met with Abdelillah al-Bashir, the newly named Chief of Staff of the Supreme Military Council. He impressed them as a commander with battlefield experience who shares our concerns with the destructive role extremists have played in distracting the moderate opposition from the fight with the Syrian regime and abhors those groups' violent attacks on Syrian civilians. We look forward to working with him as we continue to deliver our nonlethal assistance, and as he helps identify priority needs and recipients.

Question. Recently, the energy security calculus for Europe has shifted with the Russian annexation of Crimea and threats to cut off natural gas to Europe. What is the State Department doing to encourage, promote, or facilitate the expedited export of natural gas to our European allies from our energy allies, including Azerbaijan, which is currently working to complete the Southern Gas Corridor that is intended to deliver natural gas to Europe? What is the State Department doing to facilitate or encourage U.S. natural gas companies to provide technical assistance and other aid to help Ukraine extract more of their own gas? Finally, is the State Department engaged in efforts to restructure energy laws within Ukraine to eliminate corruption and improve energy efficiency?

Answer. Ukraine's energy security, and the commitment of the United States to support Ukraine, was at the forefront of the U.S.-European Union (EU) Energy Council meeting which I chaired with EU High Representative Ashton, EU Energy Commissioner Oettinger, and U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy Poneman on April 2.

The United States is working with Ukraine, its western neighbors, the EU, and the private sector to provide gas from European companies to Ukraine to offset its

reliance on Russian imports. We have long supported diversification of energy supply and energy routes to Europe, including the Southern Corridor. We are seeking to provide urgently needed international financial support to Ukraine and encouraging Ukraine to use its foreign exchange reserves to finance gas purchases.

In addition to these short-term measures, we are working with other donors and the private sector to help Ukraine bridge to long-term increased self-sufficiency in gas by raising domestic production, through modernization of existing conventional fields and contracts negotiated in 2013 for unconventional gas development. On LNG, the Department of Energy has now conditionally approved LNG export permits for 9.3 billion cubic feet per day that can be exported both to countries with which we have Free Trade Agreements (FTA) and to those where we do not, such as European countries. However, the destination and price for LNG exports will not be earmarked and will be determined by the market.

The United States is also working closely with the Government of Ukraine to increase energy efficiency practices, which will further decrease reliance on energy imports. The \$1 billion in loan guarantees provided by the United States will be available to help the Ukrainian Government ensure that increased energy costs, which will go into effect as early as May 1 as part of a reform package mandated by the IMF, will not adversely impact Ukraine's most vulnerable energy consumers.

The United States is also working with Ukraine on anticorruption across the board. We have identified significant funding from existing budgets to enhance fiscal transparency and natural resource management and Embassy Kyiv has created an anticorruption roadmap to support the Ukrainian Government in tackling this issue in all sectors.

Under the auspices of the U.S.-Ukraine Energy Security Working Group, the U.S. Special Envoy for International Energy Affairs Carlos Pascual and Ukrainian Minister of Energy Yuriy Prodan, will continue to advance these initiatives.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BARBARA BOXER

Question. Afghan Women—In elections this weekend in Afghanistan, initial reports show that 35 percent of the estimated 7 million voters were women. A record 300 women ran for provincial council seats. And three of the Presidential candidates chose female vice Presidential running mates.

In addition, the three frontrunners for President have all made commitments to support women's rights. In fact, one of the Presidential frontrunners—Abdullah Abdullah—told a British newspaper, "If you want to see this country or any other country even being able to deal with the challenges and develop, it cannot happen without the role of half the population."

These advances are important, but they are also fragile. And Afghan women continue to face barriers in all aspects of society.

- ◆ How can the United States work to ensure that Afghanistan's new government makes women's rights a priority?
- ◆ As the United States draws down its military presence in Afghanistan, how can we help protect the hard-fought gains made by Afghan women over the past decade?

Answer. Afghanistan has made enormous strides since 2001, and no one has benefited more than Afghan women, minorities, and civil society groups. Most recently, women turned out in large numbers to vote in Afghanistan's provincial and Presidential elections. They also served as candidates and searchers, demonstrating the enormous potential for the sustained advancement of women. As the Presidential elections move forward, the United States will continue to support initiatives for Afghan women and girls as it is clear the advancement of women's rights is critical to political, social, and economic progress and to ensuring a stable and secure future for Afghanistan. In particular, continued support by the United States—including through grants—and other international donors for Afghan civil society organizations and Afghan women's networks will be key to ensuring that views and voices of Afghan women are incorporated into the new government's priorities. It will also be essential to continue emphasizing the vital role of women at the decisionmaking table, particularly as the new government takes root at the national, provincial, and district levels.

As the transition process moves forward, the United States will remain committed to supporting and expanding a strong role for Afghan women by continuing to prioritize women's issues through our programmatic and policy efforts. For instance, the U.S.-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership Agreement and the 2012 Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework speak to the mutual commitments of the United States

and the Afghan Government in protecting and promoting women's rights and role in society. Also, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul adopted a new "Gender Strategy" in 2012 that highlights the need to continue to mainstream gender issues into all policies and programs through transition and beyond. The U.S. gender strategy focuses missionwide resources on five key areas: health, education, economic development, leadership opportunities, and security and access to justice, which are consistent with the five cross-cutting priorities set by the Afghan Government's National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) and is consistent with the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, launched in December 2011. Implementation of the gender strategy will also help to ensure that women are not disproportionately affected by any decreases in U.S. funding in Afghanistan.

Additionally, over the past decade U.S. Government programming has helped Afghan women and girls achieve dramatic progress in the areas of health, education, and access to justice. At this critical moment of transition, USAID is making a long-term commitment to build upon current and past programs to advance opportunities for women to help ensure that Afghanistan has a critical mass women who are political, economic, and civil society leaders in public, private, and civil society sectors. For example, Promote, which commits up to \$216 million to Afghanistan over a 5-year period, is USAID's largest gender program and is a symbol of the U.S. Government's commitment to empowering Afghan women. It aims to encourage educated young women to enter and advance into mid-high level positions in all sectors of society—business, government, academia, nonprofits, and even politics. The program builds on earlier investments in the education, health, democratic governance and economic growth sectors and will assist 75,000 women between 18 and 30 years of age who have completed secondary education to enter and advance into decision-making positions in Afghanistan's public, private and civil society sectors.

Question. In January, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan signed a bill that criminalizes same-sex relationships. A month later, Ugandan President Museveni signed a law that imposes a lifetime jail sentence for the crime of "aggravated homosexuality."

Both these laws are deplorable and represent a discouraging trend globally where LGBT individuals are harassed, attacked, and have had legal protections removed.

I appreciate that you strongly condemned the passage of the anti-LGBT laws in Nigeria and Uganda. But sadly, despite strong international opposition, these laws were enacted.

- ◆ What more can the United States do to hold countries like Nigeria and Uganda accountable for actions that infringe on the basic human rights of LGBT individuals?

Answer. We share your concern about the impact of anti-LGBT legislation on the human rights of all persons, including members of the LGBT community. We continue our close work with LGBT and other human rights organizations throughout the world to advance the fundamental tenet that LGBT rights are human rights.

In assessing our approach, we are considering how best to demonstrate our support for the LGBT communities in countries where their rights are infringed and abuses occur, deter other countries from enacting similar laws, and reinforce our commitment to the promotion and defense of human rights for all people—including LGBT individuals—as a U.S. priority.

We continue to look at additional steps we may take to work to protect LGBT individuals from violence and discrimination, and to urge the repeal of such abhorrent laws in countries where they have been enacted.

Question. In March, al-Qaeda-linked fighters attacked Kessab, Syria—a town near the Turkish border populated by ethnic Armenians. The violence and fighting in Kessab put its Armenian community at risk and forced many to flee their homes. In light of this attack, I am deeply concerned about the safety and well-being of ethnic Armenians in Syria.

- ◆ Can you provide some additional information about the attack?
- ◆ What is the United States doing to ensure the safety of ethnic Armenians and other minorities in Syria?

Answer. The tragedy in Syria is indeed heartbreaking. The Assad regime's actions have created a humanitarian catastrophe of enormous proportion. Helping to end the tragic suffering of all Syrian people remains a top priority for the United States. To that end we are devoting significant resources to address the humanitarian situation, including assisting refugees and internally displaced persons. We also recognize the importance of ensuring that Armenian Christians can continue to live and flourish in the land of their ancestors, and we understand that the situation in Kessab is particularly fraught.

We have reached out broadly to gather more information regarding events in Kessab. On April 9, officials from our consulate in Adana, Turkey, met with 21 Syrian Armenians from Kessab in the Turkish village of Vakifli to ensure they were receiving quality care. Turkish residents in Vakifli, with help from the Turkish Government, are providing food, clothing, and services for the refugees.

As we have said throughout this conflict, we deplore threats against Christians and other minorities in Syria. We note that the Syrian groups fighting in Kessab have issued statements saying they will not target civilians and will respect minorities and holy places. We expect those commitments to be upheld.

Question. A legacy of this administration has been its focus on women and girls as a cornerstone of foreign policy. I was pleased that the President's budget request continues to prioritize investments in international family planning and reproductive health.

- ◆ How are family planning programs supporting broader global health outcomes and achieving the goals of equality and empowerment of women and girls worldwide?

Answer. There is solid evidence that demonstrates that access to family planning, particularly modern contraception, not only saves lives but also empowers women and reduces poverty. Recent research from the Guttmacher Institute and U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA) shows that meeting the current unmet need for family planning would have dramatic effects: unintended pregnancy would decline by two-thirds globally and there would be 1.1 million fewer infant deaths. Further, research published in *The Lancet* shows that family planning could prevent up to 30 percent of the estimated 287,000 maternal deaths that occur every year, by enabling women to delay their first pregnancy and space later pregnancies at the safest intervals. The prevention of unintended pregnancies through family planning is also one of the four prongs of the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, a crucial intervention for the U.S. Government goal of Creating an AIDS-Free Generation. More often than not, women who can time, plan, and space their pregnancies give birth to and raise healthier children; this can lead to a reduction of the economic burden on their families and enable them to invest more in each child's care and schooling. This in turn helps to break the cycle of poverty.

