

**REVIEW OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2021
STATE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUEST**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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JULY 30, 2020
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REVIEW OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 STATE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUEST

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2020

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 8:33 a.m. in room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James E. Risch, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch [presiding], Rubio, Johnson, Gardner, Romney, Graham, Barrasso, Portman, Paul, Young, Cruz, Perdue, Menendez, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Udall, Murphy, Kaine, and Merkley.

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

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

Good morning, everyone. Today we have with us Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to discuss the State Department's fiscal year 2021 budget request though, if history is any judge, Secretary Pompeo, you will face a wide variety of questions that extend beyond the Department's budget, which I know you can handle.

The United States and our allies and partners continue to face serious foreign challenges that will test us for decades to come. China, under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party, is our chief competitor. Russia too remains a key adversary.

The efforts of these two nations to sow discord, wreak havoc, and undo the free and open international order upon which shared prosperity and security are built have reached new heights. They have stepped up disinformation and manipulated international institutions, suppressed the voices of freedom and democracy, propped up heinous dictators, coerced and invaded their neighbors, and denied millions of people access to lifesaving humanitarian assistance.

We have a long road ahead of us in this new era of great power competition. We need sustained political will. These challenges require nothing less.

On top of all of this, we are confronted by a new and acute challenge: a biological enemy that we still do not fully understand, an enemy that in 6 short months has inflicted levels of physical and economic harm upon the world that we have not seen in more than 100 years.

Here again, China especially, but also Russia has played a destructive role. From withholding vital global health data to spread-

ing disinformation and actively stealing vaccine research, China and Russia have again chosen to be and proven themselves to be adversaries.

Sanctioning bad actors will never be enough. To confront these and other challenges, the Department will need to rely upon a vast array of tools and resources. Our diplomats must be backed by effective and efficient assistance so they can help partners help themselves and contribute to the growth of healthier, more stable societies.

We are eager to support a budget that will advance these critical interests and support the State Department's most critical resources: its people.

As the coronavirus emerged from China and accelerated across the globe, you were forced to pull back thousands of our diplomats and their families, but you did not just pack up and go without a thought of your fellow Americans. Instead, the Department launched an unprecedented mission to help return more than 100,000 Americans safely home. All of us who participated in that are greatly appreciative of the Department's work in that regard. In some cases, this involved convincing countries to reopen their airspace for flights and roads for transport. In other places, you even chartered planes to get our American people home.

There are lots of folks who may never come in contact with the Department. Yet now there are more than 100,000 Americans who can personally attest to the tremendous work that the Department does for our people every day.

As the challenges get more numerous and complex, we want to support a State Department that is up to the task, fully funded, staffed, and equipped to advance U.S. national interests on all fronts and at all times.

We obviously have threats that impede this, be it health or security, but as the saying goes, all politics are local. Our adversaries understand this all too well. We need our diplomats to be local, too.

On a personal note in closing, let me say I want to publicly thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your accessibility that you have had as Secretary. As you know, in operating this committee, it is essential that I have instant access to facts and information, and at times when I have not been able to get that through the usual intelligence channels, you have always made yourself instantly accessible. I sincerely appreciate that.

When I am asked for advice from other second branch entities or individuals or even allies of ours, it is absolutely imperative that I have this information. You have always provided that. When you answer the phone, sometimes I never know where you are in the globe or what time it is, but you have always made it happen. For that, I have been and remain very grateful.

With that, Senator Menendez.

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

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for joining us this morning, Mr. Secretary. It has been a while since you have joined us, and I appreciate your enthusiasm for fulfilling this part of your constitutional responsibilities.

If past is precedent, I do not imagine we are going to see you here anytime soon. So while this is your opportunity to defend your stunningly ill-conceived request to slash the budget of our foreign policy instruments, I would also like to take a wholesale look at how your Department has represented the American people and American interests on the world stage over the past year. Unfortunately, that view is not good, to say the least.

Under your watch, the United States has faced setback after setback on the world stage, ceding leverage and influence to our stated adversaries. Today, Iran is much closer to a nuclear bomb than when you came into office, and despite your maximum pressure campaign, Iran and its proxies continue to create problems throughout the Middle East.

While the 2017 National Security Strategy details that, "Russia wants to weaken U.S. influence in the world and divide us from our allies and partners, and undermine the legitimacy of democracies," the President and your Administration has at best not seriously addressed this threat.

You have never fully used the tools we provided in CAATSA, and at worst simply abetted Putin's efforts, withdrawing forces from Germany, failing to take action when evidence emerged that Russia was paying bounties to kill U.S. troops in Afghanistan, and twice redirecting funds from the European Deterrence Initiative to pay for President Trump's wasteful border wall in September of 2019 and April 2020.

Meanwhile the Administration's confrontational bluster against China has not stopped China's march in the South China Sea, in Hong Kong, in suppressing and oppressing its own people.

Our North Korea diplomacy, which you assured this committee you would have wrapped up within a year about 2 years ago, appears to have flat-lined, leaving North Korea with a more capable nuclear and ballistic missile program.

Across Africa, the State Department has been woefully absent on issue after issue after issue, most recently in its engagement on negotiations related to management of Nile waters.

In the western hemisphere, the entirety of our approach seems to be xenophobic, anti-immigrant hysteria, and bullying, all while gutting our institutional capacity to deal with the root causes of migration. There is bipartisan support for a Venezuela policy. Yet, your approach has left millions of Venezuelans still suffering, and the Administration will not even support those who are already exiled here. Even as we struggle with an opioid epidemic, you propose cutting our international narcotics and law enforcement.

On climate change, your Department has not just failed to be part of the solution, but is becoming part of the problem, actively undermining international efforts to safeguard our planet's future.

Our allies in Europe, in Asia, in the Middle East routinely wonder out loud whether we can really be counted on.

Our values have been denigrated from President Trump's reported green-lighting of concentration camps in Xinjiang to the revisionist and sometimes repulsive views espoused by your so-called Unalienable Rights Commission.

In the face of a global pandemic when our scientists, our technology, and our diplomats should be leading the global response,

we have instead taken a back seat and are witnessing the collapse of leadership both home and abroad.

Rather than putting forth a real strategy, our leaders point fingers at China and the World Health Organization, are absent from critical global meetings, and refuse to be straight with Congress and the American people on the public health threat. All the while, infections and deaths surge across the country.

Of course, as we all know, the strength of our diplomacy starts and ends with the strength of our diplomatic corps.

Earlier this week, I released a report, *Diplomacy in Crisis: The Trump Administration's Decimation of the State Department*. I have a copy here just in case you have not seen it. I would ask unanimous consent to enter it into the record, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. It will be entered.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The information referred to above can be found in the "Additional Material Submitted for the Record" section at the end of this hearing.]

Senator MENENDEZ. The report found a State Department at risk of catastrophic failure, with career diplomats describing a "complete and utter disdain for their expertise," and even "a contempt for career employees," many asking "if their service is still valued."

Even as President Trump refers to our diplomats as the "Deep State Department," you have stood at his shoulder and said nothing, exemplified by your refusal to stand behind Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch.

The result is an exodus of expertise. Seven percent of the Department's staff left in the first year and a half of the Administration. While I realize that you were not at the Department during that time, the Department has continued to suffer persistent vacancies without Senate-confirmed nominees. In response, the Administration repeatedly puts forth candidates who do not possess the qualifications, the demeanor, nor the temperament to serve in leadership positions and represent the American people abroad.

When you send us qualified nominees, Mr. Secretary, we act. We have confirmed more than 190 nominees, and dozens have advanced quickly and without incidence, but you continuously send us nominees who have misled Congress, who have made offensive or racist statements, who have sexual harassment lawsuits and allegations against them, who have supported torture, and whose conduct would disqualify them for service in any other Administration.

The Administration promised us "the best people, the very best, terrific, tremendous," but Mr. Secretary, the best people do not seem to want to work for you.

Finally, let me just touch on a few oversight issues which I know you were passionate about as a former Member of Congress.

At your direction, the President recently removed the State Department's Inspector General, who was investigating perhaps, among other things, last year's emergency declaration of arms sales to Saudi Arabia, about which I, along with a bipartisan group of colleagues, raised serious concerns.

Additionally, we have learned of allegations of you using your office to promote your own personal, domestic political agenda,

hosting lavish dinners at the Department and creating at least the appearance of using taxpayer resources to impress high profile political donors.

While this hearing is ostensibly convened for the President's fiscal year 2021 budget request, you and I and everybody on this dais knows that the President's wish to completely gut our international affairs budget by a shocking 34 percent is dead on arrival. That said, I have to say I must say I am tempted to provide you with a budget request and see how you could actually operate under it.

Even if this budget hearing were not months after the fact and far too late in the legislative process, let me just say it is fundamentally misguided and unsuited to the needs of safeguarding our nation's security.

Now, I recognize you will take issue with much of what I have said, Mr. Secretary, but facts are stubborn things.

When you entered office, I offered a hand to work with you in areas where we could have built real agendas with bipartisan political buy-in: Venezuela, Iran, Russia, China, and indeed, I am disappointed.

As I look at your tenure in office and at the track record of this Administration, I am disappointed that instead of making America first among the nations of the world, you have instead relinquished our leadership to the applause and approval of China and Russia. That makes America last.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. As we proceed—first, let me say, obviously, those views are the views of Senator Menendez, individually, not those of this chairman or the majority of this committee.

For the members of this committee, we have an 11:30 hard stop. That will give us time for a round of questions. I am going to take a short break about halfway through.

As usual, we would stick with what has been the longstanding commitment of this committee for civility. When the witness is asked a question, we are going to give the witness a full opportunity to answer that question and not interrupt his answer simply because he is doing so well at answering the question. I will enforce that strictly.

With that, Secretary Pompeo, the floor is yours.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, if I may have a parliamentary inquiry. You just discussed the procedural process.

If we are going to have answers that are filibusters, I do not expect that we are going to allow that either.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Menendez, I will run the committee and I will do it as I have indicated. We are not going to interrupt answers from the witness.

With that, Secretary Pompeo.

STATEMENT OF HON. MICHAEL R. POMPEO, SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you, Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez. I have a full statement. In the interest of time, I will just read the first approximately one-third of that. If I could get your agreement to put the rest of the statement, I would appreciate that.

The CHAIRMAN. We will do that, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you very much.

Today I am here to present the and testify about the President's 2021 budget. It requests nearly \$41 billion for the State Department and USAID, enabling both agencies to protect U.S. citizens, increase American prosperity, and advance the development of democratic societies. Critically, it reflects a commitment to the strategic, efficient use of resources to provide better results for the American people.

That is the top line analysis, but I want to make a broader point that our diplomatic expenditures reflect America's values.

Two weeks ago in Philadelphia, I unveiled the report of the State Department's Commission on Unalienable Rights. My message that day was simple: the Trump administration places our founding principles at the very core of American diplomacy. I want to talk about how we have done that in three areas.

First, securing the American people's freedoms against authoritarian threats, securing American lives during the pandemic, and helping friends across the world secure those very unalienable rights.

On authoritarian threats, we have evaluated the world with the same realism that the American Founders did. We see the Islamic Republic of Iran for what it is, an aggressor not a victim. We have gone full bore on our maximum pressure campaign. Since May of 2018, we have slashed the vital oil revenues the regime uses for terrorism and illegal nuclear activities by 90 percent. We have rallied nations to our side through diplomacy. Witness the designations of Hezbollah from European and South American countries. We have bolstered our military companies vis-à-vis Tehran.

There is more work to do. The Security Council must renew the UN arms embargo against Iran before it expires on October 18.

Iran already mines ships in the Strait of Hormuz, launches missile at Saudi oil facilities, and ships arms to the Houthis.

Should the Security Council fail to act, Iran will have a freer hand to sow destruction across the Middle East and indeed the world.

Russia, too, is a destabilizing authoritarian force in Ukraine, in Libya, in Syria, and inside of Western democracies.

This Administration has acted to protect our interests and our friends. We have issued the Crimea Declaration. We have supplied Ukraine with lethal military hardware. We have sanctioned more than 360 Russian targets for everything from human rights abuses to supporting the murderous Assad regime, to operating mercenaries and proxy forces around the world.

The State Department's fiscal year 2021 request for the Global Engagement Center is \$138 million, more than double its current level. We will not tolerate disinformation and other propaganda directed by the Kremlin or any of our other adversaries.

Further on Russia, 2 weeks ago, the State Department removed Nord Stream 2's exemption under CAATSA, and in December, the Administration's swift implementation of PEESA, an important bipartisan endeavor, effectively halted construction of the pipeline.

We are the toughest Administration ever on Russia.

Most importantly, on China, we see the Chinese Communist Party also for what it is: the central threat of our times. Our vigorous diplomacy has helped lead an international awakening to the threat of the CCP.

Senators, the tide is turning. 30-plus countries and territories have become 5G clean countries, banning untrusted vendors from their networks. When we talked about this a year ago, that number was in the single digits.

In our hemisphere, Canada has stood firm against the Chinese Communist Party's hostage-taking. Its three major telecom carriers have also banned untrusted vendors.

Belize and Haiti have denounced Beijing's national security law targeting Hong Kong.

Denmark has rejected the CCP's attempted censorship of Danish newspapers.

Sweden has closed its Confucius Institutes.

Lithuanian intelligence services identified China as a potential threat for the first time.

In the region, in the Indo-Pacific, Australia declared China's South China Sea claims unlawful and illegitimate, as have we.

We are proud to have stepped up maritime maneuvers in that body of water alongside our friends from Australia and Japan and the United Kingdom.

India has banned 106 Chinese applications that threatened its citizens' privacy and security.

Our diplomatic efforts are working and momentum is building to mitigate the threats that the Chinese Communist Party presents.

All 10 ASEAN nations have insisted that the South China Sea disputes must be settled on the basis of international law, including UNCLOS.

Japan led the G7's condemnation of China's national security law targeting Hong Kong.

The EU condemned the law too and also declared China a systemic rival just last year.

We have agreed to start a dialogue channel focused solely on China at the EU's request.

At NATO, Secretary General Stoltenberg has called to make China a greater part of that alliance's focus as well.

We led a multilateral effort to ensure that the United Nations World Intellectual Property Organization elected a director from a country that actually gave a darn about intellectual property rights.

Our Quad, the United States, Australia, India, and Japan, has been reinvigorated.

We have worked hard at this. Our diplomats have done wonderful work. I am very proud of the progress we are making.

In addition to these multilateral efforts, the Department of Justice is cracking down on Chinese IP threats.

We sanctioned Chinese leaders for their brutality in Xinjiang, imposed export controls on companies that support it, and warned U.S. businesses against using slave labor in their supply chains.

We have terminated special treatment agreements with Hong Kong in response to the CCP's actions to deny freedom to the people of Hong Kong.

We closed our consulate in Houston because it was a den of spies.

Our budget reflects the reality on the ground. We requested nearly \$1.5 billion for foreign assistance to the Indo-Pacific region, a 20 percent increase from the 2020 request. We want that part of the world to be free and open and prosperous.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will close and am happy to take questions.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Pompeo follows:]

Prepared Statement of Secretary Michael R. Pompeo

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today on the President's FY 2021 Budget.

This budget requests nearly \$41 billion for the State Department and USAID, enabling both agencies to protect U.S. citizens, increase American prosperity, and advance the development of democratic societies.

It generously supports key allies and partners like Colombia, Egypt, Israel, and Jordan.

It includes \$1.1 billion worth of investments in the State Department's global workforce, including staffing, training, and leveraging strategic data assets.

And, critically, it reflects a commitment to the strategic, efficient use of resources to provide better results for the American people.

That's the topline analysis. But I want to make a broader point that our diplomatic expenditures reflect American values: 2 weeks ago in Philadelphia, I unveiled the report of the State Department's Commission on Unalienable Rights.

My message that day was simple: The Trump administration places our founding principles at the core of American diplomacy.

Today I'd like to talk about how we've done it in three areas: Securing the American people's freedoms against authoritarian threats. Securing American lives during the pandemic. And helping friends across the world secure their own unalienable rights.

First, on authoritarian threats: We've evaluated the world with the same realism the American founders did.

We see the Islamic Republic of Iran for what it is: an aggressor, not a victim.

We've gone full bore on our maximum pressure campaign.

Since May 2018, we've slashed the vital oil revenues the regime uses for terrorism and illegal nuclear activities by 90 percent.

We've rallied nations to our side through diplomacy—witness the designations of Hezbollah from European and South American friends.

And we've bolstered our military readiness vis-à-vis Tehran.

There's more work to do. The Security Council must renew the UN arms embargo against Iran before it expires on October 18.

Iran already mines ships in the Strait of Hormuz, launches missiles at Saudi oil facilities, ships arms to the Houthis, and supports the illegitimate Maduro regime.

If the Security Council fails to act, Iran will have a freer hand to sow destruction across the Middle East, and indeed the world.

Russia too, is a destabilizing authoritarian force—in Ukraine, Syria, Libya, and inside Western democracies.

This Administration has acted to protect our interests and our friends: We've issued the Crimea Declaration.

We've supplied Ukraine with lethal military hardware.

We've sanctioned more than 360 Russian targets for everything from human rights abuses, to supporting the murderous Assad regime, to operating mercenaries and proxy forces around the world.

And the State Department's FY 2021 request for the Global Engagement Center is \$138 million—more than double the current level. We won't tolerate disinformation and propaganda directed by the Kremlin or other adversaries.

Further on Russia: 2 weeks ago, the State Department removed Nord Stream 2's exemption under CAATSA.

And in December, the Administration's swift implementation of PEESA—an important bipartisan endeavor—effectively halted construction of the pipeline.

We are the toughest Administration ever on Russia.

And most importantly, China. We see the Chinese Communist Party for what it is: The central threat of our times.

Our vigorous diplomacy has helped lead an international awakening to the threat of the CCP. Senators, the tide is turning: 30-plus countries and territories have become 5G “Clean Countries,” banning untrusted 5G vendors from their networks.

In our hemisphere, Canada has stood firm against the CCP’s hostage-taking. Its three major telecom carriers have also banned untrusted vendors.

Belize and Haiti have denounced Beijing’s national security law targeting Hong Kong.

In Europe, the U.K. has offered refuge to millions of Hong Kongers, and members of the U.K. Parliament have stood up a China Research Group to focus on the CCP threat.

Denmark has rejected the CCP’s attempted censorship of Danish newspapers and is alarmed by Chinese activity in the Arctic.

Sweden closed all its Confucius Institutes.

Lithuanian intelligence services identified China as a potential threat for the first time.

In the Indo-Pacific, Australia declared China’s South China Sea claims unlawful and illegitimate, as have we.

We’re proud to have stepped up maritime maneuvers in that body of water alongside friends like Australia, India, Japan, and the UK.

India has banned 106 Chinese apps, including TikTok, that threatened its citizens’ privacy and security.

Momentum is building to mitigate CCP threats in multilateral settings, too: All 10 ASEAN nations have insisted that South China Sea disputes must be settled on the basis of international law, including UNCLOS.

Japan led the G7’s condemnation of China’s national security law targeting Hong Kong.

The EU condemned the law too, and also declared China a “systemic rival” last year.

We’ve agreed to start a dialogue channel focused solely on China—at the EU’s request.

Secretary General Stoltenberg has called for NATO to make China a greater part of the alliance’s focus.

We led a multilateral effort to ensure the UN’s World Intellectual Property Organization elected a director from a country that actually respects intellectual property rights.

The U.S., Australia, India, and Japan have reinvigorated the “Quad” grouping. The new Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China—many of its members European leaders, in addition to Senators Menendez and Rubio—is growing.

And for America’s part, no Administration, Republican or Democrat, has been as aggressive in confronting China’s malign actions as President Trump’s: Our Department of Justice is cracking down hard on Chinese IP theft.

We’ve sanctioned Chinese leaders for their brutality in Xinjiang, imposed export controls on companies supporting it, and warned U.S. companies against using slave labor in their supply chains.

We’ve terminated special treatment agreements with Hong Kong in response to the CCP’s crackdown.

We closed the consulate in Houston because it was a den of spies.

Our budget reflects realities on the ground. For example, we’ve requested \$1.49 billion for foreign assistance to the Indo-Pacific region, a 20 percent increase from the FY 2020 request. We want that part of the world to be free, open, and prosperous.

Moving onto my second set of points . . . I want to make sure the American people know about the outstanding work their State Department did to save American lives as the pandemic from Wuhan spread throughout the world.

From January 27 to June 10, our team successfully repatriated more than 100,000 Americans from 136 countries and territories.

Many of these folks were in very vulnerable situations—senior citizens running low on medication, pregnant women needing medical care, and even an individual on a ventilator in Bhutan.

We’ve also taken major steps to protect our diplomats around the world: We OK’d Global Authorized Departures for any at-risk team member to leave their post and get home.

We pre-positioned medevac aircraft so planes could be wheels up within 6 hours to get our diplomats to the best medical facilities possible.

We instituted thorough social distancing, telework, cleaning, and visitor screening precautions. We’ve given offices discretion to decide what’s best for their teams and their rotations, and right now we’re bringing back our teams in a conditions-based, phased approach.

Finally, even as we've adjusted to the pandemic, the State Department and USAID have continued America's signature mission of upholding the unalienable rights of people around the world.

To save lives in allied and partner countries, State and USAID have pledged \$1.5 billion in financial support, supplies, and expertise to more than 120 countries since the outbreak began, as part of the U.S. Government's world-leading \$20.5 billion to benefit the international response.

We're proud to supplement the incredible generosity of the American people, who have given nearly \$5 billion out of their own pockets to help those in need.

But that's not all. We're also economically empowering women in the developing world. Our budget invests \$200 million for our Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) fund at USAID, doubling our commitment from last year. I want to thank senators Shaheen and Graham, and others for working with the Trump administration to move forward new legislation on this initiative.

In the same vein of protecting unalienable rights, we've fought for the fundamental right to religious freedom.

Our two State Department ministerials have galvanized global momentum to protect the right to worship. Our budget request provides \$150 million to support persecuted communities globally.

My administration colleagues and I take seriously the words of our first Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson:

"Almighty God [has] created the mind free . . . No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship or ministry, or shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief."

There are many more achievements we know Americans support: Destroying the ISIS caliphate; working with Mexico and Central American countries to address illegal immigration and a broken asylum-seeking system; bringing home Americans wrongfully detained abroad like Pastor Andrew Brunson, and Michael White; I could go on.

I'm proud of a foreign policy that draws on our founding principles to confront threats, protect our people, and secure liberty for mankind. I hope you are too.

And with that, I'm happy to take questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I appreciate that.

We are going to do questioning on a seniority basis since it is the Secretary, a cabinet level, as opposed to the usual first come rule. Again, I would ask each member to be respectful of other members and stick to the 5 minutes you are allotted. Once we have gone around, we will make a determination of where we are going to go from there.

With that, Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Chairman, I see 7 minutes on the clock. Is that what it is going to be?

The CHAIRMAN. I intended to do a five. Let us do a seven because that will just about take up the time, but we are going to have to stick right to that seven because otherwise people are not going to get a chance. So we will do seven.

Senator MENENDEZ. Mr. Secretary, as I outlined in my opening statement, Vladimir Putin's investment in Donald Trump prior to the 2016 election clearly continues to pay off handsomely.

Withdrawing troops from Germany. Troops in Germany is not about Germany. Troops in Germany is about our own national security interests.

Redirecting funds from the European Deterrence Initiative. That is an initiative, as you well know, to deter Russia to pay for the President's ineffective border wall.

Refusing to follow the law and impose meaningful sanctions under CAATSA.

Perhaps most shocking, while we have all known for some time that Russia has provided support to the Taliban, both arms and re-

sources, imposing bounties on the heads of U.S. service members is an outrageous escalation. President Trump astonishingly admitted in an interview on Tuesday that he has never raised the issue with Mr. Putin, even though he has spoken to him about seven times this year alone.

Mr. Secretary, do you consider how you would react to such behavior from a Democratic President if you were sitting in your old House seat? Would you be okay with a President who abandoned our troops, but not even raising this with the Kremlin?

Secretary POMPEO. Ranking Member, you have identified four items where you are concerned about our actions with respect to Russia. I would like to address each of them. That is what I think about as Secretary of State.

Senator MENENDEZ. I only asked one question.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. I do not spend much time thinking about what I would have done were I still in the House of Representatives. I am very focused on my job as Secretary of State today.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me ask you this. Have you raised concerns with Russia, its Foreign Minister Lavrov, with respect to Russia reportedly placing bounties on the heads of service members in Afghanistan?

Secretary POMPEO. I want to be very careful about what is a public record and what is intelligence-based, but yes, I can assure you and the American people that each time I have spoken with Foreign Minister Lavrov, I have raised all of the issues that put any American interests at risk, whether that is our soldiers on the ground in Syria, soldiers on the ground in Afghanistan, the activities that are taking place in Libya, the actions in Ukraine. Each and every one of these that potentially threaten American interests are things that I raised in my conversations with Foreign Minister Lavrov, and I speak with some frequency.

Senator MENENDEZ. I appreciate that answer. I asked you specifically have you raised—this in the public sphere. I am not talking about classified materials.

Secretary POMPEO. It does not mean it is not classified, Senator.

Senator MENENDEZ. There are public reports very well documented that the Russians were supposedly paying bounties to kill our service members. Have you raised that issue with Foreign Minister Lavrov?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am going to be more careful than you are being with respect to the intelligence. I am going to tell you that make no mistake about it. The proper people have been aware of every single threat to our soldiers on the ground in Afghanistan whether that was General Miller or my team at the embassy there in Kabul. Anytime there was a tactical threat on the lives or the health or the safety and security or our assets in place, we have this with our Russian counterparts not only at my level, but Ambassador Sullivan and every one of our team that interacts with the Russians. We have made very clear our expectations not to threaten us in Afghanistan.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me turn to a few other questions. Maybe you can answer these just simply yes or no. I think they are just factual in nature.

Did Turkey purchase the S-400 system from the Russian Federation?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. Did Turkey pay approximately \$2.5 billion for that system?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am not aware of the amount of the transaction.

Senator MENENDEZ. They did pay them whatever the amount is. Right?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I believe that is correct although, Senator, let me just—I apologize. I am not certain that the cash has been exchanged.

Senator MENENDEZ. Does the Turkish Government currently have the S-400 in its possession?

Secretary POMPEO. It has an S-400, yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. Did Turkey test the S-400 radar on an American built F-16 in November of 2019, as was publicly reported?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am not going to answer that question. I am not going to discuss classified information in this setting.

Senator MENENDEZ. Has the President raised the S-400 with President Erdogan?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not talk about things that the President speaks about with foreign counterparts. The White House is free to do that if they choose, but I am not going to.

Senator MENENDEZ. So let me ask you a simple question. You sent me a response on Monday saying that you take your responsibilities under CAATSA seriously and that you fully intend to comply with the law. Well, all of these elements clearly are in violation of CAATSA. So over a year since all of these facts have attached. When will the Administration follow the law and impose CAATSA sanctions on Turkey?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, in response to the Turkish Government's acquisition of the S-400, we have taken significant actions that have had a real impact on Turkey. We have pulled out a very significant weapons program that they were building significant pieces of inside of Turkey, the F-35 program. We continue to evaluate how to apply sanctions in order to achieve our end objective. Our end objective is not to punish. It is to ensure that our NATO partner acts in a way that is consistent with American national security and the security of our NATO partners as well. Our diplomats, Ambassador Satterfield, on the ground are working diligently.

Senator MENENDEZ. I had a very pointed question. I know that you are a Harvard graduate, West Point graduate. You know what my question was. It is not about everything else. It is about CAATSA, but you have decided not to answer that.

So let me go to the final question. You had the Inspector General of the State Department, Mr. Linick, ultimately fired. Is that correct?

Secretary POMPEO. I recommended to the President that he be terminated, yes.

Senator MENENDEZ. You recommended it to the President that he be terminated, why? Because he was conducting investigations that may affect you?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, at the time I made the recommendation to the President, I was unaware of any of the investigations that were ongoing, that he had ongoing at the time, with one exception. I was aware of an investigation that he had asked me to provide testimony. I provided that testimony. Other than that, I was unaware of any investigation. It is not remotely the reason.

Senator MENENDEZ. Was your Under Secretary, Mr. Bulatao, aware, and did he not speak to you about it?

Secretary POMPEO. He did not speak to me about it.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, you said that the IG was not performing in the way he should have because he was not following, in essence, what you wanted to. Well, inspector generals are not supposed to follow what the department head wants to. They are supposed to be independent in pursuit of their mission.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Mr. Secretary, welcome. Thank you for your service.

I think we can all acknowledge the world is a complex and messy place. As the ranking member said, facts are stubborn things and administrations have track records.

Just a quick review. You came into office—President Trump came into office with a big mess, a lot of messes that he had to clean up. Let me just go through them.

Libya, a failed state because of President Obama's actions.

Syria had gone from a few hundred dead over his Administration to basically a genocide, about a half a million people killed in Syria.

What I consider as one of the historic blunders in foreign policy, the removal of troops from Iraq allowed ISIS to rise from the thoroughly defeated ashes of al Qaeda in Iraq.

Crimea had been illegally annexed, eastern Ukraine invaded. President Obama did not provide the lethal defensive weaponry on a unanimous basis that Congress authorized him to do.

North Korea was rampantly testing missiles and their nuclear weapons.

Iran. Through that agreement, it changed their behavior for the worst. It emboldened them.

Of course, illegal immigration, primarily in the form of family units exploiting laws that were not being enforced in this country, was exploding.

So President Trump came into office with a lot of foreign policy messes.

By the way, the last time I looked, under this Administration we have started no new wars. We have destroyed the physical caliphate of ISIS. General Soleimani, al Baghdadi are off the field.

President Trump actually provided those lethal defensive weaponry, the Javelins, which helped stabilize the situation in Iran.

Quite honestly, we have done a pretty good job at reducing that out-of-control illegal immigration from the southern border by diplomacy with Guatemala, is one of the things that occurred there.

So I think we have to put those track records and compare them and talk honestly about these things.

Now, the ranking member has been pretty brutal regarding the firing of Inspector General Linick. I was copied on a letter that Under Secretary of Management Bulatao wrote to Mr. Horowitz. I have read it. It is somewhat complex. I just want to give you an opportunity to talk about what happened.

By the way, I am very sensitive to inspector generals—or trying to push inspector generals to investigate the leaks out of these departments. There were 126 leaks having to do with national security in the first 125 days of this Administration. That needs to be investigated. If you could describe the leaks that you were concerned about and exactly how Inspector General Linick did not handle that the way you thought it should be handled.

Secretary POMPEO. Sure. So, thank you, Senator Johnson.

Let me just say I value inspectors general as well. I had a great relationship with the Inspector General at the CIA when I was there. He did his job. He took care of the team. He was critical of the agency when we got it wrong. I know what a good IG can do. Inspector General Linick was not that.

The incident you are referring to is that we had a very sensitive Inspector General report. When the final draft was prepared, it leaked. The Politico reporter I think said it came from two people close to the investigation. At that point, it was basically the IG's office and a couple others that actually knew about it and the full report, which had a real impact on senior State Department officials' lives. When we confronted the Inspector General, he was defensive. We then asked him to undertake a process. He ignored that request to inspect, to have a separate IG come and investigate.

It is pretty complicated, but suffice it to say he did not comply with the instructions about how we felt that leak needed to be investigated so that we could have an independent investigator do it, and then he was not candid about that process either. He did not act with integrity throughout that process in a way that inspector generals have to be counted on to behave.

Senator JOHNSON. Well, I have my own issues with Inspector General Linick. I will not go into those.

Right now, I am being falsely—Senator Grassley and I are being falsely accused of peddling in Russian disinformation. Because of Acting Director of National Intelligence Grenell's efforts to declassify four footnotes in the Michael Horowitz's IG report, we now know that the Russian disinformation that was involved in the 2016 campaign was bought and paid for by the DNC, the Clinton campaign, and contained in the Steele dossier. That is the truth. That is the Russian—I have heard no outrage on the part of our Democratic colleagues about that Russian disinformation.

We are still undergoing our investigation, and we are trying to see documents out of the State Department involved in the Steele dossier.

Let me just ask you a specific question. In October 2016, former State Department official, Jonathan Winer, arranged for Christopher Steele to provide other State Department officials the anti-Trump dossier he compiled for the DNC and the Clinton campaign.

That same month, Mr. Winer gave Mr. Steele information collected by Clinton supporters which Mr. Steele then passed on to the FBI.

This conduct raises serious concerns under the Hatch Act, Federal Records Act, and other Department policies. Although then-IG Linick acknowledged conducting a review of this conduct, he has not published any of his findings and admitted that the OIG did not interview any of the key players.

Are you aware of these issues? Can you commit that the Department will be responsive to our requests from Senator Grassley and myself? We need these documents.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, we will do our best to be responsive. We understand the request. We are working through it, and yes, I am familiar with the information that you set forth there with respect to the behavior that took place in October of 2016 in the State Department.

Senator JOHNSON. Were there any other specific instances that caused you to ask for the removal of Inspector General Linick?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, there were. There were several.

Look, at the end, it is about the core mission accomplishing the core function. One of the central functions to make sure that we can represent to you all that the financial statement for the State Department is accurate, we have an audit team to do that. Inspector General Linick screwed that up. I will read from the investigative report. It said oversight by the OIG was demonstrably ineffective, ultimately placing the Department's information, as well as the reputation, human capital, and operations at considerable and unnecessary risk. That is an enormous failure for one of the most important tasks that the IG's office does, conduct the audit of the State Department's books.

There is a handful of others. He refused to take care of his team in important ways. There were 10 percent fewer audits of our posts around the world. One of the most important functions, aside from the audit, is to travel around to posts and conduct audits to make sure that they are conducting business appropriately. We were down about 10 percent.

I must tell you morale inside the IG's office of all—we have 38 Assistant Secretary level bureaus. The IG's office was the worst survey results of any of those 38. He did not take care of his people either.

Senator JOHNSON. He also did not investigate the improper use of personal emails in the State Department, which was rampant under the previous Administration.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Johnson.

Senator CARDIN.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, sir.

Senator CARDIN. America's strength is in our values. We are the global leader for democratic values. We have been so recognized, and we have worked with the international community as the leader of the free world, with other countries that share our values. We led in that. One of the best examples was the passage of the Magnitsky sanctions, the Global Magnitsky, which was not just bipartisan. It was pretty much universal here in supporting and pro-

moting U.S. values. I was glad to work with the late Senator McCain on the passage of that legislation. Now Canada, Europe, Australia are all following our leadership to enforce universally recognized democratic values.

So when the United States isolates itself from our traditional allies, it affects our credibility as a global leader of the free world in promoting democratic values. So when we pulled out of the climate agreement, when we isolated ourselves on Iran, when our trade policies have been more bilateral rather than working with other countries in order to try to advance our causes against non-market economies or government-controlled economies, all that affects America's credibility.

So when I look at your budget, I see a decline of 35 percent in democracy funds. To me I do not understand that cut—35 percent—if we are going to be the leader in democratic values.

Then I was pleased to hear you mention as the first order of your remarks today human rights and values, American values, but I was disappointed that you used the Commission on Unalienable Rights as the example. I say that because in my conversations with human rights advocates not just here, but globally, they look at the United States trying to promote a political agenda on rights rather than working with the international community, the free world, on democratic principles of human rights.

So tell me how this commission has engaged the activists globally that are fighting every day for human rights when it is very much tied towards a particular political view rather than a universal view on human rights.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I appreciate the answer to talk a little bit about the commission and the objective I set out now just over a year ago with respect to it.

I would urge everyone to take a look at it and read it. I think they did phenomenal work. I do not agree with everything that is in there. I do not think any of the 10 members that came from broad religious backgrounds, broad political backgrounds—I do not think any of the 10 of them agreed with just everything in there.

What it set out to do was take on what is an enormous crisis in the 20th Century's Human Rights Project. We are in a really bad place all around the world. It was my view, as I watched the State Department, our DRL, all the folks who work on this who are great and amazing people—I watched as they were unmoored. They did not have a founding. So I wanted to go back and talk about how do we moor American foreign policy and American human rights policy and the traditions of the United States. So that is what the commission was asked to do.

Senator CARDIN. Well, I guess what I do not understand is what was the problem that you were trying to solve? There has been a great deal of debate—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator CARDIN. —in establishing universal values of human rights, which has been the core for democratic states. Now, all of a sudden, we are picking winners and losers, but it looks like it is done on a political basis.

Let me move to a second subject, if I might, on arms sales. We have a proud tradition of making sure that when we supply arms

to other countries, that they are not used against our human rights values. We have seen in recent years that arms provided by the United States have ended up in the hands of actors that we do not want to see get those arms.

What oversight are you deploying to make sure that arms that we make available to other countries are used for the intended purpose and do not end up for the wrong use?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, we have an elaborate process to do our best to verify that that does not happen. It is not that we do not have escapes, that there are not failures. It is certainly the case. That has been true for an awfully long time, but we have an elaborate process to validate and verify. We require representations. We do verification. We do inspections. We have big teams in multiple departments that have responsibility for doing their best to ensure that American weapon systems are used for their intended purpose when we sell them or provide them to our partners and allies around the world.

Senator CARDIN. Let me make this offer. I think this committee can help you in that regard. The jurisdictional battle between Defense and State sometimes presents challenges. State has the principal role for a good reason. There is some legislation that I have authored that would help in that regard. I would hope that you would engage us to give you the tools you need to take on sometimes the military aspects of the Defense Department that may not be as sensitive to these values.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I appreciate that very much. I do think the State Department is the proper place to lodge the primary responsibility for that activity. So I welcome your efforts there.

Senator CARDIN. The GAO recently issued a report that I had requested in regards to diversity, and the report is titled “State Department: Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity.” They point out that from the period from 2002, well before your time, to 2018, we have seen a decline of minorities in positions within the State Department. It is particularly pronounced within the higher ranks.

What steps are you taking to implement the GAO concerns?

Secretary POMPEO. So, Senator, I have seen that GAO report. I have seen the internal work we have done.

I would characterize it over the last—that you were talking about from 2002 over the last decade roughly as flat. That is not good enough. That is multiple parties. This is not partisan at all. We want to get this right.

We have undertaken a number of things. We have about a third today of our members who are minorities—excuse me—about 44 percent of them are women. We have developed the Pickering-Rangel program to bring more people in. We had double the applications this year. We have a big team that works on diversity and inclusion. We are almost finished with a major study that was begun, now I think, 13 months ago run by Carol Perez, our DGHR, to look at the failures. There has been a lot of money and effort on diversity and inclusion over this last decade with, to your point, relatively good outcomes for acquisition of new talented people, but

less so at the senior levels. We are trying to identify why we have—

Senator CARDIN. I hope we could work together on that.

Last point, just a point on the Western Hemisphere, on ranking. I would just urge you to evaluate working with us on the aid to the Northern Triangle to make sure that they have the help from the United States to deal with the economic issues which takes away the pressure of migration from the Northern Triangle.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary, for your service and being here today.

Over the last several years on the Asia Subcommittee, we have been working together on this committee to shape a new policy toward the Indo-Pacific. The region, obviously, is burgeoning in population and promising commercial growth, and it is critical for global security and economic stability, but North Korea continues to seek nuclear weapons and to threaten its neighbors.

China is an emerging global power that is intimidating its neighbors, brutally suppressing its own citizens, and attempting to remake the world order in its own image.

In Burma, the military is committing grievous human rights abuses against the minority Rohingya population.

It is more important than ever that the United States maintains a presence in the Indo-Pacific region, reaffirms alliances, encourages economic cooperation, and promotes human rights and the rule of law.

The Administration and Congress must be united on implementing a long-term strategy that will benefit American national security interests, promote American businesses, and create jobs through trade promotion and opportunities, and project American values of respect for the human rights and freedom in the Indo-Pacific region.

This includes countering China's growing militarization of the South China Sea and increasing malign influence in Southeast Asia, as well as ensuring that complete, verified, and irreversible denuclearization is achieved on the Korean Peninsula, as codified in U.S. law.

The United States has always been and will always remain a Pacific power, and legislation like my Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, or ARIA, ensures that the U.S. Government will speak with one voice to reassure our allies and to deter our adversaries in the Indo-Pacific region.

In 2018, the Asia Subcommittee held a three-part hearing series. We talked about democracy, human rights, and rule of law. We found that mass concentration camps for Uighur Muslims necessitated a serious response from the U.S. and the international community, that crackdowns in the Tibet Autonomous Region are intensifying while Beijing continues to refuse negotiations with the Central Tibetan Administration, that human rights defenders in China are routinely jailed and tortured. I was obviously pleased to see that several Chinese officials were sanctioned for abuses

against Uighurs and even 11 Chinese entities implicated in similar abuses were added to the Commerce Department's Entity List.

What is the Administration doing to address further Global Magnitsky sanctions and other remedies for these abuses?

Secretary POMPEO. So, Senator Gardner, thanks. I am familiar with ARIA. It is great work. I want to thank this committee and frankly a broader group of Senators for the bipartisan legislation that we had with respect to the Uighurs and with respect to Hong Kong democracy, as well. It is very powerful when I can talk to my counterparts around the world and say that I have not only the support of Congress, but a bipartisan, almost unanimous support on our policy with respect to securing freedom against the threats that the Chinese Communist Party is presenting.

As for what we will continue to do in western China with respect to the horrific human rights violations that are taking place against the ethnic minorities there, I do not want to get in front of the final decisions, but you can rest assured that there are further actions, including further actions with respect to human rights violations that the Department of State and the Department of the Treasury are working to complete.

Senator GARDNER. Mr. Secretary, yesterday I do not know if you had a chance to see some of the hearing in the House of Representatives regarding some of the tech companies operating in the United States. I will read you some of the comments they made. When asked whether or not China is stealing information from them, Apple CEO Tim Cook said he had no personal knowledge about Chinese technology theft. Jeff Bezos has no firsthand experience beyond knock-off products. Google CEO has said that they did not have any experience, later had clarified that remark.

Can you talk a little bit about tech in China and what you see what is happening? Is it true that there is no Chinese technology theft of U.S. companies?

Secretary POMPEO. Well, they need to get out more. I mean, there is a long history, decades-long history of Chinese intellectual property theft, including against technologies. I hear it. It is sometimes the case you hear it privately because there are continued threats made against their businesses that are operating not only in China, but threats to businesses that are actually working in other parts of Asia and Southeast Asia, as well. The Chinese Communist Party is completely willing to bully and to threaten to get companies to—

Senator GARDNER. Do you work with these tech companies at the State Department on intellectual property theft, cyber attack, those kinds of things?

Secretary POMPEO. We do. We work closely with them, and on the side of protecting cyber, we have actually had some good work where we have worked alongside each other on important projects where we have reduced risk. So I thank them for that.

The idea that anyone in the tech space could not know of what the Chinese Communist Party is attempting to steal and the cyber attacks they are making seems incredulous.

Senator GARDNER. In March of this year, as it related to some Chinese misinformation and the dissemination of misinformation when it came to the COVID-19 propaganda China was spreading,

I suggested that the National Security Council set up a task force at the White House to counter that disinformation.

Are the tech companies doing enough to combat Chinese disinformation?

Secretary POMPEO. No. There is always more that they can do. There is more we can do as well.

On that particular front, I must say I actually think the world mounted a very effective counter-campaign against the Chinese disinformation. As I have traveled and as I have spoken to my counterparts, I think the world understands that this virus emanated from China, from Wuhan in particular, and I think the world understands that the Chinese Communist Party showed up with PPE that did not work and covered up what they knew about that when they could have prevented this spread. So I think the Chinese efforts at disinformation have actually failed in this case.

Senator GARDNER. The Taiwan situation. I wanted to just ask a question about bilateral trade agreements and opportunities for Taiwan. Yesterday, I sent a letter to U.S. Trade Representative Lighthizer, Ambassador Lighthizer, asking for the U.S. to begin engaging in a bilateral trade agreement with Taiwan.

Can you talk a little bit about the Administration's pursuit of such an agreement?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator Gardner, I would prefer to leave that to Ambassador Lighthizer to talk about that. We are aware that there is great interest in this. The State Department will have its part in that, but our primary work with respect to Taiwan is different from the trade piece of this. We have been diligent about making sure that we honor the commitments that we have made to the people of Taiwan, including approving arms sales that are important so that the Taiwanese can engage in the activities that they need to do so they can protect their democracy.

Senator GARDNER. The Administration's goal of complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula remains.

Secretary POMPEO. It does.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Gardner.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here today.

Were you involved in the decision to withdraw troops from Germany?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. According to Secretary Esper, 6,400 of those troops, so over half of those who will be removed from Germany, will be coming back to the United States. They are not going to be going to parts of Europe to deter Russia, to parts of Asia to deter China. In fact, the only country that has publicly supported the removal of U.S. troops from Germany to date has been Russia.

So can you share with us whether the impact of this decision on our efforts to counter China and Russia was taken into account? Was there any sort of strategic assessment done to support this decision?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator Shaheen, thanks for the question.

Of course, there was, and we were very involved at the strategic level. Obviously, the troop level decisions and the like are primarily the Department of Defense and the President's role.

You characterized the folks who were coming back to the United States as somehow being off the field. That is not the case. These units will participate in rotational activity. They will be forward deployed. They will not be stationed or garrisoned, but make no mistake about it. They will be fully available to assure that we can properly prosecute the challenges we have from the global powers.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, Mr. Secretary, I assume that all of our troops who are in the United States are available to be forward deployed. Now, I recognize that there is certain training that needs to be part of them before they are deployed. I guess I do not understand. Was the effect of diplomatically alienating Germany, who is the largest and wealthiest country in the EU, who has been a historic strategic ally—was that also taken into consideration?

Secretary POMPEO. Ma'am, this is personal for me. I fought on the border of East Germany when I was a young soldier. I was stationed there.

Senator SHAHEEN. Yes. I am aware of that, and your unit is coming back to the United States.

Secretary POMPEO. I know. It had been once before to Fort Polk. Then they went back to Germany.

When I was there, there were six figures of soldiers there. Germany is no longer a frontline state.

As far as strategic effort, Secretary General Stoltenberg, NATO Commander, was very much in the process of helping us think this through. I saw comments out of Russia this morning that are different than you described, that viewed the actions that we took as threatening because we will have soldiers that are deployed closer to the Russian border.

Yes, this was a thoughtful process, the military piece of this run out of the Pentagon largely, but the State Department was fully involved in the strategic pieces of this. I am very confident that our mission to deter Russia, the NATO mission to deter mission we are still fully capable of executing. The precise number was 200,000 early, about 100,000 and some when I was there. Conditions have changed around the world, and our forces need to be repositioned to appropriately confront today's challenges.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I would just read from a report in "Bloomberg," that quotes Dmitry Peskov who is the press secretary for Vladimir Putin who says that "the fewer American soldiers on the European continent, the calmer it is in Europe," Peskov said, answering a question on planned U.S. troop reductions in Germany." That does not sound to me like they think that this increases the threat from Russia.

I would like to go on to another issue because I want to follow up on the question that Senator Menendez raised about the reports on bounties that Russia has put on our troops in Afghanistan by the Taliban. There was a report last night that said that State officials have secretly warned Russia against bounties on our troops, against killing our troops.

What more do you think we should be doing to address that to prevent the Taliban and Russia from trying to murder our troops in Afghanistan?

Secretary POMPEO. So there are many things, and we have been engaged in them consistently. There is intelligence collection so that if it happens, we can identify it, stop it, make sure that the actual tactical event does not take place. That is the task of not only DoD intelligence services, but our broader intelligence services. Our diplomats too make very clear our expectations and set a set of redlines. Then we have our larger Afghanistan policy. It is not just Russia that has been underwriting the Taliban for all these years. I know there is an awful lot of focus on that in this town, but let me tell you at the State Department and Department of Defense we are worried about Iranian support to the Taliban. We are worried about the Gulf money coming to the Taliban. We are——

Senator SHAHEEN. I totally agree with that.

Secretary POMPEO. We are working diligently against every one of those threats both diplomatically and from a security perspective to protect our soldiers.

Then finally, to protect our soldiers further, we have been working diplomatically to get peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. We have a ceasefire that began at the start of Eid al-Adha. We have now had a significant prisoner exchange. Since February 29, the agreement entered into, we have not had a single attack against an American soldier. This is the finest in American diplomacy, and I am incredibly proud of what my team has done, my State Department team has done, to protect American soldiers.

Senator SHAHEEN. So do you think it would be helpful for President Trump to talk to Vladimir Putin and tell him that he needs to back off in terms of paying the Taliban to kill American troops?

Secretary POMPEO. I always leave it to the President what he wants to say to other leaders. I do not think there is any doubt in the mind of every Russian leader, including Vladimir Putin, about the expectations of the United States of America not to kill Americans. I can promise you that the 300 Russians who were in Syria and who took action to threaten America who are no longer on this planet understand that too.

Senator SHAHEEN. When you were here last time, we talked about the potential for negotiations with the Taliban in Afghanistan. That was before an agreement was reached. There was an exchange that you and I had about the role of Afghan women in any talks with the Taliban. You said that Afghan women should fend for themselves.

Well, we have seen the outcome of our reticence to support Afghan women. The agreement between the U.S. and the Taliban failed to mention the rights of Afghan women, and it contains no guarantees for their continued constitutional protection.

Is the policy to have Afghan women fend for themselves consistent, do you believe, with the legal mandate for the U.S. to support “the meaningful inclusion of women in peace talks” as directed by the Women, Peace, and Security Act that was signed into law by President Trump?

Secretary POMPEO. I would have to go look and see what I said.

No. We are doing our level best to make sure that we protect every Afghan, male and female. I have seen the at least tentative composition of the Afghan negotiating team, and I think you will be pleased with it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, I am out of time, but the “fend for themselves” is an exact quote from your statement when you were before this committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Mr. Secretary, people always say actions speak louder than words. Do you think the specific action the United States of America took against General Soleimani sent a message to every country on this planet of what would happen to people who targeted United States soldiers on the battlefield?

Secretary POMPEO. I do.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Romney.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, it is a pleasure to see you and I appreciate you appearing before this committee.

I am one of many who applauds your recent addresses with regards to China. In these you have called out their predatory behavior, economic, military, geopolitical, and you note that we have to confront China with our friends and allies if we are going to be successful in diverting them from their course of predation. It is a very welcome assessment, a very clear-eyed evaluation of China’s intent and their actions, and a statement of what our mission must be with regards to China.

It is also a welcomed departure from the President’s fawning praise of Xi Jinping and celebration of agreements that China has not honored.