Many believe that access to family planning is the single greatest liberator of women in the last century, allowing important progress toward equality and empowerment. Having access to family planning services not only directly reduces maternal and child mortality, but also supports girls' and women's rights. If girls and women are allowed to delay childbearing and achieve their desired family size, they are more likely to stay in school, find meaningful employment, and fully participate in society. The evidence is overwhelming that gender equality and women's meaningful empowerment is inextricably tied to promoting women's rights, including their right to choose if, when, and how often to have children and their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality. Moreover, poor sexual and reproductive health has a negative impact on the overall health and sustainability of a community, including lower enrollment in school, reduced labor productivity, and unpredictability in structure and size of a population.

Therefore, it is a U.S. foreign policy priority that women and girls everywhere are able to decide for themselves on matters related to their own reproductive lives. Through USAID, the U.S. Government advances and supports voluntary family planning and reproductive health programs in more than 45 countries around the globe. As a core partner in the Family Planning 2020 Initiative, the U.S. Government is committed to working with the global community to reach an additional 120 million women and girls with family planning information, contraceptives and other commodities, and services by 2020. The U.S. Government will continue to support access to sexual and reproductive health services for girls and women, especially voluntary family planning, as essential to advancing gender equality, promoting sustainable economic development, and contributing to the U.S. Government's goals of Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths and Creating an AIDS-free Generation.

Question. Keystone XL Pipeline—More and more health groups—including National Nurses United, the American Public Health Association, and the National Association of County and City Health Officials—are joining the call Senator Whitehouse and I made for an in-depth health impact study on the effects of more tar sands oil coming into our country.

Clearly, the Keystone XL pipeline will greatly increase the amount of this dirty, filthy carbon polluting oil entering the country. Doctors from Canada are telling us

that there have been increased incidents of certain cancers in the region close to tar sands mining. In our country, community activists have come forward publicly to talk about the illnesses and other negative impacts from tar sands oil refining in places like Port Arthur, TX, and the open storage of the tar sands waste byproduct pet coke in places like Chicago.

Knowing of your deep concern for the health and safety of the American people and your understanding that your decision must be in the “national interest,” I am assuming that you will take this request for an in-depth health impact study to heart and will not make a decision on the Keystone XL pipeline until such an in-depth study is completed.

◆ Will you comment on this?

Answer. The Department of State has considered the potential for impacts on human health throughout its review of the Keystone XL Presidential Permit application. The Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement includes information about potential health impacts of the project. The best available science on potential health impacts pertaining to the proposed project will be considered as part of the National Interest Determination, along with many other factors.

The Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Final Supplemental EIS) took peer-reviewed research into account to examine the proposed Project’s potential impacts on human health in several areas. Section 4.13, Potential Releases, examines potential health risks associated with exposure to crude oil and other relevant chemicals, were there to be a spill. Section 4.12, Air Quality and Noise, addresses air pollution that would be associated with the construction and operation of the proposed Project. Section 4.15, Cumulative Effects Assessment and Extraterritorial Concerns, describes potential changes in pollution associated with refineries. Section 4.15 also examines potential human health impacts in Canada associated with oil sand development and pipeline construction and operation.

The current phase of the Presidential Permit review process focuses on whether the proposed project would serve the national interest. In addition to considering the best available science, the Department is taking into account information provided by federal agencies and other interested parties as well as comments submitted during the public comment period. The Department is consulting with the eight agencies identified in Executive Order 13337: the Departments of Defense, Justice, Interior, Commerce, Transportation, Energy, Homeland Security, and the Environmental Protection Agency. We are also reviewing and appropriately considering the unprecedented number of new submissions, approximately 2.5 million, received during the public comment period that closed on March 7, 2014.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. As you are aware one of the national security gems that we have in Idaho is the Idaho National Lab (INL). At INL they have a project called the Wireless Test Bed, which allows different government agencies to go out and test how devices that are just that—wireless. We can’t get into all the details in this setting, but my understanding is that the State Department is looking at making a small investment in the test bed and going out and using it to conduct some force protection type of tests.

◆ Would you be able to check on the status of this and get me an update on that?

Answer. There are ongoing discussions between the U.S. Army Program Office for Counter Radio Controlled Improvised Explosive Device Electronic Warfare and the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Organization regarding the need for “Wireless Test Bed Technology.” While the Department may make use of “Wireless Test Bed Technology,” the Department will not be investing in the test bed infrastructure at the Idaho National Lab. The Idaho National Lab test facilities and required infrastructure the Department uses are owned and operated by the Department of Defense.

Question. The President’s budget request included \$370 million in economic assistance for the West Bank and Gaza which supports economic development, humanitarian needs in Gaza as well as increasing the capacity of the PA to meet the needs of its own people through budget support. In light of President Abbas’ decision last week to return to unilateral measures, if the Palestinians continue forward in the international arena, what will be the consequences for U.S. assistance to the Palestinians?

Answer. Assistance to the Palestinian people is an essential part of the U.S. commitment to a negotiated two-state solution for Palestinians and Israelis, promoting a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. It is in the interest of the United States to ensure these efforts continue as they help to build a more democratic, stable, prosperous and secure region.

The Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2014 enables continued economic assistance to the Palestinian Authority. We continue to abide by the complex legal authorities with respect to providing foreign assistance to the PA.

The United States continues to strongly oppose unilateral actions that seek to circumvent or prejudge outcomes that can only be reached through negotiations, including Palestinian statehood. As President Obama has said, there are no shortcuts to statehood. We oppose such measures and believe the only way to a two-state solution is through direct negotiations between the two parties.

U.S. economic assistance serves as a critical stabilizing force for the PA, enabling it to leverage contributions from other donors. Our economic assistance also supports an economically viable PA and Palestinian state-building, through programs that advance democracy and good governance; security and rule of law; education; health and humanitarian assistance; private enterprise; and water resources and infrastructure. U.S. security assistance is helping to create professional and competent Palestinian Authority Security Forces that can enhance stability and combat terrorism in the West Bank, which serves our overall policy goal of achieving a two-state solution. Taken together, U.S. assistance is essential to ensuring that the necessary Palestinian institutions are developed that will help build a more democratic, stable, and secure region.

Question. In the FY14 Omnibus appropriations bill, we included new language linking any disbursement of economic aid to the Palestinians to a certification by you that the Palestinian Authority is acting to counter incitement of violence against Israelis and is supporting activities aimed at promoting peace, coexistence, and security cooperation with Israel.

- ◆ What steps is the PA taking that will help to condition the environment for peace?
- ◆ In what ways are they reaching out to prepare their own people for peace—for recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, for compromise on important final status issues like refugees and Jerusalem?

Answer. The Palestinian Authority (PA) is taking steps to condition the environment for peace and to counter incitement to violence. President Abbas regularly speaks publicly in support of tolerance and nonviolence. In mid-February, Abbas hosted 300 Israeli students in Ramallah, where he emphasized the need for a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In his remarks, which were later broadcast on Palestinian television, he discussed several final status issues including Jerusalem, borders, recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, and refugees.

Abbas also appointed Mohammed al-Madani to serve as the head of the “Palestinian Committee for Interaction with Israeli Society.” Al-Madani facilitated the first visit of Palestinian officials to the Knesset in July 2013, and recent meetings between Fatah and Israeli officials in Ramallah and Budapest.

The impact of the PA’s effort is visible throughout Palestinian society. For example, in the education sector, the PA has made significant progress in the past two decades by revising official PA textbooks in order to remove instances of incitement to violence. As part of the post-Oslo process, between 1996 and 2005, the PA began introducing new textbooks that included many references to promoting values of reconciliation, human rights, religious tolerance, respect for the law, diversity, and environmental awareness, and has replaced textbooks for all 12 grades. A succession of studies has found that the new textbooks represent a significant improvement and constitute a valuable contribution to the education of young Palestinians, and in general, concluded that the new textbooks eliminated a number of negative references to Israel and Jews and made attempts to promote tolerance.

The PA also monitors the content of Friday sermons delivered in over 1,600 West Bank mosques to ensure they do not endorse incitement to violence. The PA Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs prohibits speech that is likely to lead to incitement to violence.

The PA leadership, under President Mahmoud Abbas, remains committed to non-violence and a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has recognized the existence of the State of Israel since 1993, and in international fora and in bilateral contacts the PA leadership has insisted on recognition of Israel even while others have sought to delegitimize Israel. Abbas stated in his September 2012 speech at the United Nations General Assembly

that “The two-State solution, i.e., the State of Palestine coexisting alongside the State of Israel, represents the spirit and essence of the historic compromise embodied in the Oslo Declaration of Principles.”

Question. In the past we’ve discussed an issue with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. As you know, this is something that my colleagues and I take very seriously. While I don’t want to get into the classified portion of this, I would like to know whether you have personally spoken with your counterpart, Foreign Minister Lavrov about this important issue? And if not will you raise this issue with him the next time you both meet?

Answer. I have personally raised treaty compliance issues broadly with Russia, and Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller has discussed our specific INF concerns directly with her Russian counterpart. Other senior officials have also raised the matter with Russia and will continue to do so. We will continue to press Russia for clear answers, at senior levels, in an effort to resolve our concerns. We are committed to keeping Congress informed of treaty compliance matters and developments, and will stay in close touch with you and your colleagues on these matters.

Question. I’m concerned about harassment of U.S. personnel working out of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow by local Russian security services. My understanding is that incidents are at an all-time high and that it’s not just U.S. personnel working in the embassies, but also extends to their families. Isn’t it time that we take steps to reduce this? A good start would be by replacing some of the locally hired security force, especially the supervisors, with cleared U.S. personnel. When will we do this—I hope it isn’t after harassment crosses the line into violence.

Answer. The safety of U.S. citizens abroad, including our Chief of Mission personnel and their families, is of the utmost importance to the Department of State. The administration is deeply troubled by harassment of U.S. Embassy personnel by Russian security services, and we have repeatedly expressed these concerns to the Russian Government.

In response to your specific question, I am pleased to inform you that, like other U.S. embassies, the Local Guard Force (LGF) in Russia is already supervised by cleared American personnel. The Regional Security Officer (RSO), a Diplomatic Security Special Agent, manages security operations at U.S. missions abroad, including overseeing the vetting, hiring, training, and supervision of local guard personnel.

We are happy to offer a more in-depth briefing on this important issue in an appropriate setting.

Question. Given Russia’s recent and increasingly belligerent actions on the world stage, do you believe that the U.S. should be making any concessions to Russia vis-a-vis the Open Skies Treaty?