It is also in my view inconsistent with actions that we have taken that have offended our allies at a time we need to be drawing them closer to us. One, of course, is the steel and aluminum tariffs against our friends and allies that I thought were misplaced. I would have rather focused our entire ammunition on China.

The other, of course, is most recently, as Senator Shaheen has just indicated, the withdrawal of troops from Germany and doing so while expressing an intent to punish Germany for the fact that they spend approximately one and a half percent of their GDP on their military as opposed to the two percent NATO target, even though they have indicated that they are on track to get to the 2 percent number.

I have heard from highest levels of the German Government that this is seen by them as an insult to Germany. I cannot imagine at a time when we need to be drawing in our friends and allies so that we can collectively confront China, that we want to insult them.

My question is this, however, which is what actions will the Administration take to bring our allies together in a way that is different than what we have done in the past. I mean, I know there is always lots of talk going on and any Administration can talk about all the things happening, but are we going to do that is distinct, that is different, that is dramatic to bring the nations that

follow the rule of law together so that we can hopefully reach some kind of a common approach or common strategy in how we are going to deal with China economically, militarily, geopolitically, and then collectively confront them with the intent of dissuading them from pursuing the course that they are on? We obviously do not want to go to war economically, militarily, or otherwise, but we do want to dissuade them. I think that can only happen when we are—as you have pointed out, when we can do that with others.

I would note something you said at the Nixon Library. You said, “maybe it is time for a new grouping of likeminded nations, a new alliance of democracies.” I think that is a good idea, but I am interested in what actions of a new and dramatic nature are you considering or are you willing to take in order to accomplish the objective you described.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, it is absolutely the case that to confront the Chinese Communist Party is going to take a global effort. That is absolutely true. That is why I talked about this idea perhaps of a new alliance of democracies. What shape that would take there is lots of discussion about and many conversations with friends in the region.

Step one, Senator, to be honest with you has been to awaken the world to this threat. For an awful long time not just the United States, but the whole world saw that there were lucrative opportunities in China, and that was basically foreign policy. Sell as much as you can. Outsource jobs. Build supply chains. So I spent my first year and change traveling the world trying to raise awareness of the threat.

I think that is new and different. You may say it is not enough, but it was not happening before. I went through the list of things that have begun to turn the tide.

I will say there are still nations who understand this threat, but do not feel like they are empowered, that they are in a position where they withstand the threats that come from the Chinese Communist Party. So we are working—our diplomats—trying to build out a set of relationships, and whether that is part of a formal organization or not, I am not sure I know the answer to yet, but to convince them, to convince them that America is prepared to lead in pushing back against the Chinese Communist Party, and when they do, we will be there to support them.

We have some 26 lines of effort of the State Department, and there is probably an equal amount at the Department of Defense, all aimed centrally at building out this set of alliances both in Southeast Asia and more broadly with our Five Eyes partners and with the Quad to build out a set of commitments that can robustly communicate to the Chinese Communist Party that enough. You have to behave on the global stage. If you want to behave on the global stage, you have got to do it under a set of rules that has created so much prosperity around the world. That may be unsatisfying, Senator Romney, but it is still a real work in progress to get everyone fully aligned.

I mentioned the EU dialogue. Very important. Foreign Minister Borrell, High Representative Borrell, asked me if we would have a dialogue with them on China. That took a lot of effort to get 27 EU nations to say, yes, this is something we have got to confront, to

identify as a systemic rival. There is lots of spade work that goes into what seems pretty simple I suppose.

Senator ROMNEY. I think it is the most important work that we will be doing as a country and as an Administration as we face this challenge.

Just a parenthetical comment that comes to mind, as you are speaking, and that relates to a discussion that was held earlier with regard to tech companies that Senator Johnson raised. I know there is great interest, sometimes politically, to go after some of the big tech companies, Google, Amazon, and so forth, Facebook, and berate them for their market power. If they violate American anti-trust laws, why, that is totally appropriate.

I would note that we are in a global competition, and China has been successful in driving a lot of Western companies out of business. They have not been successful in driving companies like these out of business. These are thriving and succeeding. The last thing we ought to be doing is trying to knock down businesses in the United States that are succeeding on a global stage. So we need to be careful not to flex our muscle and berate those entities that are successful and are beating China. I mean, Alibaba would like to replace Amazon. TikTok would like to replace Instagram. So it is just an area of concern, and I hope that you are able to point these things out to other members of the Administration who care deeply about that.

Finally, were you surprised by the fact that—what was it—57 countries supported China—53 countries supported China's crack-down on Hong Kong? Did that shock you as it did me?

Secretary POMPEO. I was surprised and dismayed.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Romney.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, for holding this important hearing today. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Let me just start with two specific issues, if I can, that I think are important. I want to associate myself with a number of areas that have been explored, but let me touch on these two.

I am working with members of this committee and your Department to resolve terrorism-related claims against Sudan, which is in the middle of a critical democratic transition, to provide justice and compensation for over 700 terror victims and their family members and to move our bilateral relationship forward after 30 years under the brutal dictatorship of Omar al-Bashir. I just want to urge you and the Administration to do everything that you can to support Prime Minister Hamdok to make sure that we seize this opportunity to bring real justice to the victims and their American families and foreign nationals involved and to build a new democratic partner in the region.

Have you personally engaged on this issue, and can you commit to working transparently with Congress as we try to find a solution urgently?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator Coons, thank you for your work. This is really important.

We have proposed that there is legal peace resolution that would be in legislation that will be before Congress here in the very, very

near term. We think it is the appropriate time to both bring justice to those from the 1998 bombings and get a real opportunity for Prime Minister Hamdok. I have talked to him a handful of times. I have talked to other of the leaders there in Sudan. This is an opportunity that does not come along often. We all know the history of Sudan and the tragedy there. There is a chance not only for democracy to begun to be built out, but perhaps regional opportunities that could flow from that as well. I think lifting the state sponsor of terrorism designation there, if we can take care of the victims of those tragedies, it would be a good thing for American foreign policy. I appreciate your assistance in that regard.

Senator COONS. We have a number of members of this committee with strong interests, and it is my hope that we can move in a way that respects those constituent interests and also makes progress and does not miss this moment.

On the Global Fragility Act, it is legislation that was bipartisan that I led here with Senator Graham and President Trump signed into law last December. It requires a long-term, whole-of-government strategy to address extremism and instability in fragile states.

The first deliverable under this legislation, the Global Fragility Strategy, is due September 15. Congress really is not looking for old wine in new bottles. So we just urge you to look at the GFA as a tool to rethink our approach to these challenges and improve the way that State, AID, and DoD work together.

How are you using the tools Congress provided in the GFA to address the consequences of this pandemic and development, governance, security? Can you commit that you will look hard at and resolve a technical issue on the creation of the prevention and stabilization fund, which was designed to replace and improve on the rapid response fund in the statute?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator Coons, I will get back to you on the last question that you asked. I am familiar with it, but not enough to answer your question, but I will get you an answer briefly.

You are right. I am tracking the first deliverable. I will say I saw the first pass at this. You characterized it about right. There was not much that was original in there, and I have asked the team to go back and take a set of fresh looks, to ask for outside views from folks on Capitol Hill, people who are experts around the world to see if we cannot use this tool that you provided us on a bipartisan basis to actually deliver on the stated objectives of the law. It was an important piece of legislation, and I do not want to miss the chance to develop the strategy that can then underpin all the actions we can take once that strategy is done. It is not something that we intend to put on the shelf and admire, but something we hope creates operational opportunities underneath that strategy.

Senator COONS. Thank you.

Today is the funeral service for a friend and former colleague, Congressman John Lewis. I was struck by a comment made by your former colleague, former Secretary of Defense General Mattis, who wrote following the weeks of protests after the unlawful murder of George Floyd. General Mattis wrote, I have watched this week's unfolding events angry and appalled. The words "equal jus-

tice under law” are carved into the pediment of the Supreme Court, and that is what the protesters are rightly demanding.

Do you agree with General Mattis? I am concerned about the general direction of the most senior levels of the State Department. This has been raised before. I will not go through the GAO report, but of 189 ambassadors representing us abroad, only three are African American, four are Hispanic. I recognize that diversity in the Department has been a long-term challenge, but I would be interested in hearing both do you agree with General Mattis’ comments and what do you—are personally doing to mentor the next crop of senior leaders and to diversify the seventh floor leadership team.

Secretary POMPEO. I actually think the seventh leadership team, my entire communications team, my Under Secretary for Management, my Under Secretary for Political Affairs are all part of diversity groups. I am proud of what our small team has done, but that does not begin to accomplish what we need to get done in the State Department to make sure we get this right.

By the way, it is diversity inclusion that is broad based. We need to make sure that we have people from all across America with all viewpoints, every idea from all across America. We have been very narrow in how we have recruited from a certain set of institutions and certain universities, and we do not get a full spectrum of understandings of America or of the world if we are too narrow in how we think about diversity inclusion.

So we are working hard at it. We have built out a set of programs. Your point about not having sufficient minority representation in our ambassadorial levels is absolutely true. I guess it was 3 days ago that a set of about 23 that will be coming to you shortly, we had more than half of them that were female, the first time that has ever happened. So we are making progress, but I would agree that the rate of change is insufficient.

Senator COONS. How do you think our own failure to address structural racial inequality impacts our diplomacy overseas and impacts our ability to advocate around human rights issues?

Secretary POMPEO. Well, it is important that we get it right at home. There is no doubt about that. I would tell you that we are a beacon for that around the world, and I think you can see it in the people who want to come to the United States of America because it is the freest nation. It is a place that you have immigrants from all across the world that want to come here. I am a believer that people vote with their feet. They see America still as this greatest, most exceptional nation. We are not without flaws, but I think as our diplomats travel the world, they can be very proud of our progress—

Senator COONS. Mr. Secretary, I want to ask a last question about our election. President Trump has just tweeted that we should delay it. I am interested in whether you were able to vote by mail when you served abroad in the Army, whether you vote by mail in your home State of Kansas, whether like many of us who serve in Congress in both parties, you have availed yourself, as do virtually all of our diplomats and development professionals and armed forces members, of the opportunity to vote securely by mail. Have you done so, and do you have any concerns about the security of our election this November?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator Coons, I believe I have voted by absentee ballot. I think while I was a soldier and I also think when I was a Member of Congress, I did a couple times as well.

The State Department has some role in making sure we have election security. It is not our primary focus. So I will leave to others those who have that primary centered focus.

Senator COONS. Is there any reason for us to be concerned that those votes are fraudulent or somehow ineligible to be counted if cast by mail or by absentee ballot by our diplomats?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I must say having a small group of people vote by absentee ballot is very different than deciding that you are going to conduct a full in-mail balloting program. Those are two fundamentally different pieces I will leave to the professionals to identify the level of risk associated with that.

I also know—and I saw this in my home State of Kansas—when you change the voting rules in close to an election, it is a difficult task.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Coons.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Good morning, Mr. Secretary. Thank you for coming in and being here.

I know election security is not your area of expertise, but I think you can comment on what I am about to ask. I am sure you are well aware of influence efforts on the part of the Chinese and Taiwan to shape Taiwanese policies, policies of their government. I am certain, as most people on this committee I hope are aware of how they pressure political figures that they view are opposed to their interests. I think we have all witnessed—I think you will confirm this—worldwide that China has engaged in efforts of disinformation, particularly for example about the coronavirus.

I am not asking you to comment specifically about our country. I think I am more than anything else asking if China ever decided they wanted to do those kinds of things to us, would you assess they have the capability to conduct a disinformation campaign to pressure American political figures, potentially even Members of Congress, the way we have seen them do with Taiwan and Australia and in other places. If they decided they wanted to do that—this is the second largest economy in the world, pretty significant capabilities. If they ever decided they wanted to come after us that way, they would have the capability to do it. Would they not?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, if I have just a second to respond to this. They certainly have the capability. I have talked about this. The Chinese united front is working here in the United States today. They are meeting with State legislators. They are meeting with governors. One of the things that was taking place out of the consulate in Houston were influence operations conducted by their diplomats. We have diplomats from all across the world who come to our offices as Members of Congress and talk to us about policy. What I am talking about is fundamentally different from that. So they not only have the capability, but the intention of conducting influence operations in the United States.

I think we are a pretty resilient nation. I am confident that we will push back against that, but the world needs to understand

that when it is happening here in the United States, it is happening in their countries too.

Senator RUBIO. Well, I think one of the things, the most interesting yesterday, is the four CEOs of these tech companies appeared I believe before a House committee yesterday, if I am not mistaken, and they were asked a very simple question. Do you believe—they were asked do they believe that China steals technology from U.S. firms. They were asked this question. I think there is pretty strong consensus across the board in both parties and in the media and elsewhere that the answer to that question is yes.

The CEO of Apple said they have not experienced it. That was his answer.

The CEO of Google said, neither have we.

The CEO of Amazon says, oh, I have read that.

Only the CEO of Facebook said, yes, absolutely.

So Apple, Google, and Amazon answered that question by saying either they had not experienced it or they have read that somewhere, but would not comment further.

Why would corporations such as this, some of whom, by the way, take it upon themselves to censor truth versus what is not true and what they believe some people should be saying and not others on the basis of what they judge to be true—why would three of the four CEOs of the four largest tech companies headquartered in the United States be afraid to answer that question?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I can only speculate. I mean, it is patently clear to anyone who is watching that the Chinese are engaged in intense efforts of intellectual property theft including to technology.

Senator RUBIO. Would it be fair in your mind to speculate that they try to influence people even in the business community?

Secretary POMPEO. Absolutely.

Senator RUBIO. Okay.

One more question. I think I know the answer to this as well, but would you agree with the belief I think again that is pretty widespread that China has systematically identified industries and technologies that they believe will be key to the 21st century? They actually wrote it, *Made in China 2025*. They have undertaken a systematic effort to dominate these industries while destroying our capability. That is what the IP theft is about, the forced transfer of technology, subsidies to their firms, blocking access to their markets. There is no doubt at this point that they have a very carefully crafted plan to dominate certain key industries for the 21st century and to wipe out not just our capabilities in those industries, but everybody else's. That is a fair assessment.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, Senator Rubio. They have not been covert about this, right? They have spoken openly about how they are approaching their commercial interests. The only thing that they do not speak about is that rather than build these industries inside, the tools that they use are fundamentally different than the way western democracies do, right? We train our people. We build our businesses. We invest capital in the market. They run state-sponsored enterprises. They steal intellectual property. Then they endeavor to undermine the companies and threaten and bully countries around the world into buying their products.

Senator RUBIO. My last question is unrelated to China directly, but as you are well aware, there have been press reports, speculations, commentators, and the like that have made much about recent allegations and in one case an interview the President gave in which they took from it that the President would be willing to engage in negotiations with Maduro and the Maduro regime in Venezuela.

As you understand our policy being in the position that you are in, could you envision, as long as this Administration is in office, we would ever negotiate with the Maduro regime for them to remain in power?

Secretary POMPEO. Absolutely not. Our policy is not to negotiate with them for anything other than his departure from ruling that country.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

After the next questioner, we are going to take a 10-minute recess, but right now, Senator Udall, the floor is yours.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Pompeo, I appreciate your time and testimony today.

I want to start with an important subject, democracy promotion. Earlier this year, you called for free and fair elections in Venezuela and Nicaragua. If free and fair elections are held and the current occupants of power lose, the State Department then strongly encourages those leaders to step down from power. I think that sort of thing is an important pillar of our foreign policy on a bipartisan basis. Correct?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, sir.

Senator UDALL. I am hearing growing concern in this country about whether we are going to set a good example in our November election. In a recent Fox News interview, Chris Wallace asked President Trump whether he would give a “direct answer that you will accept the election” in November. In response, President Trump said I have to see. No. I am not going to just say yes. No. I am not going to say no. I didn’t say last time either.

During a 2016 debate, he stated, I will tell you at the time. I will keep you in suspense.

He has also called voting by mail, as you know, one of the major ways Americans vote, especially in a pandemic—he said over and over again the election is rigged if it is vote by mail.

So, Secretary Pompeo, if President Trump refuses to accept the upcoming November election due to his lack of faith in voting by mail, will you respect the results of a certified election as the State Department typically does throughout the world?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am not going to speculate. You had about 15 “ifs” in there. You should know I have said repeatedly to this committee I will follow the rule of law, follow the Constitution. I have endeavored to do that in everything I have done, and I will continue to do that every day.

Senator UDALL. The President has made this a legitimate question in Americans’ minds through his own statements. Former Pennsylvania Governor and Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, a Republican, as you know, says “I think it is very sad and very disappointing that with almost 5 months to go, the President

seems to want to try to delegitimize the November 3 election. It just seems to me that this may be an indication he is more worried about the outcome than he is worried about the fraud.”

This is a serious domestic and foreign policy question. We need to set a good example about the peaceful transition of power or else we undermine our entire foreign policy.

George Kennan wrote in his Long Telegram that in order to counter the Soviet Union, “much depends on the health and vigor of our own society.” I think that is just as true today about Russia, China, Venezuela, Iran, and other authoritarian regimes that we have challenges with. I can imagine few scenarios that would endanger our society more than a presidential candidate who refuses to accept the outcome of an election.

Secretary Pompeo, this year the Committee to Protect Journalists issued a report on the harm this President has caused to journalists’ First Amendment rights. In their summary, the committee states, “the Trump administration has stepped up the prosecutions of news sources, interfered in the business of media owners, harassed journalists crossing U.S. borders, and empowered foreign leaders to restrict their own media, but Trump’s most effective ploy has been to destroy the credibility of the press, dangerously undermining truth and consensus even as the COVID–19 pandemic threatens to kill tens of thousands of Americans.”

Are you concerned that instead of promoting press freedom abroad, America is now providing moral support to authoritarian efforts to crack down on critical media outlets from Russia to China to Venezuela and beyond?

Secretary POMPEO. No, I am not remotely concerned about that.

Senator UDALL. Over 150,000 Americans have now died from COVID–19 and we mourn their loss. Like most tragedies, this is one that could have been prevented. Like the President’s response to Hurricane Maria and other disasters, the Federal Government’s response has been nowhere near up to the challenge. Instead, this Administration is now trying to change the narrative by attacking its own citizens at home and weakening the United States abroad.

Across the world, our allies in New Zealand, Japan, Australia, South Korea, and many in Europe have taken the science and the threat of COVID–19 seriously. The result is that they are beginning to return to normal. Even countries with very different systems than ours, such as Communist Vietnam and Cuba, are beginning to reemerge from this deadly disease.

Secretary Pompeo, the best practices of these countries is simple: isolate, track and trace, quarantine, and wear a mask. We do not even know if the National Security Advisor has met with you or other members of the National Security Council lately. The U.S. has not done those things sufficiently, and here we are.

Secretary Pompeo, you and the White House seem to want to blame China for our inability to respond to this pandemic as well as to our allies. Is it true that their handling of the virus—and it is true that their handling the virus at the early onset was problematic, but we are responsible for our own response. Do you think the President should look to Europe, South Korea, Japan, and other more successful nations to learn about how to better contain this pandemic?

Secretary POMPEO. An awful lot to unpack there, Senator.

First, I would tell you that some of the countries that you identified—you are looking at the data that they are putting out. It is worthless. So when you are comparing it to data from other countries, one ought not in a Senate hearing put that data forward as dispositive about the conditions on the ground in those countries. It is silly. They are not tracking. They are not counting cases. So we need to make sure we have a shared factual database.

Yes, we should look everywhere to get best practices about how to respond to this. I know that our doctors—Dr. Birx who works for me is now over at the White House working on this. They have done that, and we will continue to do it to make sure we protect the American people in an appropriate way.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Udall.

With that, the committee is going to be at ease subject to the call of the chair for approximately 10 minutes.

[Recess.]

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

Next up, Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome back, Mr. Secretary. Good to see you again.

I appreciated your comments in the opening statement specifically related to Nord Stream 2, and I wanted to ask a little bit more about that because we know energy security is essential to national security. Nord Stream 2 threatens European energy security, increases Russian monopoly over the region. To me this pipeline is a Russian trap. I strongly support your recent announcement aimed at stopping this dangerous pipeline.

As you know, Congress is working to quickly provide the Administration with additional tools to prevent Nord Stream 2 from ever being completed. In the last few weeks, both the Senate and House passed their own versions of the National Defense Authorization Act. It includes new bipartisan Nord Stream 2 sanctions.

Could you talk about the Administration's commitment to opposing the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and applying sanctions against those companies aiding in the completion of this Russian trap?

Secretary POMPEO. The irony is that this Administration is accused by some of not being tough on Russia. President Trump personally took on this. He saw that this was a threat, that this pipeline created enormous leverage for Russia not only against Germany and the broader Europe, but Ukraine as well. So we set about it with good support from Capitol Hill, and we got legislation that was appropriate to now have delayed this project significantly. When we need further tools, we are prepared to use those tools should you provide them to us.

We have also used our diplomatic capabilities to make clear to countries that we are going to do the other end too. We are going to make sure that American LNG can be sold into these countries. We want Europe to have a secure, stable, diverse set of energy opportunities, and our Department of Energy has worked alongside of us to do that. Our E&R Department, Assistant Secretary Fannon, are working to make sure that Europe has real, secure, stable, safe energy sources that cannot be turned off in the event

that Russia decides they want to do so. We think Nord Stream 2 is dangerous in that respect, and we do everything we can to make sure that that pipeline does not threaten Europe.

Senator BARRASSO. Mr. Secretary, I would like to move now to the Iranian arms embargo. The international arms embargo in Iran, as you know, is set to expire October of this year. To my great astonishment, we are having to persuade the international community of the importance of preventing Iran, the world's leading state sponsor of terror, from purchasing advanced weapons. It will dramatically increase the ability of Iran to arm terrorists in proxy groups across the region. We have seen that more weapons will likely flow to Hamas and the Houthis, Hezbollah in Lebanon. Despite the terrible consequences, many experts believe that any extension of the Iranian arms embargo would be vetoed by Russia or by China.

What do Russia and China want the Iran arms embargo—why would they want it to expire? Is the Chinese Communist Party really willing to betray global security in order to be Iran's arms dealer?

Secretary POMPEO. Well, I hope not, but I expect so.

We have been working to convince the Russians to permit this arms embargo to be extended. We are talking to the Chinese for months and months and months. We are working with our E3 counterparts as well.

We will submit a UN Security Council resolution in the near future. We will offer to extend this. This is one of the central failings of the JCPOA was to have only a 5-year ban on the Iranian capacity to both purchase weapon systems, build out air defense systems, the capacity to protect a nuclear program should they continue down that path, but also to sell weapons around the world and become again, as they were before, one of the world's largest arms dealers.

We are going to do everything we can. We believe we have the capacity to do this at the United Nations. We hope that the UN Security Council will conclude that extending this arms embargo is the right thing. In the event they do not, we are going to use every tool that we have at our fingertips to make sure that that arms embargo is not lifted on October 18 of this year. We think it decreases stability in the Middle East. We think that would threaten Israel. We are confident it reduces American security as well.

Senator BARRASSO. On to religious freedom. Sam Brownback, a former member of this body, Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, recently wrote humanity is why religious freedom will always win out against governments and non-state actors seeking to repress and control it.

We have seen around the world authoritarian regimes continuing to attempt to restrict religious freedoms and the rights of individuals.

Could you discuss efforts by the Administration that you have taken to promote international religious freedoms?

Secretary POMPEO. So we have raised the priority of international religious freedom inside of the State Department. I think that has happened, and I think under President Trump and Vice President Pence that has happened all across the Administration.

We use our diplomatic tools to encourage it. We build resilience. We work with religious communities in many countries to provide them security. The work that we are doing in northern Iraq today is a good example, but there are still lots of challenges. What is happening in Nigeria to Christians today, it is happening to Muslims in western China. Your point about the threat to religious freedom and the exercise of conscience for people of all faiths is under attack in too many places.

The State Department has an important role to increase the capacity for people to exercise their rights of religious freedom. We held these two ministerials. We were not able to do it this year because of the virus, but we brought people from all across the world. The world's largest human rights gatherings in all of history were held at the State Department twice around the central idea that people need to be able to exercise this important right to just have their own faith.

Senator BARRASSO. Earlier today—I am going to move on to China—I think you called the Chinese Communist Party the central threat of our times. We had your Deputy here a couple of weeks ago, had a chance to talk about the issues related to China.

To me they are working to expand their military capabilities to advance their global ambitions. They want to dominate globally. In the last few months, we have seen them increase military aggression whether it is near Taiwan, the South China Sea, Japan. We have seen incursions, what they have been doing in Hong Kong, what they have been doing at home.

Can you talk about the recent confrontations by China and what that taught us about China's military ambitions, as well as their capabilities? Because when we go to secure briefings, we ask lots about their capabilities not just what they might do but what they can do, not will they or will they not, but can they or can they not.

Secretary POMPEO. So I think these actions—and when you say recent, the last 24, 36 months. I think the actions are entirely consistent with what they have been signaling to the world for decades, you might even argue since 1989, but certainly since General Secretary Xi came to power. It is a desire to expand their power, their reach. They talk about this. They talk about bringing socialism with Chinese characteristics to the world. You identified some, but a claim that they have now made for real estate in Bhutan, the incursion that took place in India—these are indicative of Chinese intentions. They are testing. They are probing. They are probing the world to see if we are going to stand up to their threats or their bullying. I am more confident than I was even a year ago that the world is prepared to do that. There is a lot more work to do, and we need to be serious about it.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy.

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

Good morning, Mr. Secretary.

Let me say at the outset I am very grateful for your proposal to double the budget of the Global Engagement Center. This is, of course, a center to counteract propaganda outside of the United States that was established through legislation written by myself

and Senator Portman. I am glad that you have recognized the importance and the good work of that center.

Though we have spent a lot of time in this hearing talking about many of our concerns regarding our adversaries' desire to use propaganda not outside of the United States, but in fact inside of the United States to influence the 2020 election—and so I want to begin by asking you a question about that.

Russia in particular has sought to weave together stories about U.S. persons and Ukrainian persons over the course of the past year in order to both try to sow chaos and dissent in the United States, but also to try to screw with Ukrainian politics as well. It is kind of a double whammy for the Russians. You can see those efforts ramping up as we head into the 2020 election.

Probably the most active foreign individual pushing narratives about the United States in Ukraine is a Ukrainian legislator by the name of Andrii Derkach. He was the individual that magically came into possession of secret audio recordings of Vice President Biden and then President Poroshenko. He has retained a government relations counsel here, and I would expect that he is going to be a pretty active presence in U.S. politics from here to the election.

So just a simple question on behalf of my constituents and maybe my colleagues as well. Should we view Andrii Derkach as a credible source of information?

Secretary POMPEO. I will answer your question, but let me say real quick because I think that is important. Thank you for the compliment. I want to make sure—the only thing I am worried about with asking for a doubling of the money is to make sure that we can deploy it. We have been pretty successful as it has grown, but when you expand something at 100 percent year on year, I have a team driving to make sure we do not misuse or waste those resources.

I do not want to comment on any particular individual like Mr. Derkach.

I will say this. We are taking seriously the threats that Russia will try to engage in disinformation campaigns, that there may be oligarchs that try and engage in this. There may be foreign actors, not just Russian. We were pretty successful at this in the 2018 election. I say we, not the State Department alone, but all the United States Government. I am confident we will be in this one as well.

Senator MURPHY. Why would you not be willing to opine on a specific individual if you had information to suggest that the source was not credible? It seems as if that is in fact a core function of the U.S. Government, if it has information that would suggest malign influence, to let Congress and the American people know.

Secretary POMPEO. So when it is appropriate, I will. When there is still work ongoing and there is still unsettled intelligence around these things, I am going to try to be just a little bit more careful, Senator.

Senator MURPHY. Let me turn to China for a moment.

China is clearly seeking to use the United States' failure to control COVID as a means to leapfrog us in our traditional leadership

position when it comes to global health. Senator Romney referred to this earlier.

I think we have given two big gifts to the Chinese since the beginning of this outbreak.

The first was the President's just remarkable fawning over China's early response to the virus. Forty-seven different times he commended China for their response and their transparency.

I think China also is pretty happy with our withdrawal from the WHO. I understand that you believe, as I understand it, that our withdrawal from the WHO is a lever to try to seek internal change. I would disagree. It also seems to allow for China to step in and occupy that vacuum. So as you step back and try to articulate this sort of broad strategy to counteract China's growing influence in the world, how does withdrawal from the WHO counteract the growing influence of China?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, it is a good question. These are close calls sometimes. We left the UN Human Rights Council. The same argument was made, better to fight from within than to try and reform from outside. I think there are reasonable arguments that can be made on either side.

The decision that the President made—and I concur with this decision—went through multiple rounds of reforms at the World Health Organization. Our team in Geneva fought for years, in previous administrations, too. Each time we got reforms, there was no capacity to make that a science-based organization and not a political one. There comes a point where you are spending half a billion dollars of U.S. taxpayer money year on year that goes to benefit political actors inside the World Health Organization, and we ultimately made the conclusion that we were more likely to achieve the global health security issues that the United States cares about deeply if we did not participate any further in the World Health Organization.

I am not at all convinced that it will be China that benefits from that. I am convinced that the world will benefit. We saw it with PEPFAR. We have seen it with GAVI. We have seen it other places. When the United States leads—and we will absolutely lead—good things can happen in the international health realm.

Senator MURPHY. It will not surprise you that I would dispute your characterization of the WHO. It is an international body. There is no way there will not be some level of politics affecting the decisions that a body made up of historic adversaries will go through. It is a science-based organization, and it is one that is indispensable to the continuation of our efforts to try to prevent the next disease. I really shudder to think about our ability to stop the next COVID if we are not back in the WHO.

Finally, in the remaining time I have, this a complicated question. Again, back to Senator Romney's line of questioning about the capabilities that we should be developing with our allies to try counteract China.

I just do not think it is sustainable for this Administration or any other Administration to try to go around the world bullying and shaming our friends and sort of half-friends into not doing business with China. We have got to have an answer for the things that China is offering. On the technology front, we do not have a

great answer for 5G, and we may not have a great answer for whatever China is going to put out there on AI or advanced battery technology.

Is this not essential to our counter China strategy, not just to shame other countries into forsaking Chinese technology, but actually to work with our allies to develop our own alternatives?

Secretary POMPEO. 1,000 percent. Absolutely, Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

Senator Portman.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your having the opportunity to let us talk to the Secretary of State today. This has been very helpful and very informative.

I will say with regard to China and developing technologies with our allies, we have a lot to do right here in the United States to get our own house in order. So we are pretty good at pointing fingers at China and it is usually appropriate, but we also are not doing much here to protect ourselves.

I want to thank you because you have provided some great help from your career professionals with regard to our efforts to push back against China taking our technology. In particular, China has these programs. You mentioned they have been doing it for a while. They have been doing it for 2 decades where they come over here, they find promising research and researchers. They systematically target them and then they take that research over to China. It is military. It is economic. It is health care. It is everything.

Over the last couple years, we have worked hard on this with an investigation, a report, and now legislation called the Safeguarding American Innovation Act.

With regard to the State Department piece of this, your career people have come and testified before us, said that they need more tools to be able to stop folks who they know are coming here to deal with export control technologies, who are coming over here to actually take—steal our stuff and take it back to China. They are unable to stop those people from coming in despite affiliations with the People's Liberation Army, affiliations with the Chinese Communist Party, and in many cases a history of taking research.

So we worked with one of your Pearson fellows. You told me about the Pearson Fellowship and I took advantage of it. In the last year, Mark Wuebbels has been working with us. He is a Consular Affairs Officer. He has done a terrific job. We have put together some legislation that is very balanced. It says, hey, we want research. We want the American research enterprise to benefit from international cooperation, but we do not want to have this U.S. taxpayer-funded research being stolen. So I thank you for that.

I would just ask you, do you agree that these new visa authorities we have in that legislation are helpful to protect taxpayer-funded research and intellectual property from our adversaries, including China?

Secretary POMPEO. They definitely are, and we need an expanded tool set to make sure that we get this right. We are making progress. Our teams, working alongside the FBI to identify these risks, are working hard on this set of issues.

I will say this, too. We all need to be candid. When we go back to our home States and we talk to the universities in our States, the educational industrial complex is alive and well. We need to be candid with them about what is taking place in some of these institutions of higher learning all across America and be thoughtful about how we respond to this influence and theft operation that is being conducted.

Senator PORTMAN. That is absolutely right. You know, there are five different provisions in the legislation. One of them relates directly to our universities and research institutions. To their credit, a number of them have worked with us and we have worked with them. Senator Carper and I have taken the lead on this in this legislation. It is a bipartisan bill, but there are universities and associations that are pushing back hard, and frankly I think they are naive and are not willing to face up to the threat that is out there. It is a national security threat.

I am glad that over the last couple of weeks that we have had the opportunity to confirm some good nominees from the Department of State, and I am concerned that the backlog built up to the point where you really had a tough time running the Department. There is more to go. We have more nominees coming up next week. I understand we might have finally the nominee for Ambassador to Japan at a critical time.

One I want to ask you about, though, in particular is Ukraine. Senator Cardin is not here today, but back in 2014, we went over to Ukraine right after the Revolution of Dignity. In those 6 years intervening, a lot of good has happened in Ukraine. A lot of bad has happened too. We see it right now we are once again at a tipping point. The ceasefire is not holding. I understand there have been about 100 violations of it recently. The Russian aggression continues. Ukraine made a decision 6 years ago to turn to us in the West, and yet we still have a situation where they are not getting the support that they need.

So two questions for you. Number one, how important is it to get Lieutenant General Dayton confirmed as the Ambassador to Ukraine? I think he is highly qualified. I am really pleased with that nomination.

Number two, do you agree with what we just did in the national defense authorization bill which was to have a record amount of lethal aid going to Ukraine? We have gone from roughly \$50 million to \$125 million in that legislation. Do you support that increased funding for lethal aid for Ukraine to be able to defend itself?

Secretary POMPEO. I do. The Administration does support the increase in lethal aid. It is important to get the general out there, although I will say our chargé on the ground there today is doing very, very good work, but it is important to get a confirmed Ambassador in that position.

If I might just add this too. We are still thinking. It was a real loss when Ambassador Volcker departed. The work that he was doing was important to the State Department's overall effort in the region, and we are hoping to get that position with just the right person filled as well so that we have a full-on effort there to help the Ukrainian people maintain their democracy.

Senator PORTMAN. We will have a chance to talk to Lieutenant General Dayton at least remotely when he comes, but he has done a good job in my view of modernizing their military and knows the Ukrainian issues inside and out. He is the right person at the right time, and I am pleased he is going to step up and do it. It was a good choice.

With regard to Germany, just my point of view for what it is worth. I am not asking you a question here particularly, but I think moving troops out of Germany is a good idea if they stay in Europe. In particular, Poland has been asking for years now to allow U.S. troops to come to Poland. They have even offered us a base. I was there several years ago where they agreed to pay for the base. I do not know if that is still an offer, but the Baltics, Eastern Europe in particular, it seems to me that is the appropriate place to move those troops. I agree that Germany is not the right place for the number of troops that we have. Rather, they should be closer to where the action is and frankly the countries that are at most risk right now.

So I do not know if you have any comment on that, but I would hope that they would be able to stay in Europe.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, the only thing I will add—I will leave it to the Department of Defense to talk about exact dispositions and numbers in particular countries.

With respect to Poland, we do not yet have our defense cooperation agreement quite done. So the State Department is working diligently with our DoD colleagues to get that done so that in the event the Department of Defense makes that decision, the President concludes it is the right thing to do, we can put those forces in there in a way that protects them as well.

Senator PORTMAN. Finally, just on the Global Engagement Center, thanks to Senator Murphy for raising those issues. He asked the same kind of questions that I would have asked.

Lea Gabrielle, in my view, is doing a terrific job with trying to reorder and take the DoD money that is now going directly to you and use it more effectively. We, of course, agree with you that that needs to be well spent.

There is a timely example on this. The United States under your leadership has provided \$2.3 billion of congressionally appropriated money to help other countries combat COVID-19. I think we have gotten very little credit for it. I hope that we can do more in terms of talking about what we are doing that is helpful, but what has happened is instead China and Russia are spreading disinformation, and we have heard about it here in this committee saying that the virus was created in a lab by Bill Gates or that COVID-19 was brought to China by American soldiers, and other false narratives. The Global Engagement Center is the perfect place to push back on that, and I hope we are doing that.

I do not know if you have any comment on that.

Secretary POMPEO. No, sir. We are working on that. It is important.

I actually think with respect to COVID, I think the world gets it. I think they know who the bad actor here was. They cannot all say it publicly, but I am convinced that the efforts not only that

the United States has made, but other countries, too, to push back against this disinformation have been powerful and effective.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Kaine.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Secretary, welcome.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you.

Senator Kaine. The context in which we have this hearing is very, very complicated. It is just almost too much to talk about.

In the last 24 hours, we passed 150,000 deaths in this country to coronavirus, and in my view and I think in the view of many, a sizable percentage of those were preventable had the United States handled the pandemic better. This morning, the Department of Commerce indicated that the economy, because of COVID, shrunk at the greatest rate ever in recorded history in the second quarter of the year.

Then this morning, the President is suggesting that the presidential election should be delayed. I sort of want to start there. This is not something either you or I were prepared to talk about today because I think it happened in the middle of the hearing.

The President sent out a tweet that said, "Delay the election until people can properly, securely, and safely vote?" Not saying it will happen, but raising a question. Can a President delay the November presidential election, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am not going to enter a legal judgment on that on the fly this morning.

Senator Kaine. Mr. Secretary, you are an honors graduate of West Point. You are a graduate of the Harvard Law School. You were on the Harvard Law Review. I was at Harvard Law School, and I went to a lot of Red Sox games. I was not on the Harvard Law Review.

Secretary POMPEO. Very kind of you. Thank you.

Senator Kaine. You are one of the most highly trained and accomplished lawyers who are part of this Administration. Can a President delay a presidential election?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, the Department of Justice, others will make that legal determination. We all should want—I know you do, too, Senator Kaine—to make sure we have an election that everyone is confident in.

Senator Kaine. Are you indifferent to the date of the election?

Secretary POMPEO. It should happen lawfully.

Senator Kaine. Right. It should happen lawfully.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator Kaine. So for the record, because you may not want to comment on it, but I do think it is important. A President cannot delay an election. The date of the election is established by Congress. It was established in 1845. There is no ability for a President to delay an election. I do not think it is that hard a question or one that should lead to any equivocation by somebody who is fourth in line of succession to be President of the United States. Let me ask another question.

Was Marie Yovanovitch a talented public servant?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am not going to comment on that personnel matter.

Senator KAINE. Was she a valuable part of the State Department family?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, again, the President made the very clear decision that he preferred that she not be our Ambassador. It is fully within his right—

Senator KAINE. That completely—

Secretary POMPEO. Every one of us that takes on these jobs knows that at any minute we could be gone.

Senator KAINE. I am not asking that. This is not a question about the President's power.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator KAINE. I am asking about your opinion of her as a public servant.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I did not interact with Ambassador Yovanovitch.

Senator KAINE. You did not?

Secretary POMPEO. No, not significantly.

Senator KAINE. So you do not really have—you do not consider that you have—

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am not going to talk about this. There will be a place and a time for me to talk about this, and I am looking forward to that. It is not the case that I talk about personnel matters in public.

Senator KAINE. You were very willing to tell us what you did not like about the Inspector General in response to Senator Menendez—

Secretary POMPEO. I was. A very different situation, a very, very different situation. There have been accusations about misconduct and malfeasance and assertions that I fired someone because they were investigating me. It demands a response. There is going to be a public report. This is different.

Senator KAINE. I want to make sure I understand your testimony.

Secretary POMPEO. I have been steadfast in this.

So you have asked me about other ambassadors before, too. I have not talked about them who were great and doing wonderful things. I did not say that either.

Senator KAINE. I am trying to determine whether you have been steadfast or not since I have so many State Department employees that live in the Commonwealth of Virginia—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator KAINE. —who are very, very concerned about whether or not a Secretary of State might have the back of a career professional who is a valued person.

You were on a phone call with President Trump and President Zelensky of Ukraine when the President said about Ambassador Yovanovitch she is going to go through some things. Do you know what the President meant when he said that?

Secretary POMPEO. I do not.

Senator KAINE. You were on that call. That has been reported—

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, I was.

Senator Kaine. When he said that about Marie Yovanovitch, did you ever follow up and ask the President what he meant?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I am confident that every action we took with Ambassador Yovanovitch was completely appropriate.

Senator Kaine. That is not the question I asked.

Secretary POMPEO. It is the truth.

Senator Kaine. Well, that may be the truth, but how about answering my question?

Secretary POMPEO. I am not going to talk about internal discussions at the State Department. You would not want me to, neither would your constituents, Senator Kaine. They would not want the Secretary of State to come up here and talk about internal conversations about personnel matters. You know that. That is not appropriate.

Senator Kaine. Well, can you just listen to my question?

Secretary POMPEO. Sure.

Senator Kaine. You were on the phone call.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator Kaine. You heard the President say that about Marie Yovanovitch, and my question to you is, did you ask what the President meant about that? Yes or no.

Secretary POMPEO. The answer is I am not going to talk about either. I guess that you are asking did I ask the President—

Senator Kaine. Yes.

Secretary POMPEO. —what he meant. I do not talk about conversations—

Senator Kaine. You told me you do not know what he meant.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator Kaine. I just asked if you asked him.

Secretary POMPEO. I appreciate your question and I hope you can appreciate why I do not talk about conversations with the President.

Senator Kaine. Here was some testimony we heard in this room the other day from your, I believe it is, Executive Secretary, Lisa Kenna, who was here for a hearing about her nomination to be Ambassador to Peru. She said in her work with you, the work that her office does, they get correspondence for you. Some they open and sort of categorize and classify it before they deliver it to you. Then she said there is a second category of correspondence that they do not open. If it is personal to you, if it is for your eyes only, if it is something from another cabinet member, they would not open that, but they would just deliver it to you. She said there is a third category of documents that was documents delivered by Rudy Giuliani to you which did not go through the process of being opened and it also did not go through the process of coming to her and having it delivered to you. It came directly to you.

What was your response to Rudy Giuliani's effort to sack Ambassador Yovanovitch? Did you say, hey, it is not your job? This is my job.

Secretary POMPEO. The President of the United States has the unconditional right to have the ambassadors he wants.

Senator Kaine. Stipulated for the record, but was your interaction with Rudy Giuliani?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I appreciate this. Do not go into great magical effects with respect to how a package came. That is all silliness. You should note for the record that that package was delivered to Capitol Hill by the former Inspector General who ran frantically to Capitol Hill and made a big news.

Senator KAINE. My time is up. I am just going to say you might think this is silly. You might think these questions are silly, but when somebody works for their entire career for the State Department and they are slandered with lies and sacked for no good reason, that sends a message that could not be clearer to other State Department officials. It may be just a big joke. I mean, hey, look at you smiling and laughing and calling them silly. I do not think it is silly to Marie Yovanovitch or the people who work for you.

Secretary POMPEO. I do not think it is silly to the United States Department of State to understand that every ambassador, every political appointee knows that when the President of the United States finds that they lack confidence in you, the President has the right to terminate them. It is that easy. It includes me.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Paul.

Secretary POMPEO. You should note I did not slander anyone. This was handled appropriately and properly, Senator.

Senator PAUL. History demonstrates that wars are easier to start than they are to end.

Secretary POMPEO. I think that is fair.

Senator PAUL. We have agreement. We have agreement.

I think the Afghan war is a great example of that. You know, after nearly 20 years of war, many are questioning the mission. In fact, many have been questioning what the mission is in Afghanistan for a decade or more, including President Trump. I traveled with him to the sad duty at Dover receiving two of our soldiers home, and I know it affects him personally. I know he has been very public and very consistent and I think very sincere in wanting to end the war in Afghanistan.

Army Lieutenant General Dan McNeill put it this way when asked about the mission. He says, I tried to get someone to define for me what winning meant even before I went over, and nobody could. Nobody would give me a good definition of what it meant. Some people were thinking in terms of Jeffersonian democracy, but that is just not going to happen in Afghanistan. The statement was 13 years ago.

When asked about our mission, General Douglas Lute said, we were devoid of a fundamental understanding of Afghanistan. We did not know what we were doing. What are we trying to do there? We did not have the foggiest notion of what we were doing. This is from 5 years ago.

How long is it going to take? What is our current mission? Why are we in Afghanistan? Do we have a cogent military reason to be in Afghanistan right now?

Secretary POMPEO. So the President has given two missions. One is to reduce our force posture, both the risk to our young men and women who are fighting there. The second is to ensure that there is not a terror attack that emanates from that space. We set about conducting a peace and reconciliation process. We have now re-

duced forces there by about half since their most recent peak. We are on our way to reduce even further.

I am hopeful that we will get the Afghans to begin their negotiation because President Trump has made very clear his expectation. We have entered into an agreement that we will go to zero. We will get our forces out of there. I think it is May of next year. We are looking to do that on terms that make sure we protect America from a—

Senator PAUL. Would you agree that Afghanistan is just one of probably hundreds of places that we potentially have terror threats or radical Islamic threats and may not even be no longer the primary place?

Secretary POMPEO. Hundreds. If you will give me dozens and dozens, yes, sir, absolutely.

Senator PAUL. Do you think that maybe it is—we talked about in Europe that we had hundreds of thousands of troops in Germany because there was the Soviet Union and they had—I do not know—2 million, 3 million people in their army. We had this sort of Cold War standoff.

So circumstances have changed and maybe even in your opinion it has changed over whether or not we need so many troops in Germany. I applaud that.

I think the same is in Afghanistan. It has certainly changed over 20 years. The war on terror is now and always has been sort of global one, but I think it may be a 20th century idea that we have to occupy territory so much that we have to have acres and we have to have large bases particularly in countries that are in prolonged civil war.

The other question is, really is our goal in these locations around the world our national security, or is our goal sometimes muddled by the idea that basically we are in Afghanistan for the equal rights amendment or for women's rights or we are there for democracy or making a country out of Afghanistan? Are we there for building roads? We built a \$45 million natural gas, gas station in Afghanistan. They have no cars that run on natural gas. So we bought them cars that ran on natural gas. They have no money, so we gave them a credit card. My understanding is that the gas station was supposed to cost half a million. It cost \$45 million and is no longer functioning. So, I mean, is our goal national security or is nation building part of what we should be doing as a country?

Secretary POMPEO. I think President Trump has made it unambiguous. Our mission set there is American national security. Plain and simple.

I would add only this. There are times in the world where we are better off if there are democratic nations. The State Department has designed to build resilience to do this kind of thing, but I do think our foreign policy sometimes has been overly ambitious about what it is we can accomplish through the use of military force with respect to getting other nations to—

Senator PAUL. I think encouraging democracy and being part of—supportive of democracy does not mean we have to pay for trying to institute our image in some other country because it just does not, frankly, work.

When we look at trying to end the Afghan war, I think in some ways we are stuck in the sense that people have decided we can only leave with some sort of treaty with the Taliban, some sort of agreement with the Taliban.

I am sort of the opinion that in some ways it might make it worse because I think that the Taliban are not necessarily trustworthy. If we leave under the agreement that they have to meet certain parameters, which is what we are looking towards, and then they break those parameters, we are right back in with a threat to stay in.

I think it is almost that the threat has to be—and maybe the threat should have been this 20 or even 30 years ago. The threat should be that if you harbor terrorists that are organizing international terrorism that there will be military repercussions, but those do not have to be landing 50,000 troops. It might be landing 50,000 bombs.

Secretary POMPEO. Absolutely right.

Senator PAUL. So I think we need to think about what our—and I think we have not escaped. We are still stuck in this idea of we have occupied this acreage and we have to do something with it, and we cannot leave until it is perfect. It is never going to be perfect there. The only thing I would just exhort you is that let us not base it completely on that we have to have a perfect deal to leave. I think there is always the threat that we can come back, and people say there are 10 al Qaeda left in Afghanistan. They might be plotting right now.

The President has admitted it. You have said they are a shadow of themselves. The President has admitted there have been reports that there are—now we are talking dozens, not hundreds. We are talking dozens, not thousands.

The same with the Islamic State. General Lute came and spoke to one of our committees recently, and he said he could not name any group there that he thought had the capability to attack the United States. He said there was no evidence that the so-called Islamic State presents a threat to the U.S. from Afghanistan.

So I do think we need to be mindful of that, but we do have to work towards finishing it. The only thing I would say in the end, because I do not want to finish this without mentioning that it takes friends of the President. The President has policy. People have to try to fulfill his policy. I think for a long time, for several years John Bolton was trying to thwart that, and John Bolton was an enemy of the President's policy. So I hope the people who are remaining will try to fulfill the President's policy and get us out of the war in Afghanistan.

Thank you.

Secretary POMPEO. If I may just take one second, Senator Risch, with your permission.

The CHAIRMAN. You may.

Secretary POMPEO. Your point, Senator Paul, about the global spectrum of terrorism and the fact that there are dozens of al Qaeda left in Afghanistan, I think that is the central thing that the American people need to understand. Wherever we were 15 or 20 years ago is not where we are today. Our resources, whether it is our decision in Germany or a decision about force posture in Asia

or Africa or in Afghanistan or Syria or anyplace else—we need to make sure that it is updated for the actual threats presented to the United States of America. That is what President Trump is driving us to do.

So thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Merkley.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I am going to start with the events that have occurred in Hong Kong and what I really see as a violation of the agreement made with Britain, between China and Britain.

Now that these events, this new Chinese law that really exerts enormous violations of civil rights in Hong Kong has occurred, should we extend asylum and visa opportunities to those who are being persecuted by the Chinese in Hong Kong?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, we are reviewing that. We are considering it. The British have made a good decision. The Australians have made a decision they are going to accept up to hundreds of thousands of people. We are looking at how best we might accomplish this and consistent with making sure that—we always want to encourage people to try to work from within to the extent they can as well. So it is important that we get this right. The President is actively considering how we ought to treat those who seek asylum coming to us from Hong Kong or to grant a visa program that surrounds that.

Senator MERKLEY. Well, it sounds like you are open to the opportunity and are reviewing it. I do feel like there are folks who will be highly targeted, and they are concerned about being locked up for the rest of their lives, young folks, 18, 20 years old, in Chinese prisons.