Answer. Today, the Open Skies Treaty contributes to European security and aids the efforts of the United States and our partners by providing releasable images and information on Russian and other forces. The United States and other countries have conducted Open Skies Treaty flights throughout the Ukraine crisis, providing insight into Russian military activity. In addition, Russia accepted an extraordinary flight by Ukraine in mid-March. At Kyiv’s request, the United States and other Treaty Partners have also conducted multiple Open Skies flights over Ukraine to provide insight into developments in the eastern part of the country. Open Skies flights provide a source of unclassified images and information on Russian military deployments and the ongoing situation in Ukraine that we can share with Treaty Partners. A fully functioning Open Skies Treaty is one of the few transparency and confidence-building tools available to the United States and our allies during this crisis.

The United States has emphasized to Russia at senior levels that implementation of arms control agreements should continue, even in difficult political times. In the case of the Open Skies Treaty, continued implementation, including good-faith consideration of Russia’s certification of digital sensors, serves both current and future U.S. interests. The transition to digital sensors represents normal implementation of the Open Skies Treaty. The Open Skies Treaty permits the introduction of new sensor technology, and since the Second Review Conference for the Open Skies Treaty in June 2010, the States Parties, including the United States, have recognized that the transition from obsolete wet film-based cameras to digital sensors is key to maintaining the long-term viability of the Treaty. Many Treaty parties, including the United States and several NATO allies, as well as Russia, are planning to develop and certify digital sensors in the next few years.

Question. The current developments in Ukraine point to the importance of the principle of territorial integrity for the stability of the international legal order. It is very concerning that Russia uses and supports separatist movements in Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Transnistria, and now Crimea to leverage former Soviet Republics and hinder their integration to the Euro-Atlantic institutions, with the hope of eventually forcing them into the Eurasian Union. To counter this, the U.S. should consistently stand for the territorial integrity of our partners in this region and provide them with the necessary support against Russian intimidation. Our consistency in upholding the principle of territorial integrity is crucial to make it credible.

- ◆ Given these issues, what policy changes is the administration taking to counter Russian pressure to undermine sovereignty and territorial integrity of our partners like Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova?

Answer. The United States stands firmly behind the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our partners in the region, and has made clear our strong and public support of these principles. We are actively engaged in negotiations that seek to resolve each partner's territorial conflicts in a manner consistent with the core principles of the U.N. Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. With respect to Moldova's Transnistrian region, the United States is actively encouraging the parties to the 5+2 format to reach a comprehensive settlement that affirms Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity, while providing a special status for Transnistria. As a participant in the Geneva International Discussions on the conflict in Georgia, we are working to hold Russia to its 2008 cease-fire commitments, improve the security situation along the administrative boundary lines, and address the humanitarian needs of people living in conflict-affected areas. As a cochair of the OSCE Minsk Group, the United States is working to help the sides reach a durable and peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In the case of Russia's occupation of Crimea, we have sanctioned Russia and worked to isolate it globally to make it clear to Moscow that its actions are unacceptable. Our strong support for the March 24, 2014, United Nations General Assembly resolution on the territorial integrity of Ukraine was but the latest opportunity to reaffirm this position, and to join the General Assembly in calling on all states to desist and refrain from actions aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Question. In Georgia we have witnessed an increasing trend of interrogations and prosecutions of current and former government officials for what appears to be political reasons. At the same time Georgia continues to ask for a NATO Membership Action Plan with the hope of ultimately becoming a member. Do you believe issues regarding the rule of law and political prosecutions could jeopardize Georgia's aspirations? What measures should the U.S. use to help Georgia avert this outcome?

Answer. Answer: We are closely following the investigations and prosecutions of former and current Georgian officials. We continue to stress to the highest levels of the Georgian Government the importance of conducting investigations and prosecutions of serious allegations with full transparency and respect for due process and the rule of law, as well as the importance of promoting justice while avoiding any perception or reality of political retribution.

At the recent meeting of the NATO-Georgia Commission at the NATO Foreign Ministerial, the United States made clear to the Georgians that the nature and timing of their recent actions are problematic. Other allies echoed this sentiment.

The alliance committed in Bucharest to supporting Georgia's aspirations to join NATO. To assist in attaining that goal, it provides mentorship through the development of mutually agreed Annual National Programs, evaluation processes, and support for internal reforms. The United States supplements NATO's efforts with bilateral support of Georgian defense modernization, professionalization of the armed forces, and anticorruption initiatives. In Tbilisi, our Embassy and the NATO Liaison Office cooperate in efforts to support the Georgians in their pursuit of NATO membership.

We continue to support Georgia's efforts to build consensus within the alliance for granting it a Membership Action Plan.

Question. In May 2012, then Secretary of State Clinton said, "I believe this [NATO] summit should be the last summit that is not an enlargement summit." While some nations are in various stages along the path to membership, Montenegro appears to be an ideal candidate to make the summit in Wales an enlargement summit, having made significant progress in security and defense reforms, the rule of law and public support.

- ◆ What specifically do you believe Montenegro still needs to do to qualify for an invitation in September? Will you commit to U.S. leadership in supporting Montenegro to overcome any remaining issues, and in mobilizing allies to secure an invitation at the Wales summit?

Answer. The United States and our allies remain committed to the Open Door policy and look forward to welcoming new members when they are ready. We fully support Montenegro's path to NATO membership. Through NATO and bilateral channels, including during the recent visit to the United States of Prime Minister Djukanovic, we have encouraged Montenegro to make further progress in the areas of judicial reform. In addition, Montenegrin public support for NATO remains weak. We have commended the current government on its campaign to increase public awareness on the benefits and responsibilities of NATO membership, but additional work is necessary.

Montenegro has made great strides in the passing of legislation to address corruption and organized crime; the government now needs to focus on implementation of this legislation. Our Embassy in Podgorica is providing guidance and mentorship in all of these areas.

The NATO International Staff will present a report on each aspirant's progress toward NATO membership at the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in June. At that time we and other allies look forward to a facts-based debate on the readiness of Montenegro and the three other aspirant nations.

Question. There has been a long standing dispute with Argentina and its refusal to settle debts it owes to U.S. investors. As you know, Argentina has refused to even negotiate with its creditors—presenting them only with take-it-or-leave-it offer. In addition, Argentina has evaded U.S. court judgments it has pledged to respect, openly vowed to disobey future court rulings, and even passed a domestic law forbidding itself from paying investors what it owes.

- ◆ Do you agree this makes Argentina a “uniquely recalcitrant debtor,” as the Court of Appeals has ruled? What specific steps are you taking to encourage Argentina to normalize relations with its creditors?

Answer. At every opportunity, the Department urges Argentina to repay its debts to the U.S. Government and to engage with its creditors, both public and private. Argentina owes the U.S. Government \$600 million and the Department is doing everything it can to recover those funds. Thanks in part to our efforts, Argentina recently made a repayment proposal to the Paris Club, which is currently under consideration. The Paris Club, including the United States, has invited Argentina for further discussions in May.

Faced with Argentina's failure to honor its international financial obligations, we have opposed most multilateral development bank lending to Argentina (except projects that benefit the poorest). We have encouraged Argentina to repair its relationship with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The United States and other Paris Club members have also stopped offering export credits to the Argentine Government. We will continue to use these and other policy tools to urge Argentina to fulfill its international financial responsibilities and normalize its relationship with creditors.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. Cuba.—According to Human Rights Watch's 2014 Annual report: “The Cuban Government continues to repress individuals and groups who criticize the government or call for basic human rights . . . The government controls all media outlets in Cuba and tightly restricts access to outside information, severely limiting the right to freedom of expression.”

- ◆ Do you agree with that statement?

Answer. While we welcomed the Cuban Government's decision in 2010 and 2011 to release dozens of political prisoners with the support of the Spanish Government and the Catholic Church, human rights conditions in Cuba remain poor. The Cuban Government continues to limit fundamental freedoms, including freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly. We remain deeply concerned by the Cuban Government's repeated use of arbitrary detention, at times with violence, to silence critics, disrupt peaceful assembly, intimidate independent civil society, and stifle peaceful dissent. We condemn the use of force against citizens peacefully exercising their human rights, and we believe all Cuban citizens should have a voice in determining their own future.

Question. Cuba.—Last week, the Associated Press published a sensationalist and ill-informed report on USAID efforts to help the Cuban people freely communicate with each other.

- ◆ Is it in the U.S.' interests to provide the Cuban people the means to exercise freedom of speech in a way available to any student in the free world?
- ◆ Is it in the U.S.' interests to provide law-abiding citizens the means to communicate freely without government censorship?
- ◆ Is it in the interests of the United States to give people a way to voice their opinions without fear of repression by the security apparatus of one of the oldest dictatorships in the world today?
- ◆ Would you agree that Cubans working to build an independent civil society and hold the Cuban regime accountable for its violations of internationally accepted human rights risk their lives?
- ◆ Has the administration taken any steps to investigate the leak of USAID's efforts to help Cubans communicate freely with each other?

Answer. President Obama has made clear that the primary U.S. policy objective in Cuba is to support the Cuban people's desire to freely determine their future. The administration has improved conditions for Cuban citizens through initiatives aimed at increasing the free flow of information to, from, and within the island.

Cuban authorities continue to deny the Cuban people their human rights, including through repression of Cubans seeking to advance peacefully civil society and human rights. President Obama stated that he will continue to stand up for those rights and encourage others to do so as well. The Cuban Government limits access to the Internet to a small number of professionals and party faithful, and employs monitoring and blocking technologies to further restrict Internet freedom, making Cuba among the least-connected countries in the world.

The Cuban people deserve the right to freely express themselves and the right to petition their government. U.S. assistance supports the Cuban people's desire to freely determine their future through programs that promote democratic principles, foster the development and training of independent Cuban civil society, provide humanitarian assistance to victims of political repression and their families, support Cuban-led efforts to promote increased respect for human rights and document human rights violations, and promote fundamental freedoms.

We continue to think creatively about how to provide people in Cuba with the information and tools they need to facilitate a vibrant civil society, to enhance their ability to determine their own future, and to secure their human rights. We look forward to the day when all Cubans can freely express their ideas and opinions and assemble freely.

Question. Cuba.—American humanitarian worker Alan Gross has now been a hostage of the Cuban Government for 1,588 days, almost 4½ years. Mr. Gross has been unjustly imprisoned for helping the Jewish community in Cuba get uncensored access to the Internet. Despite his fragile health, Mr. Gross has been on hunger strike for at least a week in protest for the inaction of our government to resolve his ordeal.

- ◆ Has the time come for the U.S. Government to begin applying pressure on the Cuban Government to unconditionally release Alan Gross?

Answer. Alan Gross has been imprisoned by Cuban authorities for more than 4 years for facilitating uncensored Internet access between a small religious community on the island and the rest of the world. The State Department has kept Mr. Gross' case at the forefront of discussions with the Cuban Government and made clear the importance the United States places on his welfare. President Obama has engaged foreign leaders and other international figures to use their influence with Cuba to call for Mr. Gross' release so he can be reunited with his family. We have made abundantly clear to Cuban officials our position that Mr. Gross ought to be released immediately and will continue our diplomatic efforts to achieve this.

Question. Cuba.—Last summer, the Cuban regime was caught smuggling over 240 tons of weapons to North Korea, in violation of international law. This was the largest interdiction of weapons to or from North Korea since United Nations sanctions were imposed. Moreover, it was the first time a country in the Americas has been found guilty of violating international sanctions. We continue hearing about Iranian and Russian activities in the Western Hemisphere, about which we should remain vigilant. However, it seems clear that if we allow this egregious violation pass without consequences, it would only embolden other rogue actors to pursue and foment dangerous and illegal activities in the Western Hemisphere.

- ◆ What is the effect of Cuban-North Korean actions on the international non-proliferation regime?

- ◆ What changes to U.S. policy toward Cuba and North Korea have occurred because of this violation of multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions?

Answer. The *Chong Chon Gang* case was a clear attempt by North Korea to violate U.N. sanctions and circumvent the international nonproliferation regime, but because of the responsible actions of Panama, the shipment was discovered and disrupted. North Korea and Cuba were embarrassed on the world stage and paid a significant price in terms of seized cargo and other financial penalties.

We used this incident to advance our nonproliferation objectives. We continue to work closely with the U.N. Security Council's DPRK Sanctions Committee to shine a light on all aspects of this violation and to ensure that all violators of U.N. sanctions are held accountable for their actions.

In March, the United States along with like-minded states, pushed to make the Panel of Experts annual Final Report on the incident public. This report described the Panel findings on the Chong Chon Gang violation, including details demonstrating that the actors involved in the shipment tried to conceal its illicit nature. The report was released in March and is on the committee's Web site.

We, along with several U.N. member states, made clear that this shipment violated sanctions and that Cuba's interpretation of U.N. Security Council resolutions is incorrect. Over the last few months, we have been consulting with Council members about an appropriate response. We will review the final results of the U.N. process before considering other policy steps, but we anticipate the Security Council's DPRK Sanctions Committee will take some actions, including the release of a public statement on the incident that will rebuke Cuba's position. U.S. policy remains insistent that all countries, including Cuba, implement fully their legal obligations to enforce U.N. sanctions.

Question. At a hearing last week, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Russel was unwilling to reaffirm that President Reagan's so-called "Six Assurances" regarding Taiwan, although he clarified his comments after the hearing when asked about the same question by journalists. Given recent efforts by China to imply that U.S. policy toward Taiwan has changed, I wanted to get your comments regarding this on the record.

- ◆ Can you reaffirm that this administration remains committed to President Reagan's "Six Assurances" as a core component of our policy toward Taiwan?

Answer. The United States remains firmly committed to the one-China policy, the three U.S.-China Joint Communiques, and our responsibilities under the Taiwan Relations Act. The United States also remains firmly committed to its "Six Assurances" to Taiwan. Taken together, these commitments and assurances form the foundation of our unofficial relations with Taiwan.

The United States has long maintained that cross-strait differences are matters to be resolved peacefully, without the threat or use of force, and in a manner acceptable to the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. There is no change in our position. Our commitments and assurances to Taiwan are firm and long-standing.

Question. As you know, Prime Minister Abe is exploring the possibility of a change to the interpretation of Japan's Constitution which would allow Japan to carry out military activities to provide for collective self-defense. This would benefit U.S. and other allied militaries in crisis situations given that the Japan Self Defense Forces are currently not allowed to intervene to defend allied militaries unless they are directly attacked.

- ◆ Is this administration supportive of this effort?

Answer. Constitutional revision or reinterpretation is strictly a matter for Japan to decide for itself. With that being said, the United States recognizes Japan's long-standing commitment to regional and global peace and stability, and we welcome Japan's efforts to play a more proactive role in the alliance, including by reexamining the interpretation of its constitution relating to the exercise of the right of collective self-defense. To be clear, collective self-defense is a right that is enshrined for all nations in the U.N. charter. It allows for a nation to act to protect a second nation against aggression by a third. Since Japan's Constitution renounces war as an instrument of foreign policy, some have interpreted this as limiting Japan's exercise of its right of collective self-defense, and this is what the Japanese Government is studying.

We also support expanding the role of the Japan Self Defense Forces within the framework of the alliance, investing in cutting-edge capabilities, improving interoperability, modernizing force structure, and adapting alliance roles and missions to meet contemporary and future security realities. We note Japan's outreach to explain its security policies, including by sending officials to foreign capitals. We appreciate these efforts by Japan to be transparent as it implements its evolving

defense policies. However, overall we see this as an example of the Government of Japan taking positive steps to increase its ability to contribute to the alliance and to international and regional security and stability.

Question. The U.N. Commission of Inquiry (COI) on human rights in North Korea issued its report last month, finding that there was “abundant evidence” of crimes against humanity in that country. What is the administration doing to follow through on the report’s recommendations?

Answer. We remain deeply concerned about the deplorable human rights situation in the DPRK and the welfare of the North Korean people. We strongly support the Commission’s final report, including its calls for accountability for the perpetrators of the ongoing, widespread, and systematic violations of human rights taking place in North Korea. In March 2013, the United States cosponsored, along with Japan, the European Union, and the Republic of Korea, the U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution that established the Commission. On March 28 this year, the United States was proud to cosponsor the HRC resolution that passed overwhelmingly. In the resolution, the HRC condemned the DPRK’s abuses, renewed the mandate of the Special U.N.’s Rapporteur for human rights abuses, and called for accountability for those responsible for human rights violations.

We support the Human Rights Council recommendation that the U.N. General Assembly forward the Commission’s final report to the U.N. Security Council for its consideration, and we continue to work closely with a broad range of partners across the international community to sustain attention on the deplorable human rights situation in North Korea and to seek ways to hold the regime accountable for its abuses. Our Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights, Robert King, has urged the Office of the High Commissioner to establish a field-based mechanism to follow up on the Commission’s important work by continuing to monitor and document human rights abuses in the DPRK. Deputy Secretary William Burns met April 14 with the Hon. Michael Kirby, former chair of the COI, to discuss how to sustain international attention on the issue and how to hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations in the DPRK. And on April 17, Ambassador Samantha Power, representing the United States—together with French and Australian officials—convened an Arria-formula meeting for U.N. Security Council members to discuss the DPRK human rights situation with the Commissioners. This meeting was a further testament to the growing international consensus that the human rights situation in the DPRK is unacceptable.

Question. The administration’s sanctions against Russia seem to have paused, even though Russian provocations continue. When will the next round of sanctions occur and what is the administration doing to increase pressure on Moscow?

Answer. We are continuing to apply pressure on Russia for its military intervention in Ukraine, purported annexation of Crimea, ongoing violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, breach of core obligations under international law, and threat to international peace and stability. We will not recognize Russia’s purported annexation of Ukraine’s territory. On April 11, we significantly escalated sanctions to include Crimean separatist leaders and a company that was involved with the misappropriation of Ukrainian state assets. The consequent uncertain business climate has already had, and will continue to have, significant consequences for Russian interests. Whenever necessary to advance our goals, we will continue to increase the pressure and the costs for actors associated with Russia’s occupation of Ukraine and work closely with our allies and partners so that sanctioned individuals will experience the full costs of the sanctions. We are applying sanctions and diplomatic pressure in an effort to persuade Russia to de-escalate the situation. Russia’s implementation of de-escalation measures will be key. Russia must know that further escalation will only isolate it further from the international community.

Question. What is the status of the administration’s response to Ukraine’s reported request for lethal assistance to its military? What will have to happen before we are willing to send a strong message of support to the interim government in Kiev about our willingness to stand by them in their time of need?

Answer. On April 22, 2014, the White House announced the provision of \$8 million of nonlethal military assistance to allow the Ukrainian Armed Forces and State Border Guard Service to fulfill their core security missions, including explosive ordnance disposal equipment, handheld radios, engineering equipment, communications equipment, vehicles, and nonlethal individual tactical gear. Additionally, the United States is moving forward on a plan to deliver an additional \$3.5 million in assistance to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense to include medical equipment, water purification systems, and other basic nonlethal items. On March 29, the U.S. deliv-

ered about 330,000 MRE rations to Ukraine. We continue to review possible additional assistance as well.

Since 1997, the United States has provided military assistance to Ukraine through Foreign Military Financing (FMF). FMF in recent years has focused on supporting defense reforms, increasing the interoperability of Ukrainian forces, and expanding Ukraine's deployable peacekeeping capabilities. We continue to work with Ukraine to determine requirements across the security sector. Based on those requirements, we will review additional options for providing security assistance where needed.

Question. The New York Times and The Daily Beast have recently reported on Russian violations of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) with the United States, which were not previously disclosed by the Obama administration. The INF Treaty bans Russia from testing, producing, and possessing medium-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads—in other words, nuclear-armed missiles that would most directly threaten our allies in Europe. The Obama administration has reportedly known about Russia's violations since 2012.

- ◆ Why were Russia's alleged or actual violations of the INF Treaty not disclosed in the State Department's unclassified compliance reports?
- ◆ Have you personally raised these concerns about Russian compliance with your Russian counterpart? If so, what has been the response?
- ◆ If Russia is in violation of the INF Treaty, why should the United States remain a party to this treaty?

Answer. The Administration takes treaty compliance very seriously and, as directed by law, produces the Annual Report to Congress on Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments. This administration has produced this Compliance Report every year since taking office. The 2014 Compliance Report, in both classified and unclassified versions, will be delivered later this spring. We will keep Congress informed through briefings with relevant congressional committees.

Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller has discussed our specific INF concerns directly with her Russian counterpart. Other senior officials have also raised the matter with Russia and will continue to do so. We will continue to work with Russia to resolve this issue.

We value the INF Treaty and believe that the treaty benefits the security of the United States, our allies, and Russia. For that reason, we will make every effort to resolve any concerns we have about Russian compliance and to ensure the continued viability of the treaty.

Question. What steps are you taking to break the logjam on NATO accession and ensure that NATO remains open for new members at the summit in September?