Do the events in Hong Kong change our perspectives on Taiwan or make us think about ways to be more supportive of Taiwan? We obviously do a lot of arms sales and so forth. Should we be more active in supporting Taiwanese participation in international institutions?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, they are different situations. There was an agreement with Hong Kong. They are different, but I think it is fair to say that the Chinese Communist Party views them as the same. If you ask the Chinese Communist Party, they would both view them as part of their territory, and so that requires diligence.

Your question about international organizations—not only the team that I have assigned to that, but the regional bureaus as well, are working on multiple fronts. We took a run at this in the World Health Assembly now a couple months back, and we have taken this on at the United Nations to make sure that Taiwan is represented in every place that it is appropriate that they be represented as part of formal and informal international gatherings.

Senator MERKLEY. There is a longstanding convention that the President of the United States should not meet with the President of Taiwan because it would offend China. Do you agree with that longstanding convention?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, if I may defer that. I am happy to have a conversation with you about it.

Here is what I will say with respect to Taiwan. There are a series of understandings that have been long held, multiple administrations, multiple parties. We intend to continue on with that. We understand the Taiwan Relations Act and the obligations that the United States Government has with respect to that.

We are working to recognize the changes that General Secretary Xi has made with respect to this. We want to make sure we get this right.

Senator MERKLEY. Saudi Arabia has been abetting the flight of Saudi nationals who have done horrific crimes in America. So really two questions.

Do you agree that this effort to sweep people out of our country who have done or are charged with doing horrific things before they can be tried is unacceptable?

Do you agree if it continues to occur, the U.S. should use significant diplomatic consequences for Saudi Arabia?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes to both questions, Senator.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

So there is the report that—well, we have done several things in regard to the situation in Xinjiang and the Chinese incarceration, basically slave camps of a million Uighurs. We have done some recent things, and I applaud those recent steps to impose sanctions to block exports that were done with forced labor in China.

I also feel like there is another narrative that has undermined kind of the effectiveness of this. As we have heard about the President's comments in November 2017 trip to China where he indicated that President Xi should go ahead with building concentration camps and then again in June 2019, a year and a half later, our President, President Trump's conversation with President Xi saying again basically they should go ahead building the camps and it is the right thing to do.

I think it is absolutely the wrong thing to do. We have done, as I noted, some steps that suggest that is—but should we be more robust at every level in condemning the Chinese enslavement of the Uighurs?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, I think the answer is yes. I am proud of what we have done, the way that the United States has responded, not only the responses we have taken directly, but the work we have done around the world to convince the whole world of what is taking place there.

I have been disappointed to see Muslim countries not respond when there are often significant Muslim populations being impacted there in western China. We are urging them to take this on in a serious way.

Then I guess the last thing I would say is I think with the objective of changing the behaviors that are taking place there, this is an important economic region. So the things that we are endeavoring to do—it is important we get the human rights piece of this right. It is important that we get the individual sanctions piece of this right, but it is very important—and I am really happy with the work we are making to convince businesses, not just American businesses because it is an international place of business, that

they should really look hard at their supply chains not just their direct employees, but their supply chains and what is taking place there. I think if we get that right, we have the opportunity to change what is taking place there.

Senator MERKLEY. A quick point and a final question because I am running out of time.

The UN fact-finding mission on the Rohingya, the U.S. Holocaust Museum, a law group engaged by the State Department to investigate atrocities have all found strong evidence of genocide by Burma. I really hope the United States will declare it to be genocide because it is, and it would strengthen our representation and advocacy for human rights in the world.

I want to turn to Honduras in my final question. The State Department Human Rights report talks about extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, detention, violence against indigenous Hondurans, violence against the LGBT communities. In addition, we had in October a U.S. federal court find that the president, Juan Orlando Hernandez, was implicated as a co-conspirator in widespread drug trafficking and money laundering.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, sir.

Senator MERKLEY. There are huge reports of systemic corruption and human rights abuses.

In the context of all of this, is it time to reevaluate our relationship, which has been quite cozy with the president of Honduras?

Secretary POMPEO. Senator, we are constantly demanding that the leadership in Honduras take these set of facts on board. We are well aware of what is taking place, and like in too many countries around the world, we have not had the effect that we desire. We are working on it.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG.

Senator YOUNG. Mr. Secretary, welcome. Good to have you here.

In response to media coverage over the last few days in the *Washington Post*, *NBC News*, the *Daily Beast*, and my hometown newspaper, the *Indianapolis Star*, I would like to bring up the situation of Peter Kassig and three other Americans who lost their lives at the hands of ISIS.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to request the following columns from the *Washington Post*, *Indy Star*, and *NBC News* be added to the record.

The CHAIRMAN. They will be included.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The information referred to above can be found in the "Additional Material Submitted for the Record" section at the end of this hearing.]

Senator YOUNG. Mr. Secretary, you may recall meeting with the Kassig family last year, but as a brief refresher, in October 2013, Indiana native and former Army Ranger, Peter Kassig, was on a mission of mercy. He was delivering humanitarian aid to suffering people in Syria. He was taken hostage by ISIS, and sadly after months of torture and incredible hardship at the hands of these ISIS terrorists and in spite of his embrace of Islam, he was brutally beheaded. Sadly, three other Americans, James Foley, Steven Sotloff, and Kayla Mueller also lost their lives at the hands of ISIS

murderers. I know each of their stories are familiar to other members of this committee.

Since that time, some of the murderers, known as “The Beatles,” have been killed in U.S.-led drone strikes, but others remain at large. I know you agree, they must be brought to justice. I believe that the United States Government should work tirelessly, independently, and with the cooperation of allies to hunt down the killers of these Americans and bring them to justice here in the United States of America.

Mr. Secretary, do you agree with me?

Secretary POMPEO. I do, and you should know that the President of the United States agrees as well.

Senator YOUNG. What efforts can the State Department and our missions overseas take to bring this about?

Secretary POMPEO. It is a broad effort. I think we are making progress. The Department of Defense, their intelligence assets, the broader set of U.S. intelligence assets, all aimed at making sure we understand and then working with important partners too who want justice, but have a different set of rules about how to think about that, so working to convince them that proceeding to bring them to justice is the right approach. I am very hopeful that we will, in the coming weeks, have a good outcome here.

Senator YOUNG. You alluded to different perspectives that exist out there. What precise obstacles stand in the way and what can you do to overcome them?

Secretary POMPEO. So, an example. I will stay away from this particular incident, but an example is when we make a decision from time to time to bring someone back from someplace else, either through extradition or through another legal process, the countries say because we have the death penalty or because of a certain set of rules we have here, they will not either permit that to happen or share the information that we might need to complete a successful prosecution. One of our roles is to make sure that those countries will permit us to do that.

Senator YOUNG. I do want to interject—and it is important to note here, though you were just using an example—it is my understanding that the four families are no longer pursuing the death penalty for these terrorists. Their hope is that this shift will alleviate any challenges whatsoever that we have encountered with the British Government and their justice system in allowing the prosecution to move forward in the United States.

Secretary POMPEO. I appreciate that, Senator Young. That is important. I will leave it at that.

Senator YOUNG. I am committed to working with you, and I suspect there are other members of this committee who will join me in that effort to ensure that justice is delivered and delivered here in the United States. Will you commit to working with me and this committee to ensure that we pursue this matter accordingly?

Secretary POMPEO. Of course, yes, sir.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

I would like to move to the United Nations and how, over the past several years, Mr. Secretary, the U.S. has lost ground in its engagement with a number of UN bodies and programs. Most re-

cently, the Administration formally submitted paperwork to withdraw from the World Health Organization.

At the same time, the role and influence of other countries, particularly the Communist government in China, has been growing at the UN. It has expanded its role in a range of UN agencies, with Chinese nationals currently holding the top job in four of the organization's 15 specialized agencies: the International Civil Aviation Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization, the International Telecom Union, and the UN Industrial Development Organization. For comparison, a French national leads two specialized agencies, the IMF and UNESCO. The UK leads one, the ILO, and the U.S. leads just one, the World Bank, although a U.S. national does lead the UN Children's Fund and the World Food Program, which are large and prominent UN organizations.

So building on Senator Murphy's earlier line of questioning, why do we not look beyond the World Health Organization, and I ask you, Mr. Secretary, what implications does this losing of ground within UN bodies and agencies have on advancing U.S. national security interests and other foreign policy priorities that we might have in the UN system?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. It is very significant, and it is at least a 15-year-long slide that has taken place and growth of the Chinese Communist Party's influence in these institutions and organizations.

We have done a couple things to turn this around. We had real success at the World Intellectual Property Organization. The Chinese thought they had the fast track to that. We put up a good candidate. It was not an American candidate, but it was a candidate that we believe has an understanding of intellectual property in the same way that freedom-loving democracies do, and we crushed them. It was an amazing diplomatic effort. We built up coalitions with the Indians, the Brits, the Australians, and then built it out all across the world. We are asking for about \$20 million in this budget to take the team that we built there and make it a permanent team that is focused on these major elections for these 15 institutions, and then there is another set that are slightly different, but still very important.

Then we have a second set of operations which is it is not just the leaders that matter at the UN organizations. They have big bureaucracies underneath them. We are sadly inadequately represented at every level inside of these international bodies, and it matters. It matters that there is someone there. It matters that they are American, but it matters, if they are not American, that they come from the nations that understand the rule of law and how the world ought to be conducted in a way that we do.

So I have actually worked closely with about seven other countries to build out an effort that is very focused on exactly this. Sometimes, frankly, we have had opportunities. We were offered a place and did not put anybody forward. That is not the right way to go. We need to make sure we get it right. I am confident that in a year and 2 years, we will be in a better place than we are today, and I hope we will have the resources to do that. It is a little bit of a resource issue, but it is a lot of a focus issue. I think I have cleaned that up materially.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Perdue.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to correct the record on a couple things here that have been said this morning.

First of all, I believe that Secretary Tillerson's two predecessors oversaw probably one of the most major withdrawals in foreign policy from the global stage that America has ever seen. It created a power vacuum that allowed Iran, North Korea, Russia, China to step into that vacuum and, actually during that period of time, created a physical caliphate that allowed the rise of ISIS in Syria such that in January of 2017, Mr. Secretary, I believe that the world was more dangerous than any time in my lifetime. We faced five threats across five domains: Iran, North Korea, Russia, China, and terrorism across air, land, and sea. All of a sudden we woke up and realized that our would-be adversaries have been developing capability in cyber and space that the prior Administration had not really warned us about.

So we woke up, and I think we have all now figured out in the United States—I think there is a consensus on both sides—for the last 50 years, with all good intentions, we got China wrong. I think there is a general awakening that you have had three other cabinet members, along with yourself, make tremendous policy speeches here just in the last month. I would like to quote some of that that you wrote about.

You had Secretary O'Brien, our National Security Advisor O'Brien, talk about ideology; FBI Director Wray talk about espionage; Attorney General Barr talk about economics; and you talked about the warning here. I am going to quote. This is your quote. "We had a very clear purpose in those four speeches, a real mission. It was to explain the different facets of America's relationship with China, the massive imbalances in that relationship that have built up over decades, and the Chinese Communist Party's design for hegemony."

It is interesting you chose that word because the Chinese love to quote Confucius, and one of his famous sayings is just as there cannot be—and they do this recently. Just as there cannot be two suns in the sky, there cannot be two emperors on the earth. The word they use for emperor is not benign dictator, which is the most common use of that translation. It is hegemon. They want to be the hegemon that they feel like they were for 4,000 years.

You said further, our goal was to make clear that the threats to Americans that President Trump's China policy aims to address are clear and our strategy for securing those freedoms established.

You went on to say later in there in closing this out, you said securing—and I think this is the most important sentence in this speech in my opinion—securing our freedoms from the Chinese Communist Party is the mission of our time, and America is perfectly positioned to lead it because our founding principles give us that opportunity. A tremendous statement. That will go down in history.

The fact that only 6 percent of China's population belong to the Communist Party, Mr. Secretary—I would argue that our fight is not with the Chinese people. It is with the Communist Party.

There is a statement from the Administration here dated May 26, 2020. It says we do not seek to contain China's development nor do we wish to disengage from the Chinese people.

Can you articulate the threats the Chinese Communist Party threaten—makes or represents to our democracy and our freedoms here, and what are we doing as a Chinese strategy as we try to manage during your Administration here—as we try to manage this turn in our relationship with China to confront them, to stand up to them, but also to protect our freedoms here at home?

Secretary POMPEO. So, Senator, there are multiple fronts to this, and these are not created by the Department of State. They are created by what the Chinese Communist Party says, to your point. President Trump recognized that. He talked about it in his campaign back as far as 2015. We have got to get this imbalance corrected. When we do, there will be costs associated with that. We have got the largest increase in our military buildup that President Trump has led. We are very focused on an arms control strategic dialogue that we are having today. I was in Vienna on the 27 and 28 of this month, so a few days back. We know we need China to be part of that, too. They are now a significant nuclear power. We have seen what has happened on the economic front. We have seen their Belt and Road Initiative. So they are competing. Senator Rubio talked about their efforts in four or five technology spheres.

This is a multi-front campaign. It will take not only the United States Government, but the United States citizens to understand this challenge. Then we have got to build out the global alliance.

The last thing I will say here is I have seen it said that the United States is asking nations to pick sides between China and the United States. It is fundamentally false. We are asking every sovereign country to pick between freedom and tyranny. That is the choice every leader has got to make. When I go around the world, that is what I talk to them about, and they all know. They all know that the United States is the country that they want to be alongside. They all know that freedom and our value system and the rule of law and property rights and the protection of these unalienable rights is central to their country, and it is why I think the tide is turning around the world and that people are seeing the Chinese Communist Party for what it is, the threat to the security of their people.

Senator PERDUE. I agree with the tyranny/freedom. I characterize it a little different. There is state control and there is self-determination. The world is turning into a binary equation. Russia, China, Venezuela, and Cuba—if you add up all the GDPs of those state-controlled countries, it is probably less than \$20 trillion. If you add up the GDP of all the rest that are self-determined, that is over \$70 trillion, Mr. Secretary.

I want to relate that back to the last question here that goes to your comments earlier about the number one thing—I think you agreed with it 1,000 percent with Senator Murphy—about allies being the answer here with China. This is a huge effort. It is going to take years to develop.

Right now we have an opportunity with the Quad, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. This is the United States, India, Japan, and Australia. A great development is happening right now that India

is very strongly considering inviting Australia to that exercise, Malabar.

Would you comment on how important this particular group is in relation to the bigger conversation you just mentioned? The fact that the GDP of the Quad is more than twice that of China today is not to be lost on the conversation. Would you just make one last comment on that, please?

Secretary POMPEO. It is more populous than China as well. These are nations that all have elected leaders, all have democracies, all understand—in different cultures and different settings, all have a central understanding about how commercial enterprise should be conducted and how militaries should engage and about how security is actually achieved. The good news is I think this grouping is stronger than it has ever been. Maybe we were gifted by General Secretary Xi. He took actions that caused each of the leaders in those countries to recognize the value of this group.

I meet with them with some frequency either by phone or in-person, and we are working on economic efforts together. We are working on COVID responses together. There are lots of places where we are finding common touch points where we can develop real strength and unity that can, in fact, provide the bulwark that we can build out from all across the world.

Senator PERDUE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Perdue.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I appreciate the good job you do for our country and leaning into hard issues forcefully. We need more of that, not less.

When it comes to a UN envoy for Libya, do you support that we need a new one?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. Good. I am going to try to get a letter from everybody in the committee to the UN Secretary-General saying please appoint a special envoy. Mr. Secretary, anything we can do to up our game would be great. I know you work with the Berlin folks.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. We will see if we can bring stability—

Secretary POMPEO. We need the right one, too, Senator—I know you agree with that—not just a new one, but the right person as well.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Thank you very much.

The Caesar Act. Thank you for using it quickly and holding Assad's son accountable is a great first step in what I think will be a long journey to punish this regime. Is more coming?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you. Great job.

I talked to General Mazlum yesterday with the SDF. Apparently, they have signed a deal with an American oil company to modernize the oilfields in northeastern Syria. Are you supportive of that?

Secretary POMPEO. We are.

Senator GRAHAM. That would be a great way to help everybody in northeastern Syria.

Secretary POMPEO. The deal took a little longer, Senator, than we had hoped, and we now are in implementation. It could be very powerful.

Senator GRAHAM. You have been terrific in that regard.

When it comes to Afghanistan, is my understanding correct that any withdrawal from Afghanistan will be conditions based?

Secretary POMPEO. That is correct.

Senator GRAHAM. The inter-Afghan dialogue hopefully will start here fairly soon?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, hopefully.

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. I do not mean to make light of that. We are very hopeful that in the next week—I have heard that I may have said that once before, but we see the conditions. They have now completed enough tasks that we think there is a real chance we can—

Senator GRAHAM. Well, in case the Taliban are following the hearing—I doubt if they are. I am a pretty hawkish guy on Afghanistan. You have been great on foreign policy in general from my point of view.

I would like to end the war too, and I would like to get the Taliban integrated into a new Afghanistan that respects the rights of women, where everybody can have a say through the democratic process. The Taliban are part of the Afghan culture. They are a minority. They are by no means a dominant voice in Afghanistan, but if we could help Pakistan and Afghanistan achieve a working relationship they have never had before on terrorism, we could get an inner-Afghan dialogue started, I am willing to invest in an Afghanistan that has a place for the Taliban, but not to the exclusion of women or religious minorities. So count me in for your efforts, and I very much appreciate what Zalmay is doing and Adam.

When it comes to China, is it fair to say that in 2020, the Chinese Communist Party is running concentration camps that house religious minorities?

Secretary POMPEO. I would be careful about the language. I have described it this way, Senator.

Senator GRAHAM. Something like a concentration—

Secretary POMPEO. It is the worst human rights violation that we have seen this century.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Fair enough. That is a good description.

You closed the Houston consulate down because they were using the diplomatic platform to cheat, steal, and lie when it comes to intellectual property.

Secretary POMPEO. Intellectual property and other items as well. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. The special status of Hong Kong has been virtually destroyed. Is that fair to say?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes.

Senator GRAHAM. I appreciate you speaking about it and taking action.

When it comes to the rule of law, the Chinese Communist Party sees it is more of a nuisance than anything else.

Secretary POMPEO. I think the litter of promises broken across multiple forums demonstrates that they take those agreements for having very little value.

Senator GRAHAM. If you go a property dispute, you generally do not build a military base on the contested property. You actually go to some kind of court and work it out.

We just passed in the Judiciary Committee legislation modeled on JASTA, allowing Americans who have been victims of the coronavirus to sue the Chinese Communist Party. Do you support that?

Secretary POMPEO. I have not had a chance to take a look at it.

Senator GRAHAM. We will get it to you, and please get back to us if you could.

Bottom line, Syria is never going to end until we get the entire fabric of Syrian society in a room working together. The north-eastern footprint we have where we are working with the SDF who helped us destroy the ISIS caliphate—they did most of the heavy fighting—that gives us leverage. I appreciate you being an advocate for the SDF. I appreciate that you have tried to work with a new leadership in Iraq. It is important that ISIS never come back. It is important that we have a say about that part of the world.

Finally, as to Iran, where do you see the Iranian regime in terms of their potency? Are the sanctions working, and what would you advise this committee to do going forward with Iran?

Secretary POMPEO. So, Senator, the sanctions have clearly had an impact. It has diminished their capacity to underwrite Hezbollah, Shia militias in Iraq, but clearly has not achieved the ultimate objective, which is to change the behavior of the Iranian regime.

So our view is this. We are happy to see them change, but until such time as they do, we see the best tool is to starve the regime of the capacity to inflict terror around the world. So your support in doing that is very important. I talked a little bit earlier—I think you had not arrived just yet—about the UN arms embargo that we are working so diligently to make sure it does not expire in a couple months.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, one last topic. Again, thank you. I think you have done a very good job from my point of view for our country, leaning into really difficult issues forcefully and with reason.

Developmental aid. The House \$3 trillion bill did not have any money for vaccines going to the developing world. The Republican bill has about \$4 billion. I would urge you to work with us to try to find a way, if we can get a vaccine developed, to get it to the developing world, sort of like what we did with PEPFAR because it will do no good to eradicate it here if we do not eradicate it everywhere. Would you work with us in that regard?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. We have presented something that we have given the name PIPER PRO that is modeled on PEPFAR that ultimately we think could be very successful. If we can get a vaccine, we are happy to work with you all on it.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Graham.

Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, welcome.

Secretary POMPEO. Senator.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you for your testimony, and thank you for your service as well.

Let us cover a number of topics. Let us start with Nord Stream 2.

You and I have worked for some time on Nord Stream 2 in stopping the completion of that pipeline. As you know, over a year ago, I joined with Senator Shaheen in passing bipartisan legislation. It went through both houses of Congress with overwhelming bicameral, bipartisan support imposing significant sanctions on companies that participated in laying the pipeline of Nord Stream 2. The President signed that legislation around 7:00 p.m., if I remember correctly, on a Thursday, and 15 minutes before his signature was on the page, the Swiss company that was laying the pipeline announced that they were immediately ceasing all pipeline construction activities. So those sanctions worked.

Russia has not stopped. They have a pipeline that is 90 to 95 percent complete. Now, the good thing about a pipeline is a pipeline that is 95 percent complete is a pipeline that is 0 percent complete because it isn't transmitting anything until they connect the two ends. It is my intention that they never complete this pipeline.

Both Russia and German continue to press forward aggressively to try to find ways to complete this pipeline. As you know, Senator Shaheen and I again introduced even stronger sanctions to any companies involved in any way whatsoever with the construction of the pipeline. Those stronger sanctions were included in the NDAA that passed this body with overwhelming bipartisan support just last week. So I am hopeful, as the NDAA moves forward, that we will have those stronger sanctions in effect.

At the same time, you made an important decision within the State Department. Under CAATSA, the Administration has the authority, I believe, to sanction companies working to build this pipeline. Your predecessor, Secretary Tillerson, had issued, as I understand it, a guidance that was widely interpreted as essentially exempting Nord Stream 2. You made the right decision to rescind that guidance.

Can you explain to the committee the importance of that guidance and what authority the Administration has right now today with no additional legislation to sanction any company, any German company, any other company that participates in any way with completing this pipeline?

Secretary POMPEO. Yes. So thanks, Senator Cruz.

The President made the decision to change that language. It was my recommendation. So I am not walking away from it, but I wanted to make sure everybody knew the President was fully on board with that change.

That language was important because to your point—and this is a little bit too simple, but it was essentially a get out of jail free card for those conducting activities surrounding Nord Stream 2. That is no longer true. Both the State Department and the Department of the Treasury have made very clear in our conversations with those who have equipment there. We can see that they are responding, as are their insurers, the board of directors, their law-

yers all understand the express threat that is posed to them for continuing to complete work on completion of the pipeline. We remain hopeful that those who have the capacity to finish this pipeline quickly will not be able to do so. They will choose not to because of these sanctions. Then we have the task of those that are harder to reach by sanctions, making sure that we do everything we can to stop them.

The President has been so clear about the security threat that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline poses to Europe. We have not been able to convince the Germans of that. So we are taking action ourselves to try and accomplish that to preserve security for the European people.

Senator CRUZ. So, Secretary Pompeo, I know you care about this issue. I spent about 6 hours with the President yesterday on Air Force One, and Nord Stream 2 came up in considerable depth, as did the President's frustrations with the leadership of Germany.

Let me point out that the State Department has a long tradition of sometimes obscure speech, perhaps rivaled only by the Federal Reserve. This is an issue in which ambiguity is not beneficial. As you know, the Russians are actively pushing disinformation, that there are not going to be sanctions for anyone involved in this pipeline. The Russians actively pushed disinformation that the bipartisan legislation I had introduced previously was not going to pass. That was wrong.

Secretary POMPEO. I remember that.

Senator CRUZ. We had overwhelming bipartisan support that passed it into law.

I believe under CAATSA, you have full legal authority right now to make clear and explicitly clear to anyone involved with constructing this pipeline that the consequences of doing so are catastrophic and not worth doing. So I would encourage the State Department—and I recognize you work within an Administration, and there may be other agencies that have different views, but if there are, those other agencies are not right in this matter. So I urge you to speak with absolute clarity because it is only that clarity I think that has any prayer of actually stopping the completion of this pipeline.

If the pipeline is completed, it will do serious damages to the economic interests and the national security interests of Europe. It will do serious damage to the economic and national security interests of the United States. It will benefit Putin and put billions of dollars in his pocket.

Secretary POMPEO. There is no need for ambiguity. The President has not been ambiguous about this at all. There was a reason that we made the change in that language, essentially the waiver language, if you will. We are fully intent on sanctioning those that violate the provisions that are contained there both in CAATSA and otherwise.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you. That is helpful.

Let us shift to another area.

Secretary POMPEO. I hope that is clear enough.

Senator CRUZ. That last statement had substantially greater clarity. So I am grateful and look forward to amplifying it loudly.

Secretary POMPEO. Thank you, Senator.

Senator CRUZ. Let us shift to another topic that you and I have also discussed at length which is Iran snapback. I believe maximum pressure should be maximum pressure, that the Iranian regime, the ayatollah when he says death to America, that he means it, that when he says death to Israel, that it means it.

Under the terms of the Obama Iran nuclear deal and the UN Security Council resolution implementing it, the United States has the authority to invoke snapback sanctions if and when Iran is in violation of the deal. We have that authority, even though we have withdrawn from that deal. Iran is now nakedly, openly, flagrantly flouting the deal. They are not pretending to comply with it. It is obvious they are defying it, and they are telling us they are defying it.

Will the United States invoke the snapback sanctions which would result in re-imposing not just American sanctions, but far broader sanctions on Iran for their violations of the deal?

Secretary POMPEO. I think the President has been very clear. We believe we have this authority. I have spoken to this a couple of times. We believe that under UN Security Council resolution 2231, we clearly have the authority to do this and that we are not going to permit this arms embargo to expire on October 18. We are going to introduce a UN Security Council resolution we hope will be met with approval from the other members of the P5. In the event that it is not, we are going to take the action necessary to ensure that this arms embargo does not expire. We have the capacity to execute snapback, and we are going to use it in a way that protects and defends America.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cruz.

Mr. Secretary, we promised you a hard stop at 11:30. We like to keep our commitments, and we have by about 30 seconds according to my clock.

Thank you so much for your service to the United States of America. Thank you for working with this committee as you have. We sincerely appreciate it.

For information of the members, the record will remain open until close of business on Friday, and any responses that are given will be made part of the record.

With that, again, thank you, Mr. Secretary, and this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:29 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE MICHAEL POMPEO TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. What proportion of the Department's budget is devoted to the Indo-Pacific region, and how has that changed over the last 5 years? What proportion of the Department's personnel are in the Indo-Pacific region, and how has that changed over the last 5 years? What is the Department doing to ensure the budget and personnel meet the demands of this important region? Is the Department considering shifting more budgetary resources and greater numbers of its personnel to the Indo-Pacific region? Is there any flexibility you need from Congress to undertake such shifts?

Answer. The Department allocated \$1.5 billion to the Indo-Pacific in bilateral and regional foreign assistance (FA) resources in the FY 2020 653(a) report and \$798 million in the FY 2020 diplomatic engagement (DE) budget. These amounts represent 5 percent of the DE budget and 4 percent of the total State-USAID budget. (Note: The proportion compares Indo-Pacific FA funding with the total State-USAID FA budget, including not only regional funding, but significant centrally managed funds.) Since November 2017, the Department reprogrammed over \$800 million in additional FA funds to the Indo-Pacific. Over the last 5 years the Indo-Pacific DE budget and personnel levels averaged 5 percent of the total, while FA resources averaged 4 percent of the total. The Department concluded a review of resource needs and expects to internally realign positions to the region. Reducing statutorily directed spending and providing additional discretionary funding would improve our ability to meet the region's challenges.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE MICHAEL POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEDEZ

Question. Last year, President Trump inappropriately withheld millions of dollars of security assistance to Ukraine, in an effort to extract commitments from Ukraine that they would conduct an investigation into a political opponent of the President, leading to his impeachment. A series of outstanding questions about your involvement and knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the hold on security assistance to Ukraine remain. When and how did you first learn \$141.5 million in foreign military assistance for Ukraine would not be immediately obligated?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive, and I refer you to those records for the information you request. Since January 2017, the U.S. Government has provided more than \$1 billion in security assistance to Ukraine, including the provision of lethal defensive articles that were not provided prior to January 2017.

Question. What role, if any, did you play in deciding to suspend such assistance?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. What was your understanding of the reasons for that delay?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Why were the funds ultimately delayed? Who made that decision?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer to those records for the information you request.

Question. Do you think it is appropriate for the President to enlist the assistance of a foreign leader to investigate his opponents?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer to those records and my prior public statements for the information you request.

Question. Are you aware of the President requesting or encouraging similar efforts of any other foreign officials?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Prior to the July 25 call, did you or did the Department communicate to Ukrainian officials that the President wanted to discuss corruption or investigations in Ukraine?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Did you communicate, or are you aware of efforts by U.S. officials to communicate, to Ukrainian officials the topics that the President wanted to discuss with President Zelenskyy?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Do you regularly receive transcripts or summaries of all of the President's calls with foreign leaders? Are you aware of any records of communications between the President and foreign leaders that have not been stored on the standard White House system for such calls and subsequently distributed to Cabinet-level officials?

Answer. Questions related to White House systems should be directed to the White House.

Question. When can I expect a response to my outstanding September 24, 2019 and June 4, 2020, requests for documents on this subject?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive, and I refer you to those records for the information you request. Those proceedings are Constitutionally concluded.

Question. In President Trump's July 25, 2019 phone call with President Zelenskyy, he repeatedly urged a foreign leader to speak with his private attorney, Rudy Giuliani, who had met with Ukrainian officials for months to pursue the personal political agenda of President Trump, allegedly with the help of the State Department. When did you first learn that Mr. Giuliani was seeking to meet with Ukrainian officials?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Were you aware of Mr. Giuliani's meetings with Ukrainian officials on or around the dates they happened?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Are you aware of other meetings between Mr. Giuliani and foreign officials?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Did you instruct anyone in the Department to not provide assistance to Mr. Giuliani regarding his meetings with foreign officials?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Were you aware that Special Envoy Kurt Volker or Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland were engaged with Mr. Giuliani regarding Ukraine? If so, did you direct or approve of their efforts?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Who else from the Department received readouts of, met with, or spoke to Mr. Giuliani about his meetings with foreign officials?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. When is the last time you communicated with Rudy Giuliani?

Answer. I do not recall when I last communicated with Mr. Giuliani.

Question. Have you communicated with him or received information for issues other than Ukraine? If so, what?

Answer. I have known Mr. Giuliani since before I was confirmed as Secretary of State.

Question. In January 2020, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) determined that the Trump administration violated the Impoundment Control Act last year when it illegally withheld Congressionally-appropriated Department of Defense security assistance to Ukraine for "policy reasons." However, GAO was unable to

make a similar legal determination regarding foreign military financing funds appropriated to the State Department for Ukraine security assistance, ultimately because the Department failed to cooperate with GAO's request for information related to the circumstances and legal justification for the withholding of assistance. Please provide an explanation for the Department's failure to produce the necessary documentation to GAO regarding the security assistance hold.

Answer. This matter is ongoing with the GAO and the Department will communicate with the GAO on this matter.

Question. In May of 2018, then Congressman Pete Sessions wrote a letter addressed to you which urged you to remove Ambassador Yovanovitch from her post in Ukraine. Did you receive the letter? Did you respond to the letter?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. According to documents the Department produced to American Oversight pursuant to a FOIA request, on March 26, 2019, you "wanted to connect to Giuliani" and were put in touch with him immediately. On March 27, a Department email stated that "Mr. Giuliani has documents pursuant to his conversation with S the other day. If possible, he would like 10 min with S upon delivery." On March 28, a Department email stated that "[Lisa Kenna] updated S[ecretary] re: Mr. G[iuliani]. S[ecretary] is happy to meet with him tomorrow." Why did you want to connect with Mr. Giuliani on March 26? What did you discuss with him?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Why did you feel it was necessary to speak and meet with Mr. Giuliani in your official capacity as the Secretary of State for the United States of America?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. At the time, what was your understanding of the role Mr. Giuliani was playing with regards to Ukraine policy? Did you have any concerns about that role?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. On July 23, 2020, Lisa Kenna told the Committee that, while serving as your Executive Secretary, she would review letters and memos for you or, if something was marked "eyes only for the secretary" and from other cabinet secretaries or the President, would not review it. However, when you received a package from Rudy Giuliani, she testified that it bypassed her and was delivered directly to your desk. Did you instruct that the package from Giuliani to bypass your executive secretary and be delivered directly to your desk? If so, why?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Was it marked "eyes only for the Secretary," or something to similar effect?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Why was this package handled in a more discreet way than even packages from other cabinet secretaries or the President?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive, and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. According to an October 3, 2019 report in The Wall Street Journal, "Trump Ordered Ukraine Ambassador Removed After Complaints From Giuliani, Others," Rudy Giuliani gave you "a nine-page document dated March 28 that included a detailed timeline of the Bidens' dealings in Ukraine and allegations of impropriety against Ms. Yovanovitch, including that she was 'very close' to Mr. Biden. 'He called me back and he said they were going to investigate,' Mr. Giuliani said of the Secretary of State, saying Mr. Pompeo asked for additional documents to back

up the allegations.” Mr. Giuliani also told The New York Times, as quoted in a November 23, 2019 article, “New Documents Reveal Details of Pompeo’s Role in Ukraine Affair,” that “Mr. Pompeo ‘said he was referring it for investigation.’” Did you review the documents that Mr. Giuliani sent you? If so, what was your impression of the information in the documents?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Did you think the documents contained any credible basis for removing Ambassador Yovanovitch?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Did you tell Mr. Giuliani that you were going to refer the matter for investigation? If so, why?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Did you refer the matter for investigation? If so, why?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. According to an October 2, 2019 report in USA Today, “‘Mysterious’ packet of Ukraine disinformation arrives on Capitol Hill amid Trump impeachment inquiry,” you gave the documents to the Counselor of the Department, Ulrich Brechbuhl, and told him that it “came over,” which he presumed to mean it came from the White House. Did you instruct Counselor Brechbuhl to review the documents sent by Giuliani? If so, why?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Did you tell him that the documents came from Giuliani?

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Have you been offered or sent any information from Ukrainian parliamentarian Andrii Derkach, or on Derkach’s behalf? If so, what has your response been?

Answer. I have no recollection of any such information.

Question. Have you issued any guidance to the Department regarding how to respond to or handle offers of information from foreign officials about the President’s political opponents, or that could be used to aid any particular candidate in the 2020 U.S. presidential election? If so, what is that guidance?

Answer. All Department personnel remain subject to and guided by all Federal laws relating to such matters.

Question. According to a July 1, 2020 report in The Washington Post (“‘Hunt for Biden tapes in Ukraine by Trump allies revives prospect of foreign interference’”), “Giuliani told the Post that his pursuit of the Biden-Poroshenko calls was aided by someone inside the State Department. ‘A guy at the State Department who gave us a lot of information’ consulted the archive of conversations between American leaders and their counterparts overseas to identify three conversations in February 2016 during which Biden mentioned the prosecutor general’s name in conversations with Poroshenko, he said.” Does it concern you that a State Department official may have provided Mr. Giuliani with this information?

Answer. I have no basis to know whether any such alleged contact occurred.

Question. Has the State Department initiated an investigation into whether a State Department official provided Mr. Giuliani, a private citizen, with sensitive U.S. Government information? If no, why not?

Answer. I have no basis to know if any facts have been provided to the Department that would warrant the initiation of any such investigation.

Question. Have you communicated to Mr. Giuliani about this claim?

Answer. I have no recollection of any communication on this claim.

Question. What steps are you taking to protect the State Department from, wittingly or unwittingly, providing information that could be used to aid any particular candidate in the 2020 U.S. presidential election?

Answer. The Department is exercising all Constitutional care in provision of sensitive, internal, non-public records to Committees and Members of Congress.

Question. “Before serving in Ukraine, Ambassador Yovanovitch had more than 3 decades of service to the State Department, including Ambassador to Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, and posts in Somalia, Moscow, and others: a) When the President said in his July 25 call with President Zelensky—a call you listened to—that Ambassador Yovanovitch was “going to go through some things,” what, specifically, did you do in response?”

Answer. The records of the House Impeachment proceedings and the Senate Impeachment Trial are extensive and I refer you to those records for the information you request.

Question. Can you point me to where in the public record you defended Ambassador Yovanovitch between March 2019 and December 2019?

Answer. During a November 18, 2019 Department press briefing, I made clear that I always defend State Department employees and that we have the greatest diplomatic corps in the history of the world. I have also made clear that I cannot get into issues associated with the House Impeachment proceedings or the Senate Impeachment Trial.

Question. Do requests for information about the President’s political opponents get treated differently than other congressional oversight requests to the State Department?

Answer. No.

Question. Why has the Department provided thousands of pages to Republican Chairmen in the Senate—without providing copies to this Committee—in response to requests for information about Joe Biden, the President’s political opponent, but it has provided no documents in response to more than 10 requests for information from House Democratic Chairs and Democratic Senators about the Trump administration’s withholding of U.S. security assistance to Ukraine?

Answer. All documents produced by the Department in response to investigatory requests from Committee Chairs are provided to the Chairs *and* the Ranking Members of the requesting Committees conducting the investigation, consistent with long-standing practice. To the best of my knowledge the Department has not received any requests from the full Senate Foreign Relations Committee under letter of request from the Chairman on the topics you described. The investigation you reference was on corruption in Ukraine, not Joe Biden.

Question. Do you believe it is appropriate to use the State Department as an instrument to further the President’s personal and political goals?

Answer. I am unaware of any such use of the Department of State for the purposes you suggest.

Question. “At the July 30, 2020 hearing, you stated that low morale was one reason, among others, for your recommendation to President Trump to remove Inspector General Linick. Specifically, you noted “morale inside the IG’s office ... was the worst survey results of any of those 38 [Assistant Secretary level bureaus].” What morale data are you referring to and what time period is this data for in your analysis?”

Answer. The data referenced in my testimony is from the results of the 2019 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) of employees of the Office of the Inspector General. Following an effort to improve response rates over the previous FEVS, we doubled the total responses from 2017. In the 2019 FEVS, over half of our thirty-eight (38) Assistant Secretary-led bureaus improved or maintained in all three major index categories year over year. Only one bureau of the 38, which had the same leader in place, declined in all three index categories. That single bureau was the Office of the Inspector General.

Question. Please provide a copy of the specific survey questions and results you were referring to in making your analysis.

Answer. The results of the 2019 FEVS show that the OIG scores dropped year-over-year in all three major index categories: the Employee Engagement Index, the

Global Satisfaction Index and the Diversity and Inclusion Index. The Global Satisfaction Index, which, among other things, measures the willingness of OIG employees to recommend the organization as a good place to work has exhibited a steady double-digit decline (>15 percent) since the 2016 FEVS survey. We were also alarmed by the insights provided by answers to several key survey questions:

- *The people I work with cooperate to get the job done.* The OIG survey respondents had a 46 percent higher negative response rate than the Department of State as a whole and also a higher negative response rate than the government-wide negative response rate.
- *My organization has prepared employees for potential security threats.* Twenty-three percent of the OIG survey respondents responded negatively to that, greater than three times higher than the negative response rates of Department of State and government-wide responses.
- *Employees are protected from health and safety hazards on the job.* The OIG survey respondents neutral and negative responses were almost 25 percent higher than Department of State and government-wide response to this question.

Question. On December 6, 2019, I sent the Department a letter requesting information about reported new limitations on the use of the Department's Operations Center and requesting a briefing with the Director of the Operations Center. I have yet to receive a response to my letter. Please detail all changes regarding the use of the Ops Center since July 2019, including but not limited to changes made to any process, procedure, notetaking, staffing, or access to any calls placed, facilitated, transcribed, memorialized, or recorded by the Operations Center and the justification for any change.

Answer. The Operations Center is integral to the Department's ability to carry out its global mission and remain connected to the Department's global workforce on a 24-hour, 7 day a week basis. Since its inception in 1961 the Operations center has strived to remain an ever evolving and an ever-improving unit than can respond quickly to the ever-changing environment of international events. Operational security is a key priority for the Operations Center's capacity to support U.S. foreign policy. Leaks of sensitive information can have serious implications for U.S. policy implementation, undercut diplomatic relations and national security, and endanger the personnel of the U.S. and its allies. To this end, the Department continuously reviews and refines its information security policies to ensure the security of sensitive information. As part of this ongoing review process, in early 2020 the Department reviewed and verified the effectiveness of existing security practices and reemphasized its commitment to preventing unauthorized disclosure of operationally sensitive information, including by application of existing "need-to-know" policies, which review resulted in the updating of distribution lists for sensitive information, continuing to ensure that only personnel with the required need-to-know receive such information. Department personnel rotations and portfolio responsibility changes make such reviews essential to ensure that the correct personnel receive information important to their duties.

Question. How soon after the President's July 25 call with President Zelenskyy were these changes instituted?

Answer. The Operations Center is integral to the Department's ability to carry out its global mission and remain connected to the Department's global workforce on a 24-hour, 7 day a week basis. Since its inception in 1961 the Operations center has strived to remain an ever evolving and an ever-improving unit than can respond quickly to the ever-changing environment of international events. Operational security is a key priority for the Operations Center's capacity to support U.S. foreign policy. Leaks of sensitive information can have serious implications for U.S. policy implementation, undercut diplomatic relations and national security, and endanger the personnel of the U.S. and its allies. To this end, the Department continuously reviews and refines its information security policies to ensure the security of sensitive information. As part of this ongoing review process, in early 2020 the Department reviewed and verified the effectiveness of existing security practices and reemphasized its commitment to preventing unauthorized disclosure of operationally sensitive information, including by application of existing "need-to-know" policies, which review resulted in the updating of distribution lists for sensitive information, continuing to ensure that only personnel with the required need-to-know receive such information. Department personnel rotations and portfolio responsibility changes make such reviews essential to ensure that the correct personnel receive information important to their duties.

Question. On what date was the decision made to limit the use of the Operations Center and access to calls with foreign leaders?

Answer. The Operations Center is integral to the Department's ability to carry out its global mission and remain connected to the Department's global workforce on a 24-hour, 7 day a week basis. Since its inception in 1961 the Operations center has strived to remain an ever evolving and an ever-improving unit than can respond quickly to the ever-changing environment of international events. Operational security is a key priority for the Operations Center's capacity to support U.S. foreign policy. Leaks of sensitive information can have serious implications for U.S. policy implementation, undercut diplomatic relations and national security, and endanger the personnel of the U.S. and its allies. To this end, the Department continuously reviews and refines its information security policies to ensure the security of sensitive information. As part of this ongoing review process, in early 2020 the Department reviewed and verified the effectiveness of existing security practices and reemphasized its commitment to preventing unauthorized disclosure of operationally sensitive information, including by application of existing "need-to-know" policies, which review resulted in the updating of distribution lists for sensitive information, continuing to ensure that only personnel with the required need-to-know receive such information. Department personnel rotations and portfolio responsibility changes make such reviews essential to ensure that the correct personnel receive information important to their duties.

Question. What was the basis for the decision, and who made it?

Answer. The Operations Center is integral to the Department's ability to carry out its global mission and remain connected to the Department's global workforce on a 24-hour, 7 day a week basis. Since its inception in 1961 the Operations center has strived to remain an ever evolving and an ever-improving unit than can respond quickly to the ever-changing environment of international events. Operational security is a key priority for the Operations Center's capacity to support U.S. foreign policy. Leaks of sensitive information can have serious implications for U.S. policy implementation, undercut diplomatic relations and national security, and endanger the personnel of the U.S. and its allies. To this end, the Department continuously reviews and refines its information security policies to ensure the security of sensitive information. As part of this ongoing review process, in early 2020 the Department reviewed and verified the effectiveness of existing security practices and reemphasized its commitment to preventing unauthorized disclosure of operationally sensitive information, including by application of existing "need-to-know" policies, which review resulted in the updating of distribution lists for sensitive information, continuing to ensure that only personnel with the required need-to-know receive such information. Department personnel rotations and portfolio responsibility changes make such reviews essential to ensure that the correct personnel receive information important to their duties.

Question. What is the current procedure for facilitating, listening to, and maintaining notes and call records for any calls placed, facilitated, transcribed, memorialized, or recorded by the Operations Center?

Answer. The Operations Center is integral to the Department's ability to carry out its global mission and remain connected to the Department's global workforce on a 24-hour, 7 day a week basis. Since its inception in 1961 the Operations center has strived to remain an ever evolving and an ever-improving unit than can respond quickly to the ever-changing environment of international events. Operational security is a key priority for the Operations Center's capacity to support U.S. foreign policy. Leaks of sensitive information can have serious implications for U.S. policy implementation, undercut diplomatic relations and national security, and endanger the personnel of the U.S. and its allies. To this end, the Department continuously reviews and refines its information security policies to ensure the security of sensitive information. As part of this ongoing review process, in early 2020 the Department reviewed and verified the effectiveness of existing security practices and reemphasized its commitment to preventing unauthorized disclosure of operationally sensitive information, including by application of existing "need-to-know" policies, which review resulted in the updating of distribution lists for sensitive information, continuing to ensure that only personnel with the required need-to-know receive such information. Department personnel rotations and portfolio responsibility changes make such reviews essential to ensure that the correct personnel receive information important to their duties.

Question. What changes have been made to any readouts of memorializing of calls? How are readouts and records of calls currently maintained and distributed?

Answer. The Operations Center is integral to the Department's ability to carry out its global mission and remain connected to the Department's global workforce on a 24-hour, 7 day a week basis. Since its inception in 1961 the Operations center has strived to remain an ever evolving and an ever-improving unit than can respond quickly to the ever-changing environment of international events. Operational security is a key priority for the Operations Center's capacity to support U.S. foreign policy. Leaks of sensitive information can have serious implications for U.S. policy implementation, undercut diplomatic relations and national security, and endanger the personnel of the U.S. and its allies. To this end, the Department continuously reviews and refines its information security policies to ensure the security of sensitive information. As part of this ongoing review process, in early 2020 the Department reviewed and verified the effectiveness of existing security practices and reemphasized its commitment to preventing unauthorized disclosure of operationally sensitive information, including by application of existing "need-to-know" policies, which review resulted in the updating of distribution lists for sensitive information, continuing to ensure that only personnel with the required need-to-know receive such information. Department personnel rotations and portfolio responsibility changes make such reviews essential to ensure that the correct personnel receive information important to their duties.

Question. In a November 7, 2019 response from the State Department to my October 28, 2019 letter to the White House Acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney requesting an investigation into outstanding allegations against pending nominees before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Department wrote that "Bureau of Diplomatic Security does not conduct additional investigations of candidates once the President has submitted their nominations to the Senate, as such background investigations are a prerequisite to such nominations, not a continuing process or function of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security." Is this statement still accurate? What is the basis for this statement?

Answer. The statement you quote correctly reflects the generic nature of the process being discussed in that statement. The Department is prepared to arrange a further briefing for you from the appropriate subject-matter experts in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security so that you may fully understand this issue.

Question. Has the Bureau of Diplomatic Security ever conducted an additional investigation regarding a nominee following the submission of a nomination to the Senate?

Answer. I have no personal knowledge of the conduct of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security practice over the decades in this regard, but the offered briefing I reference in my answer to your preceding question may be able to address this.

Question. I am extremely concerned by this Administration's notification of withdrawal from the WHO. During an unprecedented global health crisis, the WHO is the only organization with the global reach and mandate to assist and amplify any effort to mitigate the current crisis and prevent future pandemics. Simply put; our withdrawal cedes even further ground to China. How does our withdrawal from the WHO help U.S. efforts to counter Chinese efforts to gain influence in UN organizations?

Answer. The United States and the Department are committed to upholding the UN and related institutions that have fostered global peace and prosperity over the past 75 years, including by continuing to be the largest financial contributor to these organizations, providing more than \$12.2 billion in FY 2019 alone. The Department continuously works to ensure the American values of universality of human rights, the dignity and worth of individuals, peaceful resolution of conflict, sustainable economic prosperity, national sovereignty, transparency and the rule of law are protected and upheld at the UN and related international institutions.

I share the Administration's and the Committee's concern regarding the People's Republic of China and its abuse of the UN to advance its narrow foreign policy objectives. The Department will continue our efforts in reforming organizations to improve transparency, accountability, and effectiveness and in pushing back against the PRC's problematic behavior within the UN and its related agencies, including its attempts to use the UN as a tool to promote its authoritarian ideology and signature, global, and unilateral foreign policy platform, the One Belt, One Road initiative, and advance its domestic agenda at the expense of the international community.

Question. What countries have publicly expressed support for the U.S. decision to withdraw, and what countries have expressed support for our alternative proposal to fight pandemics?

Answer. The United States deposited its notice of withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO), effective on July 6, 2021. In the time before withdrawal becomes effective, we continue to engage countries and other regional organizations to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases at their source. As the failed response to COVID-19 by the WHO has clearly demonstrated, the international structures to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious-disease outbreaks and protect American lives are lacking. Political pressure by the Chinese Communist Party degraded the capability of the WHO. It also discouraged leaders and scientists from speaking out about the CCP's and other governments' refusal to report transparently on outbreaks of dangerous pathogens.

As the Department continues interagency discussions about our thoughts on future pandemic prevention, we know close coordination with other donor partners—a number of which have already reached out to us—will be critical to prevent future pandemics. For example, the U.S. rallied the multilateral Global Health Security Agenda Steering Group towards a shared dialogue on linkages between health security preparedness and COVID-19 response. The U.S. also continues to address the issue in high-level strategic dialogues, for example with governments including United Arab Emirates, Republic of Korea and Australia to better coordinate, build momentum for international COVID-19 response, and raise awareness for future preparedness against infectious disease threats.

Question. The WHO and the CDC both recommend the use of the scientific name COVID-19 to reduce social stigma and avoid discrimination against specific racial or ethnic groups. However, a number of State Department officials have used other, non-scientific terms for the virus, such as “Wuhan virus,” including you and Ambassador Kyle McCarter, whose tweet using “Wuhan flu” further inflamed already existing racial and xenophobic tensions in Kenya, particularly against Asian populations. The U.S. insistence on the use of such terminology also reportedly hampered a G7 joint statement on COVID-19. You have repeatedly referred to COVID-19 as the “Wuhan virus,” “China virus,” and “virus from Wuhan.” Do you agree with the WHO and CDC guidance use of the scientific name to reduce social stigma and discrimination?