Answer. The United States and our allies remain committed to the Open Door policy and look forward to welcoming new members, when they are ready. The alliance's standards are high and should remain so. However, the alliance does not leave aspirant nations stranded or without guidance. It mentors aspirants through the development of mutually agreed Annual National Programs, evaluation processes, and support for internal reforms. NATO takes a tailored approach with its mentorship, recognizing that each aspirant's path to NATO membership is unique. Following a U.S. Government proposal, the NATO International Staff will present a report on each aspirant's progress toward NATO membership at the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in June.

Question. There have been press reports that the administration has decided to accede to the Ottawa Treaty. What is the status of the administration's review of this issue? Do you share the view of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Dempsey recent testimony that landmines are "an important tool in the arsenal of the Armed Forces of the United States?"

Answer. With respect to consideration of U.S. landmine policy, as we indicated at the most recent Ottawa Meeting of States Parties in December 2013, we are pressing forward to bring that work to closure. While I cannot comment on internal deliberations, I can confirm we are carefully considering all issues related to anti-personnel landmines, including military utility and humanitarian concerns.

Question. Earlier this year, DNI Clapper testified to Congress that "Hezbollah has increased its global terrorist activity in recent years to a level that we have not seen since the 1990s." As I'm sure you know, Hezbollah is a proxy of Iran. Has Iranian support for terrorism changed in any way since the Joint Plan of Action between the P5+1 countries and Iran was agreed to in late November?

Answer. We do not believe there has been a change in Iran's behavior since the Joint Plan of Action was agreed to last November. Iran continues to support terrorism, promote regional instability, and provide the Assad regime in Syria with financial, material, and personnel support. In December 2013, the Bahraini Coast Guard interdicted a speedboat filled with Iranian weapons and explosives, likely destined for Shia oppositionists in Bahrain. The Bahraini Chief Prosecutor stated the suspects detained received paramilitary training in Iran prior to smuggling the weapons and explosives.

In March 2014, Israeli naval forces interdicted the *Klos C* cargo ship in the Red Sea along the border of Sudan and Eritrea. The *Klos C* was carrying Iranian weapons and explosives, including long-range M-302 rockets, likely destined for Palestinian militant organizations in Gaza. Iran has denied being behind either of these smuggling attempts.

Question. In their briefings about the Geneva agreement, White House officials specifically said that nothing in the agreement prevented the United States "from imposing new sanctions targeting Iran's sponsorship of terrorism or its abysmal human rights record."

♦ What actions has the administration taken on either front since November 24?

Answer. In February 2014, the Department of Treasury announced a number of new terrorism-related designations linked to Iran. Among these were various entities and individuals linked to Mahan Air, a private Iranian airline that was designated in October 2011 for its support to the terrorist activities of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp-Quds Force (IRGC-QF). Also designated were various IRGC-QF individuals associated with Iran's activities in Afghanistan. Finally, an individual known for supporting al-Qaeda's facilitation network in Iran was also designated.

Question. What does the administration plan to do to address the fact that if anything, Iran's actions regarding terrorism and human rights have not improved, and in some respects, even worsened, over the last 2 months?

Answer. The U.S. Government continues to raise its voice in support of the Iranian people and their desire for greater respect for human rights and the rule of law. With our allies, we will continue to highlight and condemn Iran's ongoing human rights abuses, which include the unlawful killing, torture, and imprisoning of its own people, executions in the absence of due process, politically motivated repression, harassment of members of ethnic and religious minority communities, and its excessive limitations on freedom of expression.

As part of this work, the United States led lobbying efforts in support of the successful March 28 vote on the U.N. Human Rights Council resolution extending the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, a mandate we were instrumental in establishing. We will continue to urge the international community to press Iran to allow the Special Rapporteur to visit the country and observe its human rights conditions directly and freely. We will also continue to lobby for the U.N. General Assembly's annual resolution condemning Iran's human rights practices. Additionally, we will remain committed to documenting Iran's human rights abuses in our annual Human Rights and International Religious Freedom Reports, drawing attention to, and raising awareness of, the regime's actions.

Question. Since November 24, has there been any progress in obtaining the releases of Americans imprisoned or missing in Iran such as Pastor Saeed Abedini, Robert Levinson, or Amir Hekmati?

Answer. The U.S. Government is dedicated to the return of U.S.-Iranian dual nationals Saeed Abedini and Amir Hekmati, and U.S. citizen Robert Levinson. The President, the Secretary, and Under Secretary Wendy Sherman have raised the cases directly with the Iranian Government. We have made clear that we are calling on Iran to release Mr. Abedini and Mr. Hekmati, to ensure that Mr. Abedini receives necessary medical care, and to work cooperatively with us to locate Mr. Levinson, so they can be reunited with their families. At our request, the Swiss Government, in its role as our protecting power, has also continued to raise the issue on our behalf, as have other countries that we have asked to press Iran to cooperate on these cases.

On March 3, Mr. Abedini was transferred to a private hospital for medical tests and treatment, although he has not yet received treatment or been informed of the results of his tests. His family is permitted to visit him during his stay in the hospital. We will continue to pursue all available options until all three Americans return home safely.

Question. Last month, you said during testimony in front of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, that the administration would make a decision about certification of FY14 assistance to Egypt in the “coming days.” Given the ongoing arrests and harassment of NGOs and civil society activists, do you think that Egypt meets the requirement of “taking steps to support a democratic transition” to receive this certification?

Answer. We have consistently expressed, in public and private, that the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms is a required component of any roadmap to a peaceful democratic transition. We also believe that a vibrant and unfettered civil society is necessary for Egypt to build the accountable and responsive democratic institutions that its citizens have demanded. As such, we have expressed grave concern over the politicized arrests, trials, and sentences of civil society activists in Egypt and have urged the government to redress unjust verdicts, including through pardons, and provide full and transparent due process to all accused. We continue to urge the Egyptian Government to uphold these democratic principles, many of which are enshrined in the new Egyptian Constitution, and to build an environment free of threat and intimidation in order to create a stable and secure country for all Egyptians. As we monitor the situation in Egypt, we will continue to consult with Congress.

Question. Do you believe that General el-Sisi’s decision to step down as Minister of Defense and announce his Presidential candidacy makes it more or less likely that Egypt will continue to make progress in its transition to democracy?

Answer. We believe that Egypt’s next President has another critical opportunity to shape Egypt’s future for the better. However, this will only be possible if they are elected through a credible and transparent process, and commit to governing democratically and inclusively and upholding the universal rights of all Egyptians. For the past 3 years Egyptians have demanded responsive and accountable governance, and Egypt’s next President has an obligation to meet those aspirations, and to ensure that all Egyptians have the ability to exercise their universal rights and freedoms without fear of intimidation or retribution. We continue to urge Mr. el-Sisi, as well as all other Presidential candidates, to remain faithful to the interim government’s commitment to an inclusive, democratic and peaceful transition as they engage in their Presidential campaigns.

Question. I and other members of the Senate have called for the establishment of an overt train-and-equip program by the Department of Defense to identify and train moderate elements of the Syrian opposition. Would you support such an effort?

Answer. Any Department of Defense effort to train and equip elements of the Syrian opposition would be a significant undertaking. The President has repeatedly stated that no options have been taken off the table in our pursuit of a political settlement and a durable end to the violence in Syria, and I will work to preserve his flexibility and policymaking prerogatives as we evaluate the numerous options under discussion.

The administration acknowledges that there can be no military solution to the conflict, but we are working with our partners to ensure that Syria’s moderate opposition gets the help it needs to protect civilian populations from regime assault, stabilize territory it controls, enable civilian governance and service delivery, and drive out extremists. For the Department of State’s part, we are providing approximately \$80 million in nonlethal assistance to vetted, moderate armed groups in coordination with the Supreme Military Council (SMC). To date this aid has included cargo and pickup trucks, ambulances, food, communications gear, generators, tents, blankets, mattresses, medical kits and equipment, and specialized equipment such as forklifts and backhoes to units in both the north and south of Syria.

Question. The proposed budget includes \$4.35 billion for PEPFAR—the same amount allocated under fiscal year 2014. With dried up pipeline funding, and continued flat funding, the proposed budget leaves in question how PEPFAR will scale up treatment and other life-saving HIV/AIDS services and fulfill the goals set out in the Blueprint for an AIDS-Free Generation.

◆ With continued flat-funding for PEPFAR, will we be able to reach our goal of an AIDS-free Generation?

Answer. The President is strongly committed to creating an AIDS-free generation and stated on World AIDS Day that “the United States of America will remain the global leader in the fight against HIV and AIDS.” The U.S. provides more than 60 percent of all donor government funding to address the pandemic through PEPFAR, in terms of both bilateral assistance and multilateral investments through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

However, reaching an AIDS-free generation is a shared goal. No one country can do it alone. While we cannot continue alone at the pace we were at, with millions more now on treatment, we will continue to support all patients who we have initiated on therapy and enroll as many new people as we can. We anticipate that countries and other entities, including the Global Fund, will work with the United States to provide prevention, care, and treatment services.

Question. In February, the administration announced plans to create a new Global Health Security Agenda to prioritize building the global capacity to detect global health risks rapidly, prevent them when possible, and respond effectively when they occur.

◆ Although this agenda is being primarily lead by the CDC, how will State and USAID partner with CDC on this new Agenda?

Answer. The Global Health Security (GHS) Agenda is a multifaceted interagency effort that includes the State Department and USAID; several elements of the Department of Health and Human Services, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; the Departments of Defense and Agriculture; and the National Security Council (NSC). Representatives from these and several other U.S. agencies meet regularly and collaboratively under NSC auspices to develop and advance the GHS Agenda. The GHS Agenda is intended to first and foremost build on existing U.S. Government and international investments and commitments, drawing from a diverse pool of U.S. Government expertise. The multiple U.S. Government agencies involved in the GHS Agenda work closely together not only in Washington, but also with host governments overseas under the leadership of the Chief of Mission to maximize coordination and cross-agency synergies for maximum contribution to the GHS Agenda objectives.

The State Department has played a particularly active role in adapting the GHS Agenda to the global geopolitical context, advising which countries and international organizations to invite as partners, having our embassies and missions worldwide approach partners through diplomatic channels, planning international meetings to advance the Agenda, and preparing written materials to support the effort.

USAID has been a leader over the past decade in promoting an agenda of “prevent, detect, and respond” that is fully consistent with nine objectives elaborated under the GHS Agenda. USAID has taken part in the interagency process from the beginning, and has provided input based on its long experience in health-related development, as well as how its existing and planned assistance programs fit into and advance the GHS agenda.