Answer. On February 11, 2020, the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses formalized the etiologic agent as the “severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2”, or SARS-CoV-2, and the name of the disease as COVID-19. The Department has consistently used those conventions across the enterprise since they were introduced by the WHO.

The Department issued a notice to all diplomatic posts in March that included the February announcement of “COVID-19” as the official name for the disease. The Department advised diplomatic posts to use the COVID-19 acronym, including in public-facing materials.

Question. Has the Department issued a directive encouraging the use of the scientific term for the virus, COVID-19, and discouraging the use of any other non-scientific names? If so, when? To whom was that guidance sent?

Answer. The Department issued a notice to all diplomatic posts in March that included the February announcement of “COVID-19” as the official name for the coronavirus disease 2019. The Department advised diplomatic posts to use the COVID-19 acronym, including in public-facing materials. The notice also clarified that “COVID-19” is not synonymous with “coronavirus” or “novel coronavirus” and advised posts to avoid using the term “coronavirus” to refer to the general category/type of virus.

Question. What other steps is the Department taking to reduce the social stigma and discrimination associated with COVID-19?

Answer. I have informed all Department employees of the importance of preventing stigma and discrimination, resiliency and mental health, and supporting each other through COVID-19 with the goal of raising awareness about the potential for stigma during the pandemic and setting the tone for Department leadership. This includes the importance of practicing inclusion remotely to avoid isolating or stigmatizing team members. In June we also launched TalentCare. TalentCare integrates the Department’s workforce resilience initiatives so employees have a single touchpoint to access programs and resources that enhance health and well-being.

Question. How will you hold officials accountable at the Department who do not use the WHO and CDC-recommended term COVID-19?

Answer. The Department issued a notice to all diplomatic posts in March that included the February announcement of “COVID-19” as the official name for the coronavirus disease 2019. The Department advised diplomatic posts to use the

‘COVID-19’ acronym, including in public-facing materials. The notice also clarified that “COVID-19” is not synonymous with “coronavirus” or “novel coronavirus” and advised posts to avoid using the term “coronavirus” to refer to the general category/type of virus. All personnel have intermediate and annual evaluations by their supervisors that assess performance.

Question. In a May 3, 2020, interview, you claimed there was “a significant amount of evidence” pointing to the origination of the COVID-19 virus at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, directly contradicting an ODNI determination made 4 days prior that COVID-19 was not manmade or genetically modified. Do you still stand by that statement?

Answer. The world still does not have all the information it needs from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) about the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the first to learn of the virus and the threat it posed, CCP officials in Wuhan and Beijing had a special responsibility to inform the Chinese people and the world of what they knew. The PRC Government instead failed to share information in a timely manner, delayed scientific collaboration, denied the world access to physical virus samples collected in Wuhan, and censored scientists and journalists. The United States will continue seeking full transparency from the PRC Government to understand the origin of the virus and reduce the risk of such a devastating global pandemic occurring again.

Question. Do you agree with the findings of the ODNI determination about the origins of the COVID-19 virus?

Answer. I agree with the findings. INR, as did other IC agencies, coordinated on the IC’s assessment on the origin of the virus and concurred.

Question. If not, what evidence do you have that points to a different conclusion?

Answer. I agree with the conclusions.

Question. Since the start of the pandemic the United States has failed to lead the international efforts to respond. We blocked consensus on a statement from the Security Council, and from the G7 by insisting on using divisive racially inflammatory rhetoric to describe the infection. On May 4th, the European Union and its partners hosted an international pledging conference on the development and deployment of diagnostics, treatments and vaccines against coronavirus with a goal of not only developing those tools, but of ensuring they are universally available and affordable. We did not participate. Can you give me specific examples of where we have used our convening power to mobilize collective action and generate a comprehensive response from other countries around the world? Have we hosted pledging conferences, for example? I’ve seen nothing so if you are mobilizing others, it is a pretty well-kept secret.

Answer. The United States deposited its notice of withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO), effective on July 6, 2021. Until that time, we continue to engage countries and other regional organizations to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases at their source. As the failed response to COVID-19 by the WHO clearly demonstrated, the international structures to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious-disease outbreaks and protect American lives are lacking. Political pressure by the Chinese Communist Party has degraded the capability of the WHO. It also discouraged leaders and scientists from speaking out about the CCP’s and other governments’ refusal to report transparently on outbreaks of dangerous pathogens.

As the Department continues with interagency discussions, and others discuss with the U.S. Government our thoughts on future pandemic prevention, we know close coordination with other donor partners—a number of which have already reached out to us—will be critical to prevent future pandemics. For example, the U.S. rallied the multilateral Global Health Security Agenda Steering Group towards a shared dialogue on linkages between health security preparedness and COVID-19 response. The U.S. continues to address the issue in high-level strategic dialogues, for example with governments including United Arab Emirates, Republic of Korea and Australia to better coordinate, build momentum for international COVID-19 response, and raise awareness for future preparedness against infectious disease threats.

Question. What initiatives are we going to propose at the upcoming G-7 meeting? How are we leading at the United Nations?

Answer. During our presidency of the G7 in 2020, the United States has led efforts to respond to and recover from the global COVID-19 pandemic. We are marshalling the full power of our governments to: coordinate necessary public health

measures to protect people at risk from COVID-19; restore economic growth and protect jobs; support global trade and investment; and encourage cooperation and information sharing through science, research, and technology. One successful effort within the G7 Foreign Ministers Track was the negotiation and endorsement of high-level transportation principles to help reinvigorate the global transportation system, restore passenger and crew confidence in travel, integrate evolving public health considerations into transportation and travel, and closely coordinate international approaches to the treatment of air crew and seafarers.

In the UN, we adopted Resolution 2532 a little over a month ago, supporting the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire to secure a respite for countries and regions that, weakened by violence and conflict, are especially vulnerable to the virus, while continuing our legitimate counter-terrorism operations. We continue to support critical programs in health, water and sanitation, and protection.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global challenge, and the United States remains committed to working closely with our overseas partners as part of a collective global response. The U.S. Government (USG) has allocated \$20.5 billion to benefit the global COVID-19 response, including through preparedness and response efforts, foreign assistance, and investments to rapidly accelerate the development and deployment of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics. USG investments include \$1.6 billion commitment to the Vaccine Alliance, GAVI announced in June 2020 in addition to our long-standing support to Gavi, UNICEF, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria, all of whom will be critical players in the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. The United States leads the world in the effort to combat COVID-19 and will continue to seek opportunities to collaborate bilaterally or via multilateral fora and partnerships. We continue to work to ensure that USG investments, our scientific innovations, and our "All-of-America" approach to combatting the pandemic contribute to the broader worldwide effort against this deadly virus.

Question. It will be difficult to lead if we are not properly prepared and resourced ourselves. Do the Department and USAID have the resources to help countries bring the pandemic under control?

Answer. The impact of COVID-19 has been global in reach. Through generous funding from Congress, the Department of State and USAID have provided assistance to more than 120 countries. We continue to look for ways to build upon our decades-long leadership in health and humanitarian assistance. The United States cannot do it alone though. We will work closely with our other donor partners to identify ways to meet global needs and coordinate on ways to prevent future pandemics.

The United States will continue to be the world's leader in humanitarian and health assistance, in no small part because of the support of Congress. We are now reviewing what further challenges we and our partners should address next and the costs of those interventions. For example, USAID is undertaking a time-bound strategic review to look over the horizon at evolving humanitarian, development, and wider national security and foreign policy priorities. The review will be guided by a set of strategic framing questions to provide structure to this process and lead to actionable recommendations to better position USAID for a world reshaped by COVID-19.

Question. What does Congress need to provide in the next supplemental appropriations bill?

Answer. Congress has appropriated a total of \$2.3 billion to the Department of State and USAID to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic through the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-123) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136).

Ongoing needs are likely to include mitigating the pandemic's continuing impact on fee revenues that support consular services both domestically and abroad. I will work with Congress and OMB on any further requests for funding to support the Department's response to COVID-19 around the globe.

Question. Mr. Secretary, the Department of Homeland Security has been in the news after the President deployed it to Portland, Oregon, to crack down on anti-racist protests . . . a development that—quite frankly—has further weakened our nation's global standing as a beacon of freedom of speech and assembly. But, another alarming trend is how DHS has distorted U.S. foreign policy towards Central America. DHS, not the State Department, has negotiated agreements with foreign governments—agreements that the Administration is hiding from this committee, despite repeated requests. DHS signed Safe Third Country agreements with Guate-

mala, Honduras, and El Salvador to transfer asylum seekers from the United States, over your alleged objection to the White House and despite State Department data showing these countries' lack of capacity to implement them—data that has been provided privately to my office. Making matters worse, my office uncovered that DHS misused State Department funding, violated an agreement between the two agencies, and then lied about it. Time and again, the State Department has ceded its leadership to DHS. Last August, the New York Times reported that you met with the President and then-DHS Secretary McAleenan, and that you objected to the U.S. signing the Asylum Cooperative Agreement with Guatemala. Can you confirm this is true?

Answer. I cannot comment upon New York Times reporting and anonymous leaks. My confidential communications within the Executive Branch are just that, confidential.

Question. We know that the President sided with DHS rather than the State Department on a matter related to international agreements—over your objection. Why did that happen?

Answer. I cannot comment on anonymous speculation over Executive Branch deliberative processes. My confidential communications within the Executive Branch are just that, confidential.

Question. Given State Department data showing the lack of asylum capacity in the Northern Triangle, did you assess that Guatemala and Honduras provide adequate safety and sufficient asylum capacity to protect asylum seekers, as required by U.S. law?

Answer. Under Section 208(a)(2)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Attorney General and, by operation of the Homeland Security Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security make the determinations whether asylum seekers removed to a third country pursuant to a bilateral agreement (1) will not be persecuted on protected grounds and (2) will have access to full and fair procedures for determining their protection claims in that third country. I do not participate in making these domestic law determinations and did not do so with respect to the Asylum Cooperative Agreements with Guatemala and Honduras.

Question. Why did the Department of State abandon its leadership and authority in these vital matters to DHS?

Answer. It is the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security who have the statutory authority and obligation to determine whether a bilateral agreement complies with the “Safe Third Country” exception to the Immigration and Nationality Act. The State Department works with DHS to negotiate Asylum Cooperative Agreements with foreign governments, but does not participate in making these legal determinations.

Question. Secretary Pompeo, the day after the release of the Commission on Unalienable Rights report you seemed to indicate that some rights are more important than others. You failed to extoll the importance of the rights enshrined in our own constitution including the right to peaceful assembly or the freedom of the press. Furthermore, you stated “abortion is not a human right.” This follows actions by the United States, under your leadership, at the UN to lobby UN Member States to oppose access to reproductive health care and threatening to veto a UN Security Council Resolution over the inclusion of reproductive health care for women who have survived sexual assault. Do you believe that property rights are more important than the rights of free speech or assembly?

Answer. No. I believe property rights are vitally important and I believe that rights of free speech and assembly are vitally important.

Question. Is it your belief that women who suffer rape or assault should not receive reproductive healthcare?

Answer. I support a survivor-centered approach which empowers survivors of sexual violence, including rape and assault, by respecting their rights and prioritizing their needs. For the Trump Administration, this means working to ensure that survivors have access to appropriate, accessible, and quality health care, psychological and social support, security, and legal assistance.

Question. Do you expect the United States to continue to be a shining example of a country founded on universal human rights values when you have produced a document effectively saying we need to limit our definition?

Answer. Yes, I believe it is imperative for the United States to continue to be a shining example of a country dedicated to protecting and promoting universal

human rights. I played no role in drafting the report, but note that nowhere in the report does it state we need to “limit our definition.”

Question. The State Department has repeatedly used language urging “both sides” to avoid provoking tensions whenever Turkey is involved in a dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean region. However, from its incursions of Greek airspace to its exploratory drilling in Cyprus EEZ to its illegitimate ‘maritime boundary agreement’ with Libya’s Government of National Accord, Turkey has clearly been the sole aggressor in the region. Is there any recent dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean in which Greece or Cyprus has ‘provoked tensions’? When will you and the State Department stop using equivocating language to describe disputes Turkey creates in the Eastern Mediterranean and publicly stand up to Turkey’s aggression? How do you intend to hold Turkey accountable for that aggression against our partners?

Answer. We are deeply concerned by Turkey’s ongoing operations surveying for natural resources in areas over which Greece and Cyprus assert jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean. We continue to urge Turkey publicly and privately to halt any plans for exploration and to avoid provocative steps that raise regional tensions.

Resource development in the Eastern Mediterranean should promote cooperation and provide a foundation for durable energy security and economic prosperity throughout the region. We strongly support dialogue between Greece and Turkey and encourage the parties to resume discussing these issues.

Question. I appreciate your work to boost U.S. support for the Israel-Greece-Cyprus trilateral, including your participation in “3+1” summits, and I am pleased that State is moving forward with providing IMET to Cyprus in FY 2021 as laid out in my *Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act*, which became law last December. The East Med Act also called for the establishment of a U.S.-Eastern Mediterranean Energy Center. What is the status of discussions around creating this Center? What is the timeline for establishing it?

Answer. The Department’s understanding is that the United States—Eastern Mediterranean Energy Center has yet to be established due to lack of identified funding from Congress to support this effort. In the case of the Israel Center, Congress allocated \$4 million per year for 5 years to be matched by the Israeli Government and each nation’s private sector. DoE has not yet done a regional center of this type.

As the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act specifies, the DoE is charged with establishing this institution, in coordination with the State Department, we would ask you to consult with DoE for additional follow-up.

Question. Earlier this year, I received a letter from State and USAID saying that the Administration is ending funding for humanitarian demining in Nagorno-Karabakh due to a supposed lack of remaining contamination and a desire to focus on preparing populations for peace. However, the amount of remaining contamination is unknown and poses a serious threat to the peace process given that anger and resentment from landmine accidents reduce the population’s desire to see peace. While we all hope no further landmine accidents occur, if one does happen what effect does State assess that will have on the population’s readiness for peace? Have State and USAID considered funding an independent assessment of remaining contamination, and continuing demining of known contamination in populated areas while the assessment is ongoing?

Answer. Although a third-party assessment was considered, the available data was sufficient to determine the remaining mine contamination in the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast is light. With high-priority hazard areas already cleared and no civilian deaths in the past 5 years, landmines no longer pose the threat to local populations they once did. It would be unusual for the United States to continue demining in Nagorno-Karabakh, especially since unaddressed contamination elsewhere in the world poses grave threats and results in far higher casualty rates. Given limitations on official U.S. engagement in Nagorno-Karabakh, practical and oversight concerns raised serious questions about the reliability of conducting an assessment.

Question. The majority of Northern Ireland’s population opposed Brexit in the 2016 referendum, and the increasingly probable scenario that the EU and UK fail to reach a trade deal and revert to WTO rules on December 31 is deeply concerning. What impact does the State Department assess a reversion to WTO rules would have on the people and economy of Northern Ireland, including the impact on the Ireland-Northern Ireland border? What engagements have you and others at the State Department had with the UK Government regarding how it will implement the Good Friday Agreement in such a scenario?

Answer. Through the negotiation of a Withdrawal Agreement, the UK Government, Irish Government, and EU have been clear there will not be a return to a hard border on the island of Ireland. The Special Envoy to Northern Ireland has expressed to the Northern Ireland Office, the Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister), European leaders, and members of the Northern Ireland devolved government U.S. concerns about any actions that may lead to a hard border. The Special Envoy maintains frequent and direct contact with Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Brandon Lewis to discuss the Northern Ireland Protocol, a crucial part of the draft Withdrawal Agreement that addresses key provisions that would avoid the return of a hard border.

Question. I understand that discussions are ongoing regarding a U.S.-UK free trade agreement or some other trade deal. Is it the Administration's position that full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement is a necessary condition for signing any trade deal with the UK? What impact does the State Department assess any free trade deal would have on the economies of Northern Ireland and Ireland?

Answer. The Administration is committed to maintaining peace, prosperity, and stability in Northern Ireland through the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. The Administration has made clear that ongoing adherence to the Agreement is a necessary condition of any trade deal. Any free trade deal would be beneficial to the economy of Northern Ireland and would promote strong economic ties and investment.

Question. What has Special Envoy Mulvaney done regarding Northern Ireland since starting the position earlier this year? What engagements has he had with British and Irish Government officials, officials in Northern Ireland, and civil society in Northern Ireland? What engagements has he had with the U.S. Congress given widespread Congressional interest in the area?

Answer. Special Envoy Mulvaney has emphasized the U.S. role as an honest broker committed to maintaining peace, prosperity, and stability in Northern Ireland since he was appointed. Despite being unable to travel due to COVID-19, he has met with the UK, Irish, and EU ambassadors and has held virtual engagements with the U.S. Ambassadors to the UK and Ireland; the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland; the Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister); the ministers of the devolved government in Northern Ireland; and numerous government officials, members of civil society, community leaders, and business representatives. He has briefed members of Congress, including Representatives King, Boyle, and Joyce, and Senator Cotton.

Question. I am deeply concerned by the new Roskomnadzor order that would require media designated as "foreign agents"—meaning U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) outlets—to add large labels to all of their published materials saying they are foreign agents. The intent of this order is clearly to discourage Russians from reading media that calls the Kremlin's lies into question. How has the State Department engaged with the Kremlin on this issue? What steps are you taking to reinforce our support for fair, independent coverage from USAGM and ensure that it remains accessible to the Russian people?

Answer. We share your concern about the recent order published by Russian authorities that effectively targets U.S. Agency for Global Media-funded entities in Russia, a point I stressed publicly in my press statement on August 10. For more than 70 years, Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty have been vital sources of independent news and information for the people of Russia. Unfortunately, the proposed restrictions—which would permit substantial administrative penalties for non-compliance—coincide with increased repression by Russian authorities against already embattled journalists and independent press in Russia. We have urged the Russian Government to reconsider these actions, which will further damage the bilateral relationship, and to uphold its international obligations and commitments to freedom of expression.

Question. While Bahrain has recently freed a number of prisoners or allowed them to finish their sentences outside of prison, including Nabeel Rajab, many others remain unjustly detained. Please describe the specific steps taken by the U.S. to urge Bahrain to further reduce the number of detained individuals in Bahrain and to implement further judicial and policing reform.

Answer. The Department has identified cases of concern in Bahrain in its Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. U.S. officials have expressed concern about these to the government. The Government of Bahrain has implemented meaningful justice sector reforms in recent years, with the support of the U.S. Government. Justice sector development is among the areas of discussion between our two governments.

Question. Media reports indicate that the Egyptian Government has taken delivery of the first shipment of Russian-made Su-35 fighter jets in violation of CAATSA. Last year, you and Secretary Esper sent a letter to the Egyptians warning that “major new arms deals with Russia would—at a minimum—complicate future U.S. defense transactions with and security assistance to Egypt.” Are you prepared to stand by this letter and enforce U.S. law?

Answer. The Department is not aware of the delivery of any Su-35 fighter jets to Egypt. We are, however, concerned about media reports indicating that five Su-35 fighter jets allegedly intended for eventual delivery to Egypt were spotted in Novosibirsk, Russia. We are closely monitoring the situation and continue to urge the government of Egypt to not take delivery of any Su-35 aircraft. I have made clear in public testimony to Congress and to the government of Egypt that CAATSA Section 231 requires imposition of sanctions on any person that knowingly engages in a significant transaction with the Russian defense or intelligence sectors, and that I take implementation of CAATSA 231 seriously and intend to comply with the law.

Question. If so, what steps is the Administration prepared to take and will those steps include sanctions?

Answer. We have been very clear with senior levels of the Egyptian Government that CAATSA Section 231 requires imposition of sanctions on any person that knowingly engages in a significant transaction with the Russian defense or intelligence sectors, and that the delivery of Su-35 fighter aircraft risks triggering CAATSA 231 sanctions. Egyptian officials have indicated that they understand. In addition to urging Egypt, as we do all our partners and allies, to avoid new major Russian arms purchases that risk triggering CAATSA 231 sanctions, we continue to engage Egypt to ensure the United States remains its partner of choice.

Question. The Egyptian Government has still not adequately compensated April Corley, the American citizen badly injured by the Egyptian military when attack helicopters struck her sightseeing group after misidentifying them as terrorists. What steps is the United States taking to advocate for Ms. Corley and ensure that the Egyptian government reaches an equitable compensation agreement with her?

Answer. The Department strongly supports April Corley and the Government of Egypt reaching a just resolution, and we continue to raise Ms. Corley’s desire for fair compensation at very senior levels of the Egyptian Government. The Department is also in communication with Ms. Corley and her lawyers on the status of negotiations. As of April 6, Egypt told the Department that the private entity negotiating with Ms. Corley had been urged to reopen the negotiation channels with her lawyers to strike an agreement. We will continue to urge Egypt to resume negotiations with Ms. Corley’s lawyers.

Question. I am extremely concerned that Egyptian authorities detained family members of U.S. citizen Mohamad Soltan after raiding their homes. The timing of these raids and detentions shortly after Mr. Soltan sued former Egyptian Prime Minister Hazem al-Beblawi under the Torture Victim Protection Act, for alleged torture and other human rights violations. Does the State Department assess that Mr. Soltan’s relatives were raided and detained in retribution for his lawsuit against Mr. al-Beblawi? Why or why not?

Answer. We are aware of troubling media reports of raids on the homes of Mr. Soltan’s Egyptian family and detention of his relatives. On July 8, I publicly urged Egyptian officials to stop any harassment of U.S. citizens or their families. We will continue to engage the Egyptian Government on this issue, because we take seriously all allegations of arbitrary arrest or detention in Egypt.

Question. Does the State Department assess that the raid and detention of Mr. Soltan’s relatives amount to a pattern of intimidation against Mr. Soltan, an American citizen? Why or why not?

Answer. We note that these arrests occurred within 2 weeks of Mr. Soltan filing a civil lawsuit against Mr. Beblawi. We are monitoring the situation and plan to document such allegations in the Department’s Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. I can assure you that the welfare of all Americans remains a top priority for the State Department, and we continue to press Egypt on its detention conditions, the need for timely and fair judicial processes, and for the respect of human rights in general.

Question. What steps, if any, did the Administration take to urge the Egyptian Government to release Mr. Soltan’s relatives?

Answer. We continue to emphasize to the Government of Egypt that the United States rejects all forms of intimidation and have raised our concerns with senior Egyptian officials in Washington and Cairo. We have asked Egypt to disclose where Soltan's family members are being held and on July 8, I publicly urged Egyptian officials to stop any harassment of U.S. citizens and their families. In June and July respectively, the Bureaus of Near East Affairs and Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor issued public messages expressing that the Department takes all allegations of harassment of U.S. citizens and their families seriously.

Question. Has the Administration urged the Egyptian Government not to take such action in the future?

Answer. The United States has long emphasized the importance of respect for the fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly, and association, and we continue to do so. We have also raised with Egypt that the United States rejects all forms of intimidation and takes all allegations of arbitrary arrest or detention in Egypt seriously. On July 8, I publicly requested Egypt stop any harassment of U.S. citizens and their families.

Question. Without taking a position on the merits of Mr. Soltan's lawsuit, I have questions about State Department's declaration on July 17 that Mr. el-Beblawi should be immune from being under the Torture Victim Protection Act. Did the Egyptian Government specifically seek this determination and announcement? If so, who and when?

Answer. In June, the Department received diplomatic correspondence from the Egyptian Embassy related to the immunity of Mr. el-Beblawi. It is the Department's standard practice, as set forth in the Foreign Affairs Manual (2 FAM 234.1-1), that in such cases, the Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) will provide a certification confirming any immunities enjoyed by the person at issue under international law. OFM provided such a certification to the Egyptian Embassy regarding Mr. el-Beblawi on July 7.

Question. Please provide the State Department's legal reasoning for why Mr. el-Beblawi is immune from such a lawsuit.

Answer. Mr. el-Beblawi is the Principal Resident Representative of Egypt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Pursuant to Article V, Section 15(4) of the Agreement Between the United Nations (UN) and the United States Regarding the Headquarters of the UN, principal resident representatives of members of a "specialized agency" are entitled to the same privileges and immunities as diplomatic envoys accredited to the United States. The Agreement between the UN and the IMF establishes that the IMF is a "specialized agency." In the United States, the privileges and immunities of diplomatic envoys (now called "diplomatic agents") are those provided under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR). Therefore, Mr. el-Beblawi enjoys the same immunities as would a diplomatic agent under the VCDR.

Question. Regional aggression from Iranian proxies has continued since Qassem Soleimani was killed in January. And while your legally questionable strike against Qassem Soleimani perhaps, as General MacKenzie recently said put the Iranians "on their heels", he continued by saying that he "draws no confidence from periods of quiet" rather takes these moments to look very hard at what the Iranians have planned long term. Just this week, Israel said it stopped a Hezbollah infiltration under its border and there was an exchange of fire at the border. In Yemen, the Houthis continue to launch Iranian-made ballistic missiles into Saudi Arabia. In Iraq, U.S. diplomatic and military facilities remain under constant threat with Camp Taji again coming under rocket fire earlier this week. Please describe what steps you are taking, in concert with our allies, to seriously address this ongoing Iranian aggression.

Answer. In light of Iran's continued sponsorship of terrorism and attacks on its neighbors, it is imperative to remain vigilant against the threat of Iranian attacks. The JCPOA's failure to address Iran's support for armed proxies and partners in the region was one of the reasons that this Administration ultimately decided to exit the deal and institute the maximum pressure campaign. Since May 2018, we have deprived the regime of more than \$70 billion in revenue, which has in turn meant the regime has less money to support its proxies. We have also maintained a clear and consistent line with the Iranian regime: any targeting of U.S. personnel, facilities, or interests will result in serious consequences.

Question. While there is no question that Iran is suffering economically, its proxy networks continue to be active in promoting instability. What evidence do you have

that the maximum pressure campaign has reduced the level of Iranian aggression or support for proxies in the region?

Answer. The economic constraints caused by the maximum pressure campaign mean the Iranian regime has less money to support its proxies and terrorist activities. As a result, Hizballah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah publicly appealed for donations for the first time ever. Hamas has also enacted what it calls an “austerity plan” to mitigate a lack of funds from Iran. Iranian partners and proxies in Syria and elsewhere are going unpaid, and the Iranian support they once relied upon is drying up.

Question. Do you assess that Iran’s financial duress has pushed them closer to and economic and security arrangement with China?

Answer. For the Iranian regime, a closer partnership with China is a partnership born of desperation. Because the regime has been severely weakened, in part by U.S. sanctions but also through its own mismanagement and corruption, it is willing to negotiate a bad deal for the Iranian people as long as the regime gains access to much-needed capital. The regime has been reluctant to publicly share details of the agreement for this very reason. The Iranian people know this, and they are rightly outraged by this hypocrisy.

Question. How would increased Iranian and Chinese cooperation impact U.S. interests and efforts across the Middle East and Asia?

Answer. We are closely monitoring reports of a draft 25-year agreement between China and Iran. The scale of the supposed Chinese investment in the deal deserves healthy skepticism. However, Chinese entities continue to provide financial support to the Iranian regime, including through continued sanctionable purchases of Iranian petrochemicals and metals. We have made clear to the Chinese Government that we will continue to vigorously enforce our sanctions regime with respect to Iran, including on Chinese individuals and entities that engage in sanctionable conduct. By allowing Chinese companies to conduct sanctionable activities with the Iranian regime, the PRC is undermining its own stated goal of promoting stability in the Middle East.

Question. Will you commit to sharing any classified evidence that would pertain to these answers to me or my staff in a secure setting?

Answer. My staff and I are committed to keeping your staff, and any other member of the legislative branch, informed.

Question. The Administration’s maximum pressure campaign has not brought Iran back to the negotiating table. Nor has unilaterally withdrawing from the JCPOA, which I did not support, without the support of our allies. I remain concerned about Iran’s nuclear progress over the past year. In the past months, Iran was closer to a nuclear break out than at any time over the past 5 years. In spite of the economic damage wrought by renewed sanctions, Iran has not shown any willingness to negotiate a new nuclear deal or even lessen its support for proxies that menace our allies and partners around the Middle East. The President has said that Iran will not be allowed to have the ability to have a nuclear weapon. Can you provide specific examples of how this Administration has increased constrained Iran’s nuclear weapons’ development?

Answer. The JCPOA was a flawed deal because it did not permanently address our concerns with respect to Iran’s nuclear program and destabilizing conduct. The fact that Iran has been able to return to higher levels of nuclear enrichment so quickly and easily reflects the deal’s deficiencies. The purpose of the maximum pressure campaign is to deprive the regime of revenue needed to foment its malign activities and bring Iran to the negotiation table to address both Iran’s nuclear program as well as its other destabilizing activities. The United States is engaged in robust international engagement to bring multilateral pressure on Iran and to raise the costs of its nuclear escalation.

Question. What is the Administration’s red line as it considers the size and sophistication of Iran’s nuclear program when considering whether military action is necessary to restrain Iran’s nuclear program?

Answer. The President has been clear that the United States will never allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon. Any decision on if, and under what circumstances, military action would be warranted is up to the President.

Question. Does the red line cover the number of centrifuges?

Answer. The President has been clear that the United States will never allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon. Any decision on if and under what circumstances military action would be warranted is up to the President.

Question. Does the red line cover the ability to deliver a warhead via a ballistic missile?

Answer. The President has been clear that the United States will never allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon. Any decision on if and under what circumstances military action would be warranted is up to the President.

Question. Does the red line cover the level of uranium enrichment?

Answer. The President has been clear that the United States will never allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon. Any decision on if and under what circumstances military action would be warranted is up to the President.

Question. Will you commit to providing me and my staff a classified meeting to address this question?

Answer. My staff and I are committed to keeping your staff, and any other member of the Legislative branch, informed.

Question. Given Iran's unwillingness thus far to return to a negotiating table, what do you think would change that calculus?

Answer. Iran is facing massive economic and political crises, including a large economic contraction, high unemployment, a currency crisis, and mass protests. The economic conditions, as well as the regime's credibility with its people, will not likely improve. Given this reality, the regime faces a stark choice: come to the negotiating table or face economic collapse.

Question. While we ostensibly share the same goals regarding constraining Iran's nuclear ambitions and nefarious activities with our European partners, it seems the coalition is fraying. What steps are you taking to ensure that our European partners stay with us in a concerted joint effort to constrain Iran's ambitions.

Answer. The UK, France, and Germany have all expressed opposition to Iranian actions to advance its nuclear program beyond JCPOA limits and also share our concern regarding Iran's continued proliferation of weaponry to arm proxies and partners. Cooperation with European allies and partners to address the range of threats posed by Iran remains robust and we are in regular communication with our allies and partners regarding our Iran policy and how to raise the cost on Iran for its destabilizing activities.

Question. The IAEA is becoming increasingly concerned about access to declared Iranian facilities. What steps are you taking to ensure the IAEA is empowered to fulfill its inspection responsibilities?

Answer. The United States is committed to strengthening international safeguards globally and fully supports the efforts of the IAEA to fulfill its important mandate, including in Iran, which is required under its legally-binding safeguards agreements to provide the IAEA with access to locations specified by the agency. The IAEA Director General (DG) Rafael Grossi reported that since January 2020, Iran has refused to provide access to two locations not declared by Iran. In June 2020, we supported a strong IAEA Board of Governors resolution calling on Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA without further delay. I recently met with DG Grossi, and we will continue to use our diplomacy to ensure the IAEA maintains full access to Iranian facilities.

Question. What steps are you considering if the IAEA is denied access?

Answer. On June 19, the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a resolution calling on Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA without any further delay, including by providing prompt access to the locations specified by the agency. We have made clear that if Iran fails to cooperate, the international community must be prepared to take further action.

Question. While clearly not a supporter of the JCPOA, I was still concerned that unilaterally withdrawing from the agreement without a plan for how to replace it would alienate our allies and embolden our rivals. We are now trying to extend the UN arms embargo on Iran by October with no clear way of countering the inevitable Russian and Chinese veto of our efforts. What options do we have in the almost certain event of the arms embargo expiring?

Answer. While we would prefer to see the UN Security Council take collective action, we have been clear that absent collective action the United States would have

no choice but to initiate the snapback of UN sanctions to prevent Iran from obtaining and proliferating deadly weapons throughout the region.

Question. What assurances do you have from our European allies that they will join us in pursuing these options?

Answer. The UK, France, and Germany have all expressed opposition to Iran's continued proliferation of weaponry to arm proxies and partners. While we would prefer to see the UN Security Council take collective action, we have been clear that absent collective action the United States would restore UN sanctions to prevent Iran from obtaining and proliferating deadly weapons throughout the region.

Question. Are you planning to invoke the snapback mechanism in the event the embargo is not extended?

Answer. While we would prefer to see the UN Security Council take collective action, we have been clear that absent collective action the United States will have no choice but to trigger the snapback of all UN sanctions on Iran in order to prevent Iran from obtaining and proliferating deadly weapons throughout the region.

Question. What are the implications for the future of UN sanctions if snapback is invoked and Russia and China or other countries do not comply with those sanctions?

Answer. All UN member states are required to implement UN Security Council sanctions obligations. These obligations exist independent of non-compliance by individual Member States. The United States will continue to make every effort to ensure that all UN member states comply with their UN Security Council sanctions obligations.

Question. How are you engaging with other countries to ensure that the current embargo is enforced?

Answer. Cooperation with allies and partners to address the range of threats posed by Iran remains robust and in the context of Iranian conventional arms transfers, has resulted in several well-publicized interdictions conducted in recent years by U.S., French, Australian, and Saudi forces. We have also worked with both the United Nations and like-minded countries to shine a light on Iran's continued malign activities. In part due to our efforts, the UN Secretary General's June report on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2231 unequivocally concluded that the cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles used in the September 14, 2019, attack on Saudi oil facilities were Iranian in origin.

Question. I have still not received a good answer to my first two questions from January regarding the imminence and nature of the threat used to justify the assassination of Qassem Soleimani. U.S. personnel in Iraq are now under greater threat than they have been in recent history and the U.S. Embassy and Green Zone are rocketed on a near daily basis. Over the past year, U.S. presence in Iraq has been on ordered departure more days than not and the State Department has permanently decreased its positions in Iraq to roughly 80. Yet the State Department and USAID continue to program foreign assistance, including over half a billion dollars in Northern Iraq, at the same time it is downsizing its presence, thereby impeding its ability to oversee these funds and raising serious concerns about waste, fraud, and abuse. Do you expect any shortcomings in administering U.S. assistance in Iraq given the reduced staffing in the country?

Answer. The Department of State and USAID have long faced security challenges in delivering assistance in Iraq, which we seek to mitigate by drawing on additional support from Washington and from regional staff to supplement our mission. As a result, we do not expect any shortcomings in the Administration of U.S. assistance based on current staffing levels.

Question. Do you believe our diplomatic presence in Iraq is large enough to adequately perform all the tasks we are asking of it?

Answer. Our current staffing level (349 U.S. Direct Hires and Third Country Nationals) enables us to accomplish our mission in Iraq while accounting for the current security environment. However, staffing levels are not static and are constantly re-evaluated and adjusted to meet mission priorities. Our diplomatic presence is consistent with staffing levels previously notified to Congress in CN 19-327.

Question. Given the staffing reductions, what steps are the State Department and USAID taking to ensure that U.S. foreign assistance is properly administered?

Answer. The Department of State and USAID are committed to properly administering U.S. foreign assistance in Iraq. Last year, USAID increased its authorized expatriate staff in Iraq from 8 to 13, allowing us to better manage our resources

in-country. The State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination manage their programs entirely from Washington, incorporating an in-country monitoring team. The Department of State and USAID also maintain a network of staff outside the country who provide support to the Iraq mission.

Question. Lebanon's financial crisis is accelerating at an alarming rate with some economists warning that the country faces an economic collapse similar to Venezuela with the country's large middle class being pushed into poverty. Is U.S. economic assistance helping to mitigate Lebanon's financial crisis?

Answer. U.S. economic assistance is reaching thousands of Lebanese people in a time of acute crisis. Our economic assistance, which included more than \$117.5 million in FY 2019 economic support funds alone, promotes economic growth, supports workforce enhancement and education, and helps with the local provision of basic services. For instance, USAID expects to have created more than 3,000 new full-time jobs in Lebanon by September, and its assistance has led to education for more than 300,000 Lebanese children. However, a path out of Lebanon's crisis depends on Lebanese political leaders and whether they are prepared to implement the reforms necessary to put the country on a sustainable path.

Question. What reforms do you think are most critical for Lebanon to pursuant to the IMF recommendations?

Answer. Despite many months of discussions between the Lebanese Government and the International Monetary Fund, Lebanese leaders have not yet taken even the most preliminary steps toward reform that would be required for serious negotiations for an IMF program. Reforms are needed in a variety of areas, including in the electricity, customs, and telecoms sectors, as well as in fiscal policy, fiscal transparency, and finance and banking, among others. Progress in these areas would help put the Lebanese economy on a more sustainable path.

Question. Do you assess this government as capable of making necessary reforms to the economy?

Answer. The popular demand for real change in Lebanon could not be clearer, and the United States has called on Lebanon's political leaders to finally respond to the people's longstanding and legitimate demands for good governance, sound economic and financial reform, and an end to the endemic corruption that has stifled the country's tremendous potential. So far, Lebanese leaders have failed in their responsibility to meet the needs of the people and have resisted the kind of deep fundamental reforms that are needed. Lebanese leaders must demonstrate a political will and commitment to reform. It is what the Lebanese people expect and deserve.

Question. Would Hezbollah benefit from an economic collapse in Lebanon?

Answer. A stable and secure Lebanon is in the interest of the United States, the Lebanese people, and the region. Hizballah is a terrorist organization and a destabilizing force. It has benefitted from the lack of accountability and transparency in Lebanon. Its malign activities undermine the Lebanese state and threaten the country's security. Economic collapse would be harmful to the institutions in Lebanon we support and that help undermine Hizballah's influence.

Question. Does such an economic collapse in Lebanon threaten the security of our ally, the State of Israel?

Answer. Israel's security is a long-standing cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. Economic collapse in Lebanon would have negative effects both on the state and beyond its borders, and Hizballah in this scenario could very well pose even more of a threat to Israel. Economic reform is key to Lebanon's stability and, therefore, to U.S. national security and the security of our partners.

Question. Should the United States continue to provide economic assistance to Lebanon at the same level as in recent years?

Answer. The President's Budget Request for FY 2021 reflects the level of U.S. assistance that we assess is appropriate to our efforts to assist in meeting the needs of the Lebanese people who continue to face persistent challenges. Our economic assistance addresses the needs of vulnerable communities, particularly those struggling due to declining economic opportunities and poor public services. By improving local governance, strengthening educational institutions, and enhancing and boosting economic growth, U.S. economic assistance activities also help to challenge the false narrative advanced by Hizballah, and its sponsor Iran, that it represents a viable alternative to legitimate Lebanese institutions.

Question. U.S. security assistance has helped the Lebanese Armed Forces become a more effective and professional force for all Lebanese, regardless of sect, thereby undermining Hezbollah's claim that it is the only defender that Lebanon can count on. Do you agree with that statement?

Answer. I strongly support the statement that U.S. security assistance has helped the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) become a more effective and professional force for all Lebanese, regardless of sect. The LAF remains one of the most respected institutions in Lebanon and the U.S.-LAF partnership builds the LAF's capacity as the sole legitimate defender of Lebanon's sovereignty. U.S. support for institutions like the LAF helps undermine Hezbollah's influence and helps debunk Hezbollah's false narrative of being Lebanon's protector.

Question. Would a reduction in the capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces undermine Israeli security?

Answer. Israel's security is a long-standing cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. The United States has expressed publicly and privately deep concerns about Hezbollah's continued efforts to expand its weaponry and project Iran's threats to Israel and the region. U.S. support for institutions like the Lebanese Armed Forces helps undermine Hezbollah's influence.

Question. Should the U.S. continue to provide security assistance to Lebanon at the same level as in recent years?

Answer. U.S. security assistance for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) is a key component of U.S. policy in Lebanon. U.S. assistance to the LAF and the Internal Security Forces (ISF) helps to build capable and committed partner forces for the United States in a difficult region, as well as helping the Lebanese state protect its borders, effectively counter ISIS, and demonstrate it is the sole legitimate defender of Lebanon's sovereignty.

Question. What would the implications be of reducing U.S. military assistance to the LAF?

Answer. The LAF is one of our strongest counterterrorism partners in the region. A weakened LAF would enable Hezbollah to expand its influence even further and increase the risk of instability inside Lebanon and beyond. Our assistance to the LAF helps ensure it remains a reliable and critical counterterrorism partner for the United States. In addition, a LAF weakened by reduced assistance from the United States might need to accept supplementary assistance from other nations, which may have objectives contrary to ours. Russia, for instance, has offered military assistance to the LAF in the past, and it was able to refuse, in large part, because of the strength and reliability of our own partnership.

Question. Much like the Astana process in Syria, following their meeting in Ankara last week, it now appears that Turkey and Russia are poised to drive the geopolitical agenda in Libya and across the Mediterranean. Last week, there were also a number of reports that Russia is positioning more forces in Libya in support of Khalifa Hefthar, adding more fuel to a fire already raging with weapons from other countries across the region. Is it your assessment that Russia and Turkey control the future of maritime security in the Mediterranean?

Answer. Countering malign Russian influence remains a U.S. foreign policy priority worldwide. In Libya, we remain concerned by the continued influx of Russian military armaments and Russian-backed Wagner mercenaries from Russia, Syria, and other countries. Russia seeks to divide NATO Allies over Libya, establish a foothold on the Mediterranean, and exploit and control Libyan energy resources. The United States opposes any arrangement that allows Russia to dictate outcomes in Libya. From bases in Libya, Russia could challenge NATO area access in the Mediterranean and threaten European and U.S. assets and personnel stationed across the continent.

To ensure regional security in the Mediterranean, we stress to Turkey and other NATO Allies, as well as our non-NATO partners in the region, countering Russian activity in Libya must be a top collective priority. We continue to urge Turkey, aligned with Libya's UN-recognized Government of National Accord, to avoid pursuing any sort of arrangement with Russia in Libya; we want to see de-escalation on both sides. We continue to call on all Libyan and external actors to support UN-led negotiations towards a sustainable ceasefire, the resumption of oil sector operations, and an immediate return to UN-facilitated political negotiations.

Question. What steps is the Administration taking to ensure that Turkey and Russia do not end up controlling maritime security in the eastern Mediterranean?

Answer. We will continue to use our full diplomatic and economic leverage to stop Russia's destabilizing activities in Syria and Libya. We regularly warn Eastern Mediterranean allies and partners of Russia's intention to establish a permanent presence in the region. We ask them to deny Russia port visits and publicly condemn Russia's support for armed groups, including Russian proxy the Wagner group, and violations of the UN arms embargo in Libya.

We have conveyed to Turkey repeatedly that its continued overflights of Greek territory, drilling activities in waters off Cyprus, signing of a maritime boundary memorandum of understanding with Libya, and ongoing operations surveying for energy resources in areas over which Greece and the Republic of Cyprus assert jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean are provocative and unhelpful.

Question. The Turkish-GNA maritime border agreement is based on a flawed reading of international law. Our partners including Greece and Cyprus have expressed vocal opposition to this agreement, which undermines U.S. security interests as well as broader security and energy cooperation in the eastern Mediterranean. Will the United States insist that any potential future Libyan government eschew the underpinnings of this agreement and work with other Eastern Mediterranean countries to comply with international law and peaceful energy exploration?

Answer. As we have said publicly and privately, the Memorandum of Understanding on maritime boundaries has raised tensions in the region and has been unhelpful to efforts to negotiate a solution to the conflict. The United States has called on all parties to refrain from actions that risk heightening tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. This development highlights the risk of the Libyan conflict taking on wider regional dimensions and the urgent need for all interested parties to work towards a negotiated solution.

Question. What steps is the U.S. taking to counter Turkey's aggression in the Eastern Mediterranean?

Answer. The Administration is deeply concerned with heightened tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. We have conveyed to Turkey repeatedly that its continued overflights of Greek territory, its drilling activities in the waters off Cyprus, its signing of a maritime boundary MOU with Libya, and its ongoing operations surveying for natural resources in areas over which Greece and Cyprus assert jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean are provocative and unhelpful. We continue to press Turkey to meet its responsibilities under the existing Turkey-EU migration deal and to avoid provocative acts on the Turkey-Greece border.

Turkey remains an important NATO Ally, and we will continue working with Turkey on areas of mutual interest while urging it to change course in areas of concern.

Question. Over the past year, we have seen a lack of diplomatic engagement on Libya, coupled with mixed messages from President Trump, which allowed for General Haftar's ill-advised assault on Tripoli and open the way for Turkey and Russian footholds in the country. While I appreciate that you participated in the Berlin conference earlier this year, I fear that our absence is causing significant damage. Does the Administration have a strategy to deescalate the fighting in Libya and restart political talks? Will we see that strategy in writing by September 15 as required by the 2020 NDAA?

Answer. As an active but neutral actor, the United States is pursuing diplomatic engagement with Libyan and external stakeholders across the conflict to find a solution. U.S. goals in Libya are to seek an immediate end to the conflict and return to political negotiations. The efforts of foreign actors to exploit the conflict pose grave threats to regional stability and global commerce. The Department of State is in the process of coordinating a joint report to Congress with the Department of Defense on the U.S. strategy on Libya.

Question. Does that strategy have buy in from regional partners and allies, some of whom support the GNA and some of whom support the LNA?

Answer. Through our diplomatic engagement, the United States is working to find a solution that ends foreign interference in Libya and protects the shared interests of the United States, our allies, and partners. Our approach includes engagement with all external actors in Libya—whether they support the GNA or LNA—with the goal of aligning them with the position of the United States in favor of a UN-facilitated political process.

Question. I understand the President has recently made some calls to foreign leaders encouraging them to cease their supply of weapons and support. How effective do you assess those engagements?

Answer. The President's personal engagement has helped advance our policy of reducing foreign interference in Libya and supporting UN-facilitated political dialogue.

Question. What are the potential implications of direct confrontation between Turkey and Egypt in Libya?

Answer. The Department of State is encouraging Egypt, Turkey, and other partners to use their influence to press Libyans including Khalifa Haftar, House of Representatives Speaker Agilah Saleh Issa, and Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj to de-escalate the conflict, support implementation of an immediate ceasefire, and engage in a UN-facilitated political process to work for a peaceful solution. Any direct conflict between outside actors in Libya would have negative effects on the Libyan people and U.S. interests in the region.

Question. One of the complications of the lack of U.S. engagement on Libya is that U.S. partners and allies are on both sides of the conflict, some supporting the GNA and some joining Russia to support the LNA and many violating the UN arms embargo on Libya to supply weapons and equipment to their proxies. What steps has the U.S. taken to enforce the UN arms embargo on Libya?

Answer. The United States supports Security Council Resolution 2292, which provides vital authorities for member states to limit the destabilizing flows of arms to and from Libya. The Security Council renewed these authorities most recently in June. The United States has strongly supported a robust UN arms embargo and sanctions regime, and has used its position on the Security Council to ensure those continue. The United States has made clear to all actors, publicly and privately, the need to respect the arms embargo. Secretary Pompeo emphasized this in his remarks to the Berlin conference in January. The United States cooperates with the UN Security Council Libya Sanctions Committee Panel of Experts, which investigates alleged arms embargo violations, and encourages other countries to do so as well.

Question. Have there been any repercussions for countries that have repeatedly violated the arms embargo?

Answer. Individuals and entities that have participated in efforts to send arms to Libya have faced sanctions and criminal prosecution. EU Operation Irini and its predecessor, Operation Sophia, have interdicted vessels suspected of violating the embargo and shared information on alleged violations with the UN Security Council Libya Sanctions Committee Panel of Experts. Countries that sent arms and fighters to Libya have faced direct criticism from the international community, including the United States, as well as from independent NGOs.

Question. Will the U.S. impose any repercussions for repeated violations of that embargo?

Answer. The United States has consistently promoted accountability for violations of the UN arms embargo on Libya. Sanctions discourage violations and we will consider their targeted use when appropriate. We continue to press our partners to do the same and respect the embargo they committed to in Berlin. Countries that sent arms and fighters to Libya also faced direct and public criticism from the United States. In testimony before Congress, in public comments, and in my own remarks at the Berlin conference in January, the Department has not shied away from naming countries that have escalated the conflict. We also support international efforts to better enforce compliance with the embargo, including efforts by the European Union.

Question. What is the Administration's broader policy toward foreign intervention in Libya? What is the State Department communicating to those foreign governments involved in Libya, many of whom are close U.S. partners like Egypt and the United Arab Emirates?

Answer. The Administration opposes all foreign military interference in Libya, supports UN-led negotiations towards a sustainable ceasefire, and backs an immediate return to a UN-facilitated political process. In recent weeks, we have seen Egypt take a more constructive approach and we encourage this positive development. We are urging foreign parties to end their military involvement in Libya and use their influence to encourage diverse Libyan participation in UN-facilitated security and political negotiations. We made clear there is no military solution and Libyan leadership and external backers must support a political settlement to this conflict.

Question. The Turkish-GNA maritime border agreement is based on a flawed reading of international law. Will the United States insist that any potential future

Libyan Government eschew the underpinnings of this agreement and work with other Eastern Mediterranean countries including Greece and Cyprus to comply with international law and peaceful energy exploration?

Answer. As we have said publicly and privately, the Memorandum of Understanding on maritime boundaries has raised tensions in the region and has been unhelpful to efforts to negotiate a solution to the conflict. The United States has called on all parties to refrain from actions that risk heightening tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. This development highlights the risk of the Libyan conflict taking on wider regional dimensions and the urgent need for all interested parties to work towards a negotiated solution.

Question. What steps is the U.S. taking to counter Turkey's aggression in the Eastern Mediterranean?

Answer. The Administration is deeply concerned with heightened tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. We have conveyed to Turkey repeatedly that its continued overflights of Greek territory, its drilling activities in the waters off Cyprus, its signing of a maritime boundary MOU with Libya, and its ongoing operations surveying for natural resources in areas over which Greece and Cyprus assert jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean are provocative and unhelpful. We continue to press Turkey to meet its responsibilities under the existing Turkey-EU migration deal and to avoid provocative acts on the Turkey-Greece border.

Turkey remains an important NATO Ally, and we will continue working with Turkey on areas of mutual interest while urging it to change course in areas of concern.

Question. If Saudi Arabia and the UAE are allowed to purchase armed drones from the U.S., will they be allowed to deploy those drones in Libya?