Attachment:

ADDITIONAL DETAIL ON USAID ACTIVITIES

USAID has been a leader over the past decade in promoting an agenda of “prevent, detect, and respond” that is fully consistent with nine objectives elaborated under the GHS Agenda. The hallmark of the GHS Agenda is its bold commitment to a multisector approach as it recognizes that the source of new infectious diseases is most commonly found in events and practices that fall outside the scope of traditional public health initiatives.

USAID has a unique and central role among our U.S. Government counterparts in implementing the GHS Agenda. The Agency’s broad bilateral partnerships and its multisector capacities—spanning human health, agriculture, food security, the environment, economic growth, and education—are the basis for this role. The nine GHS objectives accord well with USAID’s capacities, and its standing engagement with multiple Ministries, underscoring the GHS Agenda’s broad multisector scope. USAID is now actively identifying opportunities where enhanced coordination across its portfolio can directly contribute to the GHS Agenda. For example, activities to strengthen surveillance for diseases in livestock may be linked to public health disease surveillance. Such cross-sector linkages could enable earlier identification and mitigation of potential infectious diseases originating in animals before they pose a significant threat to human populations. Other areas of USAID strengths that applicable to GHS Agenda include:

- In the agriculture sector, support for livestock production and biosecurity, animal markets and value chains, training veterinarians and agricultural extension workers, strengthening livestock disease surveillance and veterinary laboratories, and addressing the use of antibiotics in animal feed.
- Food security and livelihoods.

- In the environmental sector, activities supporting wildlife conservation, conserving biodiversity and forests, sustainable land management, transboundary water management, habitat and climate change.
- In higher education, strengthening capacities of professional schools for public health, veterinary medicine, human medicine, and environment.
- Disaster preparedness and response.
- In human health, immunization, emerging infectious diseases, laboratory strengthening (particularly in the areas of diagnostic capacities, biosafety and quality assurance), and antimicrobial resistance (particularly for antimalarials and TB drugs, and prescriber/user practices).
- In addition, USAID's Emerging Pandemic Threats Program has been specifically designed to address the GHS objectives. Its team of technical experts is actively working with USAID missions across the globe to determine how best to link the elements of their bilateral portfolio to maximize opportunities to prevent, detect, and respond to emerging infectious disease threats.

Question. As part of the Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States for 2013–2017, the State Department is supposed to develop procedures for in-person registration of domestic workers employed by diplomatic personnel in Washington, DC. What is the status of these procedures?

Answer. Procedures for in-person registration of domestic workers employed by diplomatic personnel have been continually discussed at the State Department in an interbureau internal working group. The Department continues its efforts to implement in-person registration while addressing the need for the system to be operational for the many non-English speaking domestic workers employed by foreign diplomatic personnel. This effort will likely entail additional resources and budgetary discussions. However, in the interim the Department is preparing to hold a briefing for domestic workers in the Washington, DC, area in the fall. This briefing will ensure that domestic workers understand their rights and responsibilities, as well as the resources available to them should they suffer abuse or mistreatment.

Question. When does the State Department plan to expand the program to domestic workers employed by diplomatic personnel all over the United States?

Answer. The Department does not currently have a date for nationwide implementation of an in-person registration system as the Department is still working to address language management for the multinational population of domestic workers employed by foreign diplomatic personnel.

Question. The Ambassador At Large for International Religious Freedom post has been vacant for 6 months. When will this important position be filled?

Answer. Thank you for your leadership in international religious freedom. I agree with you on the need to fill this important position. The White House is actively working to nominate a strong leader as soon as possible.

In the meantime, the Department continues to work to advance religious freedom worldwide through a wide range of efforts, including dialogue with foreign government counterparts and ongoing discussion with civil society, including religious leaders, people of faith, and NGO representatives. Promoting religious freedom is a whole-of-government effort, and the President and other senior Department officials, including myself, our Assistant Secretaries and our ambassadors, regularly raise religious freedom concerns around the world.

Question. Due to Pakistan's engagement and toleration of systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of freedom of religion, would you support the designation of Pakistan as a Country of Particular Concern for religious freedom?

Answer. We are currently reviewing all countries for possible CPC designations and I take note of your recommendation to designate Pakistan.

We continue to engage with the Government of Pakistan regarding our concerns about the state of religious freedom there. In keeping with President Obama's comments at the National Prayer Breakfast making clear our opposition to blasphemy laws, we continue to encourage the Pakistani Government to work toward repealing discriminatory laws, including the blasphemy and anti-Ahmadi laws. We continue to express our concerns to Pakistani authorities about the poor state of religious freedom. A recent example occurred when Principal Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Jones visited Islamabad during the last week of February. We also encourage the government to take further concrete action to combat sectarian violence and bring perpetrators to justice, and we consistently urge officials to ensure that all Pakistanis are free to exercise their universal rights, including freedoms of religion, expression, association, and assembly.

In Pakistan, the State Department is funding a variety of programs to promote respect for human rights. These programs include projects funded by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor that support victims of religion-based persecution; promote peaceful coexistence between religious groups; and develop school curricula and training materials to advance religious freedom, promote mutual respect and tolerance, and combat violent extremism.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TOM UDALL

Question. The problems in Central America increasingly reverberate into the U.S. For example, according to a Los Angeles Times Report from last December, the United States is seeing a surge in Central American asylum seekers attempting to escape the violence in the region. According to the article, over the last 5 years, “Credible Fear applications have increased sevenfold, from just under 5,000 to more than 36,000, driven largely by an influx from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.”

The problem in Central America is complex. While the headlines point to drug trafficking and gang violence, the roots of these problems are in the lack of educational and economic opportunities, and the lack of a strong judicial and law enforcement system that is resistant to corruption and can hold violent criminals accountable.

- ◆ (a). When we have worked with our friends in the region to combat these problems, our work has had results. The Merida initiative in Mexico and Plan Colombia are two such examples. But Central America is not a success story. Why isn’t a similar, regional and coordinated approach which deals with economic development, law enforcement and judicial reform to prevent violence on the Department’s agenda?
- ◆ (b). How will a \$15 million cut in funding for the Central America Regional Security Initiative over FY13 levels impact our efforts to reduce violence and improve rule of law in the region?

Answer. Central America faces serious challenges that directly impact the United States and our hemispheric goal of economically integrated democratic nations collaborating in peace and prosperity. Central America suffers from deep poverty, the world’s highest murder rates, severe judicial impunity, poor governance, drug- and gang-fueled violence, and corruption.

We employ a coordinated approach to combat these systemic problems, working with Central American nations through the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) to strengthen institutions to counter the effects of organized crime, uphold the rule of law, and protect human rights. We believe that the region’s needs fall into three categories: security, governance, and prosperity. We continually refine our engagement to meet the complex and evolving challenges the region faces so our assistance will best address regional and individual country circumstances.

U.S. assistance in Central America is complemented by our work with North American and other partners under mechanisms such as the North America-Central American Integration System (SICA) Security Dialogue and the Group of Friends of Central America. The United States and its partners consult on how best to combine our resources and work with SICA to improve citizen security and combat transnational organized crime while enhancing the effectiveness of our bilateral assistance.

The decrease to the FY 2015 CARSI request does not reflect a decrease in the priority the United States places on Central America. We are requesting a 19-percent increase for USAID programs from the \$50.6 million FY 2013 level. The increase will enable us to support community-based approaches to preventing youth violence and strengthening criminal justice systems in the region. The 26-percent decrease from the \$95 million FY 2013 level in International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) assistance reflects the conclusion or nationalization of various projects, a strategic shift from procurement-heavy to training-specific projects, and our capacity to draw from existing resources in pipeline. The request will sustain current and planned programing. We are mindful that our future requests need to reflect our efforts to refocus and refine engagement to promote prosperity and good governance in addition to security.

Question. Russia has significant leverage over Europe through its natural gas resources. Natural gas also has potential to be a valuable tool in reducing carbon emission—if we do it right. What is the State Department’s view on LNG exports in general and for the European situation in particular?

Answer. The Department of Energy has regulatory authority over Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has regulatory authority over the construction of LNG export facilities. To date, the Energy Department has conditionally approved seven LNG permits for 9.3 billion cubic feet per day that can be exported both to countries with which we have Free Trade Agreements and to those where we do not, such as in Europe.

These are significant volumes. To put it in perspective, the amounts conditionally approved to date, i.e., which the Department of Energy has said it will approve assuming the satisfactory completion of environmental review processes and compliance with any and all preventative and mitigative measures imposed by federal or state agencies, including the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, are more than double the amount of LNG that Europe imported in 2013.

The first project to export this gas is not expected to come online until late 2015. DOE will continue to make public interest determinations on a case-by-case basis, where appropriate, considering economic, energy security, environmental and geopolitical impacts, among other factors. FERC has approved one LNG export facility, is in the process of reviewing other applications to construct LNG export facilities, and expects more companies to apply for approval to build LNG export facilities in the near future.

In sum, we are committed to putting gas onto the global market in a way that is consistent with U.S. public interest because we know that increased global supplies help our European allies and other strategic partners.

Question. As you know, the Colombian Government is currently negotiating with the FARC to resolve longstanding issues. Do you believe the U.S. should continue to stay on the sidelines or is there room for possible U.S. engagement?

Answer. The United States has been strongly engaged in support of peace in Colombia, as an advocate for negotiations and in laying the groundwork for a negotiated settlement.

Most recently the Secretary, in public remarks with Foreign Minister Holguin on February 28, noted that it is “so important to bring a lasting peace to Colombia once and for all” for the benefit of the Colombian people. In his December meeting with President Santos, the President praised the “bold and brave efforts to bring about a lasting and just peace inside of Colombia.”

Our ongoing foreign assistance has helped the Colombian Government initiate talks and prepare for a peace agreement, and laid the ground work that will sustain an agreement once it is finalized. Counternarcotics programs have reduced cocaine production, thereby reducing illicit funding to terrorist groups, including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). In addition, U.S. programs currently engage government, civil society, and the private sector to strengthen Colombia’s ability to implement a sustainable and inclusive peace. This includes initiatives to support conflict victims, reduce impunity, develop rule of law, bring government services to rural areas previously controlled by the FARC, and improve land tenure and livelihoods in rural areas. By supporting efforts by the Colombian people to secure justice and good governance, we help lay the ground work for the accountability, stability, and reconciliation necessary for any peace deal to be successful.

We are in regular, close contact with the government about the status of the peace talks and have encouraged the government to inform us of possible assistance the United States may offer in support of a final peace agreement.

Question. The situation in Venezuela has been alarming, especially as President Maduro attempts to distract individuals in Venezuela by blaming the problems on the United States.

- ◆ (a). What can we do to encourage a greater respect for democracy and human rights in the region without inciting the ideological paranoia that the United States is attempting to interfere in Latin America?

Answer. The United States remains deeply concerned by the government’s response to ongoing protests in Venezuela. The government’s arbitrary detention and excessive use of force against protesters and journalists, lack of due process, and the shutdown of foreign media and Internet endanger human rights. We join with the international community to call for an end to violence, respect for human rights, support for the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, due process of law, and release of those detained for exercising their right to peaceful protest and free expression.

This is not a U.S.-Venezuela issue, it is an internal Venezuelan issue. We’ve been clear all along that the future of Venezuela is for the Venezuelan people to decide. That is why our focus has been to bring an end to the violence and encourage an authentically inclusive dialogue to address the Venezuelan people’s legitimate griev-

ances. We have been actively engaging international partners to find a peaceful solution.

The U.S. Government supports a wide range of civil society organizations that promote and defend fundamental freedoms, democratic processes, and nonviolent advocacy. Civil society organizations play an important role in the promotion and effective exercise of democracy and accountable governance.

- ◆ (b). What more should the OAS be doing to help restore calm in Venezuela and highlight human rights violations?

Answer. We believe the Organization of American States (OAS), as the region's premier multilateral institution, must assume a greater role to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Venezuela, consistent with its mandate to promote peace, democracy, and respect for human rights in member states, as expressed in the OAS Charter and in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights continues to focus attention on the situation in Venezuela, including during recent sessions, and we welcome its views and recommendations.

- ◆ (c). The President is proposing a cut of \$800 thousand in democracy assistance, despite an increasingly complicated political situation. How is this helpful to U.S. democracy goals in the region?

Answer. Our commitment to support human rights and democracy, including in challenging environments in the Western Hemisphere, remains strong.

Our assistance request reflects no decrease in priority toward these areas. We have the resources we need to advance U.S. objectives and support democracy and human rights in countries of concern.

For Venezuela, the U.S. Government will support ongoing assistance for civil society to push for public accountability, defend human rights, and increase the public's access to independent information. We will continue to monitor events and circumstances closely.

Question. Your leadership on climate change is commendable. While climate change is a global problem, it is a problem with serious local implications. In New Mexico and the Southwest, we are starting to see the impacts of climate change in the form of decreased snowpack and rainfall, and more intense droughts. Unless we act on a global scale, climate models show an increasingly dry future for the American West. We understand however that negotiations through the UNFCCC remain difficult.

- ◆ Please provide detail on how the Department's funding request for climate change will help accelerate these talks, and U.S. efforts to address this important issue?

Answer. Funding through the President's Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCCI) not only directly supports efforts with partners around the world to reduce emissions and help the world's most vulnerable communities adapt to climate change, these funds also provide important leverage and facilitation toward an ambitious global agreement.

Through GCCCI funding, the United States has made low-emissions, climate-resilient sustainable economic growth a priority in our diplomacy and development. Our efforts involve two major areas of engagement: (1) lowering the atmospheric accumulation rate of greenhouse gases that cause climate change; and (2) helping societies anticipate and incorporate plans for responding to potential climate change impacts.

The Enhancing Capacity for Low Emission Development Strategies (EC-LEDS) program is an important example. EC-LEDS is an interagency program led by the Department of State and USAID that blends our respective strengths in diplomacy and development. EC-LEDS seeks to guide policymakers in developing countries to analyze greenhouse gas emissions and economic trends and pursue policies that enable economic growth along a lower emission pathway. This program directly supports partner countries in developing the technical expertise required to make and keep emission reduction commitments. It not only has emission reduction benefits, it also builds on the recognition that all countries must be and can be a part of the climate change solution. Additionally, this program builds confidence in developing countries that tackling climate change can, at the same time, boost job creation and economic competitiveness.

EC-LEDS stands as a key element of U.S. support, alongside other critical efforts including the Major Economies Forum, Clean Energy Ministerial, Climate and Clean Air Coalition, Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, and a range of multilateral

funds, such as the Climate Investment Funds and funds focusing on adaptation such as the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund.

Question. The new Global Development lab is an exciting and important pillar in our approach to development globally. Innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation are critical to U.S. economic competitiveness as well. Just last year 75 U.S. industries classified as intellectual property intensive added \$5.8 trillion to U.S. output. Technology transfer, which accelerates innovations from the lab to the market, is critical to maintaining our role as a leader in science and technology, and developing solutions to complex global challenges such as disease, pollution, and access to energy. Our National Labs including Sandia and Los Alamos in New Mexico are actively involved in basic and applied research, and examining ways to accelerate tech transfer.

- ◆ How will you ensure that the research and technologies you support through the lab mature into viable businesses, and are scaled up to benefit those in need around the world?
- ◆ How will this new lab link with other agencies such as the Department of Energy, Small Business Administration, and Department of Commerce, also focused on innovation?

Answer. The U.S. Global Development Lab (The Lab) is building directly off of the successes of its two predecessor organizations—the Office of Innovation and Development Alliances and the Office of Science and Technology. Those two offices were able to generate hundreds of new innovative and cost-effective approaches to solving long-standing development challenges. Where the Lab seeks to improve is in the area of making sure the most promising of those solutions are taken to global scale, impacting hundreds of millions of people. This can only be done if these efforts become sustainable. For a large subset of these solutions, it means ensuring that they become viable businesses.

The Lab will do this in two ways. First, we will provide staged financing, making increased investments to those solutions where there is solid evidence of a sound business model that will enable global impact. Second, the Lab is establishing innovative financing models and other tools for nascent development enterprises, and connecting entrepreneurs with accelerators like the USAID Higher Education Solutions Network Health Accelerator at Duke University and USAID partnerships like LAUNCH (Department of State, NASA, and Nike) that connect entrepreneurs with business advisory services. Successful examples include: the Odon Device, which will be manufactured by Becton, Dickinson and Company, of Franklin Lakes, NJ; Sub-surface Vapor Transfer Irrigation, which has licensed the technology to Dupont; and d.Light, which just closed on \$11 million in Series C venture capital financing.

The Lab has created a strong network of partners with whom it will work from the outset to help scale proven solutions. The Lab's cornerstone partner network includes corporations, foundations, donors, universities, and nongovernmental organizations. The Lab also has a close network of U.S. Government Partners that we are already working with to help the Lab design and implement programs. This list includes the State Department, USDA, NASA, the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Science Foundation, the Millennial Challenge Corporation, the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN F. KERRY TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEFF FLAKE

Question. Department of State Contract Files Missing.—According to a report from the Associated Press, an inspector general recently found that the files for more than \$6 billion in State Department contracts over the past 6 years are either missing or incomplete. The State Department has called the issue a “bureaucratic” one, and stated that it is addressing the matter.

- ◆ When does the State Department expect to explain its inability to account for \$6 billion in contracts over the last 6 years?
- ◆ Does this matter call into question any of the State Department's methods for tracking and retaining files?

Answer. The OIG Management Alert did not state that moneys were missing or contracts were otherwise unaccounted for. The OIG Management Alert letter advised the Department that over the past 6 years the OIG had identified Department of State contracts with a total value of more than \$6 billion in which contract files were incomplete or could not be located and noted that, in the IG's opinion, inadequate files “exposes the Department to significant financial risk . . .”

Please note that the OIG Management Alert is a compilation of audits, inspections, and investigations previously completed over the past 6 years. What the OIG Management Alert did not mention are the many changes implemented over the past several years to improve contract management nor did it mention current efforts—such as a pilot for electronic filing that has been underway at several posts for the past several months. When completed, we will have a better idea of the overall feasibility and resources required to develop, deploy, and maintain such a system, both domestically and at our over 280 posts worldwide.

Question. OCO Funding.—DOD OCO funding has been plussed up significantly over the past decade. In the past few years, however, the State Department has also begun requesting OCO funding outside of the base budget. It is unclear what this precedent this will set for future years after Iraq and Afghanistan.

- ◆ Do you believe that it will be the new status quo for the State Department to come up with a base estimate for responding to humanitarian crises across the globe, and then to also submit an OCO request for “unforeseen” expenses?

Answer. The OCO request of \$5.9 billion for the Department of State and USAID is consistent with the practice of the past 3 years and allows the Department the flexibility to respond to extraordinary needs and contingencies that are critical to immediate U.S. national security objectives without unnecessarily undermining funding for longer term efforts to sustain global order and tackle transnational challenges. The OCO request funds exceptional operations and assistance expenses in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan; our response to ongoing challenges presented by the Syria crisis; and emergent peacekeeping needs.

The OCO request for humanitarian needs in Syria (\$1.1 billion) is consistent with appropriations since FY 2012, which have included significant amounts of OCO for humanitarian expenses and enabled us to respond appropriately to crises worldwide, including in and around Syria. The entire \$4.8 billion humanitarian assistance request—base and OCO—will allow us to respond to the unprecedented Syria crisis and other humanitarian needs around the world. The administration will continue to seek the necessary flexibility to enable the most appropriate U.S. response to these and other crises.

TESTIMONY GIVEN BY SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN F. KERRY AT THE HEARING ON
SEPTEMBER 9, 2013, SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BOB CORKER

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, SECRETARY OF STATE,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC**

Secretary KERRY. Well, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, Ranking Member Corker, thank you very, very much for having us here today. We look forward to this opportunity to be able to share with you President Obama’s vision with respect to not just this action but, as Senator Corker has inquired appropriately, about Syria itself and the course of action in the Middle East.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for welcoming Teresa. This is her first public event since early July. So we are all happy she is here.

As we convene for this debate, it is not an exaggeration to say to you—all of you, my former colleagues—that the world is watching not just to see what we decide, but it is watching to see how we make this decision, whether in a dangerous world we can still make our Government speak with one voice. They want to know if America will rise to this moment and make a difference.

And the question of whether to authorize our Nation to take military action is, as you have said, Mr. Chairman, and you have echoed, Mr. Ranking Member, this is obviously one of the most important decisions, one of the most important responsibilities of this committee or of any Senator in the course of a career.

The President and the administration appreciate that you have returned quickly to the Nation’s capital to address it and that you are appropriately beginning a process of focusing with great care and great precision, which is the only way to approach the potential use of military power.