Answer. We don't comment publicly on possible arms sales until and unless we notify them to Congress. Partners are required to follow "End Use" requirements for all arms transfers as addressed in the Letter of Offer and Acceptance, standard terms and conditions for foreign military sales or other end use assurances as part of commercial sales agreements.

Question. Ever since President Trump's hasty and ill-conceived withdrawal from much of northeast Syria last October, the U.S. has lost much of its diplomatic leverage and freedom of movement in Syria. Are U.S. troop movements in northeast Syria challenged on the ground by Russian soldiers and Assad regime fighters more or less frequently since October?

Answer. The U.S. military continues to communicate with the Russian military in Syria via a de-confliction hotline. This is first and foremost a safety mechanism to prevent accidents and ensure the safe and professional conduct of our forces in close proximity. The Department of Defense is best positioned to respond to questions regarding U.S. troop movements, but the Department of State stresses in diplomatic exchanges with Moscow the importance of adherence to de-confliction agreements and procedures.

Question. How many USAID personnel are on the ground in Northeast Syria, compared to September 2019?

Answer. As of July 21, 2020, the USAID has no personnel on the ground in Northeast Syria. This has not changed since September of 2019.

Question. Is it fair to say that it is harder to administer U.S. assistance without that same USAID presence, especially now when COVID had finally reared its head in Northeast and Northwest Syria?

Answer. The ability of USAID to deliver assistance inside Syria depends on security, the availability of legitimate local partners, the legal ability to provide such aid, and risk-mitigation measures to avoid diversion to sanctioned groups. USAID has provided assistance remotely in Syria since 2012, and continues to do so. Our response to COVID-19 in Syria relies on the same trusted non-governmental organizations we have worked with to provide humanitarian assistance since before the pandemic. We continue to require post-award vetting for prime and sub-awardees and rigorous risk-mitigation plans for all implementing partners.

Question. During the hearing you confirmed to Senator Graham the existence of a deal between an U.S.-based oil company, reported to be Delta Crescent Energy LLC, and Kurdish authorities in northeast Syria to develop oil fields there and that the United States is supportive of the deal. Does this company have an OFAC license allowing it to operate in Syria?

Answer. Queries about private business contracts or whether private companies have authorizations or specific licenses should be directed to the entity or parties

in question. More broadly, we ensure our sanctions are in line with our foreign policy interests and target the Assad regime's continued violence against the Syrian people. For all sanctions programs, including Syria, the U.S. Government considers on a case-by-case basis requests to authorize via specific licenses U.S. persons' involvement in normally prohibited; this may include activities in support of the Syrian opposition.

Question. A significant amount of oil from Kurdish-controlled northeast Syria is sold to the Assad regime. Will any of the oil extracted from fields included in this deal be sold by Kurdish authorities to the Assad regime? If so, does this company's OFAC license allow for such sales?

Answer. We are not involved in the commercial decisions of our local partners. As a matter of policy, we seek to cut off the regime's access to the international financial system and other sources of revenue it uses to perpetuate the Syrian conflict. Our sanctions programs, including any granting of licenses, reinforce that policy and our efforts to ensure compliance are rigorous. We remain committed to the unity and territorial integrity of Syria. The U.S. Government does not own, control, or manage the oil resources in Syria.

Question. The recent expiration of the UN authorization for the Bab al-Salama border crossing from Turkey into northwest Syria means that nearby areas will now have to be reached from the Bab al-Hawa crossing which will require traversing Syrian territory that is controlled by the Turkish military or by Turkish-backed rebel groups. What assurances does the U.S. have from Turkey that cross-border assistance will be allowed to flow through these areas unmolested and undiverted and that humanitarian NGOs will be allowed to continue operating?

Answer. The United States regularly engages with Turkey to urge access for international humanitarian organizations and to facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those in need in and through areas over which Turkey has influence. Turkey has played a vital role in the delivery of cross-border assistance since the UN authorized the program in 2014. In April and May of this year, Turkish facilitation of border movements resulted in the highest monthly volumes of cross-border aid delivery on record.

Question. What steps is the U.S. taking to help mitigate the logistical complications that arise from the closure of the Bab al-Salama crossing?

Answer. Prior to the July 11 vote in the UN Security Council on cross-border access to northwest Syria, UN partners pre-positioned humanitarian commodities inside northwest Syria to last several months. This allowed our UN and NGO humanitarian partners a period of transition as they adapted their activities and logistical arrangements to continue delivering assistance to vulnerable populations previously reached by the UN through Bab al-Salama. Having provided more than \$11.3 billion in humanitarian assistance since the start of the crisis, the U.S. government continues to be the world-leader in ensuring life-saving assistance reaches all Syrians in need.

Question. The 12-month extension of the UN Security Council's authorization for the Bab al-Hawa crossing provides some much needed breathing space for both diplomats at the UN and humanitarian groups on the ground before the next reauthorization. Please describe the U.S.'s strategy for the next reauthorization in 12-months' time.

Answer. The U.S. strategy comprises multiple lines of mutually reinforcing efforts. The Department of State and USAID remain in constant contact with those providing cross-border humanitarian assistance to Syrians, including the UN and non-governmental organizations. The Department continues to highlight shortcomings and concerns regarding cross-border access during monthly meetings in the UN Security Council and call for those responsible for interference with humanitarian aid and attacks on humanitarian workers to be held accountable. The Department communicates regularly with like-minded countries to provide the rationale and evidence needed to support a forward-leaning and well-justified renewal resolution.

Question. How will the U.S. engage with like-minded countries on the Security Council to persuade other members of the Council to extend or expand the current authorization and to counter the efforts of Russia and China to end or further limit the current authorization?

Answer. The Department of State remains in constant contact with UN Security Council like-minded countries to ensure message alignment, including emphasizing the Assad regime remains responsible for sufficient cross-line humanitarian assistance into Syria. The Department and USAID maintain contact with humanitarian

partners in NY and on the ground. With the election of India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, and Norway for the 2021–2022 term of the Security Council, the Department and USAID will meet with each incoming Security Council member to clearly and convincingly convey the need to extend and expand this mechanism. The Department will facilitate a roundtable discussion, wherein Syrians will highlight the horrid conditions they endure.

Question. Please describe U.S. engagement with the UN, its related agencies and other international aid agencies to create a contingency plan in the event that Russia and/or China veto the next authorization extension?

Answer. The United States remains a strong supporter of UN agencies and other international organizations providing life-saving services in Syria. The UN and international humanitarian assistance partners do not have a ready alternative that would allow them to replicate the scale, timeliness, or reach of its current cross-border activities. The United States will support and advocate for the pre-positioning of commodities by the UN, including the World Food Program, as well as work with non-governmental organizations and implementing partners to increase their capacity to take over essential activities. While these efforts will help continue to bring humanitarian assistance to Syrians in need, significant gaps will nevertheless remain.

Question. With the implementation of sanctions under the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act underway, there are legitimate concerns about whether humanitarian carve-outs will be fully effective and protected. We are already hearing reports of some NGOs who have experienced financial difficulties due to the tightened restrictions. This has the unintended risk of inhibiting badly needed humanitarian aid. To date, how many organizations have reported to the United States or other partner countries that they are experiencing heightened challenges operating in Syria as a result of the sanctions imposed under the Caesar act?

Answer. The Caesar Act and the U.S. Syria sanctions program do not target humanitarian assistance nor do those sanctions hinder our stabilization activities in northeastern Syria. The sanctions are intended to promote accountability for the Assad regime's violence and destruction.

The United States works closely with international organizations and the broader humanitarian assistance community to address any obstacles. The Administration has had and welcomes further conversations with them to address obstacles, including ensuring financial institutions can do necessary due diligence and support organizations providing lifesaving aid.

Question. What steps is the United States taking to reassure NGOs and their financial institutions that they are not subject to sanctions under the Caesar Act?

Answer. The U.S. Government works closely with international organizations and the broader humanitarian assistance community to address any obstacles. We welcome conversations with humanitarian partners to work through any challenges, including ensuring financial institutions can undertake necessary due diligence and support organizations providing lifesaving aid to Syrians in need.

Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control has issued several general licenses related to humanitarian assistance and trade with Syria. I refer you to them for additional information.

Question. Following the initial optimism about the Arab uprisings, only one country—Tunisia—remains on a democratic path. Its successful transition should be a national security priority of the United States. However, for FY 2021, the President has requested only \$84 million in economic and security aid, a 65 percent cut from Congress' FY 2020 appropriation. Can you explain why the Administration is seeking such a dramatic cut in funding and what it says about the priority you attach to this important country, which has also been an important partner in countering terrorism?

Answer. Security assistance levels requested for Tunisia in the FY 2021 request are maintained at the same level as the FY 2020 request. We provide Economic Support Funds (ESF) to strengthen Tunisia's democratic institutions and believe the FY 2021 request level is appropriate. Tunisia also benefits from regional ESF under the Middle East Partnership Initiative and other governance and public diplomacy programs managed by the Department of State and USAID.

Question. A political solution for Yemen unfortunately looks to be very far off with Houthi gains on the battlefield and conflict even among the anti-Houthi forces of the internationally recognized Yemeni Government and the Southern Transition

Council. What specific steps has the United States taken in recent months to support a political solution in Yemen?

Answer. Though the Southern Transition Council (STC) announced it “suspended” negotiation of the Riyadh Agreement on August 25, the United States continues to work closely with our Saudi, UAE, and Republic of Yemen Government (ROYG) counterparts to encourage the ROYG and the STC to finalize the agreement.

We continue to support the work of UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths. There is no military solution in Yemen. The only way forward is a political solution that guarantees a unified, stable, and prosperous Yemen.

Question. What steps is the United States taking to ensure that life-saving humanitarian medical assistance reaches those who need it most?

Answer. COVID-19 poses a grave and unprecedented threat to humanitarian workers in Yemen, who bravely put their own lives on the line to continue their life-saving work. We honor those who have lost their lives or fallen ill while serving on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response. We work with our partners, the UN, and Yemeni authorities to ensure aid staff can safely support response efforts and have the ability to enter and leave the country as necessary so humanitarian organizations can continue critical aid operations. This includes support for the logistics work overseen by WFP and the UN Humanitarian Air Service. We also continue to advocate jointly with other donors for all parties to the conflict to facilitate access of aid workers to those in need.

Question. This Administration still has not shown how it has helped Saudi Arabia and the UAE improve its use of precision guided munitions and yet it would ease restriction on the sale of armed drones to countries like them. Will the Administration allow Saudi Arabia and the UAE to purchase armed drones from the United States?

Answer. Consistent with the President’s Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) policy, all arms transfers to foreign partners are subject to case-by-case comprehensive consideration of U.S. interests, including any risk the transfer may contribute to human rights abuses, acts of gender-based violence, violence against children, violations of international humanitarian law, terrorism, mass atrocities, or transnational organized crime. The President’s policy directs the U.S. Government to aid partners in reducing the risk of harm to civilians during military operations, and the Department of State will continue to conduct human rights reviews for foreign military sales and direct commercial sales. U.S. expertise and training are also shared to help mitigate the potential for harm to civilians and promote adherence to the law of armed conflict.

Question. If Saudi Arabia and the UAE are allowed to purchase armed drones from the United States, will they be allowed to deploy those drones in Yemen?

Answer. Consistent with section 4 of the Arms Export Control Act, in cases of foreign military sales, partners agree to end-use requirements in the Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) Standard Terms and Conditions. Typically, the U.S. Government does not place end-use requirements that limit the equipment’s geographic employment.

Question. What are the specific categories of “life-saving activities” that are exempted under the March 27 suspension of USAID funding to North Yemen? Has USAID revisited these categories since the suspension to expand the definition of what’s exempt under “life-saving activities” to address the COVID-19 pandemic and other health issues facing the people of Yemen?

Answer. The United States has provided nearly \$16.7 million in funding to support COVID-19 response efforts. We continue to support the most critical life-saving activities in northern Yemen, including programs to treat malnutrition, provide clean water, and help to prevent cholera, COVID-19, and other communicable diseases. USAID will continue supporting operational costs to ensure INGO partners can maintain their capacity in northern Yemen. USAID continues to support UN partners countrywide. Through the World Food Program (WFP), USAID is supporting emergency food operations, including at a recalibrated level in the north set by WFP. Development assistance in Houthi-controlled areas remains suspended, with the exception of operational costs.

Question. Has any of the suspended assistance been reprogrammed? If so, please provide a detailed breakdown of what programs were reprogrammed and where the funds have been reprogrammed to.

Answer. USAID has not reprogrammed any suspended humanitarian or development funding within Yemen. As always, we allocate our humanitarian funding

based on needs, with partners who can deliver on behalf of our mission and in a manner that manages U.S. taxpayer funding effectively and efficiently. In FY 2020, we continued programming carve-out activities with partners and support operational costs with suspended international NGOs in northern Yemen to retain a footprint in the hopes that current Houthi impediments to a principled response will be removed, and our partners can restart operations in reaching innocent Yemeni beneficiaries.

Question. Please provide a detailed breakdown of the \$225 million in emergency aid to the World Food Program including what programs these funds went to support and what portion of those funds was allocated for use in Houthi-controlled areas.

Answer. The United States remains one of WFP's largest donors. WFP's decision to recalibrate programs in northern Yemen was a direct result of the untenable operating environment created by the Houthis' interference in aid operations. Time and again, the Houthis have failed to abide by their commitments to end their obstruction of WFP's operations and to allow WFP to implement necessary procedures to ensure food is reaching the most vulnerable Yemenis. As I announced on May 6, we provided nearly \$225 million to support WFP's food assistance program in Yemen. This un-earmarked contribution was distributed countrywide by WFP. Nearly 75 percent of the in-kind food commodities from the contribution went to vulnerable Yemenis who live in northern Houthi-held areas.

Question. Other international donors and aid agencies have avoided similar suspensions to assistance in Yemen while still working with the UN to push back against Houthi obstruction, including securing the walk-back of a 2 percent proposed tax on humanitarian assistance and biometric accountability measures. Please provide an assessment of why such a wide suspension of assistance was deemed necessary and a description of what, if any, steps were taken to coordinate this suspension with the UN, other donors and aid agencies, including USAID implementers.

Answer. Houthi interference—including blocking aid projects, seeking to profit from humanitarian funding, and detaining and torturing aid workers—prevented critical, life-saving aid from reaching millions of Yemenis. The partial reduction in operations was undertaken in cooperation with other donor countries and the United Nations as a result of this undue interference. We met as a group in Brussels in February and unanimously concluded that the situation was untenable. We have met multiple times since then to evaluate the situation. In June, following months of collective advocacy and negotiation, the U.S. government joined other donors in sending letters to the Houthis and Yemeni officials in the south, reiterating the need for interference in aid operations to cease immediately.

Question. Furthermore, please provide an update on the specific conditions that must still be met in order for USAID to consider lifting its aid suspension in Yemen.

Answer. The United States, in cooperation with other donors and the UN, identified seven pre-conditions that need to be met in northern Yemen and agreed on 16 benchmarks to gauge progress in addressing these. A technical monitoring group meets monthly to evaluate the Houthi's progress. Among the benchmarks the Houthis have not met, they have not allowed the World Food Program's biometric registration pilot to move forward and have blocked independent needs assessments. Without these, we are concerned Houthi leaders could steer assistance away from the most vulnerable families to reward combatants and their own supporters. With USAID development funding, we need written approval from the Houthis allowing third-party monitoring before resuming any activities.

Question. Are you confident that this suspension in assistance will not exacerbate Yemen's already dire humanitarian situation, especially with the spread of COVID-19 in the country?

Answer. We remain concerned about the Houthis' disregard for the suffering their deliberate obstruction is causing their fellow Yemenis, and call on the Houthis to abide by humanitarian principles. The United States is the leading humanitarian donor in Yemen this year, providing more than \$1.1 billion in U.S. humanitarian assistance funding to Yemen since October 2018. The United States is committed to providing robust humanitarian aid for the people of Yemen where our partners are able to operate without interference. In fact, the United States has already provided significantly more humanitarian funding since the suspension went into effect in March than any other donor has provided in Yemen this year. We continue to encourage other donors to contribute additional funding and to fulfill pledges they have already made quickly.

Question. Whether or not the suspension exacerbates Yemen's humanitarian crisis, will USAID consider lifting the suspension in assistance without those conditions being satisfied if conditions in Yemen worsen? If so, please provide metrics for how bad the humanitarian situation must become for USAID to lift the suspension without satisfying its conditions.

Answer. The United States is committed to providing robust humanitarian aid for the people of Yemen where our partners are able to operate without interference. To meet the increasing needs resulting from the conflict, economic decline, and COVID-19, the United States has provided more humanitarian funding since the suspension went into effect in March than any other donor provided Yemen this year. USAID will continue supporting operational costs, ensuring international NGO partners maintain their capacity in northern Yemen to scale up in the event the benchmarks are achieved and/or humanitarian conditions deteriorate significantly. Through the World Food Program, USAID is supporting emergency food operations, including in the north. This support has helped prevent food security conditions from deteriorating further.

Question. Has any of the suspended assistance for Yemen been reprogrammed elsewhere? If so, please provide a detailed breakdown of the amount of funds reprogrammed, their intended use in Yemen and what countries and programs they have been reprogrammed to.

Answer. USAID has not reprogrammed any suspended humanitarian funding within Yemen. As always, we allocate our humanitarian funding based on needs, with partners who can deliver on behalf of our mission and in a manner that manages U.S. taxpayer funding effectively and efficiently. In FY 2020, USAID continued programming carve-out activities with partners and supporting operational costs with suspended international NGOs in northern Yemen to retain a footprint in the hope that current impediments to a principled response by the Houthis will be removed so that our partners can restart operations in reaching innocent Yemeni beneficiaries.

Question. As we are now rapidly approaching the end of President Trump's first term, I would therefore like to ask you whether or not you have reached an agreement with North Korea on any of the goals you told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2018 that you would achieve within a year. Do you have an agreement with North Korea that: Provides a definition for denuclearization, meaning the dismantlement or removal of all nuclear weapons, facilities, technology, and material from North Korea?

Answer. My colleagues and I have worked tirelessly toward achieving denuclearization in North Korea (DPRK) and a lasting, stable peace on the Korean Peninsula; but we cannot negotiate by ourselves. The DPRK simply has not yet made the decision to seriously engage in working-level denuclearization negotiations. In the meantime, we continue to work with our partners to maintain pressure on the DPRK and remain ready to seize the opportunity to negotiate a roadmap toward final, fully verified denuclearization and a bright economic future for the North Korean people.

Question. Ends North Korea's production and enrichment of uranium and plutonium for military programs?

Answer. My colleagues and I have worked tirelessly toward achieving denuclearization in North Korea (DPRK) and a lasting, stable peace on the Korean Peninsula; but we cannot negotiate by ourselves. The DPRK simply has not yet made the decision to seriously engage in working-level denuclearization negotiations. In the meantime, we continue to work with our partners to maintain pressure on the DPRK and remain ready to seize the opportunity to negotiate a roadmap toward final, fully verified denuclearization and a bright economic future for the North Korean people.

Question. Permanently dismantles and disables North Korea's nuclear weapons infrastructure, including test sites, all nuclear weapons research and development facilities, particularly with respect to advanced centrifuges, and nuclear weapons enrichment and reprocessing facilities?

Answer. My colleagues and I have worked tirelessly toward achieving denuclearization in North Korea (DPRK) and a lasting, stable peace on the Korean Peninsula; but we cannot negotiate by ourselves. The DPRK simply has not yet made the decision to seriously engage in working-level denuclearization negotiations. In the meantime, we continue to work with our partners to maintain pressure on the DPRK and remain ready to seize the opportunity to negotiate a roadmap to-

ward final, fully verified denuclearization and a bright economic future for the North Korean people.

Question. Provides a full, complete and verifiable declaration of all North Korean nuclear activities?

Answer. My colleagues and I have worked tirelessly toward achieving denuclearization in North Korea (DPRK) and a lasting, stable peace on the Korean Peninsula; but we cannot negotiate by ourselves. The DPRK simply has not yet made the decision to seriously engage in working-level denuclearization negotiations. In the meantime, we continue to work with our partners to maintain pressure on the DPRK and remain ready to seize the opportunity to negotiate a roadmap toward final, fully verified denuclearization and a bright economic future for the North Korean people.

Question. Imposes robust restrictions to assure that North Korea's nuclear material, technology and expertise are not exported?

Answer. My colleagues and I have worked tirelessly toward achieving denuclearization in North Korea (DPRK) and a lasting, stable peace on the Korean Peninsula; but we cannot negotiate by ourselves. The DPRK simply has not yet made the decision to seriously engage in working-level denuclearization negotiations. In the meantime, we continue to press countries around the world to enforce the existing sanctions regime and to take actions to prevent both sanctions evasion and DPRK proliferation activities prohibited by the sanctions.

Question. Dismantles all North Korean ballistic missiles and agrees to a prohibition on all ballistic missile development?

Answer. My colleagues and I have worked tirelessly toward achieving denuclearization in North Korea (DPRK) and a lasting, stable peace on the Korean Peninsula; but we cannot negotiate by ourselves. The DPRK simply has not yet made the decision to seriously engage in working-level denuclearization negotiations. In the meantime, we continue to work with our partners to maintain pressure on the DPRK and remain ready to seize the opportunity to negotiate a roadmap toward final, fully verified denuclearization and a bright economic future for the North Korean people.

Question. Puts in place sufficient safeguards to assure that no ballistic missiles and associated technology are proliferated or exported from North Korea?

Answer. My colleagues and I have worked tirelessly toward achieving denuclearization in North Korea (DPRK) and a lasting, stable peace on the Korean Peninsula; but we cannot negotiate by ourselves. The DPRK simply has not yet made the decision to seriously engage in working-level denuclearization negotiations. In the meantime, we continue to press countries around the world to enforce the existing sanctions regime and to take actions to prevent both sanctions evasion and DPRK proliferation activities prohibited by the sanctions.

Question. Commits North Korea to robust compliance inspections including a verification regime for its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, including complete access to all nuclear related sites and facilities with real time verification including "anywhere, anytime" inspections and snap-back sanctions if North Korea is not in full compliance?

Answer. My colleagues and I have worked tirelessly toward achieving denuclearization in North Korea (DPRK) and a lasting, stable peace on the Korean Peninsula; but we cannot negotiate by ourselves. The DPRK simply has not yet made the decision to seriously engage in working-level denuclearization negotiations. In the meantime, we continue to work with our partners to maintain pressure on the DPRK and remain ready to seize the opportunity to negotiate a roadmap toward final, fully verified denuclearization and a bright economic future for the North Korean people.

Question. Has no sunsets?

Answer. My colleagues and I have worked tirelessly toward achieving the denuclearization in North Korea (DPRK) and a lasting, stable peace on the Korean Peninsula; but we cannot negotiate by ourselves. The DPRK simply has not yet made the decision to seriously engage in working-level denuclearization negotiations. In the meantime, we continue to work with our partners to maintain pressure on the DPRK and remain ready to seize the opportunity to negotiate a roadmap toward final, fully verified denuclearization and a bright economic future for the North Korean people.

Question. And, that creates a roadmap for progress on sanctions relief dependent on dismantlement and removal of North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs?

Answer. My colleagues and I have worked tirelessly toward achieving denuclearization in North Korea (DPRK) and a lasting, stable peace on the Korean Peninsula; but we cannot negotiate by ourselves. The DPRK simply has not yet made the decision to seriously engage in working-level denuclearization negotiations. In the meantime, we continue to work with our partners to maintain pressure on the DPRK and remain ready to seize the opportunity to negotiate a roadmap toward final, fully verified denuclearization and a bright economic future for the North Korean people.

Question. The Administration has said it is looking for "alternative partners" to the WHO. Documents leaked in May referred to something called the Preparedness Initiative for Pandemics and Emergency Response, or PIPER. From what I understand the proposal under consideration is for a fund run by a governing body that will administer bilateral, multilateral, and private-sector funds to fight pandemics. It sounds very much like a convenient alternative to the World Health Organization. Is this the alternative to replace WHO? Where is the money slated for WHO going to go now that the President has withdrawn from WHO? Is it going to be channeled to PIPER?

Answer. We are not seeking to establish an alternative to the World Health Organization (WHO). We are providing foreign assistance funding previously planned for the WHO to other global health organizations to address urgent needs around the world. However, we do believe there are gaps in the international system that were exposed by the Ebola, Zika, and COVID-19 health emergencies. Outbreaks and pandemics can impact any country and all aspects of society, and U.S. Government and multilateral organizations are not sufficiently organized to rapidly respond to pandemics. We learned we must strengthen and link early warning systems and other critical data sources, think holistically about preparedness, and build accountability into the international system. None of these lessons are wholly owned by any one institution.

We believe there are a number of models that have been supported by the United States that advance global collaboration without undermining existing institutions. Examples include the Global Vaccine Alliance (Gavi) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. These successful efforts provide insight into how the U.S. Government and other donors could collaborate on pandemic prevention. As we look toward future efforts on pandemic prevention, we intend to work closely with Congress.

Question. The Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria launched a COVID-19 response mechanism. Does the Administration support funding for the Global Fund's COVID response mechanism? How much should we give? Has the Administration asked or proposed to the Global Fund that they take on funding and responsibilities related to pandemic response that would normally be undertaken by WHO?

Answer. The United States joined the other members of the Global Fund's Board to approve the creation of the COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM) and allowed up to \$500 million of contributed funding, one-third of which the United States provided to C19RM to protect the Fund's programming in HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria affected by the pandemic. We agree the investment the United States made in establishing the Global Fund makes it an attractive vehicle to help combat the impact of COVID-19 on the three diseases. The U.S. Government is committed to maintaining the Global Fund's effective execution of programs in its core mandate of HIV, TB, and malaria. The United States does not support expanding the Global Fund's remit permanently beyond the three diseases. We have not asked, nor proposed, the Global Fund take on funding and responsibilities normally undertaken by the WHO as the Fund does not set normative guidance for combating the pandemics of HIV, TB, malaria, nor COVID-19.

Question. For decades, the United States has provided critical, life-saving assistance to countries around the globe to alleviate severe humanitarian and health crises. USAID has notified Congress about the expenditure of approximately \$202 million in Global Health Program, Emergency Reserve Funds and Economic Support Funds to purchase 7,582 ventilators to distribute to up to 40 countries. I am concerned that the NSC's influence in these decisions both circumvents longstanding USAID procurement and accountability policies and interjects political agendas into USAID's mission. What needs-based assessments the NSC using to determine which countries will receive ventilators and how this aid is prioritized?

Answer. The National Security Council (NSC) has said, “With the United States now on track to produce over 100,000 high-quality ventilators this Summer, by far the highest production of ventilators in history, the President continues to reach out to our partners and allies around the world to ensure they can have access to high-quality, America-made, life-saving ventilators to meet their medical needs.”

The U.S. Agency for International Development also would encourage the Committee to reach out directly to NSC Legislative Affairs for further information.

Question. Any and all guidance by the NSC regarding the procurement process USAID should follow for the purchase of the ventilators it is distributing, including whether vendors or manufacturers are competitively bidding on contracts to provide ventilators.

Answer. The provision of ventilators and medical supplies will in no way affect the availability of this critical equipment for the American people. We carefully balanced our domestic needs with those of the world, to ensure the availability of essential medical supplies, including ventilators, in the United States. At the early stages of the response to the pandemic in the United States, many models predicted a shortage of ventilators threatening a public-health catastrophe. The Administration organized an industrial ramp-up not seen since World War II, using the Defense Production Act to encourage private-sector companies to start producing ventilators or expand their existing production to meet anticipated demand. The United States is now on track to produce over 100,000 high-quality ventilators this summer. As a result, HHS, DHS, and the Directorate for Resilience at the NSC collaborated to identify vendors to satisfy the manufacturing needs of the ventilator-donation program. The NSC, working with HHS and DHS, assigned each vendor a series of countries and a number of ventilators. USAID, through the Global Health Supply-Chain-Procurement and Supply-Management contract managed by Chemonic, Inc., procured the ventilators, assisted the vendors in delivering products meeting the specifications for each country and coordinated the delivery of the donations with U.S. embassies and national governments. No, the ventilators the NSC is requiring USAID to purchase were not originally contracted or procured by DHS or any other federal agency or department.

Question. Is the NSC applying and adhering to the metrics and capacity requirements USAID has outlined in the respective Congressional Notifications for the provision of ventilators?

Answer. Yes.

Question. What commitments are the Administration obtaining from foreign governments receiving U.S. assistance that they will engage in science-based public health actions and interventions to bend the curve of COVID-19 infections and make information about the spread of the disease public on a sustained basis?

Answer. The United States received requests for assistance from nearly every government in the world. We have provided assistance to over 120 countries, reflecting a truly global diversity of approaches and needs in responding to COVID-19. Throughout the response, the U.S. Government has worked closely with Departments of Health and other science-based partners to implement interventions across a range of health and humanitarian needs. We will continue to work closely with these partners, as well as our own international implementing partners to implement a range of context-sensitive interventions based on the latest knowledge of the virus and its spread. USAID is focused on interventions that are proven and globally recognized as critical to the pandemic response.

Question. I recently released a report titled *Global Forced Migration: The Political Crisis of our Time* which speaks to the urgent situation of at least 79.5 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced due to persecution and conflict, the highest total on record. At every turn, this Administration has actively opposed efforts to support refugees and other vulnerable migrants, both domestically through our policies and programs, and internationally in important multilateral fora. For example, under your leadership, the Department of State’s refugee resettlement program is operating at historic lows, and is on pace to admit the lowest number of refugees this fiscal year since the program began 40 years ago. The Department also withdrew its support from key multilateral instruments and global compacts designed to improve global responses and coordination to more effectively address the plight of migrants and refugees. And on the southern border, the Administration has implemented unlawful policies that have left thousands stranded in horrid conditions in Mexico and deported vulnerable asylum seekers back to the countries they fled in Central America. While you continue to champion the U.S. as the world’s largest humanitarian donor, these actions reveal an Administration that is actively sabo-

tagging every institutional mechanism designed to support vulnerable refugees and migrants. Your Department has also continued to defy requests from my committee regarding its policies and agreements related to migration. Does the Administration have a strategy—beyond simply provisioning funds—to address the global forced migration crisis?

Answer. The President's National Security Strategy clearly outlines our commitment to champion American values by reducing human suffering. The United States continues to lead the world in humanitarian assistance even as we expect others to share the responsibility. We support displaced people close to their homes to help meet their needs until they can safely and voluntarily return home. At the Department of State and USAID, we work to provide protection and achieve durable solutions for the millions of forcibly displaced people across the globe. In addition, we aim our diplomacy at continuing to strengthen the global humanitarian architecture and at helping to ensure respect for international humanitarian laws and norms.

Question. I am deeply concerned by the reports that the U.S. consistently advocated for removing references from sexual and reproductive health care from UN agreements. I understand this administration has argued they have other priorities, like economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. How can women develop and lead their own businesses and participate in the economy if they are not able to have autonomous control of their own bodies, supported by comprehensive access to sexual and reproductive health care?

Answer. The United States continues to be the global leader in foreign assistance for women's health across their lifespan, including access to family planning. Consistent with the laws of the United States, taxpayer dollars should not be used to promote or provide abortion as a method of family planning. We strongly promote responsive interventions to meet the health needs of all women, at the UN and in other multilateral negotiations, as references to ambiguous terms and expressions inject unnecessary controversy, derailing opportunities to address critical women's health needs. We will continue to promote the highest attainable standards of health for women, in addition to women's full and free participation in their economies and societies.

Question. Ethiopia's transition to an inclusive representative democracy is in jeopardy. There are alarming signs of backsliding including mass arrests, disappearances, arrest of opposition politicians and an internet blackout. Elections, scheduled for this year have been delayed indefinitely. Additionally, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project has caused serious tensions with Egypt and Sudan. You visited Ethiopia earlier this year. What actions have you taken in the wake of your visit to help ensure Ethiopia succeeds in its democratic transition, specifically with regards to calling out actions that close political space and violate human rights?

Answer. Despite intermittent challenges our assessment continues to be that Prime Minister Abiy's administration remains committed to the reforms they championed when he came to power in 2018. We continue to engage diplomatically with the Ethiopian Government to assure them of our support and urge them to continue to uphold the rule of law, respect basic democratic principles, and work towards free and fair elections. Department leadership meets regularly with senior officials from the Ethiopian Government to reiterate our concerns regarding troubling reports of human rights violations and abuses and restrictions on basic freedoms.

Question. What are the regional implications should the GERD negotiations fail, and how will that impact U.S. interests in the region? What role are you playing in the GERD negotiations? What role have you advocated for the State Department writ large in the GERD negotiations?

Answer. The on-going GERD negotiations hold the promise of greater cooperation and sound management of the Blue Nile for power, agriculture, industry, and other uses that could improve the lives of the more than 250 million people of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan. Treasury plays the lead role in the U.S. Government's participation in the GERD negotiations. The Department is in close contact with Treasury to ensure a unified U.S. policy. Secretary Mnuchin and I regularly discuss policy and negotiation developments, and I have spoken repeatedly with senior officials from all three countries on this issue. The Department is engaged through U.S. embassies in Addis Ababa, Cairo, Khartoum, and Pretoria, and the U.S. Mission to the African Union.

Question. Do you support withholding U.S. assistance to Ethiopia as a bargaining tool in the GERD talks, even though doing so could imperil Ethiopia's fragile transition?

Answer. The Department is committed to leveraging all available tools to promote outcomes that advance our interests around the world. We are considering a variety of methods to support Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan in reaching agreement on the GERD.

Question. We are on the verge of losing the Sahel. Mali, which is suffering from a violent jihadist insurgency and a failing economy, has seen mass protests calling for President Ibrahim Keita to resign. There are no signs of progress on implementation of the Algiers Accord, and, across the Sahel, the fight against terrorism being waged by MINUSMA, the G-5 Sahel, and our European allies has been undermined by atrocious acts of violence perpetrated by state security forces. The Administration appointed a Special Envoy, but that in itself is not a strategy. What is our strategy for the Sahel?

Answer. The Diplomatic Framework for the Sahel focuses on addressing the drivers of insecurity, containing the spread of violence, and stabilizing the region with the help of better coordinated international and U.S. interagency support. There are four key elements to this Framework: 1) improving coordination with other international and regional partners and international organizations; 2) promoting stability in Mali, including implementation of the Algiers Accord and improving the effectiveness of MINUSMA, the UN peacekeeping mission; 3) pressing and supporting governments to expand state legitimacy in the G5 Sahel countries and neighboring coastal states and; 4) preventing further spill over into the West African coastal countries.

Question. What is the State Department doing to promote accountability for security forces that commit human rights abuses, and to prevent further abuse?

Answer. Advancing respect for human rights and accountability for security forces is a central tenet of U.S. diplomacy reflected in our security cooperation. Continued engagement with partners helps mitigate human rights abuses and security force overreach by emphasizing the development of professional forces that respect human rights. Security assistance builds partner capacity to hold forces accountable and institutions capable of oversight. It promotes dialogue at high levels of government otherwise closed to international engagement. We support and adhere to the Leahy law, a powerful tool against human rights abuses that prevents foreign security forces guilty of abuses from receiving future assistance.

Question. The Pentagon's review of troop deployments in Africa has unnerved our allies who rely on U.S. military support in the Sahel. What is the State Department doing to reassure our allies of the U.S. commitment to the Sahel? Do you support drawing down our military deployment in the Sahel?

Answer. The State Department funds the majority of peace and security assistance in Africa. The Department of Defense's Blank Slate Review does not change my commitment to reduce threats and advance mutual interests with our African partners. Between Fiscal Years 2010 and 2019, the Department of State obligated approximately \$4.7 billion in bilateral security assistance to Africa, a significant portion of which assisted Sahel countries. The majority of the State Department's security assistance does not depend on the Department of Defense for implementation or oversight. I remain committed to maintaining this engagement, recognizing that some programs may require review and adjustment in light of reduced Department of Defense oversight and implementation capacity.

Question. Analysis by the International Crisis Group suggests that insecurity and jihadist activity in Northwest Nigeria could turn that part of the country into a "land bridge" between terrorists in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin—a deeply troubling prospect, considering there has already been a 31 percent increase in violent incidents by Islamist militants in Africa in the last 12 months, according to at least one estimate. Do you agree with this assessment about Northwest Nigeria? What is the State Department doing to increase civilian security and prevent the expansion of jihadism in the Lake Chad Basin and northwest Nigeria?

Answer. We are concerned by the rise in violence in Northwest Nigeria over recent months and the opportunities destabilization creates for terrorists. To assist in Nigeria's fight against ISIS-West Africa and Boko Haram, U.S. diplomatic, defense, and development actors are working to disrupt terrorist activities; weaken terrorist groups and promote defections; improve processes to screen, rehabilitate, and reintegrate ex-combatants; save lives through humanitarian assistance; support the Nigerian government to set the security and governance conditions necessary for the safe and voluntary return of displaced people to their communities; and address underlying drivers of terrorism.

Question. During the budget hearing, in discussing the issue of diversity at the State Department, you noted that some members of your senior leadership team were part of “diversity groups.” You also rightly noted the lack of minority representation at the Ambassadorial level and that the rate of change in increasing diversity at the Department is insufficient. Please further explain your use of “diversity groups.” To what groups are you referring?

Answer. While the Department has made progress in promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce, I’ve stated in meetings with Department employees that we need to take a deeper look into these issues and take concrete steps to make meaningful change. I will continue to have these discussions and ask bureaus to strengthen their diversity and inclusion efforts in line with the Department’s mission of working together to recruit, retain, and develop a diverse workforce to foster effective diplomacy. I support my senior leadership team’s active engagement of our diverse employee affinity groups and articulation of the concerns of those whom have been historically underrepresented, such as women and minorities, in American diplomacy.

Question. Please provide a demographic breakdown of diversity in the 7th floor’s senior leadership team.

Answer. The 7th floor senior leadership team consists of 26 men and 11 women, of which 31 are White, 5 are Asian and 1 is African-American. Department-wide, 15 percent of senior leaders—members of the Senior Foreign Service, Senior Executive Service, and equivalents—are racial or ethnic minorities; and 34 percent are women. Among other efforts, my team and I are working to improve diversity through: requiring that employees, hiring managers, and members of selection and promotion panels receive formal training in mitigating unconscious bias; including diversity and inclusion as a leadership criteria for the Deputy Chief of Mission/Principal Officer Committee; and expanding the Pickering and Rangel Fellowship programs.

Question. How are you personally promoting, mentoring, and supporting your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the Foreign Service? In the Civil Service?

Answer. I will continue to promote efforts underway in the Department to ensure leaders under my direction are fostering a culture and environment of inclusion. I support the Department Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan’s goals that speak to work/life wellness and increased workplace flexibilities in order to better support our workforce and retain talent. I support my senior leadership team’s active engagement of our diverse employee affinity groups and articulation of the concerns of those who have been historically underrepresented in U.S. diplomacy. I will continue to support the requirement of all hiring managers and members of promotion panels to take formal Mitigating Unconscious Bias training.

Question. Beyond recruiting candidates of diverse backgrounds into the Department, what steps are you taking to retain, train, and accomplish equitable outcomes for staff from historically underrepresented backgrounds?

Answer. In January, Under Secretary Bulatao convened a Department-wide taskforce comprised of representatives from every bureau in the Department to develop the Department’s Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (DISP). We did this to reiterate that diversity and inclusion must be a whole-of Department effort and wanted every employee to see themselves in our new strategic plan. I support the Department’s efforts to review longstanding cultural practices and consider whether there have been unintended impacts on our ability to retain and promote a diverse workforce. I also support the DISP’s goals of promoting work/life wellness and increased workplace flexibilities in order to better support our workforce and retain talent.

Question. You said in a recent speech about the inalienable rights commission that *The New York Times* 1619 Project was “a dark vision of America’s birth. I reject it. It’s a disturbed reading of history. It is a slander on our great people.” Slavery was real, and our country is dealing with the consequences of systemic racism to this day. One impact of such racism could be the lack of diversity at the State Department, especially at the level of Assistant Secretary and above. A recent GAO study found that only 32 percent of the State Department’s full-time, career employees were racial or ethnic minorities, and found differences in promotion outcomes between minorities and whites. The recent murder of George Floyd is an example of the impacts in the area of law enforcement. What have you done during your tenure to address systemic racism and the lack of diversity at the Department of State? What do you plan to do going forward?

Answer. I am committed to taking a critical approach to reviewing policies, programs, and practices that affect how we recruit a talented and diverse workforce and create an inclusive environment where all our employees have the opportunity to contribute and rise through the ranks of our workforce. The Office of Civil Rights provides training around the world on discrimination and harassment and conducts investigations of allegations of discriminatory harassment and sexual harassment. This work allows leaders to make critical decisions on possible disciplinary action. We send out biannual reports on discipline to the workforce to spread awareness of accountability.

Question. What is the State Department doing in the wake of George Floyd's murder and the Administration's poor response to ensure that the United States maintains its moral authority on the messages our diplomats deliver on respect for constitutional rights of peaceful assembly, human rights and rule of law?

Answer. The discussions taking place in the United States, amplified by a free and independent media and our respect for fundamental freedoms such as freedom of association and peaceful assembly, demonstrate our robust democracy, our vigorous debates, and our constant striving to be better. There can be no moral equivalence between actions in the United States and those of authoritarian regimes which violate and abuse human rights.

The charges filed against Minnesota police officers for George Floyd's tragic death illustrate accountability, due process, and rule of law. The Department encourages our overseas missions to speak openly about these issues and how accountability measures in the United States serve as an example of our commitment to democratic principles and the rule of law.

Question. I have been particularly concerned about reports of insensitive, offensive, or inconsistent messages from U.S. Ambassadors in the wake of these events. Have you provided any guidance to Ambassadors and Department senior officials regarding the tone and message that should be communicated to employees about the U.S. Government and Department of State's commitment to equality and against systemic racism? Please provide a copy of any such guidance.

Answer. Following George Floyd's murder, Deputy Secretary Biegun communicated guidance to all Department employees, encouraging them to participate in constructive dialogue in the workplace. I also expressed my heartfelt condolences in my regular communication with Department employees. The Department is preparing our outgoing ambassadors, deputy chiefs of mission, and principal officers in executive training for their new positions, and all newly promoted senior executives in the Leading at the Executive Level Seminar on diversity and inclusion policy, including how they should convey the importance of equal protection and inclusion to their teams and take meaningful steps to achieve it in the organizations they lead.

Question. According to recent reporting, U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom Robert "Woody" Johnson inappropriately promoted President Trump's golf resort, Trump Turnberry, to British Government officials as a potential site for the British Open golf tournament. What guidance, if any, has the Department provided to embassies and ambassadors against taking actions that would support, endorse, promote, or could otherwise be perceived as benefitting the Trump Organization? Do you support completing the Export Control Reform Initiative?

Answer. The State Department conducts extensive training for embassies and ambassadors on ethics rules and requirements. All State Department ethics training and the briefings provided for each non-career ambassador following confirmation emphasize the importance of compliance with the full range of ethics rules and obligations. This includes the obligation to ensure that officials not misuse their positions to benefit their own personal interest or that of other individuals with whom the official is affiliated. Rather, the Department emphasizes that officials must aim to serve the public interest. In addition, the Department's Office of Ethics and Financial Disclosure provides specific guidance about the promotion of any private business as matters arise.

Question. The process for the U.S.'s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement will be complete on the eve of the 2020 election. Taking the shame of this tragedy aside, I have to ask ... and before you say anything about the 'the U.S. is leading on climate change ... and whatever.' I want specific examples of this leadership. How are you leading? Don't just say you are, tell us how. Because when the President announced he was going to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Agreement in June 2017, he said he was going to pursue a "better deal" to rival the Paris Agreement. Where is that "Better Deal"? I can tell you where it is ... but I want to hear where you think it is. I raise this issue as a warning for America. It's a harbinger that every-

one must consider when this Administration boasts about abandoning other multi-lateral organizations like the WHO with lofty statements that you are going to create something better ... you've had 3 and half years to deliver your "better" alternative to one of, if not the, first international agreement the Administration ripped up and you have nothing to show for it. So why should we trust anything will be different when it comes to your WHO 2.0 plan?

Answer. I am proud of our record as a world leader in reducing all types of emissions, fostering resilience, growing our economy, and ensuring access to affordable energy for our citizens. Our success in reducing emissions is largely due to the development and deployment of innovative "all of the above" energy technologies, including nuclear, shale gas, transformational coal technologies, renewables, battery storage, and enhancing energy efficiency. U.S. energy-related greenhouse gas emissions dropped nearly 16 percent between 2005 and 2019, even as our economy grew substantially during this time and our economic competitors such as the People's Republic of China continued to rapidly increase their emissions. In international climate discussions, we continue to offer a realistic and pragmatic model—backed by a record of real world results—showing innovation and open markets lead to greater prosperity, fewer emissions, and more secure sources of energy. We continue to work with our global partners to enhance resilience to the impacts of climate change and prepare for and respond to natural disasters. Please see QFR 281 for information on the World Health Organization.

Question. As you know the CCP's so-called "national security" law for Hong Kong, which undermines Hong Kong's autonomy, encourages the crackdown on pro-democracy protestors, and effectively ends its "one country, two systems" policy, recently went into effect. Along with my colleagues, I introduced the Hong Kong Safe Harbor Act, which would provide those Hong Kongers who peacefully protested Beijing's corrupt justice system, and have a well-founded fear of persecution, to be eligible for Priority 2 Refugee status. What efforts, other than just harsh words and criticism aimed at the CCP for their erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy, is the State Department actively pursuing?

Answer. The Departments of State and Treasury announced sanctions on August 7 on 11 individuals who were involved in developing, adopting, or implementing the National Security Law. I stated, "Today's actions send a clear message that the Hong Kong authorities' actions are unacceptable and in contravention of the PRC's commitments under 'one country, two systems' and the Sino-British Joint Declaration, a UN-registered treaty." The State Department will continue to work with the interagency on future actions against those who are responsible for actions detrimental to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong. The Department of States also works closely with interagency partners on refugee issues, including for Hong Kong residents who express fear of persecution.

Question. One of the major issues playing out in public currently is how Chinese companies are playing an increasingly dominant role in development and implementation of 5G mobile communications technologies. We are increasingly seeing the implementation of products from companies such as Huawei around the globe, ranging from Europe to Asia to Latin America to Africa. What security concerns does the Administration see in the proliferation of Chinese made 5G technologies around the globe?

Answer. The Administration is deeply concerned about the dangers of networks that can be manipulated, disrupted, or controlled by authoritarian governments that have no democratic checks and balances and no regard for human rights, privacy, or international norms. U.S. security concerns are much broader than industrial and political espionage. Untrusted, high-risk vendors like Huawei and ZTE could provide the People's Republic of China's (PRC) Communist Party-led, authoritarian government the capability and opportunity to disrupt or weaponize critical applications and infrastructure or provide technological advances to the PRC's military forces.

Question. What is the Administration doing to counter this spread?

Answer. The Administration is taking strong action at home and abroad to confront this challenge. Domestically, President Trump signed an executive order on May 15, 2019 entitled "Securing the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain" and a national emergency continuation notice on May 13, 2020. The executive order empowers the U.S. Department of Commerce to prohibit transactions involving information and communications technology or services designed, developed, manufactured, or supplied by persons owned by, controlled by, or subject to the jurisdiction or direction of a foreign adversary and that pose an

undue risk of sabotage or subversion to U.S. information and communications technology and services.

Abroad, the Administration is implementing a coordinated set of measures to: (1) encourage countries to put in place risk-based security measures that prohibit the use of untrusted vendors like Huawei and ZTE in 5G and other next generation networks and (2) level the playing field for trusted vendors to compete and win.

Question. Have our efforts to pressure countries to not use Huawei products been successful in light of the fact that so many countries continue to integrate their technologies into their infrastructure?

Answer. Yes, we are seeing the tide turn against Huawei and untrusted technology vendors as additional countries put in place restrictions and a growing list of carriers choose to procure from trusted vendors. Australia and Japan were two of the earliest countries to put in place security measures to protect their 5G networks. Recently, a growing number of countries have likewise put in place strong security measures to protect their networks against untrusted vendors, including: the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Sweden, and the UK. In addition, some of the largest telecom companies around the globe are also becoming “Clean Telcos” by choosing to work only with trusted vendors. We’ve seen this with Orange in France, Jio in India, Telstra in Australia, SK and KT in South Korea, NTT in Japan, and O2 in the UK. In June, the big three telecommunications companies in Canada decided to partner with Ericsson, Nokia, and Samsung.

Question. How will a Chinese centric 5G ecosystem affect U.S. and allied security?

Answer. The risks from a People’s Republic of China (PRC) 5G ecosystem to the security of the United States and our allies and partners are numerous, including espionage, disruption, and/or manipulation of networks enabling critical infrastructure and services. Untrusted, high-risk vendors like Huawei and ZTE could provide the PRC’s Communist Party-led, authoritarian government the capability and opportunity to disrupt or weaponize critical applications and infrastructure or provide technological advances to the PRC’s military forces.

Question. I’d like to ask about your knowledge of the events regarding the plight of Uyghurs in Xinjiang as described in Ambassador John Bolton’s new book. The former National Security Advisor alleges that that the President of the United States gave an explicit approval to the President of China to “go ahead” with concentration camps estimated to be holding more than 1 million Uyghurs in Xinjiang, giving a green light to one of the most horrific gross human rights abuses on the planet today. This is extraordinarily startling and disturbing. If true, such a message would make a mockery of many of the public statements regarding the situation in Xinjiang that you and other members of the Trump administration have made over the past several years. Did the President of the United States give a green light to the President of China to build his concentration camps?

Answer. The Administration’s actions to stop human rights abuses in Xinjiang speak volumes, and the President himself has personally heard from those affected, including Jewher Ilham, the daughter of prominent Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti who was given a life sentence in 2014. More than any other government, the United States has taken concrete action to combat the People’s Republic of China’s campaign of repression in Xinjiang, to include visa restrictions, financial sanctions, export restrictions, import restrictions, and the release of a business advisory. We have also joined with like-minded partners in publicly condemning these human rights abuses.

Question. I remain deeply concerned with China’s pattern of aggression in territorial disputes with India. From the 2017 Doklam standoff, to the recent violence along the borders in Sikkim and Ladakh, to China’s new claims to Bhutanese territory, the Chinese Government has sought to redraw the map of South Asia without respecting the region’s people or governments. That aggression resulted in the tragic violence along the Line of Actual Control last month, and the international community must be clear that such behavior is unacceptable. The U.S.-India partnership can play a vital role in responding to Chinese aggression, and it is especially important that this partnership rest on the democratic values that the Chinese government lacks. How has the Department engaged with the Indian Government to develop a diplomatic strategy against Chinese efforts to violate the sovereignty of countries in South Asia?

Answer. The United States is deeply concerned by the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) continued pattern of aggressive actions along the Line of Actual Control with India. These actions mirror the PRC behavior in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. Our growing defense ties and regular high-level engagements with India,

including the Quad, State-DoD 2+2 Ministerial Dialogues, calls with senior Indian officials to discuss the border situation, and engagements by our ambassador in New Delhi, reinforce our shared commitment to a free and prosperous South Asia. In addition, Deputy Secretary of State Biegun's COVID-19 coordination calls with Indo-Pacific counterparts, including Indian Foreign Secretary Shringla, have fostered likeminded cooperation on supporting South Asian countries vulnerable to Chinese debt and economic pressure. We will continue to use upcoming dialogues, including our anticipated fall 2+2, to discuss the challenges that China poses to India and the region and to offer U.S. support to India and other South Asia nations that find their sovereignty and security at risk as a result of China's continued aggression.

Question. The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative has made inroads into Europe and has even signed an MOU with EU member Italy. I applaud the recent work done by the Development Finance Corporation and Ambassador Geoff Pyatt regarding the Elfasina Shipyard in Greece which I think shows how investment and diplomacy can be married to counter BRI. I don't however have a sense that there is an overall strategy to counter BRI in Europe, including working with Brussels and other key capitals across the continent. Do we have one? If so, what are its component parts?

Answer. Our strategy is rooted in robust and continuous engagement with the EU, EU member states, and other European countries. Our strategy emphasizes the risks of dealing with Beijing while highlighting attractive U.S.-led alternatives.

Beijing's One Belt, One Road strategy, also known as the Belt and Road Initiative, is designed to promote the People's Republic of China (PRC) industrial policies at the expense of foreign nations and foreign competitors. PRC state-owned firms made inroads in Europe after the European debt crisis of 2010, when Beijing scoured the continent for distressed assets. The Department of State, in coordination with the Treasury Department and other CFIUS member agencies, has conducted outreach with EU and other European partners to highlight potential vulnerabilities from PRC involvement in critical infrastructure and to encourage the adoption of strong, transparent, and national-security focused investment screening systems. Partly resulting from these robust efforts, the EU established an investment review framework that will become operational in October 2020, while 15 European governments are pursuing national-level investment review mechanisms to keep predatory state-led investments in check.

At the same time, we are also rolling out new initiatives and financing to amplify private sector-led investments. We are working with our interagency partners at the Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and U.S. EXIM Bank to create sustainable opportunities that foster competition and benefit all parties.

Question. The Administration reportedly is considering barring Communist party members and their families from getting visas. That might mean about 200 million people, some with important power with whom we need to interact and some just ordinary citizens. What is the logic of such a move? What do you hope the effect will be?

Answer. We are deeply concerned that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s malign behavior harms vital U.S. interests and undermines the sovereignty and dignity of countries and individuals around the world, and we will continue to pursue a wide range of options to address these concerns. In my speech at the Nixon Library in July, I explained that we have to keep in mind that the CCP is a Marxist-Leninist regime and that General Secretary Xi Jinping is a true believer in that bankrupt totalitarian ideology. I will not speculate on possible future actions, but will note that we will continue to highlight our concerns with the CCP's behavior and consider policies that would demonstrate our resolve on this issue.

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Question. Ambassador Lighthizer commented the other day that he has no idea what the end game is on China with this Administration's trade policy. Do you? And if so, what is it?

Answer. The United States is committed to rebalancing the U.S.-China economic relationship. Our whole-of-government approach supports fair trade, advances United States competitiveness, promotes U.S. exports, and breaks down unjust barriers to U.S. investment.

Question. Aside from words of condemnation and economic sanctions, what other tools does the Trump administration have to counterbalance China's growing influence around the world, including in contentious regions such as the South China Sea, Hong Kong, and Tibet?

Answer. We continue to increase pressure on the People's Republic of China (PRC) government and take action to protect U.S. interests and values by imposing costs on malign PRC conduct. These costs are applied through visa restrictions, financial sanctions, and policy announcements, among other tools. We remain committed to supporting meaningful autonomy for Tibetans, improving respect for their human rights, and helping to preserve their unique religious, cultural, and linguistic identity as well promoting access to Tibetan areas through the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act. Additionally, the Department of State continuously engages with our partners and allies around the world to encourage them to take similar steps.

Question. China and Iran are reportedly discussing a multi-billion-dollar trade and security deal. As you rightly pointed out at the hearing, there have long been reports about this kind of arrangement and nothing is set in stone. However, Chinese companies have helped Iran evade international and U.S. sanctions for years, and Chinese and Iranian leaders both employ repressive governing techniques. The Administration has repeatedly touted the success of its "maximum pressure campaign" as evidenced by Iran's economic decline. Do you see this economic devastation as making a partnership with China more appealing to Iranian leaders?

Answer. For the Iranian regime, a closer partnership with China is born of desperation. Because the regime has been severely weakened, in part by U.S. sanctions, but also through its own mismanagement and corruption, it is willing to negotiate a bad deal for the Iranian people as long as the regime gains access to much needed capital. The regime has been reluctant to publicly share details of the agreement for this very reason. The Iranian people know this, and they are rightly outraged by this hypocrisy.

Question. What are your current bilateral and multilateral engagements with China regarding its potential investments and cooperation with Iran?

Answer. We are closely monitoring reports of a draft 25-year agreement between China and Iran. The scale of the supposed Chinese investment in the deal deserves healthy skepticism; however, Chinese entities continue to provide financial support to the Iranian regime, including through the continued sanctionable purchases of Iranian petroleum, petrochemicals, and metals. We have made clear to the Chinese Government that we will continue to vigorously enforce our sanctions regime on Iran, including on Chinese individuals and entities that engage in sanctionable conduct. By allowing Chinese companies to conduct sanctionable activities with the Iranian regime, the People's Republic of China is undermining its own stated goal of promoting stability in the Middle East.

Question. Does an increased security relationship between Iran and China help or hinder American interests in both the Middle East and Asia?

Answer. We are closely monitoring the increasing security cooperation and deepening partnership between Iran and the People's Republic of China. We continue to work closely with allies and partners in the Middle East and Asia to safeguard U.S. interests and promote regional stability.

Question. The continuing clampdown by the Chinese Government on the religious freedom of the Tibetan people is a matter of the utmost concern. What is the U.S. Government position on the right of Tibetan Buddhists in selecting a future Dalai Lama without the interference of any government, and what is the plan to push back against the planned interference of the Chinese Government?

Answer. The United States prioritizes the promotion and protection of religious freedom, particularly in China, where people of all faiths face severe repression and discrimination. I remain concerned by the PRC's interference in the selection, education, and veneration of Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders. The U.S. Government believes Tibetan Buddhists, like members of all faith communities, must be able to select, educate, and venerate their religious leaders in accordance with their beliefs and without government interference. The succession or identification of Tibetan Buddhist lamas, including the Dalai Lama, should be decided by Tibetan Buddhists without any government interference.

Question. President Trump has not once publicly raised the issue of Tibet. Since 1997, all U.S. Presidents have publicly challenged the sitting Chinese President to negotiate with the Dalai Lama or his representative to find a lasting solution to the Tibetan issue. Would you recommend and make sure that President Trump calls publicly on the Chinese President to address the legitimate grievances of the Tibetan people through dialogue with the Dalai Lama?

Answer. The United States remains deeply committed to Tibetans' human rights and fundamental freedoms. Our long-standing policy is to encourage meaningful and direct dialogue between the Government of the People's Republic of China and His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, or his representatives, without preconditions, to seek a settlement that resolves differences. The U.S. Government believes that a negotiated resolution that leads to meaningful autonomy for Tibetans and ensures they are able to practice freely their religion, and to preserve their culture and language provides the best hope for long-term stability in the region. We continue to meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama as a religious and spiritual leader revered by Tibetans and many around the world.

Question. At a time when the relationship is facing increasing friction and when the risk of conflict is rising, do we need such a process?

Answer. The Administration sees no value in engaging with Beijing in formal high-level dialogues when the People's Republic of China (PRC) offers no prospects for tangible results or constructive outcomes. We remain open to constructive, results-oriented engagement and cooperation with the PRC Government where our interests align, even as we continue to compete vigorously when necessary.

Question. Secretary Tillerson proposed a good framework at the beginning of the Administration, but obviously it has been abandoned. Why?

Answer. While we no longer conduct dialogues for the sake of dialogue, we do continue to engage with People's Republic of China leaders in a respectful yet clear-eyed manner on a wide range of issues, challenging Beijing to uphold its commitments. This is particularly evident in our push for reciprocity in the U.S.-China bilateral relationship.

Question. Given China and Russia's opposition to extending the UN arms embargo on Iran that is set to expire in a few short months, how do you see increased bilateral tension with China impacting its posture towards extending the arms embargo at the Security Council?

Answer. We were disappointed by the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) recent decision to join Russia in voting against the resolution to extend the UN arms embargo on Iran due to the Islamic Republic of Iran’s destabilizing behavior. As historical arms suppliers to Iran, both nations clearly have financial motives to end the embargo. The Islamic Republic has done nothing to merit the lifting of the embargo and continues to send weapons to armed groups all across the region in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. Iran’s actions drive instability and exacerbate human suffering across the Middle East. Every country ought to have an interest in combating Iranian malign influence in order to foster regional stability and safeguard the free flow of commerce. Allowing Iran to purchase and proliferate even deadlier weapons would be an abdication of the UN Security Council’s responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

Question. During recent UN Security Council negotiations over extending cross border humanitarian aid to Syria, Russia and China worked diligently to deny the humanitarian access to support the people of Syria. While it’s clear Russia was leading this effort on behalf of its client in Damascus, China was only too happy to join. What are you doing to combat Chinese and Russian influence at the UN Security Council regarding Syria?

Answer. Working with our partners and the UN in support of the Syrian people, the United States is combating People’s Republic of China (PRC) and Russian malign influence at the UN Security Council on Syria in a multitude of ways and on two different fronts: political and humanitarian. The vote on cross-border assistance demonstrated that the Council was largely united in its support for the Syrian people and in the process we and our allies are isolating both Russia and the PRC in their support of the Assad regime. The United States worked with an overwhelming majority of the Security Council to overcome Russian and PRC intransigence and adopt a UN Security Council resolution to enable humanitarian assistance to reach many of those in need in Syria.

Question. China has made significant investments into Arab Gulf countries with whom the United States has significant security relationships. Last month, CENTCOM Commander General McKenzie stated: “We see China moving in, principally economically—but not completely—to establish a beachhead.” What are the implications of increased Chinese investment in critical infrastructure projects in the Arab Gulf States?

Answer. Chinese investment in the Gulf is focused on satisfying Beijing’s domestic economic priorities, including its demand for energy and search for new export markets. In 2015, China became the biggest global importer of crude oil, with almost half of its supply coming from the Middle East. Prior to the COVID–19 pandemic, the International Energy Agency had predicted that Chinese imports from the Gulf region would double by 2035. China also views the region as a market for construction, finance, and telecom infrastructure investments. While many of these projects may be benign, the lack of transparency in Chinese bids, Beijing’s tendency to undermine free market dynamics through its heavily subsidized state-owned enterprises, and the routine inclusion of Chinese tech companies subject to the People’s Republic of China’s draconian national security laws as part of nearly every major infrastructure investment all raise red flags. In response, we are working with partners in the region to enhance tools to counter malign economic activity, such as investment screening capabilities.

Question. Please describe your engagement with relevant leaders in these [Arab Gulf] countries regarding Chinese investment.

Answer. Our engagement emphasizes that China’s agenda in the Middle East is all about advancing China’s interests—it is not about shared values, institution-building, or improving access to capital. Private investment that flows from the United States and Europe to the Middle East is consistent over time, far larger in terms of foreign direct investment stock, and is a stronger force for job creation, human capital cultivation, and regional economic development. While we do not ask our partners to turn away Chinese investment on principle, we have advocated for appropriate screening of investments that take the form of controlling stakes in critical infrastructure or dual-use technologies, while remaining vigilant for any malign People’s Republic of China activities.

Question. In what areas do you see Chinese investment as presenting direct threats to U.S. interests or equities?

Answer. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) uses its One Belt, One Road initiative to reshape international norms, standards, and networks while creating leverage Beijing uses to extract political concessions from other countries, including U.S.

partners and allies. PRC investments can provide Beijing with control of critical third-country infrastructure and key supply chains. PRC-controlled communications infrastructure is a threat to global data privacy and information security. The United States Government will continue working to mitigate these risks through a whole-of-government approach to investment screening, outreach to like-minded partners, and efforts to provide high-quality, sustainable alternatives to Chinese investment.

Question. Chinese weapons, including armed drones have been repeatedly used by warring parties in the Yemen and Libya conflicts. Have any Chinese-origin weapons systems, including armed or unarmed drones, been used by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Qatar or Turkey in the conflicts in Yemen or Libya? If so, have any of those uses resulted in civilian casualties?

Answer. China has sold multiple weapons systems to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey, including armed drones to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt. Available reporting suggests that Saudi Arabia employed its China-origin drones in Yemen, and the UAE used them in Yemen and Libya. Saudi Arabia has also reportedly employed Chinese artillery pieces in Yemen. We cannot establish if any of these reported drone or artillery strikes resulted in civilian casualties.

Question. Have any Chinese-origin weapons systems, including armed drones, been provided to non-state actors by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Qatar or Turkey in the conflicts in Yemen or Libya? If so, have any of those uses resulted in civilian casualties?

Answer. We have no unclassified reporting to indicate that Chinese-origin weapons have been provided to non-state actors by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Qatar or Turkey in the conflicts in Yemen or Libya.

Question. What steps has the U.S. taken to prevent the purchase of Chinese-origin weapons systems, including armed drones by countries included in the NEA bureau?

Answer. The United States has urged countries to beware of unscrupulous actors like China offering deceptively cut-price defense systems and equipment. Such acquisitions are no bargain and are often accompanied by: the loss of sovereignty; resource extraction or debt-trap diplomacy; the signing away of rights to critical physical or IT infrastructure; or the exploitation of intellectual property due to espionage or outright theft. We have emphasized to our partners globally that acquiring these systems does not strengthen their security, but rather undermines their interoperability with U.S. forces and should rightly be avoided. The United States will continue to offer assistance to allies and partners in need, and we will do so without those harmful strings attached.

Question. I am deeply troubled by the letter on July 12 signed by several Muslim-majority countries, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Algeria and Qatar that praises China for its “remarkable achievements in the field of human rights” while characterizing the detention and torture of Muslim Uighers as “a series of counter-terrorism and de-radicalization measures in Xinjiang, including setting up vocational education and training centers.” What steps did the U.S. take to try to prevent these and other countries from signing such a letter whitewashing China’s crimes against its own Uighur population?

Answer. The People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) human rights abuses in Xinjiang against Uyghurs and members of other Muslim minority groups are horrific. The Trump administration has led the global effort to spotlight and impose concrete costs on the PRC’s continuous campaign of repression, which includes mass arbitrary detention, intrusive surveillance, forced labor, forced population control, and involuntary collection of biometric data. I will continue to call on all countries to join the United States in condemning these heinous human rights abuses.

Question. What steps will the U.S. take to push these countries to recant their signatures and prevent future letters from being signed?

Answer. The People’s Republic of China’s human rights abuses in Xinjiang against Uyghurs and members of other Muslim minority groups are horrific. I will continue to call on all countries to join the United States in condemning these abuses.

Question. What initiatives are we going to propose at the upcoming G-7 meeting? How are we leading at the United Nations?

Answer. The President has been clear that the WHO needs to get its act together. That begins with making substantive improvements to its ability to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks with transparency and accountability.

Through the G7, UN, and likeminded partners, the United States will continue its efforts to reform the WHO and other international organizations to ensure they operate with transparency, fulfill their mandates, and hold governments accountable for their commitments under international law. There is shared recognition among the G7 of the WHO's failures during the current pandemic response. There is also significant common ground about how to address those problems and reform the organization so we can avoid a repeat of the COVID-19 disaster in the future.

The President's priorities are to safeguard the health and safety of the American people and save lives around the world. As we redirect foreign assistance funding to other deserving global health organizations and urgent needs around the world, the United States has generously allocated more than \$20.5 billion that will benefit the global COVID-19 pandemic response.

Question. Has the Department issued a directive encouraging the use of the scientific term for COVID-19, and discouraging the use of any other non-scientific names? If so, when? To whom was that guidance sent?

Answer. The Department issued a notice to all diplomatic posts in March that included the February announcement of "COVID-19" as the official name for the coronavirus disease 2019. The Department advised diplomatic posts to use the "COVID-19" acronym, including in public-facing materials. The notice also clarified that "COVID-19" is not synonymous with "coronavirus" or "novel coronavirus" and advised posts to avoid using the term "coronavirus" to refer to the general category/type of virus.

Question. What other steps is the Department taking to reduce the social stigma and discrimination associated with COVID-19?

Answer. I have informed all Department employees of the importance of preventing stigma and discrimination, promoting resiliency and mental health, and supporting each other through COVID-19 with the goal of raising awareness about the potential for stigma during the pandemic and setting the tone for what I expect from Department leadership. This includes the importance of practicing inclusion remotely to avoid isolating or stigmatizing team members. In June, we also launched TalentCare. TalentCare integrates the Department's workforce resilience initiatives so employees have a single touchpoint to access programs and resources that enhance health and well-being.

Question. How will you hold officials accountable at the Department who do not use the WHO and CDC-recommended term COVID-19?

Answer. On February 11, 2020, the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses formalized the etiologic agent as the "severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2", or SARS-CoV-2, and the name of the disease COVID-19. The Department has consistently used those conventions across the enterprise since they were introduced by the WHO.

Question. COVID-19 is currently "spreading like wildfire" in South Africa and The Wall Street Journal reported that the virus "is overpowering hospitals and has caused a dramatic increase in deaths" in the country. The impacts of COVID-19 are straining the already weak health care systems in Africa. It is essential to aid low-income countries to help them control the pandemic as we wait for a vaccine. As one example, the Global Fund is helping countries respond to COVID-19 and is uniquely positioned to shore up fragile health systems, protect health care workers with PPE, and make diagnostics and treatments available. What is the State Department doing to mitigate the effects of the pandemic in Africa by working through effective international partnerships, such as the Global Fund, which is already helping countries respond to COVID-19?

Answer. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the State Department and USAID have invested more than \$468 million in Africa in health and humanitarian assistance specifically aimed at helping governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations fight the pandemic. Additionally, our whole-of-government approach is helping confront the pandemic through American private businesses, non-profit groups, and individuals. PEPFAR coordinates with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to ensure our efforts remain complementary. Over the last 17 years, PEPFAR has established labs and surveillance systems to help address the HIV pandemic that are now being leveraged to support diagnostics for COVID-19.

Question. How will U.S. international funding to its partnerships provide life-saving services in Africa and protect Africa's most vulnerable peoples?

Answer. The United States has a longstanding commitment to supporting life-saving services in Africa. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the U.S. Government has invested more than \$468 million in Africa in health and humanitarian assistance to respond to the pandemic, including to protect the health of vulnerable people. We continue partnering with countries across Africa through global health security programs; responses to specific diseases like Ebola, polio, malaria, TB, and now COVID-19; and building national capacity to strengthen health systems to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats. PEPFAR continues to deliver life-saving HIV prevention and treatment services and made significant progress toward controlling the HIV pandemic.

Question. With Africa's CDC (Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention) observing an increase of 100,000 new cases weekly in Africa, COVID-19 is having a large impact on the epidemics of HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria, which continue to be widespread across the continent. The Imperial College London issued a report stating that "in high burden settings, HIV, TB, and malaria related deaths over 5 years may be increased by up to 10, 2, and 36 percent, respectively" due to COVID-19. Without decisive action, COVID-19 could wipe out nearly two decades of progress in combating these three diseases. The Global Fund is now working to address this through its COVID-19 Response Mechanism and working to mitigate the risks the pandemic poses to HIV, TB, and malaria outcomes. Given the rapidly increasing rates of COVID-19 in Africa and the enormous challenges that the pandemic places on HIV, TB, and malaria progress, how can the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator help to ensure responses to COVID-19 globally are sufficiently prioritizing impacts on other epidemics like AIDS, TB, and malaria, and that programs supported through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) are not disrupted or otherwise compromised by the COVID-19 response?

Answer. PEPFAR, the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), and the Global Accelerator to End Tuberculosis funded by USAID continue to deliver life-saving prevention and treatment in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Since the onset of COVID-19, the U.S. Government has developed responses to ensure we preserve our gains in the fight against HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria as well as to address maternal and child health and voluntary family planning while continuing to serve, support, and protect our clients, communities, staff, health care workers, and partners around the world. The Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator (S/GAC) in the Department of State continues to coordinate the U.S. response with PMI and the TB Accelerator by engaging the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and malaria to ensure our respective efforts remain complementary, especially during the evolving pandemic.

Question. Figures estimated by UNAIDS point to half a million deaths from AIDS-related illnesses in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 and 2021 due to possible disruptions of ARTs. When South Africa implemented a lockdown to slow the rate of COVID-19 infections, the lockdown caused enormous consequences for continued healthcare services and resources. A recent survey by the Global Fund shows widespread service disruptions in AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria responses as a result of COVID-19, impacting approximately three-quarters of HIV, TB, and malaria programs. What specific actions can the State Department take to ensure that COVID-19's health and economic impacts—both direct and indirect—on already overstretched health systems in vulnerable areas? What actions are you taking to work with international partners to mitigate these particular impacts of COVID-19?

Answer. PEPFAR invests more than \$900 million annually to support health infrastructure and capacity in partner countries, including by strengthening surveillance, laboratories, epidemiology, and public health interventions. These funds complement the healthcare investments of other programs in global health funded by USAID, such as the President's Malaria Initiative, the Global Accelerator to End Tuberculosis, maternal and child health and voluntary family planning. Over the last 17 years, PEPFAR has established 3,000 clinical laboratories and 28 national reference laboratories in sub-Saharan Africa. PEPFAR and USAID have established laboratories and surveillance to address HIV/AIDS and other diseases. The U.S. Government and our partners have leveraged these resources to support diagnostics for COVID-19 to help ensure people who are living with HIV and other conditions continue to receive care. Multiple health programs funded by the U.S. Government have adapted their delivery of care, medications, and immunizations during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, PEPFAR expanded the multi-month dispensation of anti-retroviral (ARVs) drugs and decentralized the delivery of ARVs by allowing non-clinical institutions to serve as distribution points, saving costs and reducing the frequency of patient visits to health facilities.

Question. Sudan is currently experiencing widespread violence in Darfur, and there have been recent violent incidents in South Kordofan and Kassala. Conflict in these regions will impede Sudan's transition to a civilian-led, democratic government. What is the Administration doing to prevent further violence and improve civilian security in Sudan?

Answer. The United States is supporting the Sudan Peace Process between the Sudanese civilian-led transitional government and armed opposition groups so both groups can reach a sustainable peace agreement. We have repeatedly raised our concerns about violence in Darfur, the Two Areas, and other areas; and we will continue to engage the government on human rights, security sector reform, and protection of civilians. The United States also supports UNAMID and the new special political mission in Sudan, UNITAMS, in their efforts to support Sudan in protecting civilians, to monitor human rights, to promote justice, and to assist the Sudanese Government to develop and implement a credible and sustainable Protection of Civilians strategy.

Question. The dispute between Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project and management of the Nile waters has caused serious tensions in the Horn of Africa. Despite the sensitive diplomatic negotiations involved in the dispute, which would typically fall under the purview of the State Department, the Treasury Department is the lead agency handling this issue. What are the regional implications should the GERD negotiations fail, and how will that impact U.S. interests in the region? What role are you playing in the GERD negotiations? What role have you advocated for the State Department writ large in the GERD negotiations?

Answer. The on-going GERD negotiations hold the promise of greater cooperation and sound management of the Blue Nile for power, agriculture, industry, and other uses that could improve the lives of the more than 250 million people of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan. The Treasury Department plays the lead role in the U.S. Government's participation in the GERD negotiations. The State Department is in close contact with the Treasury Department to ensure a unified U.S. policy. Secretary Mnuchin and I regularly discuss policy and negotiation developments, and I have spoken repeatedly with senior officials from all three countries on this issue. The State Department is engaged through U.S. embassies in Addis Ababa, Cairo, Khartoum, and Pretoria and the U.S. Mission to the African Union.

Question. *Foreign Policy* reported that, "several U.S. officials said that the Trump administration could move forward with aid cuts to Ethiopia if negotiations hit another impasse and the sides can't reach a final deal." Do you support the current aid freeze on Ethiopia to induce its cooperation on the GERD negotiations?

Answer. The Department is committed to leveraging all available tools to promote outcomes that advance our interests around the world. As of July 30, no funding already obligated for Ethiopia has been affected by these considerations. The State Department will consult and notify Congress before reprogramming funds previously notified or justified bilaterally for Ethiopia, consistent with applicable requirements.

Question. Ethiopia's transition to an inclusive representative democracy is in jeopardy. There are alarming signs of backsliding including mass arrests, disappearances, arrest of opposition politicians and an internet blackout. Elections, scheduled for this year have been delayed indefinitely. What actions have you taken in the wake of your visit to help ensure Ethiopia succeeds in its democratic transition, specifically with regards to calling out actions that close political space and violate human rights?

Answer. Despite intermittent challenges, our assessment continues to be that Prime Minister Abiy's administration remains committed to the reforms they championed when he came to power in 2018. We continue to engage diplomatically with the Ethiopian Government to assure them of our support and to urge them to continue to uphold the rule of law, respect basic democratic principles, and work towards free and fair elections. Department leadership meets regularly with senior officials from the Ethiopian Government to reiterate our concerns regarding troubling reports of human rights abuses and restrictions on basic freedoms.

Question. However, the transition remains extremely fragile, and could even fail without strong support. What specific programmatic activities to support the transition in Ethiopia will the FY 2021 request support? What specific programs will the U.S. undertake to target youth in marginalized communities? What specific geographic areas will we target through such programs?

Answer. The FY 2021 budget request includes funding for robust interagency support for Ethiopia's economic, security, and democratic reforms as well as efforts to strengthen constructive civic engagement and mitigate conflict. U.S. Government programming is inclusive of all Ethiopians, including a growing youth population throughout the country. The FY 2021 budget request includes programs for outreach and events in every region of Ethiopia, aligning with our assessment of where challenges are the greatest. The Department continues to assess the impact COVID-19 will have on our programming.

Question. Last May, the White House announced the United States is undertaking a comprehensive review of its assistance programs to South Sudan to ensure our assistance does not contribute to, or prolong the conflict, or facilitate predatory or corrupt behavior. When will the review be complete? What impact has it had on the FY 2021 budget request?

Answer. The comprehensive review of assistance programs is being led by the National Security Council in conjunction with the interagency. The Department of State remains committed to ensuring our foreign assistance programs do not contribute to, prolong, or facilitate predatory or corrupt behavior in South Sudan and that these programs have sufficient safeguards in place, including robust monitoring and evaluation. The review has not had an impact on the FY 2021 budget request.

Question. Conflict between the Government of Cameroon and Anglophone separatists has killed thousands. What actions is the Administration taking to address ongoing violence and to foster a sustainable settlement between the government and Anglophone separatists?

Answer. Coordinating closely with likeminded partners, Department of State officials continue to call for the government as well as the separatist groups to cease violence and engage in dialogue without preconditions, to ensure humanitarian workers can access the affected regions, and to allow for independent investigations of human rights violations and abuses, such as the February 14 killings in Ngarbuh, Northwest Region. We significantly reduced security assistance to Cameroon and removed eligibility for Africa Growth and Opportunity Act benefits due to credible allegations of human rights violations by security forces. We believe the Swiss initiative is the most promising effort leading toward dialogue and will continue to support it.

Question. The Pentagon's review of troop deployments in Africa has unnerved our allies who rely on U.S. military support in the Sahel. What is the State Department doing to reassure our allies of the U.S. commitment to continuing engagement in support of counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel? Do you support drawing down our military deployment in the Sahel or other parts of sub-Saharan Africa?

Answer. The Department of State funds the majority of peace and security assistance in Africa. The Department of Defense's Blank Slate Review does not change my commitment to reduce threats and advance mutual interests with our African partners. Between Fiscal Years 2010 and 2019, the Department of State obligated approximately \$4.7 billion in bilateral security assistance to Africa, a significant portion of which assisted Sahel countries. The majority of the State Department's security assistance does not depend on Department of Defense for implementation or oversight. I remain committed to maintaining this engagement, recognizing that some programs may require review and adjustment in light of reduced Department of Defense oversight and implementation capacity.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE MICHAEL POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. [Question for the Record Submitted is classified.]

Answer. I remain committed to protecting U.S. national security interests and supporting the safety and security of U.S. Mission Russia. My team is working with the interagency on these matters and is prepared to brief you or members of your staff in a classified setting.

Question. Is the State Department aware of any Russian officials currently in the U.S. who have overstayed their visas? If so, will you work to ensure they are repatriated to Russia?

Answer. I remain committed to protecting U.S. national security interests and supporting the safety and security of U.S. Mission Russia. My team is working with the interagency on these matters and is prepared to brief you or members of your staff in a classified setting.

Question. How is the State Department working to address the imbalance between U.S. personnel in Russia and Russian personnel in the U.S.?

Answer. I remain committed to protecting U.S. national security interests and supporting the safety and security of U.S. Mission Russia. My team is working with the interagency on these matters and is prepared to brief you or members of your staff in a classified setting.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE MICHAEL POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RON JOHNSON

Question. You have been a strong voice for internet freedom and recently tweeted that “the United States will not tolerate government imposed internet shutdowns and other forms of censorship.” Is it the policy of the Department of State to support development and distribution of the tools needed to circumvent the internet censors of the Chinese Government? If so, what is the plan for doing so, and do you have the funding you need to achieve that goal?

Answer. The Department of State supports the Administration’s policy to protect and promote internet freedom as articulated in the U.S. National Cyber Strategy. As reflected in the Strategy, the United States takes a principled stand on protecting an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet and works to ensure that the U.S. approach to an open internet is the international standard. Department programs funded through Section 7065(a) of the 2019 SFOAA contribute to the Administration’s strategic efforts by providing civil society and human rights defenders in China and other repressive environments with tailored and context-specific support that includes development, deployment, and support for technologies that counter censorship and/or enable secure communications. The Department will continue to optimize the use of available funds on programs best designed to protect and promote internet freedom.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY MICHAEL POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. How have the events that triggered recent protests around our country—and the government’s response—hindered our ability to promote human rights and democratic principles abroad?

Answer. There is no change to the Department of State’s work overseas promoting human rights and democratic principles. The discussions taking place in the United States, amplified by a free and independent media and our respect for fundamental freedoms such as freedom of association and peaceful assembly, demonstrate our robust democracy, our vigorous debates, and our constant striving to be better.

The charges filed against the four Minnesota police officers for George Floyd’s tragic death illustrate accountability, due process, and rule of law. The United States continues to serve as an example of our commitment to democratic principles through dedication to accountability at home and respect for fundamental freedoms.

Question. What is the impact of the President’s perceived affinity for authoritarian leaders on our human rights efforts around the globe?

Answer. The United States is firmly committed to using its voice and position on the world stage to draw attention to human rights violations and abuses and promote accountability for human rights violators and abusers. I raise a wide range of human rights issues and concerns with leaders from around the world. The Department of State engages privately and publicly at all levels to promote the importance of democratic processes, rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms to ensuring freedom, security, and prosperity. The United States will continue to stand up and speak out on human rights violations and abuses—wherever and by whomever they are committed.

Question. Do you believe that other countries still regard the United States as a leader on human rights? If so, what examples of our leadership can you provide?

Answer. Yes. During the current global health crisis, the United States is leading multilateral and multi-stakeholder efforts to promote upholding democracy, human rights, and good governance as a critical component of responding effectively to the pandemic. For example, in May, the United States led a statement by the Freedom Online Coalition—a group of like-minded states seeking to advance internet freedom—on the human rights implications of certain measures introduced by governments in response to the COVID-19 crisis, such as the use of arbitrary or unlawful

surveillance practices, network shutdowns, and censorship. This was the first time a group of governments took a public position promoting access to information online during this crisis.

Question. You recently said that, “[o]ur dedication to unalienable rights doesn’t mean we have the capacity to tackle all human rights violations everywhere and at all times.” In your view, which human rights violations should the United States focus on and which should we ignore? Do you consider women’s rights and LGBTQ rights to be equally as important as the right to religious freedom?

Answer. Any realistic foreign policy—including the promotion of human rights—must acknowledge the constraints imposed by finite resources and limited capacity. As the Commission on Unalienable Rights notes in its draft report, “[W]hile it is important in principle to affirm the interdependence of all rights that pertain to human dignity, U.S. foreign policy can and should, consistent with the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights], determine which rights most accord with national principles, priorities, and interests at any given time. Such judgments must take into consideration both the distinctive U.S. contributions to the human rights project and also prudential judgments about current conditions, threats, and opportunities.” As the report affirms throughout, human rights are the rights inherent in all persons. The Administration is committed to promoting human rights as a national security priority, and leads by example in our public commitments to the worldwide decriminalization of LGBTQ and in promoting the economic and societal empowerment of women.

Question. Does the premise that internationally recognized human rights are subject to interpretation based on individual nation’s traditions and values empower countries like China or Russia in their efforts to delegitimize human rights?

Answer. No. While each state decides how rights are implemented domestically, human rights are still universal. Unfortunately, some nations simply ignore the universality of human rights. The Chinese Government represses members of religious and ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang, Tibet, and elsewhere, and undermines the freedoms guaranteed to Hong Kongers under the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. The Russian Government severely limits the exercise of human rights at home, including through growing restrictions and reprisals on individuals who exercise their freedom of expression, members of the political opposition, and certain religious minorities. We continue to work in multilateral fora and with like-minded partners to press countries such as China, Russia, and others to respect universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. As you have stated, the Commission’s draft report is not a statement of policy. How will you ensure that the report is not used in official State Department business?

Answer. The report is meant to inform policymaking; to serve as a reference for NGOs, teachers, and students; to assist in clarifying conceptual and terminological confusion; and to stimulate discussion regarding the promotion of human rights across the world. The report states: “As elaborated by the Secretary, the Commission’s instructions were to focus on principle, not policy formulation.” Further, it notes, “Recognizing that foreign policy must be tailored to changing circumstances and must necessarily consider many other factors along with human rights, the Commission did not seek to enter into debates about the application of human rights principles to particular current controversies.”

Question. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women guarantees women’s rights “to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education, and means to enable them to exercise these rights.” Do you acknowledge that access to reproductive health and family planning are human rights?

Answer. I am committed to advancing the health and well-being of women and girls globally. The United States plays a leading role in supporting the rights of women and girls around the world, working to strengthen democratic, transparent, representative, and responsive governance that includes the voices of women and marginalized communities. The United States continues to provide more foreign assistance for women’s and girls’ health than any other country in the world, and we will continue to be a leading funder of (voluntary) family planning, child and maternal health, HIV/AIDS, cancer research and treatment, and other programs that address the life-long health needs of women and girls.

Question. Do you think that providing women the tools and information they need to prevent unintended pregnancies is a worthy public health goal?

Answer. The Administration is a strong defender of programs to improve the health, life, dignity, and well-being of women. The United States is the world's largest bilateral donor for essential health care, including voluntary and informed family planning.

The Administration supports the empowerment of women and efforts to promote their access to health care across the lifespan, whether or not they are mothers. This includes maternal health and promoting the healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy through access to voluntary family planning. It also includes the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and their complications including HIV, the prevention and treatment of fistula and female genital mutilation and cutting, and other interventions to address health-care needs specific to women and girls, excluding abortion as a method of family planning.

Question. Will U.S.-funded programs continue to support and supply a full range of (modern) contraceptive methods in order to ensure that women have access to the information, counseling, and methods best suited to their needs?

Answer. As the world's largest bilateral donor of family-planning assistance, the United States remains committed to helping women and their children thrive. Preventing child and maternal deaths remains a priority for this Administration. Access to voluntary family planning is a key intervention for achieving the healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy, preventing child and maternal deaths, and for helping communities progress along the Journey to Self-Reliance.

We know women need access to a range of contraceptive options over their reproductive years, as their fertility intentions will change over time. We best serve women when we provide them with access to a broad range of modern contraceptive options—from fertility-awareness methods, to short- and long-acting reversible methods, to voluntary permanent methods, as well as high-quality counseling so women can make their own informed decisions. We also are committed to supporting the development, introduction, and scale-up of a wide range of contraceptive methods to meet the voluntary family-planning needs of women and couples so they can time and space their families in the healthiest way possible.

Question. You recently stated that, “Even as we continue our robust COVID-19 response, the United States must start preparing for the next outbreak today.” With 70 percent of the world still underprepared to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats, it is critical that the U.S. lead efforts to strengthen global pandemic preparedness. Looking ahead, how can we apply lessons learned from this pandemic to bolster future global pandemic preparedness?

Answer. Achieving global health security and bolstering pandemic preparedness remain policy priorities of the Department of State. The COVID-19 outbreak reiterated three key themes that emerged from previous outbreaks of Zika and Ebola: the U.S. Government, our bilateral partners, and multilateral organizations must be better organized to rapidly respond to infectious disease threats and pandemics; we must strengthen transparent and trusted early warning systems and connect critical data sources; and we must think holistically about preparedness and build accountability into the international system. We will continue to leverage U.S. Government successes, including our whole-of-government support to the Global Health Security Agenda, to build country-level capacities and help partner countries fill gaps identified in their Joint External Evaluations and National Action Plans for Health Security. We are currently reviewing options to expand efforts in these areas.

Question. What efforts is the State Department undertaking to prevent future infectious disease threats from spreading and to work with our allies to coordinate best practices?

Answer. Global health security is a global responsibility and requires a transparent, trusted, and coordinated international approach. U.S. diplomacy is key to this effort. Our diplomatic outreach fosters collaboration between governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and other partners to encourage multisectoral approaches to bolster global health security. The Department of State continues to engage bilaterally, in multilateral fora, and through initiatives like the Global Health Security Agenda, to coordinate with allies and partners to strengthen the ability of countries around the world to better prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats.

Question. How can we hope to protect Americans from pandemic disease and other global health challenges without participating in a multilateral coordinating authority like the WHO?

Answer. The Administration is examining ways to use the expertise of key U.S. Government departments and agencies and the U.S. non-governmental and private

sectors to protect U.S. citizens and deliver essential support rapidly to other countries to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases at their source. Political pressure by the PRC and other malign actors has degraded the capability of the World Health Organization and left its leaders and scientists reluctant to speak out about the PRC's and other governments' refusal to report transparently on outbreaks of dangerous pathogens. The United States will continue to work with countries to develop tools to address infectious diseases and fill gaps created by the WHO's inaction.

Question. Is the State Department concerned that a U.S. withdraw from the WHO will further strengthen China's role at the organization and other multilateral bodies?

Answer. The United States remains an indispensable, committed partner of the international community, including the UN and its associated bodies by continuing to be the largest financial contributor to international organizations, providing over \$12.2 billion in fiscal year 2019. The United States continuously works to ensure the U.S. values of universality of human rights, the dignity and worth of individuals, peaceful resolution of conflict, sustainable economic prosperity, national sovereignty, transparency, and the rule of law are protected and upheld at the UN and related international institutions.

The Department of State proactively supports these values, the core pillars of the UN Charter—peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights—and advances the reforms the UN and its organizations require to be transparent, effective, and accountable institutions of the 21st century. The United States' demonstrated commitment to the UN and related agencies is critical to accomplishing the UN mission, maintaining its integrity and impartial role of serving all its members, and rejecting the efforts of the PRC to harness the UN to accomplish its own authoritarian goals.

Question. Do you believe that a bilateral approach to complex and far-reaching global health crises is the most effective and efficient way to spend tax payer dollars?

Answer. The United States leads the world in health and humanitarian aid in an “All-of-America” effort: our assistance accounts for more than 40 percent of total global health funding, or more than \$140 billion since 2001. Similarly, the Administration is committed to ensuring our generosity directly reaches people around the world, while supporting the health-security priorities of the United States. The U.S. provides an average of \$10 billion per year in global health funding—and this year, those funds will double as we surge to respond to the pandemic of COVID-19 around the world. The vast majority of these funds will be implemented bilaterally, allowing us to work closely with each country as they pursue their journey to self-reliance. The Department works through and with multilateral organizations such as the Global Fund and Gavi. In addition, the United States has allocated more than \$20.5 billion toward the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond our generous funding, the U.S. Government actively engages with our domestic and international partners to support a coordinated and coherent international response so we can direct U.S. funding and technical expertise to the areas of greatest need.

Question. How does the Administration plan to allocate funding that would otherwise be obligated to WHO, especially in countries like Venezuela and Yemen, in which U.S. implementers have particular difficulty operating?

Answer. On May 29, 2020, the President announced that the United States will be terminating its relationship with the WHO and redirecting WHO-related funding to other deserving and urgent global health organizations and needs around the world. While the United States was by far the leading contributor to the WHO, those contributions represented a small fraction—just 4 percent—of total U.S. funding to global health assistance every year. There is a wide range of excellent implementing partners available to us, partners that value transparency and are better able to provide value for U.S. taxpayers. In many cases, our teams in the field and here in Washington have already identified alternate implementers in challenging environments, such as World Vision in Afghanistan, the International Medical Corps in Iraq, the International Rescue Committee in Syria, and in environments where we do not discuss the names of our partners due to safety and operational considerations.

Question. As you may be aware, the Republican HEALS Act would only provide approximately \$4 billion for a contribution to The Gavi Vaccine Alliance and for distribution of a future COVID-19 vaccine abroad. Is this funding level adequate?

Answer. The nature of a future COVID-19 vaccine remains to be seen. The funding needed to deploy a COVID-19 vaccine globally will be a global challenge requiring the entire international donor community. As we learn more, the Department of State will work with our partners to refine the estimates for anticipated global costs. The U.S. Government has already allocated \$20.5 billion in funding to support the international response to the pandemic and is the global leader in health and humanitarian assistance. We just recently announced a commitment of \$1.16 billion over FY 2020–2023 to Gavi, further reflecting our leadership in this area.

The Department of State will continue to work with OMB and other departments and agencies to assess whether and to what extent additional U.S. Government funding will be needed.

Question. To effectively respond to COVID-19 and the pandemic's secondary effects overseas, how much additional funding will the State Department and USAID need?

Answer. Congress has appropriated a total of \$2.3 billion to the Department of State and USAID to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic through the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116–123) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116–136).

Ongoing needs are likely to include mitigating the pandemic's continuing impact on fee revenues that support consular services both domestically and abroad. The Department will work with Congress and OMB on any further requests for funding to support the Department of State's response to COVID-19 around the globe.

Question. If Congress is to appropriate additional funding for the international COVID-19 response, can you commit to expending new resources in an expeditious and transparent manner?

Answer. Yes. The Department of State and USAID commit to expending funds appropriated for COVID-19 response in an expeditious and transparent manner, consistent with applicable congressional notification procedures and other requirements.

Question. Rates of COVID-19 are increasing rapidly in Africa and posing enormous challenges to progress on other health challenges like HIV, TB, and malaria on the continent. How can Congress ensure that even as the U.S. responds to COVID-19 globally, we are also sufficiently prioritizing impacts on other epidemics like AIDS, TB and malaria?

Answer. With the bipartisan support of Congress, PEPFAR continues to deliver lifesaving HIV prevention and treatment services and advance global progress toward controlling the HIV pandemic in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including in Africa. PEPFAR has taken decisive action since the onset of COVID-19 to confront the unique challenges it poses, ensuring we preserve our gains in the fight against HIV/AIDS and continue to serve, support, and protect our clients, communities, staff, health care workers, and partners around the world. PEPFAR coordinates closely with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria to ensure our respective efforts remain complementary, especially during the evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

Question. Is the State Department considering launching a Grand Challenge to advance innovations to fight coronavirus as it did during the Ebola and Zika global health emergencies? If so, what resources are needed from Congress to support this work?

Answer. As the Department of State and USAID have now committed or obligated nearly all of the COVID-19 supplemental resources provided by Congress, we are reviewing all available options to continue to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and better prepare for future pandemics. We are currently reviewing all of our resources and investments to consider how to utilize available funding sources such as prior year resources. The Department of State and USAID will continue to engage with Congress as those discussions progress.

Question. What policy actions does the State Department intend to take to push back against negative trends in democracy and human rights that are tied to government responses to COVID-19?

Answer. I have underscored that democracies are better equipped to address pandemics than authoritarian regimes. The Department of State is leading multilateral and multi-stakeholder efforts to promote democracy, human rights, and good governance as key to an effective response to COVID-19. We are also closely monitoring concerning trends related to some governments' responses to the pandemic,

including growing authoritarianism, crackdowns on fundamental freedoms, expanded use of surveillance tools, and targeting of vulnerable groups. We are leveraging bilateral and multilateral diplomacy and other foreign policy tools to promote democratic, rights-respecting responses and to counter authoritarian responses to the pandemic.

Question. Russia’s increasingly authoritarian governance under President Putin is deeply concerning. When President Trump seemingly ignores Russia’s malign activities and expresses a desire to pursue cooperation with Russia on a range of issues, even calling for its inclusion in the G7, what message does it send to other countries—both our allies and our adversaries?

Answer. We and the other members of the G7 have been clear: Russia must live up to its international commitments and accept responsibility for its destabilizing actions. The Administration will continue to impose costs on Russia and its proxies until Russia ends its aggression against Ukraine and ceases its efforts to undermine our democratic processes. The Administration has also been clear that the door to dialogue is open, should Russia choose to take credible steps toward a constructive path. Any change to G7 membership would require consultation with and consensus among members.

Question. What is the Administration’s “redline” with Russia? Russia has already attempted to interfere in our elections and faced little consequence, so there is reason to believe they would do so again. At what point will the White House more forcefully address malign Russian actions in the U.S.?

Answer. The Administration has launched an unprecedented election security effort working on a whole-of-government basis to ensure the security of our elections. The Administration has been clear with the Russians that efforts to interfere will be met with consequences. We continue to maintain sanctions against Russians responsible for U.S. election interference and we continue to increase pressure on Russian oligarch and Internet Research Agency financier Yevgeniy Prigozhin. The Department’s approach is to steadily raise the costs of Russia’s ongoing malign actions until Vladimir Putin chooses a less confrontational foreign policy, while keeping the door open for dialogue that advances our national interests.

Question. In addition to imposing robust sanctions against officials responsible for politically motivated imprisonment, how else can the U.S. Government ensure accountability for perpetrators of human rights abuses in Russia?

Answer. The U.S. Government’s commitment to democracy and civil society in Russia remains firm. We will continue to promote accountability for those responsible for human rights abuses, especially in cases where we can demonstrate that an individual’s conduct meets the legal threshold for specific action. For example, the Department’s July designation of Ramzan Kadyrov and members of his immediate family under Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2020, was an important step that signaled our concern about the appalling human rights situation in Chechnya. We will continue to work with allies and partners through bilateral channels and at multilateral fora to condemn human rights abuses in Russia and press for accountability for perpetrators.

Question. How can the United States combat Russia’s weaponization of corruption? How can we be more proactive in engaging in anti-corruption diplomacy?

Answer. Our response to Russia’s weaponization of corruption to achieve its political objectives continues to be rooted in democratic principles of *transparency, accountability, and integrity*. The United States will continue to proactively identify and publicly address Russian corruption and speedily impose sanctions on Russian officials, or those working on their behalf, who have engaged in corruption. We will also continue to work with our allies to press Russia to uphold its anticorruption obligations and defend against attempts by Russia to distort the international anticorruption framework or by Russian individuals and entities who are engaged in illegal activities including unlawful transfers of money into the United States.

Question. On July 27, Germany, the current head of the G7’s rotating presidency, rejected the suggestion that Russia be permitted to rejoin. What is the perceived benefit of rewarding Russia for its destabilizing behavior while alienating our allies?

Answer. We and the other members of the G7 have been clear: Russia must live up to its international commitments and accept responsibility for its destabilizing actions. The Administration will continue to impose costs on Russia and its proxies until it ends its aggression against Ukraine and ceases its efforts to undermine our democratic processes. The Administration has also been clear that the door to dia-

logue is open, should Russia choose to take credible steps toward a constructive path. Any change to G7 membership would require consultation with and consensus among members.

Question. Putin's successful manipulation of Russia's constitution last month may permit him to remain President, in effect, for life. What risks do you foresee in normalizing his anti-democratic tendencies?

Answer. Russian President Vladimir Putin orchestrated a carefully manipulated vote on constitutional amendments in June and July that gives him the option to remain president through 2036. Putin's eroding public support drives his reliance on repression not only in the form of harsh treatment of perceived critics of the Kremlin, but also against groups such as religious and other minorities, civil society actors, rule of law advocates, and independent media outlets and journalists. The Russian people, like people everywhere, deserve a government that supports an open marketplace of ideas, transparent and accountable governance, equal treatment under the law, and the ability to exercise their rights without fear of retribution.

Question. After the Administration ordered the Chinese Consulate in Houston closed on July 24, Beijing retaliated by ordering the closure of the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu. What immediate and long-term impacts will the closure of the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu have on U.S. diplomatic engagement in China?

Answer. We were troubled and disappointed by the PRC's decision to withdraw consent for the operations of U.S. Consulate General Chengdu, which—unlike its counterpart in Houston—was not engaged in malign activities. The consulate had stood at the center of our relations with the people of southwest China, including Tibet, for 35 years. While this unfortunate decision will no doubt make efforts to engage diplomatically and represent U.S. interests across southwest China more difficult, we will strive to continue our outreach to the people of this important region through our other diplomatic posts in China.

Question. What are the three top priority policy areas that the United States should be pursuing over the next 4 years to advance our competitive position vis-à-vis China, and how does the Administration's budget request reflect these priorities?

Answer. As outlined in the U.S. Strategic Approach to the People's Republic of China (PRC), released in May, we seek to improve the resiliency of our institutions, alliances, and partnerships to prevail against the challenges the PRC presents. Through diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance, the United States is building cooperative partnerships and developing positive alternatives with foreign allies, partners, and international organizations to support the shared principles of a free and open global order. We aim to compel Beijing to cease or reduce actions harmful to our national interests, as well as those of our allies and partners. We seek cooperation where our interests align, and strategic competition need not lead to confrontation or conflict. The Administration's budget request supports the strategic approach, including shoring up transparent and competitive markets globally.

Question. What joint interests exist between China and the United States where cooperation is necessary?

Answer. Strategic competition with the PRC need not lead to confrontation or conflict. The Department seeks cooperation where our interests align. We remain committed to achieving progress on a range of topics, such as implementing the Phase One trade deal, achieving DPRK denuclearization, and stemming the flow of fentanyl into the United States. However, we are willing to tolerate greater friction in the bilateral relationship, as we remain committed to our overarching goal of protecting U.S. vital national interests from malign PRC conduct.

Question. How does the State Department assess risks to U.S. citizens arising from the imposition of national security legislation in Hong Kong? What are the most serious risks for U.S. citizens living in or visiting Hong Kong? What are the risks for U.S. citizens living elsewhere?

Answer. Hong Kong's new National Security Law (NSL) poses a unique threat to U.S. citizens, both resident in Hong Kong and elsewhere. The NSL's provisions include several troubling components, including provisions stating that acts performed by the Office for Safeguarding National Security are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and provisions giving the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress the power to interpret the law, among others. Article 38 of the NSL states the law applies to offenses committed outside the region by a person who is not a permanent resident of Hong Kong. This could

potentially affect U.S. citizens who support freedom of expression and democracy in Hong Kong, even if they do so from the United States or elsewhere.

Question. What unintended consequences may result from the new policy the U.S. is pursuing by deeming China's South China Sea land reclamation illegal? Are there additional resources you believe the United States needs to achieve its goals in the South China Sea?

Answer. The decision to clarify our public position on PRC South China Sea claims was not taken lightly. With the new policy, the United States clearly stands with our Southeast Asian allies and partners in upholding their sovereign rights and interests, consistent with international law. We stand with the international community in defense of freedom of the seas, respect for sovereignty, and rejection of any push to impose "might makes right" in the South China Sea or the wider region.

The United States continues to carefully monitor ongoing developments in the South China Sea, and continues to invest in our own maritime capabilities and strengthen security cooperation with Southeast Asian claimants, as well as Taiwan.

Question. What specific strategy is the State Department following to broaden relations with Taiwan? How has this strategy changed in the wake of the most recent tensions?

Answer. The United States is strengthening our unofficial relationship with Taiwan as a key partner in our vision for the Indo-Pacific region. For decades, the United States has supported Taiwan's ability to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability, and we will continue to support an effective deterrence capability for Taiwan. The United States is also taking a stand against PRC coercion and pressure to restrict Taiwan's international space. Through the American Institute in Taiwan, we are working to highlight Taiwan's strengths as a partner through Global Cooperation and Training Framework programs focused on issues including public health, women's empowerment, media disinformation, and the digital economy.

Question. You have expressed outrage over Beijing's treatment of Uighurs in Western China, despite President Trump having taken no action when notified of resettlement camps in Xinjiang as early as 2017. What has changed between 2017 and this year?

Answer. The Administration's actions to stop human rights abuses in Xinjiang speak volumes. The President has personally heard from those affected, including Jewher Ilham, the daughter of imprisoned prominent Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti. The United States has taken concrete action to combat the PRC's campaign of repression in Xinjiang, including visa restrictions on officials, financial sanctions (on the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps and Politburo member Chen Quanguo), export restrictions, import restrictions, the release of a business advisory, and outreach to universities and businesses about the risks of doing business in Xinjiang. We have also joined with like-minded partners in publicly condemning these human rights abuses.

Question. What is your Department's plan to effectively counter China's culture of high-tech authoritarianism that has been brought to bear in Xinjiang and serves as a model for other authoritarian states?

Answer. I have paid particular attention to Beijing's use of digital technologies to support repressive rule—particularly in Xinjiang. There are reports of pervasive, arbitrary high-tech surveillance and involuntary collection of personal data. The Department of State has conducted outreach to companies with business in Xinjiang to urge them to implement safeguards to ensure that their commercial activities do not contribute to these human rights abuses. Department of State initiatives also aim to address trends of digital illiberalism, both through measures to impose costs on repressive governments and complicit corporations and through efforts to promote the development and adoption of best practices to support digital freedom.

Question. Congress has consistently appropriated aid to the Northern Triangle to address the root causes of migration, which has led to a reduction in homicides in El Salvador and Honduras and a strengthening of Guatemala's economy. Last year, however, the Administration cut off foreign assistance to the region. Do you think U.S. assistance focused on long-term priorities is a worthy investment in the Northern Triangle?

Answer. Ongoing U.S. foreign assistance to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador supports programs to continue and further our joint efforts to deter illegal immigration to the United States by working to strengthen governance and rule of law, improve civilian security, and augment private sector efforts to create economic

opportunity in the region. Addressing the root causes of illegal immigration to the United States through this programming is a worthwhile investment to make the region more secure and prosperous, a key U.S. policy interest.

Question. As you are aware, the U.S. has signed Asylum Cooperative Agreements with Northern Triangle countries to accept deportees for the United States, despite these countries' lack of capacity to process asylum seekers or to keep them safe. Is the Department tracking outcomes for deported migrants?

Answer. Implementation of the U.S.-Guatemala Asylum Cooperative Agreement (ACA) has been paused since mid-March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From November 15, 2019, to March 16, 2020, DHS transferred to Guatemala 948 Salvadoran and Honduran nationals who expressed an intent to seek protection in the United States. Through our international organization partners, the Department of State is tracking outcomes of ACA transferees who applied for asylum and those who requested assistance to voluntarily return to their home countries. Implementation of the U.S.-Honduras ACA has yet to begin due to COVID-19. The U.S.-El Salvador ACA has not yet entered into force.

Question. How many migrants have been killed or assaulted after being deported from the U.S.?

Answer. The Department of State does not track individual cases of deportees removed by the United States. We defer to the Department of Homeland Security for additional information on deportation.

Question. How can we expect countries that are unable to care for their own citizens to provide economic and physical security for asylum seekers?

Answer. The Department of State and USAID continue to provide economic, security, and governance assistance in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, we support international organization partners to provide humanitarian aid to asylum seekers, refugees, and other vulnerable migrants. Through the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, we support capacity building to address key challenges to civilian security. The Department of State also continues to engage diplomatically with these governments to help create a more transparent enabling economic environment that attracts private sector investment, thereby creating more economic opportunities for individuals.

Question. If conditions in their home countries have not changed and migrants are sent back to the region from which they fled, what makes the Department think that they will not leave to seek asylum in the U.S. again?

Answer. The Asylum Cooperative Agreements allow the United States to transfer individuals who express an intent or interest in seeking protection in the United States to a partner country where the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice have determined they will have the opportunity to file a protection claim with that government.

Question. ICE has deported hundreds of migrants who tested positive for COVID-19, despite multiple requests by countries to halt deportation flights and to conduct better health screenings. Is the U.S. risking a public health crisis by deporting individuals with COVID-19?

Answer. Sustained cooperation on removal flights remains important, even with the present challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Every government has an international legal obligation to accept the return of its nationals whom another state seeks to expel, remove, or deport. The Department of State is aware some deportees have tested positive for COVID-19 after being removed by the U.S. Government. We refer you to the Department of Homeland Security for additional information on U.S. removal flight policies and procedures.

Since mid-March, the U.S. Government has committed more than \$137 million in supplemental health, humanitarian, and economic assistance to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Question. What could be the impact of deporting individuals with COVID-19 to Haiti, a country with just 60 ventilators for its 11 million people?

Answer. As of July 29, Haiti has 7,371 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 158 deaths. Haiti's COVID-19 Scientific Task Force has affirmed its satisfaction with the management of the pandemic in Haiti, and the WHO has cited the community-based homecare model in Haiti's West Department as a successful approach to managing the pandemic. We have provided \$13.2 million in emergency health and humanitarian assistance to support Haiti's COVID-19 efforts.

As agreed to by the Government of Haiti, all individuals manifested for removal to Haiti are tested by DHS and Customs Enforcement for COVID-19 within 72 hours prior to their departure from the United States; those who test positive are not removed. For additional details on ICE's removal procedures, we refer you to DHS.

Question. How has the U.S.'s refusal to halt deportations, despite requests from multiple governments, impacted our bilateral relations with receiving countries?

Answer. Every government has an international legal obligation to accept the return of its nationals whom another state seeks to expel, remove, or deport. Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean continue to receive their nationals. The United States Government supports our allies by remaining the largest contributor to global public health and continue to help friends and allies through an "All of America" effort that includes government, multilateral, business, faith-based, and other NGO aid.

Question. The Administration's immigration policies have caused tens of thousands of non-Mexican citizens to spend months in Mexican border cities awaiting U.S. asylum hearings. There, most are subjected to substandard housing, are exposed to severe violence, and are vulnerable to COVID-19. As long as the Administration maintains "Remain in Mexico," metering, and other policies that keep asylum seekers in Mexico, is there any plan to provide assistance to Mexico to minimize the danger and suffering that these fleeing migrants face?

Answer. The Department of State, through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) since the start of FY 2019 has provided more than \$133 million in migration and refugee assistance (MRA) through our international partners in Mexico, including more than \$2 million in COVID-19-specific assistance to limit the spread of COVID-19 among vulnerable migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. Other ongoing PRM programming supports asylum seekers, refugees, and other vulnerable migrants, including individuals subject to the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), through activities to promote access to asylum and local integration opportunities, support for private and government-run shelters, and direct humanitarian assistance, including support to return home safely for individuals who wish to do so voluntarily.

Question. Is there any plan to increase support for UNHCR to help Mexico process its increased flow of asylum seekers from Central America?

Answer. The Department of State, through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), has significantly scaled up humanitarian funding in Mexico. Since fiscal year 2019, in response to the increased numbers of asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants arriving at the U.S. southern border, PRM contributed more than \$98 million to UNHCR's operations in Mexico. This includes support for direct emergency assistance, capacity building for Mexico's refugee agency (COMAR), and support for refugee integration. With this support, COMAR has expanded its field presence and increased its adjudication rate, and UNHCR helped more than 42,000 people through direct assistance.

Question. In December of this year, Venezuela will hold a new round of legislative elections that will determine the makeup of the National Assembly and, in turn, the opposition coalition. In the face of the waning support and efforts by the Maduro government to delegitimize the opposition, it is likely that these elections will not be free or fair and that the Guaidó-led opposition will lose its majority in the National Assembly. Does the U.S. Government plan to continue to recognize the Guaidó government regardless of the results of December's election?

Answer. Yes, we will continue to recognize Interim President Guaidó's leadership regardless of the results of the December 6 electoral event, which we, and many other countries, have assessed, will not be free and fair. The illegitimate Maduro regime continues to undermine the legitimacy of the democratic process, to include naming a new, regime-aligned National Electoral Council contrary to Venezuelan law, handing over the legal rights to parties to regime-allied figures, and the continued detention of hundreds of political prisoners. Twenty-seven political parties intend to boycott the December 6 process based on their determination that it cannot be free and fair given these and other abuses. The recent Joint Declaration signed by over thirty countries, including members of the Lima Group and multiple EU member states, called for an inclusive transitional government and noted National Assembly elections alone do not present a political solution.

Question. If not, what alternative options is the State Department considering?

Answer. The Department of State will maintain its recognition of Interim President Guaidó following the December 6 sham elections. Because the elections are already destined to be illegitimate, the United States and other countries do not intend to lend any credence to their results. U.S. recognition of Guaidó is based on his status as the legitimate interim president pursuant to the Venezuelan constitution, which persists in the absence of a legitimate National Assembly. We do not accept the legitimate interim government can be removed through cheating, intimidation, and violence. We will continue to work towards a peaceful, democratic transition in line with the wishes of the Venezuelan people and in accordance with the internationally supported Democratic Transition Framework.

Question. Since the signing of the Colombian peace accord in 2016, hundreds of social leaders have been assassinated. According to the Colombian think tank INDEPAZ, 166 such leaders were murdered in 2020 so far, with a disproportionate number belonging to indigenous communities. What are you doing to guarantee that the perpetrators of these crimes are brought to justice?

Answer. Protecting Colombia's community leaders is a priority of U.S. diplomatic engagement and a focus of foreign assistance programming. The Colombian Government provides physical protection through its National Protection Unit (NPU) to over 5,000 community leaders under threat. The U.S. Government helped found the NPU in 2011, and continues to support Colombia's efforts to strengthen protection, bring perpetrators to justice, and prevent future violence. Foreign assistance programs, law enforcement, military, intelligence, and judicial cooperation all play a role in our joint efforts to strengthen Colombia's ability to dismantle criminal groups, reduce narcotics trafficking, and protect human rights.

Question. How are you guaranteeing that the human rights conditions linked to U.S. military assistance are being fully implemented in Colombia?

Answer. The Department of State works closely with U.S. interagency partners, and the Colombian Government, to ensure we direct all U.S. assistance to human rights-respecting security forces in an effective manner, in accordance with U.S. law. Under the Leahy law, we vet recipients to ensure assistance and equipment are only provided to security forces that meet our human rights standards. The Department of State's Colombia Foreign Military Financing and International Military Education and Training programs have dedicated resources for education and training that focuses on human rights, rule of law, and civilian control of the military.

Question. Earlier this year, the Colombian press revealed that Colombian military intelligence was illegally spying on over 130 members of the political opposition, journalists (including from U.S. news outlets), civil society, and others. Was U.S. assistance misused in any of these incidents?

Answer. The Department can confirm that no U.S. assistance managed by the Department of State, including from security assistance accounts, was misused in these incidents. The Department affirms our unequivocal support for freedom of journalists, and condemn any arbitrary or unlawful interference with the privacy of journalists, including U.S. citizen journalists. We welcome the steps Colombian authorities have taken to investigate the alleged illegal acts and look forward to the just resolution of these allegations.

Question. How will you work with Colombia to guarantee that commanders involved in this scandal are held accountable for these troubling incidents and to ensure they are not repeated?

Answer. The Department expects our Colombian partners to meet the highest standards of conduct. President Duque has also made clear that he has zero tolerance for human rights abuses committed by security forces. We welcome the steps Colombian authorities have already taken to investigate the recent allegations, and note that Colombia has dismissed 12 implicated army officials. The Department of State will continue to closely follow Colombia's investigations in both the ordinary and military justice systems, and will continue to emphasize the importance of accountability for any abuses, including criminal accountability for any violations of law.

Question. In the last year, the governments of Guatemala and Honduras ended two anti-corruption bodies: the MACCIH in Honduras and the CICIG in Guatemala. Despite this, the State Department certified that Honduras and Guatemala as meeting requirements to advance anti-corruption efforts. Can you provide further insight into decision-making behind these certifications?

Answer. While the Governments of Guatemala and Honduras have faced challenges in several of the certification criteria, they have made progress and thus, the

Department of State has determined that they met each criterion. In January, Guatemalan President Giammattei created an anti-corruption commission within the executive branch, and U.S. foreign assistance programs are helping to build the capacity of this commission. While the Department of State was disappointed the Honduran Government chose not to renew the mandate of MACCIH, a newly created anti-corruption unit within the public ministry (UFERCO) is a positive step. UFERCO has taken over MACCIH's investigations and is receiving U.S. assistance funding.

Question. The Administration's maximum pressure campaign appears to have steered Iran more firmly into China's orbit. How effective can the Administration's campaign be if Iran and China have now publicly deepened their economic and security partnership?

Answer. We are closely monitoring reports of a draft 25-year agreement between China and Iran. The scale of the supposed Chinese investment in the deal deserves healthy skepticism. For the Iranian regime, a closer partnership with China is a partnership born of desperation. Because the regime has been severely weakened, in part by U.S. sanctions, but also through its own mismanagement and corruption, it is willing to negotiate a bad deal for the Iranian people as long as the regime gains access to much-needed capital. The regime has been reluctant to publicly share details of the agreement for this very reason. The Iranian people know this, and they are rightly outraged by this hypocrisy.

Question. Despite your appearance before the UN Security Council in June to urge an extension of the arms embargo on Iran; Britain, Germany, and France have continued to resist the U.S. approach. How important is multilateral pressure in seeking behavioral changes from Tehran? What is the State Department's plan to achieve consensus with our allies and partners on how to deal with Iran's destabilizing activities?

Answer. The UK, France, and Germany have all expressed opposition to Iranian actions to advance its nuclear program beyond JCPOA limits. They share our concern regarding Iran's continued proliferation of weaponry to arm proxies and partners. Cooperation with European allies and partners to address the range of threats posed by Iran remains robust and we are in regular communication with our allies and partners regarding our Iran policy and how to raise the costs on Iran for its destabilizing activities.

Question. Had the Administration not unilaterally abandoned the JCPOA agreement negotiated with the P5+1, would you have had more success last month addressing the UN Arms Embargo with our allies in the UN Security Council?

Answer. No one can argue that Iran's behavior merits the lifting of the UN arms embargo, which Iran has continuously and flagrantly violated since it was imposed under UNSCR 1747 (2007) and UNSCR 1929 (2010).

Question. You have repeatedly expressed the Administration's solidarity with the people of Iran. What is the Administration doing to mitigate the harmful unintended consequences of its sanctions policy on the Iranian people?

Answer. We have repeatedly called on the Iranian Government to focus on their people's welfare, and our policy is aimed at depriving the regime of the funds to support their malign behavior. As a general matter, the United States does not use sanctions to target bona fide humanitarian-related trade, assistance, or activity and in the case of Iran, has publicized the availability of exceptions and authorizations that allow humanitarian trade and assistance. Furthermore, the Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement, which has already facilitated transactions for the delivery of cancer and transplant drugs to Iran, is an additional mechanism for companies to export humanitarian goods to Iran.

Question. You have spoken about an overlap in U.S. and Russian strategic goals in Afghanistan. However, it was reported in late June that Russia has been offering bounties to Taliban fighters in exchange for killing U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Is Russia committed to a stable and peaceful Afghanistan?

Answer. We take any threat against U.S. citizens seriously and have repeatedly warned Russia not to endanger U.S. citizens or interests in Afghanistan or anywhere else in the world. Russian involvement in Afghanistan in ways that are adverse to or undermine U.S. objectives precedes this Administration. The Department has repeatedly noted and objected to their behavior.

Of note, the specific allegation regarding bounties allegedly occurred before the U.S.-Taliban agreement was signed on February 29, 2020. The Taliban committed not to threaten the security of the United States or our allies as part of the agree-

ment and since the agreement, no attack against U.S. or Coalition forces has occurred. Facilitating a durable negotiated political settlement for Afghanistan requires acknowledging the role of influential countries in the region, including Russia, in order to dissuade behavior that endangers Afghan stability.

Question. You said in a July press conference that the U.S. has told Russia for more than a decade to stop selling small arms in Afghanistan that put Americans at risk. Why is Russia not facing pressure campaigns similar to our approach to China and Iran?

Answer. We take any threat against U.S. citizens seriously and have warned Russia repeatedly not to endanger U.S. citizens or interests in Afghanistan or anywhere else in the world. The United States currently has a significant pressure campaign against Russia, including an unprecedented sanctions campaign. We do share interests with Russia in Afghanistan, including on some counterterrorism and counter-narcotics activities, while in other areas our interests diverge. It is in our interest to work together where possible to facilitate a negotiated political settlement that ends the war and ensures international terrorists cannot launch attacks from Afghanistan.

Question. How can we ensure that human rights, including the rights of women and girls, are a key consideration in peace negotiations? How are we ensuring women are present in all levels of negotiations?

Answer. Upholding human rights, including the rights of women and girls, is an important U.S. foreign policy priority. In Afghanistan, our significant civilian assistance in support of health, education, and economic empowerment, as well as our sustained policy advocacy for women and girls illustrate the importance the United States attaches to this priority. Intra-Afghan negotiations on the country's political future will take place among Afghans. Four of the 21 members of the team representing the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan are women. We have made clear to all parties that we expect women to play a meaningful role throughout the negotiations. While the future of Afghanistan is for Afghans to decide, we strongly support the preservation and advancement of the social, economic, and political gains made since 2001. These gains include Afghanistan's democratic development and the protection and expansion of the human rights of all Afghans, including women, children, and minorities. We have also consistently shared the message that the decisions and conduct of both parties to intra-Afghan negotiations will impact the size and scope of future U.S. assistance.

Question. How does the Administration's requested assistance for Afghanistan support, complement, or otherwise relate to ongoing U.S. military efforts and "a peaceful resolution to the conflict?"

Answer. Efforts to achieve peace, stability, and self-reliance in Afghanistan, including through the provision of security assistance, are designed to facilitate a durable, negotiated political settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan and to ensure that international terrorists can never use Afghanistan to threaten the security of the United States or its allies. U.S.-provided assistance aims to support effective governance, spur private sector investment, encourage tangible actions to combat corruption, protect the gains made over the last 19 years to advance the rights of all Afghans (and particularly the rights of women, children, and minorities), and to address emerging development opportunities and humanitarian needs, all of which help create an environment that supports a peaceful resolution to the conflict. As preparations for negotiations to end the conflict in Afghanistan move forward, we are also identifying areas where our assistance could be repurposed to boost prospects for an inclusive and sustainable peace settlement.

Question. The Administration stated in its budget request that it is seeking to draw down activities in Iraq and Afghanistan previously supported via Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding. Please identify activities in Afghanistan you are seeking to scale down or eliminate, and discuss the strategic rationale for doing so.

Answer. The Department of State assesses that the request for Afghanistan for FY 2021 would provide sufficient resources to support key priorities, including those that help to create conditions for an inclusive and sustainable peace settlement. We are also working with other donors to support Afghan government programs, spur private sector investment, protect the rights of all Afghans (particularly women, girls, and minorities), and address emerging development and humanitarian needs.

Question. The Trump administration suspended most U.S. assistance to Yemen due to concerns about Houthi interference in humanitarian efforts, but OCHA head

Mark Lowcock told the UN Security Council in a briefing on July 28 that “overall, efforts to improve the operating environment in the north, where we have had most problems, are progressing.” Do you agree with that assessment of progress?

Answer. The U.S. Government has not suspended most aid to Yemen. The U.S. Government is the leading humanitarian donor to Yemen this year, despite suspending \$50 million in humanitarian assistance and \$23 million in development funding. This suspension was undertaken in cooperation with other donor countries and the UN. A technical monitoring group of experts meets monthly to evaluate the Houthis’ progress. That group has found major areas of concern yet to be addressed. Among these, the Houthis have not allowed the World Food Programme’s biometric registration pilot to move forward and have blocked independent needs assessments. Without these, we are concerned Houthi leaders could steer assistance away from the most vulnerable families to reward combatants and their own supporters.

Question. What benchmarks must be met before the Administration will lift the Yemen aid suspension?

Answer. The United States, in cooperation with the UN and other donors, identified seven benchmarks that need to be met in northern Yemen and agreed on 16 benchmarks to gauge progress in addressing these. Among the benchmarks that have not been met, the Houthis have still not allowed the World Food Programme’s biometric registration pilot to move forward, established standard operating procedures for NGOs to operate in their areas, or established procedures to allow independent needs assessments and project monitoring to move forward. Without these, we and other donors are concerned Houthi leaders will steer assistance away from the most vulnerable families to reward combatants and their own supporters.

Question. How is the Administration ensuring that the suspension of most U.S. aid to Yemen in the midst of COVID-19 does not further exacerbate what was already the worst humanitarian crisis in the world?

Answer. The U.S. Government has not suspended most aid to Yemen. In addition to the more than \$1.1 billion in U.S. humanitarian assistance funding to Yemen since October 2018, we have also provided nearly \$16.7 million in additional funding to support COVID-19 response efforts in Yemen. USAID has provided nearly \$39 million and \$33 million in dedicated health and WASH funding since FY 2019, to reduce the spread of communicable diseases like COVID-19 and cholera. We also continue to provide significant financial and diplomatic support for the safety and security of UN and other relief organizations in Yemen. Despite this crisis, the Houthis have not only failed to end their longstanding obstruction of aid, they also have refused to acknowledge that COVID-19 is widespread in areas under their control or to take steps to prevent its spread.

Question. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been parties to the conflict in Yemen that has caused this man-made humanitarian catastrophe. Indeed, Saudi and UAE airstrikes are responsible for the majority of civilian casualties over the past 5-plus years of war. Meanwhile, these countries are failing to provide sufficient funding to address the most basic humanitarian needs of Yemen’s people. What is the Administration doing to press Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to contribute sufficient funding to the UN humanitarian response for Yemen?

Answer. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have provided significant humanitarian support to Yemen since the conflict began, providing nearly \$1.5 billion to the UN humanitarian response in 2019 alone. COVID-19 has had significant economic effects on the Gulf countries, especially for Saudi Arabia and the UAE. However, we continue to engage with all donors, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE, to ask they enhance their support for assistance needs in Yemen and for all assistance to be provided according to humanitarian principles. The United States cannot meet the humanitarian needs in Yemen alone. We also continue to support the peace process and to push for other means of addressing the humanitarian situation.

Question. I believe a two-state solution, resulting from direct negotiations between the two sides, is the only way end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Does this Administration support a two-state solution?

Answer. The Administration supports the U.S. Vision for Peace, which we believe is the best and most realistic framework to inform negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. The plan outlines a clear path to a realistic two-state solution in which a secure and prosperous Palestinian state lives peacefully alongside a secure and prosperous State of Israel.

Question. I believe that the Trump Peace Plan would make it more difficult for Israel and Palestine to return to direct negotiations and would hamper the ability of the United States to reclaim its role as an honest broker. Do you think a peace plan that does not include feedback from both parties can be successful?

Answer. The Administration understands that Palestinian leaders do not like parts of President Trump's Vision for Peace, which is why the Administration has asked them to negotiate with Israel and present their objections within the context of direct talks based on the Vision. The Administration also encourages key regional and European partners to urge the Palestinians to bring their concerns to the negotiating table. The U.S. Vision for Peace is the most comprehensive and realistic framework to inform negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Question. Has the Administration expressed support for unilateral annexation of territory in the West Bank? How does unilateral annexation help get both sides of the conflict back to the negotiating table?

Answer. As a result of the diplomatic breakthrough achieved through the Abraham Accords, and at the request of President Trump with the support of the United Arab Emirates, Israel will suspend declaring sovereignty over areas outlined in the President's Vision for Peace. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has stated as recently as July that he is ready to engage in negotiations with Israel if it halts any actions to extend its sovereignty. Now that extension of sovereignty is on hold, the Department encourages the Palestinians to live up to this commitment and bring their concerns to the negotiating table within the context of direct talks based on the Vision. The only realistic path to end this conflict is through negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace.

Question. According to the findings of a GAO report titled, "State Department: Additional steps are needed to identify potential barriers to diversity," close to 80 percent of Foreign Service officers and 60 percent of Civil Service staff are white, and of 189 ambassadors, only three are African-American and four are Latino career diplomats. What can you do in the coming months to increase the number of racial and ethnic career diplomats in ambassadorships, the senior executive service, the Foreign Service, and mid-level careers to at least 20 percent?

Answer. The Department of State is currently undertaking a number of efforts to ensure leaders foster a culture of inclusion and help us retain and develop diverse talent. To achieve diversity at all levels, the Deputy Secretary and the Director General, along with other department leaders, have joined me in encouraging promising leaders from historically underrepresented backgrounds to put themselves forward for leadership positions. The Department also supports requiring all hiring managers and members of selection and promotion panels to receive formal training in mitigating unconscious bias in order to identify and mitigate potential for bias in the hiring and promotion processes.

Question. What tools and mechanisms exist for State Department employees to express concerns about possible discrimination without fear of reprisal? Are these means adequate?

Answer. The Office of Civil Rights (S/OCR) is a neutral, central office that manages the EEO process, as well as harassment inquiries. Employees may file EEO complaints, including those based on retaliation, to seek resolution/remedies. Retaliation is prohibited by law and is a disciplinable violation of Department of State policy. Employees may report concerns to "Responsible Department Officials" (e.g., supervisors, HR, Security Officers, etc.), who are mandated to report to S/OCR when they observe, are informed of, or reasonably suspect incidents of possible harassment and can be disciplined for failing to do so. Employees are informed of S/OCR's programs via mandatory No FEAR, leadership, and onsite trainings and Department Notices, cables, and bulletin boards worldwide.

Question. The State Department has seen massive losses since the start of the Trump administration, losing significant diplomatic expertise as those in senior leadership have resigned or been removed. This, coupled with high numbers of unfilled leadership positions, has resulted in job satisfaction among State Department employees reaching their lowest levels in over a decade. How would you characterize the current level of morale in your Department? What could the State Department do better to improve morale and retention?

Answer. The Department of State has a highly engaged workforce, evidenced by our 2019 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Employee Engagement score. Our employees are committed to the organization and mission, and that allegiance manifests in the results we achieve. Consistent with our One Team One Mission Professional Ethos, we want all of our employees to feel empowered to create and sustain

a workplace that encourages high morale and job satisfaction; but this responsibility is shared. Department leadership is committed to ensuring the Department of State remains an agency where all employees can have satisfying careers; and we will continue to partner with our employees throughout the agency and hold each other accountable in pursuit of that goal.

Question. In 2019, President Trump declared a national emergency to complete \$8 billion in military sales to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. State Department Inspector General Steve Linick, fired on your recommendation, was reportedly investigating the State Department's role in this sale. As the world's oldest democracy and largest arms exporter, would you agree that the human rights standards the U.S. sets on arms transfers have global ramifications? Has your position on this claim changed during your tenure as Secretary?

Answer. Consistent with the President's Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) Policy, all arms transfers to foreign partners of the United States are subject to a comprehensive, case-by-case consideration of U.S. interests—including any risk the transfer may contribute to human rights abuses, including acts of gender-based violence, violence against children, violations of international humanitarian law, terrorism, mass atrocities, or transnational organized crime. For the first time, U.S. CAT Policy requires the U.S. Government to aid partners in reducing the risk of harm to civilians during military operations. The Department will continue to consider human rights alongside other factors when reviewing Foreign Military Sales and Direct Commercial Sales.

Question. In June, Trump reportedly considered whether to end the system of congressional notification for foreign military sales. Do you support the right of Congress to review, and if necessary to block, weapons sales to foreign governments? What accountability exists for these sales if Congress is out of the loop and State Inspectors General reviewing the sales fear retribution?

Answer. The Department of State's engagement with Congress on pending arms transfers is an essential element of executing our respective statutory duties under the Arms Export Control Act. The Department remains firmly committed to our collaboration and commit my team to continuing the conversation with committee staff on how we can more effectively further our shared objectives in support of U.S. national and economic security.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE MICHAEL POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER A. COONS

Question. What is the Trump administration's policy toward foreign intervention in Libya?

Answer. The Administration supports an immediate end to external interference and the involvement of foreign mercenaries in the conflict, and urge all sides to return to a UN-facilitated political process. Department officials have told involved countries they must stop fueling the conflict, respect the UN arms embargo, and uphold commitments made at the Berlin Conference on Libya in January. There is no durable military solution to the Libyan conflict. Ultimately, the Libyan people must resolve this crisis through political negotiations. The United States supports the UN Support Mission in Libya's work to facilitate a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process.

Question. What is the State Department communicating to those foreign governments involved in Libya, especially to Turkey, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates?

Answer. The Department's message to these governments, and to all others fueling the conflict in Libya is the same: now is the time to wind this conflict down. Libya is not the place for foreign governments to fight battles in pursuit of their own agendas.

The Department is urging foreign parties to the conflict to leave Libya and support a ceasefire and a return to the UN-led political process. We press countries to use their influence to support all Libyan parties' participation in the UN-facilitated security talks as a first step toward securing a sustainable ceasefire. We have made clear there is no military solution and are urging Libyan leadership and the external backers to support a political settlement to this conflict.

Question. In December 2019, Congress provided \$75 million in FY 2020 appropriations for humanitarian assistance to the West Bank and Gaza. When do you expect those dollars to be obligated?

Answer. The FY 2020 section 653(a) report includes \$75 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF) for the West Bank and Gaza, consistent with section 7019 of the FY 2020 appropriations act and the ESF table in the accompanying Joint Explanatory Statement. The Administration continues to ensure foreign assistance funds are used in accordance with U.S. national interests, applicable legal requirements, and are providing value to the U.S. taxpayer. U.S. foreign assistance is not the only tool available to unleash the economic potential of the Palestinian people and empower them to build a prosperous, vibrant society. The Administration's Vision for Peace includes the potential to facilitate more than \$50 billion in new investment over 10 years, much of it from non-U.S. sources.

Question. How do the Trump administration's decisions to end funding for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and for humanitarian assistance to the West Bank and Gaza affect stability in the West Bank and Gaza and Israel's security?

Answer. The Administration made it clear when we provided our final contribution of \$60 million in 2018 that the United States would no longer bear a disproportionate share of UNRWA's costs, and other countries must step up and do their part to advance regional security and stability. UNRWA continues to operate with an unsustainable business model, tied to an expanding community of beneficiaries. We continue to work closely with Israel and key regional partners on ways to improve economic and humanitarian conditions in Gaza. Hamas is primarily responsible for those conditions, having put its own interests above those of Gaza's residents.

Question. Public reporting indicates that the Trump administration has suspended the process for Ethiopia to receive support from the new Development Finance Corporation, suspended the Millennium Challenge Corporation threshold process for Ethiopia, that USAID is under pressure to cancel all non-humanitarian assistance contracts for Ethiopia, and that the Trump administration is pressing the World Bank not to move programs forward for Ethiopia. Is it true that the United States is withholding or at any point threatened to withhold assistance to Ethiopia? If so, what was communicated to Ethiopia about why the assistance was withheld?

Answer. As of July 30, no funding already obligated for Ethiopia has been affected by considerations related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Department officials are in regular contact with the Ethiopian, Egyptian, and Sudanese governments to stress the importance of reaching agreement on the GERD without delay.

Question. Does withholding assistance support the democratic transition in Ethiopia and advance U.S. interests in East Africa? If so, how?

Answer. Ethiopia is one of our strongest partners on the continent and we look forward to continuing to support the development of the nation's democracy and economy through a number of pre-existing programs, activities, and continued diplomatic engagement with the Ethiopian Government.

Question. What public and private actions has the State Department taken to address the root causes of ethnic violence in Ethiopia?

Answer. The Department continues to engage all stakeholders and monitor the situation in Ethiopia very closely. The Department's Bureau for Conflict Stabilization (CSO) implements programming to provide data on drivers of tension across ethnic groups and assistance to support former armed groups' transition into viable political parties to contest national elections and prevent a return to hostilities. A CSO polling project will shed light on drivers of violence as well as potential resiliencies at the community level. The State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) is supporting a program to address hate speech online, partnering with influencers, including in Oromia, at risk for ethnic violence. USAID also has several conflict mitigation and peacebuilding activities that seek to reduce ethnic tensions. We also continue to engage diplomatically with the government and Ethiopia's nascent civil society.

Question. What public and private actions has the State Department taken to ensure elections are held in Ethiopia? What is the State Department's posture and strategy if elections are not held before the constitutionally-mandated October 2020 deadline?

Answer. The State Department supports a number of initiatives aimed at facilitating free and fair elections in Ethiopia. USAID promotes competitive and representative multiparty political systems by assisting political parties to build inclusive internal structures, develop organizing strategies, and communicate on issue-based policies. Under this program, we also offer voter outreach and capacity build-

ing for party officials. Ethiopia's electoral commission has already indicated that elections will not be held until well after the country has recovered from COVID-19.

Question. The Global Fragility Act of 2019 (division J, title V of Public Law 116–94) authorized the creation of a new Prevention and Stabilization Fund to replace the Relief and Recovery Fund in order to support the stabilization of conflict-affected areas and prevent global fragility. Contrary to the law and congressional intent, the State Department continues to use the Relief and Recovery Fund rather than the Prevention and Stabilization Fund, citing a lack of clarity in the legislation.

Do you commit to working with the Congress to resolve this discrepancy and utilizing the Prevention and Stabilization Fund as authorized by the Global Fragility Act?

Answer. The Department is committed to continuing to work with Congress in connection with the implementation of the Global Fragility Act. The Department seeks to harmonize provisions in the Act and the annual appropriations act related to the Prevention and Stabilization Fund, which we anticipate could potentially serve as an important tool for aligning policy and programmatic interventions under the Global Fragility Strategy.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE MICHAEL POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

Question. In November 2019, you announced that the United States would “no longer recognize Israeli settlements as per se inconsistent with international law” and rescinded a 1978 legal opinion that then-Legal Adviser Herbert Hansell provided to Congress reaching a contrary conclusion. The media has reported that this legal view is rooted in a 40-page written opinion assembled by Ambassador Friedman and a team of attorneys led by then-Legal Adviser Jennifer Newstead, but it has not been released or provided to Congress. The media also reported that at a July 28 event to relaunch the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus, you cited telling “the truth that Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank are not per se inconsistent with international law” as one of the Trump administration’s accomplishments in the U.S.-Israel relationship. Will you provide this legal opinion in unclassified form to myself and other Members of the Committee so that it may be provided to the public to understand the Administration’s rationale for overturning decades of bipartisan legal precedent on this issue?

Answer. As Secretary Pompeo stated in November 2019, after carefully studying all sides of the legal debate and recognizing that U.S. public statements on settlement activities have been inconsistent over decades, it is the position of the U.S. Government that the establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank is not per se inconsistent with international law. Legal conclusions relating to individual cases of settlement activity must depend on an assessment of specific facts and circumstances surrounding the activity in question. Consistent with the longstanding practice of both Republican and Democratic administrations, the Department is not in a position to provide the legal advice prepared at the time as part of our internal review of this question.

Question. Due to the Administration’s termination of humanitarian aid to the West Bank and Gaza, UNRWA is in dire financial straits. For 2020 to date, UNRWA has received funding and pledges that can cover less than 50 percent of its main budget and 60 percent of its planned COVID–19 response. It has received even less for its emergency budgets to respond to the acute humanitarian needs in Syria and Gaza, where Palestine refugees often live in abject poverty. The Agency’s Commissioner-General said this month that absent additional funding, he will have to seek guidance on the programs that the Agency must prioritize over others. *Does the Administration believe that if UNRWA stops feeding a million Gazans and assisting 400,000 Palestinians in Syria, turns half a million kids away from their schools, and closes its health network, the region will be more stable? As part of its response to address the COVID–19 pandemic globally, will the Administration restart U.S. humanitarian assistance to Palestinians, including UNRWA?*

Answer. The Administration announced in 2018 that the United States will no longer provide financial contributions to UNRWA. That has not changed. UNRWA’s business model remains unsustainable and Palestinians deserve better than a service provision model that operates in permanent crisis mode.

The United States is leading the world's humanitarian and health assistance response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through USAID, we are providing \$5 million in support of immediate, life-saving needs for Palestinian hospitals and households in the West Bank for Palestinians battling the COVID-19 pandemic. This decision does not prejudice future decisions about U.S. assistance in the West Bank and Gaza. We continue to assess how U.S. assistance can best be used to advance U.S. foreign policy and provide value to U.S. taxpayers.

Question. I continued to be dismayed by Saudi Arabia's jailing of women's rights defenders, many who have been subject to torture including solitary confinement, electric shocks, flogging and sexual assault. This includes Virginia constituent Aziza al-Youssef who has been released from prison, but placed on a travel ban, and her son, Salah al-Haidar who remains in jail. I understand that the Saudi regime is now charging Salah, after more than a year in prison, on trumped up and baseless grounds under its "anti-terrorism law" that allows authorities to prosecute peaceful dissidents with harsh penalties as "terrorist crimes." The regime is asking that Salah receive a sentence of between 9 and 33 years in total. Please provide me with an update on your personal engagement—as well as the work of other U.S. Government officials—to secure the release and dropping of all charges against Saudi women's rights defenders, particularly Aziza al-Youssef and her son Salah al-Haidar, and your efforts to facilitate their safe return to Virginia.

Answer. The Department of State has no higher priority than assisting U.S. citizens overseas. The U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia; the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs; the Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs; the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; and the Office of Global Women's Issues all engage on Ms. Yousef's and Mr. Haidar's cases. We have assessed that Mr. Haidar and Badr Al-Ibrahim (a U.S. citizen who was arrested at the same time) are wrongfully detained and have voiced our disappointment to Saudi Arabia for not dropping the baseless charges. We conduct regular consular visits and will continue to press for their release at our upcoming bilateral strategic dialogue and at every possible opportunity.

Question. Following the 2016 killing of Berta Cáceres, I remain concerned about human rights violations against Honduras's indigenous groups. In 2019, Honduras was the most dangerous country per capita for land and environmental defenders. Lethal attacks were particularly prevalent against women and against members of the Garifuna minority group—16 of whom were killed for defending their land. Most recently, five Garifuna land rights activists were abducted from their homes by heavily armed gunmen in police uniforms, leading to protests around the country. This follows the murder of a Garifuna leader weeks ago. What is the State Department doing to address the abduction of these five missing Garifuna activists? Additionally, please detail what the State Department is doing to protect environmental defenders and to hold the Government of Honduras accountable for its human rights violations.

Answer. Officials from U.S. Embassy Tegucigalpa meet regularly with top Honduran officials to advocate on human rights issues. This includes urging movement in the case of David Castillo, the ninth defendant accused in the Berta Cáceres case; expressing concern over the Garifuna abductions and urging a transparent, expeditious, and thorough investigation; pushing for progress on the Guapinol Case, the mining and indigenous land rights dispute; and advocating for Honduras to implement the recommendations in the 2020 Trafficking In Persons Report. Additionally, we plan to virtually host the seventh Bilateral Human Rights Working Group dialogue with Honduras in October.

Question. On July 30, a Spanish court found Victor Stemberger, a 77-year old Virginian, guilty of drug smuggling and sentenced him to 7 years in prison, rejecting his defense that he was duped. Mr. Stemberger's family believes that he was targeted by Nigerian based drug-traffickers as part of a sophisticated scheme that takes advantage of elderly American citizens. These traffickers frequently target individuals who have suffered from significant health challenges that limit their cognitive abilities. Mr. Stemberger suffered a brain aneurysm in 2005 that greatly diminished his logic and decision-making abilities, which a medical expert testified to at his trial. In a letter and memorandum regarding Mr. Stemberger's case dated October 28, 2019, the U.S. Department of Justice concluded that he was "fraudulently deceived by members of a narcotics trafficking network into unwittingly transporting concealed controlled substances." Given Mr. Stemberger's age and the significant risk to his health from COVID-19 in prison, I urge the State Department to engage with the Spanish Government to ask that every consideration be made toward the compassionate and humanitarian release of Mr. Stemberger for his re-

turn to the United States in accordance with Spanish laws and regulations. I understand that the DOJ has requested that Mr. Stemberger be returned to the U.S. to help prosecution of those who victimized him and others. Please detail what next steps the State Department will take in regards to Mr. Stemberger's case and to secure a humanitarian release.

Answer. The Department of State has no higher priority than the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens abroad. Our embassy in Madrid continues to conduct regular consular visits to monitor Mr. Stemberger's health and welfare. Stemberger's attorney is pursuing humanitarian release within the Spanish judicial system. Options to appeal the lower court's decision remain available to Stemberger. We will continue to monitor Stemberger's welfare and case and remain in close contact with his family and legal representation. We defer to the DOJ on any questions concerning U.S. criminal investigations and prosecutions.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE MICHAEL POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD MARKEY

Question. Two weeks ago, in a deeply disturbing speech, you unveiled the draft report of your Commission on Unalienable Rights. By specifically elevating religious freedom and property rights, you are upending decades of human rights practice and civil rights victories. It also appears you and the commissioners are weaponizing religious liberty in order to curb human rights protections for vulnerable communities like women, girls and LGBTQI+ people—and encourage other countries to do the same. Do you believe that organizations and individuals should be able to promote stigma and discrimination in their communities by refusing to provide services to women, girls, and LGBTQI+ people based on so-called “religious freedom”?

Answer. The speech did not “specifically elevate” religious freedom and property rights above all other rights; it made a historical, descriptive claim about the importance America's founders attached to those two unalienable rights. Neither the speech nor the Commission's draft report “upended decades of human rights practices and civil rights victories.” Similarly, neither “weaponized religious liberty in order to curb human rights protections.”

Question. Did you recently send an email to the State Department, directing employees to use this report in their decision making? You have said that this commission report is not a statement of policy, so how will you ensure that the report is not being used in the official business of our foreign policy?

Answer. On July 20, I emailed the State Department encouraging all employees to read the report thoroughly. I emphasized the report is a statement of principle, not policy, and it is highly relevant to our daily work. I indicated it should be used as a reference for every State Department employee involved in the difficult, complex questions surrounding the promotion and protection of human rights in our foreign policy.

Question. How will the State Department ensure all of its COVID-19 aid response is conflict sensitive and integrated into sectors including health? Will COVID-19 aid incorporate peacebuilding and a trauma-informed approach in order to reduce further violence and advance effective recovery for the long-term?

Answer. In April, in collaboration with the interagency, the Department of State released the U.S. Government Action Plan to Support the International Response to COVID-19—“SAFER”—a comprehensive package of services to support our international partners around the world in combatting COVID-19. A key component of the SAFER package was to create tailored strategies in complex humanitarian crises, extremely fragile states, conflict zones, and high-density population centers and prioritize the most vulnerable, including those in ongoing pre-COVID-19 humanitarian crises. This is a reflection of our existing commitment to use conflict as a lens for our existing work. With the COVID supplemental assistance provided by Congress we have also focused on providing support for WASH; food security; protection and security of children, orphans, displaced persons, and refugees; prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation; basic health care, including primary care; and coordination of humanitarian assistance in specific settings. The impacts of COVID-19 on communities impacted by conflict will continue, and the Department will continue to assess how we can mitigate or address them with available resources going forward.

Question. How will the State Department ensure that COVID-19 support is reaching the most vulnerable populations, including women, children, marginalized groups, and the poor?

Answer. Given the unprecedented economic, health, and humanitarian impact of COVID-19, the Department of State and USAID utilized an All-of-America approach, leveraging the unique expertise, capacities, and mechanisms of various U.S. Government departments and agencies to rapidly deploy and deliver essential support when, where, and to whom it is most critically needed. We have provided assistance to more than 120 countries since the beginning of the U.S. response to COVID-19.

We appreciate the supplemental funding that was provided by Congress to respond to the pandemic, including \$908 million for International Disaster Assistance and Migration and Refugee Assistance. Specifically, we prioritized critical assistance in 63 countries that were in conflict or fragile before the pandemic. For example, USAID issued guidance for partners engaging in COVID-19 humanitarian response that outlines cross-cutting requirements for gender sensitivities, accountability to affected populations, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. We also recognize the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic will have on women and girls, and we are supporting efforts to ensure survivors of gender-based violence have access to emergency assistance and improved protections. The impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable individuals and communities will require a concerted, coordinated long-term recovery strategy between governments, multilateral financial institutions, humanitarian and development actors, and the private sector.

Question. How does the State Department plan to address governments using COVID-19 as opportunity to infringe on human rights by closing civic space, cracking down against free speech and dissent, increased surveillance, and other methods?

Answer. The Department has underscored that democracies are better equipped to address pandemics than authoritarian regimes. The Department is leading multilateral and multi-stakeholder efforts to promote democracy, human rights, and good governance as key to an effective response to COVID-19. We are also closely monitoring concerning trends related to some governments' responses to the pandemic, including growing authoritarianism, crackdowns on fundamental freedoms, expanded use of surveillance tools, and targeting of vulnerable groups. We are leveraging bilateral and multilateral diplomacy and other foreign policy tools to promote democratic, rights-respecting responses and to counter authoritarian responses to the pandemic.

Question. How do you justify the Administration's broad use of religious refusals in the context of foreign, development, and economic assistance when organizations and individuals use these excuses to endanger and discriminate against women, girls, and LGBTQI+ people in the provision of services provided with U.S. funds?

Answer. Protecting and defending the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people—including women, girls, and LGBTI persons—has long been and remains the foreign policy of the United States. In this regard, the United States continues to invest in the social, economic, and political empowerment of women and girls around the world and advances efforts to protect LGBTI persons from violence, criminalization, discrimination, and stigma.

Question. How is the State Department tracking partners who refuse to provide services to individuals because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics?

Answer. The Department integrates inclusion and nondiscrimination principles into its policies and programming, and advances inclusion and nondiscrimination through programs that address the specific needs of historically marginalized and vulnerable populations. The Department continues to enforce its nondiscrimination policies for access to services to beneficiaries, which help ensure that no recipient of U.S. assistance discriminates against any beneficiary for any reason, including discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics.

Question. The U.S. has historically used its unique power to sanction countries and people for wrongdoing in many forms including mass human rights abuses, nuclear proliferation, and trafficking in drugs or humans. We use this power to respond and deter criminality. Yet the recent Executive Order directed at the ICC—an international judicial institution where American lawyers work—could target judicial professionals. Virtually all of our allies have judicial personnel that work at the highest levels of the Court. Has the Administration considered any options other

than sanctioning allied nationals and/or an international tribunal working to hold alleged mass criminals accountable under the law?

Answer. There has been longstanding bipartisan concern about illegitimate attempts by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to exercise jurisdiction over U.S. personnel. Events of the past several months have only exacerbated our concerns about the ICC. More than 300 members of Congress, Republican and Democrat, recently signed letters expressing outrage over the ICC's efforts to target the United States and Israel, which likewise does not consent to its jurisdiction.

In response, we have imposed a series of escalating consequences in response to the ICC's actions. In 2019, the Department announced a policy to deny entry into the United States to those most responsible for launching the investigation. We authorized imposition of additional sanctions only after it was apparent that less confrontational measures would not succeed.

The United States fully shares the concerns the ICC was initially created to address, extending into prevention and mitigation of such mass atrocities, not only accountability after the fact. The ICC, a politicized and ineffective institution, had not contributed to that effort and has set out on a reckless path when it comes to the United States.

Question. Have you evaluated what the impacts of sanctions would be on efforts to hold perpetrators accountable for crimes in places like Myanmar, Libya, Sudan, DRC, Mali, Central African Republic, Georgia, Venezuela, and the Philippines where there are few or no options for justice for atrocities that the United States has condemned, and if so what are they?

Answer. No country has made greater lasting contributions to the cause of justice and accountability in armed conflict than the United States. We have consistently provided training on the rule of law and assistance to scores of partners and allies around the globe to help bring perpetrators of atrocity crimes to justice. We do not need a corrupt and politicized international body in order to continue to advance U.S. longstanding efforts to hold those responsible for atrocities accountable.

Question. North Korea continues to produce fissile material and to test and develop its ballistic missile systems. In an August 27, 2019 speech, you said "Americanism" means "telling the truth about the challenges we face" and that "we recognized that North Korea's rogue behavior could not be ignored." Even as North Korea repeatedly tested shorter-range missiles in violation of UN Security Council resolutions, and in a way that helps North Korea advance long-range missile technology according to the UN Panel of Experts, President Trump says he has "no problem" with the missile tests. What has the State Department done to counteract the President's statement that he has "no problem" with shorter-range missile tests by the Kim regime?

Answer. We call on North Korea to cease provocations, abide by UN Security Council resolutions, and return to sustained and substantive negotiations to achieve complete denuclearization. We continue to work with the international community to reinforce the need for full sanctions implementation. These tests underscore why we work to prevent transfers of equipment and technology that could support the DPRK's missile development efforts. The international community continues to send a strong signal that provocative behavior only exacerbates isolation and hinders progress in securing a bright future for all North Koreans.

Question. The Chinese Government has now clearly broken its promise of autonomy for Hong Kong, but there are still a wide range of escalatory steps that Beijing can take to bring restrictions on Hong Kong's freedom in line with the repressive restrictions on the mainland. What is the State Department's strategy for addressing and publicizing further encroachments on human rights and democracy in Hong Kong?

Answer. The Department of State and Consulate General Hong Kong consistently and vocally advocate for increased individual freedoms and protection of human rights in Hong Kong, especially following the imposition of the National Security Law (NSL). On August 7, the Departments of State and Treasury announced sanctions on 11 officials who were involved in the development, passage, or implementation of the NSL. The State Department also suspended three agreements with the Government of Hong Kong and encouraged like-minded countries to consider doing the same. We continue to engage political and civic leaders in Hong Kong and globally regarding our concerns over the NSL, and have spoken out publicly at the highest levels. We released a joint statement on August 9 with Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the UK.

Question. How do you propose to balance U.S. support for Burma's democratic transition, while intensively pursuing accountability for crimes committed against the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities in Burma?

Answer. The United States must maintain its policy of principled engagement with Burma to move the country towards democratic civilian rule. That includes strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations, political parties, women and youth activists, and ethnic groups to more effectively engage in the democratic process; empowering public servants to be responsive to their constituents; strengthening the rule of law; and encouraging responsible investment and business practices to shrink the space for corruption.

Promoting the rule of law, respecting, and protecting the rights of members of minority groups are critical to Burma's democratic transition. As such the United States will continue to take targeted actions against those responsible for serious human rights abuses, promote justice and accountability for victims, and defend human rights, including religious freedom. These actions, including the designation of the most senior Burmese military officials under the Global Magnitsky sanctions program, are consistent with our decades of support to the people of Burma. They also marginalize military leaders and empower the civilian government as it continues to pursue much-needed reforms.

Question. The U.S. Government has leveraged some sanctions against top Burmese military commanders, recognizing their role in the atrocities committed against the Rohingya. Given continued impunity and ongoing violence, it seems imperative to continue to build pressure. What other increased costs can the U.S. Government impose on the senior Burmese military command, to change their thinking and behavior? Do you agree that this should include sanctioning military-owned enterprises, noting that many of their owners and directors are the same senior leadership that we think should be sanctioned, and that likely it would impose a more powerful real world economic cost to them? How are you working with allies such as the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia to urge further targeted sanctions and other forms of pressure on Burma to change its thinking and behavior?

Answer. Reforming the Burmese military, ending its decades of impunity, and placing it under civilian control is essential for the long-term success of Burma. The United States designated the Burmese military's Commander-in-Chief (CINC), deputy CINC, and seven other senior officers and two security force units under the Global Magnitsky sanctions program; designated the Commander-in-Chief, deputy CINC, and four other officers for involvement in gross violations of human rights under Section 7031(c) of the State Appropriations Act; and has strongly supported UN investigation mechanisms. We have worked with international allies and partners to expand targeted sanctions and will continue to support efforts to pursue justice and accountability. All policy tools remain under consideration to promote accountability for abuses, including, additional sanctions.

We continue to support reforms that support Burma's democratic transition and economic transformation. We support inclusive economic growth and facilitation of responsible trade and investment, which in turn promote broad-based development and limit the influence of the military's economic interests. Promoting international trade and investment best practices is the surest way to shrink the operating space for military-owned businesses while supporting economic reforms.

Question. What is the status of payments of U.S. arrears to international organizations in general, especially institutions critical to the global fight against COVID-19, including the World Health Organization?

Answer. The most recent report to Congress on arrears at international organizations indicated approximately \$625 million in U.S. arrears from CY 2017, 2018, and 2019 as of March 31, 2020, not including UN peacekeeping arrears and arrears at UNESCO. Of the approximately \$625 million in arrears, the Department has since paid approximately \$350 million, leaving a balance of approximately \$275 million. Roughly \$80 million of the \$275 million balance is arrears at WHO, and \$160 million is arrears for the UN regular budget.

Question. Given the Administration's determination to withdraw from the World Health Organization, how are you ensuring continued U.S. engagement with the WHO in the meantime, as the United States remains a full member at this time.

Answer. The United States deposited its notice of withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO), effective on July 6, 2021. In the time before our withdrawal becomes effective, we are continuing to engage the WHO on priority areas, such as the WHO's Independent Panel on Pandemic Preparedness Response (IPPR),

a body created at the request of the United States and WHO Member States to evaluate the WHO-coordinated COVID-19 response. Further, the Administration is examining ways to leverage the expertise of key U.S. Government Departments, agencies, and the U.S. private sector and civil society to protect Americans and deliver essential support rapidly to other countries to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases at their source.

Question. Does the State Department have adequate PPE stocks to protect employees across all posts, domestic and overseas? Do you forecast any shortfalls or urgent needs in the next 6 months to a year?

Answer. The Bureau of Medical Services (MED) follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strategies to optimize the supply of PPE. The CDC recommends reserving PPE use to healthcare personnel (HCP) to protect themselves, patients, and others when providing care. MED procures and distributes PPE to Department HCP involved in direct patient care and testing, both domestically and at our overseas missions. Supplies include N-95 masks, isolation gowns, eye protection, gloves, and face shields. All overseas missions have a baseline level of supplies, with the ability to replenish PPE as needed. MED does not anticipate shortfalls or urgent and unmet requirements at this time.

Question. Why has the State Department moved Washington, DC area facilities to phase 2, when your own criteria show the metro area does not yet qualify to proceed to phase 2, as the 24 day caseload average is not decreasing, public schools, daycares, and elder care options are not available to employees and their families, etc.? Why has the State Department ceased to track COVID-19 cases in their domestic facilities?

Answer. While Diplomacy Strong provides a framework for mitigating COVID-19 risk, other factors also informed the decision to move Washington, DC-area facilities to Phase 2 by June 12 (Northern Virginia), June 19 (Maryland), and June 22 (the District of Columbia). In this case, the decision was informed by availability of robust contact tracing and rapid testing capability, as well as data indicating a decline in positive test cases among employees and the general public. The Department has not stopped tracking COVID-19 cases in domestic facilities. Telework flexibilities are still being encouraged given local conditions. Department leadership continues to monitor operational conditions and prioritize the safety and security of our people and assets.

Question. On July 29, 2020, President Trump was asked by a member of the press about “bringing China in” to “formal negotiations with Russia on arms control.” He said in response to that question: “We’ll talk about that later. We’re going to work on this first and we’ll see. China right now is a much lesser nuclear power—you understand than Russia.” Do you agree with the President that discussions about “bringing in China” should occur after U.S. formal arms control negotiations with Russia?

Answer. The United States is moving forward with the mandate President Trump gave us and will not allow China to exercise a veto over our relationship with Russia. We seek a new arms control treaty that covers all nuclear warheads, includes a strengthened verification regime, and limits China’s unconstrained nuclear build-up. President Trump has made clear that the next arms control treaty entered in by the United States must be multilateral—it must include China. Our goal is to thwart a three-way nuclear arms race, and the most effective way to do that is a trilateral treaty.

Question. You signaled in your Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) testimony that the United States would attempt to snap-back UN Security Council sanctions that were relieved pursuant to UN Security Council 2231 if a U.S. led effort in the Council to extend the conventional arms embargo on Iran past October 2020 is not successful. Will the United States pursue a snap-back of UN Security Council sanctions if it is opposed by one or more U.S. allies on the Council?

Answer. While we would prefer to see the UN Security Council take collective action, we have been clear that absent collective action the United States would have no choice but to initiate the snapback of UN sanctions on Iran in order to prevent it from obtaining and proliferating deadly weapons throughout the region.

Question. Short of a snap-back of those sanctions, what statutory tools does the United States currently have at its disposal to designate actors who do trade in conventional arms with Iran?

Answer. Section 107 of the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2017 provides an authority to designate for sanctions any person who know-

ingly engages in any activity that materially contributes to the supply, sale, or transfer directly or indirectly to or from Iran, or for the use in or benefit of Iran, of any battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, missiles or missile systems. Additionally, the Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act provides for penalties on entities and individuals for the transfer to or from Iran of equipment and technology, including conventional arms, controlled under multilateral control lists.

Question. If UN Security Council sanctions are re-imposed and Iran moves to no longer be bound by any limitations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), what is the State Department's strategy to ensure that Iran's "breakout" time to a nuclear weapon does not shorten?

Answer. The Iranian regime uses its nuclear program to extort the international community and threaten regional and international security. For over a year, Iran has taken steps to move well beyond the limitations under the JCPOA, and in January 2020, Iranian officials announced that their nuclear program "no longer faces any operational restrictions" under the JCPOA. President Trump has made clear that we will deny Iran all paths to a nuclear weapon. Nuclear brinkmanship will not strengthen Iran's position, but instead lead to further international isolation and pressure. We will continue imposing maximum pressure on the Iranian regime until it ceases its destabilizing activities and negotiates a comprehensive deal.

Question. Can you explain the Administration's decision to end support for the Nagorno Karabakh landmine removal program, a decision that politicizes demining by selectively picking and choosing which civilians "deserve" to be protected from landmine deaths and injuries. Why are we playing games with humanitarian demining, and with the lives of innocent civilians in Nagorno Karabakh?

Answer. In 2018, The HALO Trust reported it had cleared nearly 98 percent of all landmines in the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast. Current contamination is light and predominantly in sparsely populated and largely inaccessible areas or outside the territory bounded by the former Oblast where the United States provided funding. Although three demining technicians died tragically in March 2018, no civilian mine deaths have been reported since 2015. After nearly 20 years and with the vast majority of mines cleared, more forward-looking priorities, including those aimed at preparing the populations for peace, provide the most effective use of taxpayer dollars and the best hope for long-term peace and prosperity in the region.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE MICHAEL POMPEO TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. In June, I along with Senator Shaheen and others, sponsored S. 3897, the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Clarification Act of 2020 (PEESCA), that amends the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act of 2019 (PEESA) and leaves no room for uncertainty about the scope and intention of the sanctions mandated by PEESA. It clarifies that facilitating and insuring vessels for pipelaying activities, including support activities like digging trenches and rock laying, are indeed subject to mandatory sanctions pursuant to PEESA. It also includes expanded sanctions on port activities and certification of the pipeline for activation. It will be passed as part of this year's NDAA. However, in the meantime, there is still confusion among some of our global partners and those in the corporate world about whether pipe-laying activities and insurance are subject to existing, mandatory PEESA sanctions. What is the Administration's view on the mandates and authorities it was given by Congress last year in PEESA?

Answer. PEESA provides the United States with the authority to advance U.S. national security and foreign policy objectives by addressing Russian pipeline projects that threaten Europe's energy security, and consequently Europe's political and economic security. PEESA targets vessels engaged in pipe-laying at depths of 100 feet or more below sea level for the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project, the TurkStream pipeline project, or any project that is a successor to either such project. PEESA refers to the scope of persons to be sanctioned, including those that have "provided those vessels for the construction of such a project." The Department intends to provide PEESA guidance shortly that will clarify and broaden our interpretation to cover foreign firms or persons who provide services or goods necessary or essential to the provision or operation of a vessel engaged in the process of pipe-laying for such projects. This may include, but is not limited to, providing

services or facilities for upgrades or installation of equipment for those vessels, or funding for upgrades or installation of equipment for those vessels.

DIPLOMACY IN CRISIS: THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S DECIMATION
OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT, DATED JULY 28, 2020

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—This report can also be found at:
<https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Diplomacy%20in%20Crisis%20-%20SFRC%20Democratic%20Staff%20Report.pdf>
and a Committee Print of this report can be found at:
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CPRT-116SPRT42925/pdf/CPRT-116SPRT42925.pdf>]

DIPLOMACY IN CRISIS:

The Trump Administration's
Decimation of the State
Department

A Democratic Staff Report
Prepared for the use of the
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate

July 28, 2020

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Executive Summary

Every day, at home and abroad, the people who make up the Department of State help keep Americans safe from conflict, secure from terrorism, advance America's economic interests, embody our best values, and represent us to the world. The Department's public servants are dedicated to serving the nation, regardless of party, president, or politics—and they do so with little fanfare, out of public view, and often at great sacrifice.

Yet, under President Trump, the Department of State and its dedicated career public servants have found themselves under attack. Non-partisan public servants have been smeared as the “Deep State,” accused of trying to undermine the President, and labeled “radical unelected bureaucrats.”¹ Over the last three and a half years, the Department has been plagued by a hiring freeze, a bungled “reform” effort, proposals to slash its funding by one-third, and persistent vacancies, all of which have hampered its effectiveness.²

While Secretary Pompeo came into office stating his intentions to reverse some of the Administration's more damaging personnel policies, under his tenure, critical senior positions remain vacant without nominees, making it more difficult for the Department to do America's work on the global stage.³ Assistant Secretaries, key ambassadorships, and other senior positions have sat empty for months—in some cases, years—without nominees for Senate confirmation.⁴ A number of vacancies exist because many of the President's nominees for national security posts lack the character and fitness expected of U.S. diplomats, and their nominations therefore languish in the Senate.⁵ The White House has repeatedly ignored basic due diligence and vetting, struggling or unable to find individuals willing to serve in this Administration and of suitable fitness to represent the United States.⁶

¹ Rebecca Ingber, “Bureaucratic Resistance and the Deep State Myth,” *Jut Security*, Oct. 18, 2019; Tom Shoop, “Trump, the GOP and the ‘Swamp’: A Dangerous New Low in Bureaucrat Bashing,” *Government Executive*, Feb. 11, 2020.

² Robbie Gramer, “State Department Vacancies Increase Embassy Security Risks, Report Warns,” *Foreign Policy*, Mar. 7, 2019; U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Department of State: Integrated Action Plan Could Enhance Efforts to Reduce Persistent Overseas Foreign Service Vacancies*, at 17–20 (Mar. 2019); Felicia Schwartz, “Trump Administration Proposes 32% Cut to State Department Budget,” *The Wall Street Journal*, May 23, 2017; Conor Finnegan, “Trump Proposes Deep Cuts in State Department Budget,” *ABC News*, Feb. 12, 2018; Nahal Toosi, “Tillerson scales back State Department restructuring plan,” *Politico*, Feb. 7, 2018.

³ Three and a half years into the Administration, 11 Assistant Secretary or Under Secretary posts are vacant or filled by acting officials. See Chapter 2; Tracy Wilkinson, “In His First Year, Pompeo Brought ‘Swagger’ But Made Little Progress on Foreign Policy Priorities,” *LA Times*, Apr. 26, 2019.

⁴ For example, there was no Assistant Secretary nominee for South Asian Affairs until January 2019. That nominee was later withdrawn, and no replacement has been named. See Robert Williams, nominee to be Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, PN6, (116th Congress) (nominated, Jan. 3, 2019; withdrawn, Apr. 11, 2019); Chapter 1.

⁵ See, e.g., Justin Rohlfich, “Trump has appointed the highest percentage of inexperienced ambassadors since FDR,” *Quartz*, Feb. 21, 2019; Dan De Luce et al., “Senior Trump official embellished résumé, had face on fake Time cover,” *NBC News*, Nov. 12, 2019; see also Chapter 2.

⁶ See Chapter 2; Patrick Finley, “Tucson doctor gets restraining order against Olson's ex-wife,” *Arizona Daily Star*, Nov. 6, 2008; Doyle McManus, “Almost Half the Top Jobs in Trump's State Department Are Still Empty,” *The Atlantic*, Nov. 4, 2018; Lisa Rein & Abby Phillip, “Help Wanted: Why Republicans Won't Work for the Trump Administration,” *The Washington Post*, June 17, 2017.

Allegations of retaliation and reprisal persist, and Secretary Pompeo has been missing in action when it comes to defending his own staff and organization.⁷ Examples abound of how the Department's senior officials act in contravention of the professional "ethos" heralded by Secretary Pompeo.⁸

The result is a State Department left feeling "besieged," "demoralized," "battered," "beaten," "mistreated," "paralyzed," and "at a new low."⁹

Recent months have only compounded this reality. Late on a Friday night in May 2020, the President, at Secretary Pompeo's urging, ousted the State Department Inspector General charged with conducting independent oversight, whose work has revealed significant challenges and defects the Department and its leadership faces—and who was investigating the Secretary's own conduct at the time of his firing.¹⁰

Meanwhile, as the nation struggles to confront and address systemic racism, diplomats abroad face significant challenges in representing the United States and the ideals our nation embodies to the rest of the world. The State Department, itself, has significant challenges with regard to diversity, as non-white Foreign Service officers and Department employees, especially Hispanic and African American employees, continue to struggle to advance and reach the upper echelons of leadership in the State Department.¹¹

This Senate Foreign Relations Committee Democratic Staff report catalogues some of these significant challenges. Employees report that their morale, and their confidence in their senior leaders, have dropped precipitously. Many are far more fearful today than they were three years ago to report a violation of law, and are equally afraid they will be subjected to reprisal.

Political appointees harboring suspicion about career public servants' perceived political affiliations have engaged in demoralizing and unjustified actions that have endangered the livelihoods of dedicated public servants.¹² At the same time, the Department's turmoil has brought to light institutional deficiencies that can be addressed, and protections for employees that should be strengthened. This report calls for a strong response to the chaos and mismanagement of the Department by the Trump administration. Congress must take action to leave the Department's dedicated employees better protected and more effective—and, in so doing, further safeguard America's national security.

As the nation struggles to confront and address persistent racial inequality and injustice, diplomats abroad face significant challenges in representing the United States and the ideals our nation embodies to the rest of the world.

⁷ See Chapter 3.

⁸ See U.S. Department of State, "Professional Ethos," <https://www.state.gov/about/professional-ethos> (last visited July 15, 2020).

⁹ Ted Osius, "Respect, Trust and Partnership: Keeping Diplomacy on Course in Troubling Times," *The Foreign Service Journal*, Apr. 2018; Reid Wilson, "Diplomats describe all-time low in morale at State under Trump," *The Hill*, Oct. 21, 2019; Abigail Tracy, "'Be Careful What You Wish For': How Mike Pompeo Trumpified the State Department," *Vanity Fair*, June 25, 2018.

¹⁰ Edward Wong, "Inspector General's Firing Puts Pompeo's Use of Taxpayer Funds Under Scrutiny," *The New York Times*, May 17, 2020. The Inspector General has conducted in-depth investigations into political retaliation, see Chapter 3, and was in the midst of investigations into the Secretary when he was fired. Robbie Gramer, "Fired State Watchdog Confirms Ongoing Investigation Into Pompeo and His Wife," *Foreign Policy*, June 10, 2020.

¹¹ See, e.g., Robbie Gramer, "Fighting for U.S. Values Abroad, Black Diplomats Struggle With Challenges at Home," *Foreign Policy*, June 11, 2010; Lara Jakes, "A Reckoning With Race to Ensure Diversity for America's Face Abroad," *The New York Times*, June 27, 2020; U.S. Government Accountability Office, *State Department: Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity* (Jan. 2020).

¹² See e.g., U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs*, at 1 (Aug. 2019).

These years of intentional and collateral damage to the diplomatic workforce could not have come at a worse time. In addition to the multitude of traditional foreign policy challenges facing our diplomats, the depletion of the Department and the diplomatic corps have made it even more difficult to address the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19. The systemic challenges of senior-level vacancies, understaffing, and unqualified nominees, compounded with U.S. pandemic under-preparedness, have left U.S. diplomats feeling directionless and that they are fending for themselves.¹³ The Trump administration's negligence and its attacks on our diplomatic corps, who serve on the frontlines of our global pandemic response, have left diplomats devoid of leadership and cost the United States valuable time in preparedness and response efforts.

The President has undermined the United States' role as a global leader, withdrawing from international organizations, agreements, and commitments, seeking to walk back our responsibilities to allies and partners, and retreating from leading the response to global crises. The State Department stands as our first line of defense on all these fronts to ensure that America does not become less secure. To keep America at the forefront, and to keep Americans safe and prosperous, we must build, retain, and stand up for a diplomatic corps that embodies the best of our nation.

This report is based on an extensive Democratic staff analysis of the Administration's nominees, Department vacancies, State Department Office of the Inspector General reports and findings, and Employee Viewpoint Survey data from 2016 to 2019. It also draws from public reports and statements by former officials documenting a decline in morale and an increased fear of retaliation, and the effect those had on the departures of several public servants from the Department.

Chapter 1 examines the pattern of vacancies and acting officials that has characterized the Trump administration's State Department, and the impact on U.S. foreign policy. Chapter 2 highlights examples of the Administration's failure to adequately vet nominees and its practice of nominating candidates who lack the fitness to serve as U.S. diplomats. Chapter 3 describes incidents of retaliation and attacks against diplomats and career public servants that have had a corrosive effect on morale. Chapter 4 presents employee survey results from selected bureaus demonstrating that a crisis in morale and lack of faith in leadership at the Department has increased to staggering levels. It also shows how the Administration's response to ongoing racial injustice affects the ability of U.S. diplomats to fulfill their mission. Chapter 5 sets out a series of recommendations and guiding principles to start the rebuilding that must take place over the coming years.

Key Findings:

- Vacancies and acting officials at the Department have persisted through two Secretaries of State, despite numerous commitments to fill key positions.
- Three and a half years into the Administration, 11 Assistant Secretary or Under Secretary posts—more than one-third—are vacant or filled by acting officials.
- As of July 2020, more than half of Senate-confirmed Department positions have been filled at least once by someone who had not been confirmed.

¹³ See John Hudson, "Coronavirus case in State Department-provided housing alarms diplomats," *The Washington Post*, Apr. 10, 2020; Nicole Gaouette & Kylie Atwood, "Lacking Clear State Department coronavirus guidance, embassies are 'just making it up as we go along,'" *CNN*, Mar. 20, 2020; Nahal Toosi, "Pompeo Faces Internal Questions About His Handling of the Coronavirus," *Politico*, Mar. 17, 2020; Robbie Gramer, "Pompeo Criticized for Failure to Communicate on Coronavirus," *Foreign Policy*, Mar. 17, 2020.

- Career public servants report that senior leadership exhibits a sense of disrespect and disdain for their work, prompting many to leave and contributing to a loss of expertise at the Department.
- Senior leadership's lack of accountability and refusal to defend career employees against attacks has contributed to declining morale and a drop in confidence in leadership.
- From 2016 to 2019, employees in key bureaus reported steep increases in fear of reprisal for reporting suspected violations of law and declining confidence in senior Department leadership.

Key Recommendations:

This report makes 10 recommendations aimed at reversing the downward trends in morale, strengthening protections for employees, and ensuring that the individuals leading our foreign policy are of the caliber that the American people deserve in their diplomats.

1. Rebuild and retain expertise in the State Department's ranks.
2. Reduce barriers to restoring lost expertise and for former diplomats and civil servants to return to the Department.
3. Promote more career employees to senior positions.
4. Increase diversity at senior ranks and throughout the Department.
5. Formalize the State Department exit survey process.
6. Initiate a review of how the "corridor reputation" system at the Department enables or exacerbates the challenges outlined in the report.
7. Restore and commit to minimum vetting standards for nominees.
8. Prioritize and fill senior leadership slots.
9. Maintain an independent Inspector General.
10. Enforce accountability for improper personnel practices and management.

PROLOGUE

Diplomacy 101: Why the State Department Matters

“We have got to understand that what we do in the world is not only good for the world; it’s good for us. It’s not a form of philanthropy; it’s a form of national security.”

— *Richard Haass, President of the Council on Foreign Relations*¹⁴

In the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak, in a heroic effort, from late January 2020 to June 2020, the State Department repatriated more than 100,000 Americans from 136 countries to the United States after many nations suspended international flights and closed their borders to slow the spread of the virus.¹⁵ A few years earlier, employees from the State Department’s San Juan and Dallas Passport Agencies helped evacuate more than 1,200 Americans and their families from St. Maarten after Hurricanes Irma and Jose ravaged the island, ensuring that they were quickly and safely returned home.¹⁶ Under both the Obama and Trump administrations, diplomats have negotiated for years to successfully obtain the release of several U.S. citizen detainees from Iranian prisons.¹⁷

This is just some of the work diplomatic professionals carry out every day—often behind the scenes, with the public unaware of the effort and sacrifice that helps keep Americans safe. Today, diplomatic professionals at home, and through more than 270 embassies, consulates, and missions abroad, help America fight terrorism, stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, end the modern slave trade, reduce global poverty, mitigate climate change, end hunger and malnutrition, and stop the trafficking of drugs.¹⁸ Our diplomats help Americans adopt children from foreign countries, provide life-saving humanitarian aid

¹⁴ Richard Haass, President of the Council on Foreign Relations, Interview with Margaret Warner, *PBS NewsHour*, Apr. 17, 2017.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of State, “Department of State Coronavirus Repatriation Statistics,” <https://www.state.gov/coronavirus/repatriation/> (last visited July 10, 2020).

¹⁶ Luis Martinez, “Americans on St. Maarten tell of Irma’s devastation, lawlessness; 1,200 evacuated,” *ABC News*, Sept. 10, 2017; Alastair Jamieson & Daniella Silva, “Over 1,200 Americans Evacuated From St. Maarten Amid Reports of Violence,” *NBC News*, Sept. 10, 2017; DipNote, “Evacuating U.S. Citizens from St. Maarten,” Sept. 10, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/evacuating-u-s-citizens-from-st-maarten/>.

¹⁷ Yeganeh Torbati & Joel Schectman, “Special Report: America’s unending hostage crisis with Iran,” *Reuters*, Aug. 1, 2018; Nicole Gaolette et al., “Trump announces American has been released from Lebanese prison,” *CNN*, Mar. 19, 2020.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of State, “HR Fact Sheet,” Jan. 2020, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/HR_Factsheet1219.pdf; National Museum of American Diplomacy, “Who is a diplomat?,” <https://diplomacy.state.gov/diplomacy/who-is-a-diplomat/> (last visited July 9, 2020); National Museum of American Diplomacy, “How does the U.S. Department of State engage with other countries?,” <https://diplomacy.state.gov/diplomacy/how-does-the-u-s-department-of-state-engage-with-other-countries/> (last visited July 9, 2020); U.S. Department of State, “Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons,” <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-civilian-security-democracy-and-human-rights/office-to-monitor-and-combat-trafficking-in-persons/> (last visited July 9, 2020); National Museum of American Diplomacy, “What are the key policies of the U.S. Department of State?,” <https://diplomacy.state.gov/diplomacy/what-are-the-key-policies-of-the-u-s-department-of-state/> (last visited July 9, 2020).

to people fleeing conflict and persecution, support Americans caught in disasters abroad, bolster American cybersecurity, and expand American businesses.¹⁹

Department personnel also help ensure the United States is a good steward of American taxpayer dollars by monitoring and evaluating the performance of foreign assistance programs.²⁰ Diplomats help keep U.S. political leaders informed of critical developments around the world, how foreign governments are responding to U.S. policy, and the state of relations with our allies and our adversaries.²¹ Department personnel engage in critical information gathering and analysis, which informs and influences our national security decisions.²²

The State Department also promotes American democratic values, such as free and fair elections, transparency in government, protection of basic human rights and freedoms, and equality amongst all peoples.²³ Historically, the Department has carried out these many varied roles on a budget 19 times smaller than the U.S. defense budget, and, while the gap between the defense and international affairs budgets has decreased in recent years, the Department still operates on a budget 12 times smaller than the defense budget.²⁴

In carrying out these duties, Department employees face a range of threats, including political violence, crime, terrorism, natural disasters, exposure to health hazards, and more.²⁵ Some make the ultimate sacrifice for their country: as of May 2019, 250 diplomats had lost their lives while serving abroad, including eight U.S. ambassadors who have died in the line of duty.²⁶

The State Department's diplomatic corps, comprised of a Foreign and Civil service, represents highly talented and specialized individuals.²⁷ More than 60 percent of Foreign Service Officers have advanced

The State Department promotes American democratic values, such as free and fair elections, transparency in government, protection of basic human rights and freedoms, and equality amongst all peoples.

¹⁹ The National Museum of American Diplomacy, "Who is a diplomat?," <https://diplomacy.state.gov/diplomacy/who-is-a-diplomat/> (last visited July 6, 2020); DipNote, "#State4States: A Year-Long Look at How @StateDept Works for the American People," Nov. 6, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/states4states-a-year-long-look-at-how-state-dept-works-for-the-american-people/> (last visited Mar. 4, 2020); U.S. Department of State, "Cybercrime and Intellectual Property Crime," <https://www.state.gov/cybercrime-and-intellectual-property-crime/> (last visited July 9, 2020); U.S. Department of State, "Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration," <https://www.state.gov/bureau-offices/under-secretary-for-civilian-security-democracy-and-human-rights/bureau-of-population-refugees-and-migration/> (last visited July 14, 2020).

²⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Office of Foreign Assistance, Resources and Reports," <https://www.state.gov/resources-and-reports-office-of-foreign-assistance/> (last visited June 24, 2020).

²¹ Andrew Glass, "Newspapers publish leaked diplomatic cables, Nov. 28, 2010," *Politico*, Nov. 28, 2017.

²² U.S. Department of State, "About Us—Bureau of Intelligence and Research," <https://www.state.gov/about-us-bureau-of-intelligence-and-research/> (last visited July 6, 2020).

²³ U.S. Department of State, *2017-2018 Advancing Freedom and Democracy Report*, Sept. 6, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/2017-18-advancing-freedom-and-democracy-report/>.

²⁴ Bill Burns, President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Interview with Mary Louise Kelly, All Things Considered, *NPR*, Oct. 15, 2019, *Historical Tables, Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2021*, "Table 5.1: Budget Authority by Function and Subfunction: 1976-2025," <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDDGET-2021-TAB/pdf/BUDDGET-2021-TAB.pdf>, at 88, Feb. 10, 2020.

²⁵ U.S. Department of State Office of Inspector General, *Review of the Effects of the Department of State Hiring Freeze*, at 9 (Aug. 2019).

²⁶ Six ambassadors have been killed by militants, and two died in plane crashes. American Foreign Service Association, "AFSA Memorial Plaque List," <https://www.afsa.org/afsa-memorial-plaque-list> (last visited July 6, 2020).

²⁷ The Department is mainly divided into Foreign Service and Civil Service, all of whom undergo rigorous and ongoing training when they start and as they progress through their careers. Foreign Service members, including many Ambassadors, largely represent the U.S. abroad and rotate through a series of foreign and domestic postings. Civil Service employees, which also include some Ambassadors, are generally based in Washington D.C., where they serve as the domestic counterparts to their Foreign Service colleagues and offer specialized subject-matter and institutional expertise in key areas of foreign policy. U.S. Department of State, "Who We Are," <https://careers.state.gov/learn/who-we-are/> (last visited July 9, 2020); U.S. Department of State, *Agency Financial Report: Fiscal Year 2019*, at 8 (Jan. 17, 2020), <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FY-2019-Agency-Financial-Report.pdf>. The Department also depends heavily on foreign national employees who support U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. These locally-employed staff provide local expertise, language skills, and institutional knowledge and continuity for overseas posts as American employees rotate in and out.

degrees.²⁸ U.S. diplomats are trained to communicate in over 70 foreign languages.²⁹ Characterized by “excellence and professionalism,” U.S. diplomats are recognized by Congress as “essential in the national interest to assist the President and the Secretary of State in conducting the foreign affairs of the United States.”³⁰

Abroad, Foreign Service Officers serve in hardship posts without their families, or bring family members along in non-hardship posts, moving every two to three years. Spouses give up careers or studies, and children lose friends and are forced to navigate the disorienting experience of frequent moves. These combined sacrifices are a testament to the dedication of public servants who serve our nation and dedicate their lives to promoting American democratic values.

Preventing Conflict

From its inception in 1789 as America’s first federal agency, the State Department has been responsible for navigating relationships between the U.S. and foreign nations, negotiating the end to foreign conflicts, and establishing the foundation for international peace and cooperation through alliances.³¹ Its diplomats and other professionals play, in the words of former Secretary of State James A. Baker III, “indispensable roles in maintaining security and peace at home and around the world.”³²

Diplomatic professionals remain our first line of defense against war because they can stop conflicts before they start. U.S. diplomats preempt war declarations with peaceful resolutions, and have convinced countries to abandon weapons of mass destruction.

Diplomatic professionals remain our first line of defense against war because they can stop conflicts before they start. U.S. diplomats preempt war declarations with peaceful resolutions, and have convinced countries to abandon weapons of mass destruction.³³ Then-Commander of U.S. Central Command General James Mattis recognized the important role that diplomacy plays in avoiding conflicts when he told Congress, “if you don’t fund the State Department fully then I need to buy more ammunition.”³⁴

²⁸ Academy of Diplomacy, *Strengthening the Department of State*, at 44 (May 2019).

²⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Five-Year Workforce Plan: Fiscal Years 2019-2023*, at 44 (Feb. 2020).

³⁰ Foreign Service Act of 1980, P.L. 96-465, Sec. 101, 22 U.S. Code § 3901(a)(1).

³¹ The State Department was originally founded as the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1789; U.S. Department of State, “A History of the United States Department of State,” July 1996, https://1997-2001.state.gov/about_state/history/dephis.html (last visited June 24, 2020); Letter from James A. Baker III, Secretary of State, on the opening of the U.S. Diplomacy Center Pavilion, Jan. 10, 2017 (as read by Secretary of State John Kerry), <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2017/01/266823.htm>.

³² Letter from James A. Baker III, Secretary of State, on the opening of the U.S. Diplomacy Center Pavilion, Jan. 10, 2017 (as read by Secretary of State John Kerry), <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2017/01/266823.htm>.

³³ William Burns, *The Back Channel*, Random House, at 190-192 (2019); Patrick E. Tyler & James Risen, “Secret Diplomacy Won Libyan Pledge on Arms,” *The New York Times*, Dec. 21, 2003.

³⁴ Testimony of General James Mattis, Commander of U.S. Central Command, *U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command*, Hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Mar. 5, 2013, at 16.

Promoting U.S. Business

One of the highest, but lesser known, priorities of our embassies abroad is to promote U.S. business interests.³⁵ Ninety-six percent of global consumers live outside of the United States, and diplomacy is essential in promoting U.S. exports and creating a level playing field for American businesses abroad.³⁶

These efforts create real benefits for American communities. For example, in 2019, Texas exported \$330.5 billion worth of goods, which supported more than 910,000 jobs in the state; foreign direct investment into Texas supported an additional 622,700 jobs in 2017.³⁷ In 2019, California exported \$174 billion worth of goods, which supported more than 683,000 jobs; foreign direct investment supported an additional 802,800 jobs.³⁸ The Department also provides visas for more than a million foreign students and tourists in the United States, who generate about \$240 billion every year for the U.S. economy.³⁹

Securing Alliances and Countering Terrorism

America is stronger when we have allies to help us pursue our interests. Our diplomats build, strengthen, and maintain the alliances and partnerships that make America safer and more prosperous.⁴⁰ Through these treaties, partnerships, and security agreements, our diplomatic professionals help our country adapt and thrive in an increasingly complex world with global challenges such as climate change, cyberattacks, and transnational crime.⁴¹ As one diplomat put it, “Diplomacy is the art of turning contacts into friends, and friends into partners as we work together to solve common challenges, contribute to global development, and work towards achieving shared goals.”⁴²

One area the diplomatic workforce leverages our alliances in is counterterrorism. Through partnerships such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the 79-member Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, which is the largest international coalition in history, the State Department works to detect, degrade, and dismantle terrorist networks.⁴³ Diplomats and civil servants also work to address the root causes of extremism and counter violent extremist narratives.⁴⁴ Alongside its international partners, the Department works with nearly a dozen American cities and more than 100 cities globally to counter violent extremism and terrorism.⁴⁵

³⁵ See, e.g., U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and U.S. Department of State, *USAID and Department of State Strategic Plan FY 2014-2017*, at 8 (Apr. 2014), <https://2012-2017.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/State%20USAID%20Joint%20Strategic%20Plan%2014-2017.pdf>; Marie “Masha” Yovanovitch, Deposition before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, House Committee on Oversight and Reform, and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Oct. 11, 2019, at 41-42; Testimony of Marie “Masha” Yovanovitch, Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, *Impachment Inquiry: Ambassador Marie Masha Yovanovitch*, Hearing before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Nov. 15, 2019.

³⁶ U.S. Department of State, “Direct Line for American Business,” <https://www.state.gov/direct-line-for-american-business/> (last visited July 6, 2020); William Burns, *The Back Channel*, Random House, at 11 (2019).

³⁷ U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Department of State in Texas,” <https://www.state.gov/states/texas/> (last visited July 6, 2020); International Trade Administration & U.S. Department of Commerce, “Texas Exports, Jobs, & Foreign Investment,” <https://legacy.trade.gov/mas/ian/state-reports/states/tx.pdf> (last visited July 6, 2020).

³⁸ U.S. Department of State, “U.S. Department of State in California,” <https://www.state.gov/states/california/> (last visited July 6, 2020); International Trade Administration & U.S. Department of Commerce, “California Exports, Jobs, & Foreign Investment,” <https://legacy.trade.gov/mas/ian/state-reports/states/ca.pdf> (last visited July 6, 2020).

³⁹ William Burns, *The Back Channel*, Random House, at 11 (2019).

⁴⁰ See National Museum of American Diplomacy, “Diplomacy is our Mission,” <https://diplomacy.state.gov/diplomacyourmission/> (last visited July 9, 2020).

⁴¹ See, e.g., National Museum of American Diplomacy, “Diplomacy is our Mission,” <https://diplomacy.state.gov/diplomacyourmission/> (last visited July 9, 2020); U.S. Embassy in Turkey, “10 Things You Need to Know about NATO,” Apr. 4, 2019, <https://tr.usembassy.gov/10-things-you-need-to-know-about-nato/>.

⁴² Julie Eadeh, Political Counselor at the U.S. Consulate General in Hong Kong, “Serving Citizens Abroad in Times of War,” Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, May 14, 2019, <https://ccas.georgetown.edu/2019/05/14/serving-citizens-abroad-in-times-of-war/>.

⁴³ U.S. Embassy in Turkey, “10 Things You Need to Know about NATO,” Apr. 4, 2019, <https://tr.usembassy.gov/10-things-you-need-to-know-about-nato/>; U.S. Department of State, *Fact Sheet: The Global Coalition—Working To Defeat ISIS*, Feb. 6, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/the-global-coalition-working-to-defeat-isis-2/>; U.S. Department of State, “Countering Terrorism,” <https://www.state.gov/policy-issues/countering-terrorism/> (last visited July 16, 2020).

⁴⁴ U.S. State Department Office of the Inspector General, *Audit of the Department of State Implementation of Policies Intended to Counter Violent Extremism*, at 1, June 2019.

⁴⁵ Dipnote, “Countering Racially or Ethnically Motivated Terrorism,” Sept. 30, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/countering-rationally-or-ethnically-motivated-terrorism/>; Institute for Strategic Dialogue, *Strong Cities Network Programme Summary* (2019), at 4.

Conclusion

The nation's diplomatic personnel are, in the State Department's words, the Department's "greatest asset."⁴⁶ U.S. diplomats carry out the foreign policy of the United States on behalf of all Americans. Retired Ambassador Mari Carmen Aponte captured well the nature of their commitment:

[E]very single day I was at the Embassy I saw what the diplomats do for the bottom line of the United States. They help Americans in trouble overseas, they advocate for American businesses, and create American jobs via trade agreements. They make the world safer by negotiating nuclear and non-proliferation accords. They facilitate American travel abroad by issuing passports. They promote the rule of law and use aid to help countries to develop so that their people don't feel that they have to immigrate. They help mitigate and resolve conflicts. They promote legitimate travel and promote study in the U.S. which helps our economy and our universities. They help in times of natural disasters and they are front and center during outbreaks, epidemics, and pandemics.⁴⁷

Nowhere have the heroic efforts and sacrifice of our diplomats been on fuller display than during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Department employees worked tirelessly, managing crucial information-sharing with their domestic counterparts, foreign governments, and Americans, and working to mitigate the impacts of the crisis as it unfolded in real-time.

They also did so with little guidance from senior leadership early on in the pandemic.⁴⁸ In March 2020, the President abruptly announced travel restrictions on European countries, and diplomats fielded calls from blindsided international counterparts and panicked Americans trying to get home.⁴⁹ As the virus began to spread more rapidly, diplomats did not know how to handle visa requests or how the Department planned to prevent spread at overseas posts, and they were troubled by the lack of transparency around the number of internal COVID-19 cases at the Department.⁵⁰ One diplomat concluded, "every embassy is just making it up as we go along . . . there's no uniformity."⁵¹ As the virus added to the workload for diplomats, many were left frustrated by the lack of leadership and the patchwork of uneven guidance that complicated their ability to fulfill their duties.⁵²

Further compounding these challenges was President Trump's disdainful statements about diplomats in the midst of the pandemic. During a COVID-19 White House task force press briefing, President Trump referred to the diplomats working hard on behalf of Americans as the "Deep State Department," without any pushback from the Secretary Pompeo, who was standing next to the President.⁵³

The mistreatment of our nation's diplomats, who have risked their lives on the frontlines to keep Americans safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, is just the latest example of the mismanagement by the Trump administration and its chaotic side effects. As this report describes, despite the many benefits these diplomatic professionals provide to the United States, the Trump administration has left the State Department reeling from an unprecedented lack of leadership, and demoralized from intentional attacks on its professional integrity.

⁴⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Agency Financial Report: Fiscal Year 2019*, at 122, Jan. 17, 2020, available at <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FY2019-Agency-Financial-Report.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Remarks of Ambassador Mari Carmen Aponte, "Addressing Diversity at the State Department," Congressional Briefing hosted by Senators Bob Menendez and Ben Cardin, Feb. 25, 2020, available at https://youtu.be/_Y9Pi3FkTNA?t=2772.

⁴⁸ See Nicole Gaouette & Kylie Atwood, "Lacking Clear State Department coronavirus guidance, embassies are 'just making it up as we go along,'" *CNN*, Mar. 20, 2020; Erin Banco, "Pompeo's Virus Response Blasted by State Dept Officials," *The Daily Beast*, Mar. 17, 2020.

⁴⁹ See Norimitsu Onishi, "Chaos in Europe, and Anger, Over U.S. Travel Ban to Curb Coronavirus," *The New York Times*, Mar. 12, 2020; Heather Murphy, "Trump's Travel Ban Leaves Americans in Europe Scrambling to Get Home," *The New York Times*, Mar. 12, 2020; Nicole Gaouette et al., "European Union Leaders Denounce Trump's Coronavirus Travel Restrictions," *CNN*, Mar. 12, 2020.

⁵⁰ Erin Banco, "Pompeo's Virus Response Blasted by State Dept Officials," *The Daily Beast*, Mar. 17, 2020.

⁵¹ Nicole Gaouette & Kylie Atwood, "Lacking Clear State Department coronavirus guidance, embassies are 'just making it up as we go along,'" *CNN*, Mar. 20, 2020.

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ Press Briefing, President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force, Mar. 20, 2020.

CHAPTER 1

Vacant Posts and Frequent Turnover: An America Less Present and Less Effective

“You know how we don’t win wars without soldiers . . . We don’t win foreign policy and we don’t maintain America’s global leadership without diplomats.”

— *Ambassador Barbara Stepbenson, President,
American Foreign Service Association*⁵⁴

The State Department’s work is critical to ensuring American safety and prosperity. Vacancies in senior leadership posts hamper the Department’s ability to carry out its mission and engage in effective diplomacy. Yet, under this Administration, the President has been slow or failed altogether to nominate individuals for dozens of senior posts. Through two Secretaries of State, and despite numerous commitments to fill key positions, vacancies and acting officials at the Department have persisted.

Three and a half years into the Administration, 11 Assistant Secretary or Under Secretary posts—more than one-third—are vacant or filled by acting officials.⁵⁵ Of those positions, all but three had no named nominees by the Administration at the time of publication.⁵⁶

The basic responsibility of filling key posts has been plagued by a combination of a White House that is slow to nominate, frequent turnover, and, often, poor vetting of candidates.⁵⁷ As an illustrative example, it took the Administration 11 months to submit the first nomination for Under Secretary for Arms Control.⁵⁸ Then, following a controversy over that confirmed official’s failure to disclose key information, which may have revealed a counterintelligence threat, she departed in late 2019. It took another six months for the White House to propose a replacement—a nominee who had languished in the Senate for a different Under Secretary position, due to his role in controversial policies in a prior administration and his failure to be

⁵⁴ Carol Morello, “How a retiring American diplomat helped navigate a ‘perilous minefield,’” *The Washington Post*, July 26, 2019.

⁵⁵ This does not include the announced resignation of Michael Evanoff, Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, who announced on July 14, 2020 that he was leaving the Department effective July 24, 2020. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff Analysis, as of July 15, 2020.

⁵⁶ As of July 15, 2020, the following nominees were pending for Assistant Secretary or Under Secretary positions: Ronald Mortenson (nominated May 24, 2018), Carlos Trujillo, Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs (nominated Mar. 18, 2020), and Marshall Billingslea, nominee for Under Secretary of Arms Control (nominated May 4, 2020).

⁵⁷ See Chapter 2.

⁵⁸ Andrea Thompson, nominee for Under Secretary of Arms Control, was submitted on December 19, 2017. See PN1326, 115th Congress.

forthcoming with the Senate about that role.⁵⁹ As a result, the senior position responsible for negotiating with Russia and other nuclear powers on arms control and leads U.S. policy on non-proliferation has been vacant or led by an acting official for two out of the three and a half years of this Administration.⁶⁰

The Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretary for Europe and Eurasian Affairs departed in February 2019; as of July 2020, the Administration has yet to nominate someone to fill that role.⁶¹ The Assistant Secretary for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance, who works with partners to control the threat of weapons of mass destruction, had a Senate-confirmed official for just over one year, and has been vacant since June 2019, with no subsequent nominee.⁶² The Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, which leads the Department's public outreach and messaging, has been vacant since March 2018, with no nominee.⁶³ There has been no confirmed Assistant Secretary for South and Asian Affairs for the entire Trump administration—a position that manages relations with India and Pakistan, and a region where the U.S. is engaged in a long-standing war.⁶⁴ As of July 2020, more than half of senior Department positions have been filled by someone other than a Senate-confirmed official at least once.⁶⁵

Vacancies and acting posts have had serious ramifications for America's presence in the world, its overseas operations, and for U.S. national security.

Vacancies and acting posts have had serious ramifications for America's presence in the world, its overseas operations, and for U.S. national security. Senior leadership positions such as Assistant Secretaries are essential to formulating, implementing, and coordinating U.S. foreign policy. They drive international economic policy, oversee conflict prevention, and represent the United States in bilateral and multilateral negotiations on weapons nonproliferation, global health, and other critical matters.⁶⁶ When they are filled with officials serving in an acting capacity, those officials have diminished authority, both within the Department and with foreign counterparts.⁶⁷ When the positions are vacant, the work of the entire bureau suffers and slows.

Further, one-quarter of senior positions across the Department have turned over at least once since 2017.⁶⁸ Others serve in dual-hatted roles. Dr. Deborah Birx, tapped to lead the federal COVID-19 response for the White House Coronavirus Task Force, also technically serves as the lead for the State Department's global HIV/AIDS response.⁶⁹ Deputy Secretary Stephen Biegun still serves as the lead negotiator for North

⁵⁹ Josh Rogin, "State Department official didn't disclose ties to the boyfriend of Russian agent Maria Butina," *The Washington Post*, June 19, 2019; Kylie Arwood & Jennifer Handler, "Top State Department official with ties to Russian agent Butina's boyfriend will depart post," *CNN*, Sept. 20, 2019; Marshall Billingslea, nominee for Under Secretary of Arms Control, was submitted on May 4, 2020. See PN1732, 116th Congress. Billingslea was nominated in January 2019 for Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, and encountered strong opposition due to his prior role in torture policy under President George W. Bush. See PN107, 115th Congress; Rob Berschinski & Benjamin Haass, Opinion, "Trump Wants a Torture Proponent to Lead U.S. Human Rights Policy. The Senate Should Say No," *Politico*, Sept. 17, 2019.

⁶⁰ Under Secretary Thompson served from April 2018 to September 2019, just over 16 months.

⁶¹ Wess Mitchell resigned in February 2019. Carol Morello, "Top diplomat for European affairs resigns from State Department," *The Washington Post*, Jan. 22, 2019.

⁶² John Hudson & Paul Sonne, "Senior arms control official resigns from State Department, aides say," *The Washington Post*, May 13, 2019.

⁶³ The prior official, Steven Goldstein, served for just 3 months.

⁶⁴ The prior Assistant Secretary departed the post in January 2017.

⁶⁵ Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff Analysis. The 37 positions includes 6 Under Secretary, 22 Assistant Secretary positions, and 9 Senate-confirmed positions that lead a bureau equivalent to an assistant secretary.

⁶⁶ See 1 FAM 130, 1 FAM 420, 1 FAM 450, 1 FAM 470.

⁶⁷ See, e.g., Robbie Gramer et al., "How the Trump Administration Broke the State Department," *Foreign Policy*, July 31, 2017; see also Anne Joseph O'Connell, *Vacant Offices: Delays in Staffing