Ranking Member Corker, I know that you want to discuss, as you said, why Syria matters to our national security and our strategic interests beyond the compelling humanitarian reasons, and I look forward, with Secretary Hagel and General Dempsey, to laying that out here this afternoon.

But first, it is important to explain to the American people why we are here. It is important for people who may not have caught every component of the news over the course of the Labor Day weekend to join us, all of us, in focusing in on what is at stake here. That is why the President of the United States made the decision

as he did, contrary to what many people thought he would do, of asking the Congress to join in this decision. We are stronger as a Nation when we do that.

So we are here because against multiple warnings from the President of the United States, from the Congress, from our friends and allies around the world, and even from Russia and Iran, the Assad regime, and only undeniably the Assad regime, unleashed an outrageous chemical attack against its own citizens. We are here because a dictator and his family's personal enterprise, in their lust to hold onto power, were willing to infect the air of Damascus with a poison that killed innocent mothers, and fathers, and hundreds of their children, their lives all snuffed out by gas in the early morning of August 21st.

Now, some people here and there amazingly have questioned the evidence of this assault on conscience. I repeat here again today that only the most willful desire to avoid reality can assert that this did not occur as described, or that the regime did not do it. It did happen, and the Assad regime did it.

Now, I remember Iraq. Secretary Hagel remembers Iraq. General Dempsey especially remembers Iraq. But Secretary Hagel and I and many of you sitting on the dais remember Iraq in a special way because we were here for that vote. We voted. And so we are especially sensitive, Chuck and I, to never again asking any member to take a vote on faulty intelligence.

And that is why our intelligence community has scrubbed and re-scrubbed the evidence. We have declassified unprecedented amounts of information, and we ask the American people and the rest of the world to judge that information. We can tell you beyond any reasonable doubt that our evidence proves the Assad regime prepared for this attack, issued instructions to prepare for this attack and warned its own forces to use gas masks. And we have physical evidence of where the rockets came from and when. Not one rocket landed in regime-controlled territory, not one. All of them landed in opposition-controlled or contested territory.

We have a map, physical evidence, showing every geographical point of impact, and that is concrete. Within minutes of the attack—90 I think to be precise, maybe slightly shorter—the social media exploded with horrific images of the damage that had been caused, men and women, the elderly, and children sprawled on a hospital floor with no wounds, no blood, but all dead. Those scenes of human chaos and desperation were not contrived. They were real. No one could contrive such a scene.

We are certain that none of the opposition has the weapons or capacity to affect a strike of this scale, particularly from the heart of regime territory. Just think about it in logical terms, common sense. With high confidence, our intelligence community tells us that after the strike, the regime issued orders to stop, and then fretted openly, we know, about the possibility of U.N. inspectors discovering evidence.

So then, they began to systematically try to destroy it, contrary to my discussion with their foreign minister, who said we have nothing to hide. I said, if you have nothing to hide, then let the inspectors in today and let it be unrestricted. It was not. They did not. It took four days of shelling before they finally allowed them in under a constrained pre-arranged structure. And we now have learned that the hair and blood samples from first responders in East Damascus has tested positive for signatures of sarin.

So, my colleagues, we know what happened. For all the lawyers, for all the former prosecutors, for all those who have sat on a jury, I can tell you that we know these things beyond the reasonable doubt that is the standard by which we send people to jail for the rest of their lives.

So we are here because of what happened two weeks ago, but we are also here because of what happened nearly a century ago in the darkest moments of World War I and after the horror of gas warfare when the vast majority of the world came together to declare in no uncertain terms that chemical weapons crossed the line of conscience, and they must be banned from use forever. Over the years that followed, over 180 countries, including Iran, Iraq, and Russia, agreed, and they joined the Chemical Weapons Convention. Even countries with whom we agree on little agreed on that conviction.

Now, some have tried to suggest that the debate we are having today is about President Obama's red line. I could not more forcefully state that is just plain and simply wrong. This debate is about the world's red line. It is about humanity's red line. And it is a red line that anyone with a conscience ought to draw.

This debate is also about Congress' own red line. You, the United States Congress, agreed to the Chemical Weapons Convention. You, the United States Congress, passed the Syria Accountability Act, which says Syria's chemical weapons "threaten the security of the Middle East and the national security interests of the United States." You, the Congress, have spoken out about grave consequences if Assad, in particular, used chemical weapons. So I say to you, Senator Corker, that is one of the reasons why Syria is important.

And as we debate and the world watches, as you decide and the world wonders, not whether Assad's regime executed the worst chemical weapons attack of the 21st century. That fact, I think, is now beyond question. The world wonders whether the United States of America will consent through silence to standing aside while this kind of brutality is allowed to happen without consequence.

In the nearly 100 years since the first global commitment against chemical weapons, only two tyrants dared to cross the world's brightest line. Now Bashar al-Assad has become the third. And I think all of you know that history holds nothing but infamy for those criminals, and history reserves also very little sympathy for their enablers. So the reality is the gravity of this moment. That is the importance of the decision that this Congress faces and that the world is waiting to learn about in these next days.

Now, Ranking Member Corker asked a central question: Why should Americans care beyond what I have just said, which ought to be enough in the judgment of the President and this administration. Well, it is clear that in addition to what I have just mentioned about the Syria Accountability Act and the threat to the Middle East, we cannot overlook the impact of chemical weapons and the danger that they pose to a particularly volatile area of the world in which we have been deeply invested for years because we have great friends there. We have allies there. We have deep interests there.

Since President Obama's policy is that Assad must go, it is not insignificant that to deprive Assad of the capacity to use chemical weapons, or to degrade the capacity to use those chemical weapons, actually deprives him of a lethal weapon in this ongoing civil war, and that has an impact. That can help to stabilize the region ultimately.

In addition, we have other important strategic national security interests, not just in the prevention of the proliferation of chemical weapons, but to avoid the creation of a safe haven in Syria or a base of operations for extremists to use these weapons against our friends. All of us know that the extremes of both sides are there waiting in the wings, working and pushing and fighting. They would be desperate to get their hands on these materials. And the fact is that if nothing happens to begin to change the equation or the current calculation, that area can become even more so an area of ungoverned space where those extremists threaten even the United States and, more immediately, if they get their hands on their weapons, allies and friends of ours, like Jordan, or Israel, or Lebanon, or others.

Forcing Assad to change his calculation about his ability to act with impunity can contribute to his realization that he cannot gas or shoot his way out of his predicament. And as I think you know, it has been the President's primary goal to achieve a negotiated resolution, but you got to have parties prepared to negotiate to achieve that.

Syria is also important because, quite simply, and I cannot put this to you more plainly than to just ask each of you to ask yourselves, if you are Assad or if you are any one of the other despots in that region, and the United States steps back from this moment together with our other allies and friends, what is the message? The message is that he has been granted impunity, the freedom to choose to use the weapons again or force us to go through this cycle again with who knows what outcome after once refusing it. We would have granted him the capacity to use these weapons against more people with greater levels of damage because we would have stood and stepped away.

As confidently as we know what happened in Damascus, my friends, on August 21st, we know that Assad would read our stepping away or our silence as an invitation to use those weapons with impunity. And in creating impunity, we will be creating opportunity, the opportunity for other dictators and/or terrorists to pursue their own weapon of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

I will tell you there are some people hoping that the United States Congress does not vote for this very limited request the President has put before you. Iran is hoping you look the other way. Our inaction would surely give them a permission slip for them to at least misinterpret our intention, if not to put it to the test. Hezbollah is hoping that isolationism will prevail. North Korea is hoping that ambivalence carries the day. They are all listening for our silence.

And if we do not answer Assad today, we will erode a standard that has existed for those 100 years. In fact, we will erode a standard that has protected our own troops in war, and we will invite even more dangerous tests down the road.

Our allies and our partners are also counting on us in this situation—the people of Israel, of Jordan, of Turkey. Each look next door and they see that they are one stiff breeze away from the potential of being hurt, of their civilians being killed as a consequence of choices Assad might make in the absence of action. They anxiously await our assurance that our word means something. They await the assurance that

if the children lined up in un-bloodied burial shrouds for their own children, that we would keep the world's promise. That is what they are hoping.

So the authorization that President Obama seeks is definitely in our national security interests. We need to send to Syria and to the world, to dictators and terrorists, to allies, and to civilians alike the unmistakable message that when the United States of America and the world say "never again," we do not mean sometimes, we do not mean somewhere. Never means never.

So this is a vote for accountability. Norms and laws that keep the civilized world civil mean nothing if they are not enforced. As Justice Jackson said in his opening statement at the Nuremberg trials, "The ultimate step in avoiding periodic wars, which are inevitable in a system of international lawlessness, is to make statesmen responsible to the law." If the world's worst despots see that they can flout with impunity prohibitions against the world's worst weapons, then those prohibitions are just pieces of paper. That is what we mean by accountability, and that is what we mean by we cannot be silent.

So let me be clear. President Obama is not asking America to go to war. And I say that sitting next to two men, Secretary Hagel and Chairman Dempsey, who know what war is. Senator McCain knows what war is. They know the difference between going to war and what President Obama is requesting now. We all agree there will be no American boots on the ground. The President has made crystal clear we have no intention of assuming responsibility for Syria's civil war. He is asking only for the power to make clear, to make certain, that the United States means what we say, that the world, when we join together in a multilateral statement, mean what we say. He is asking for authorization to degrade and deter Bashar al-Assad's capacity to use chemical weapons.

Now, some will undoubtedly ask, and I think appropriately, what about the unintended consequences of action? Some fear a retaliation that leads to a larger conflict. Well, let me put it bluntly. If Assad is arrogant enough, and I would say foolish enough, to retaliate to the consequences of his own criminal activity, the United States and our allies have ample ways to make him regret that decision without going to war. Even Assad's supporters, Russia and Iran, say publicly that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable.

Now, some will also question the extent of our responsibility. To them I say, when someone kills and injures hundreds of children with a weapon the world has banned, we are all responsible. That is true because of treaties like the Geneva Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, and, for us, the Syria Accountability Act. But it is also true because we share a common humanity and a common decency.

This is not the time for arm chair isolationism. This is not the time to be spectators to slaughter. Neither our country nor our conscience can afford the cost of silence. We have spoken up against unspeakable horror many times in the past. Now we must stand up and act, and we must protect our security, protect our values, and lead the world with conviction that is clear about our responsibility.

Thank you.

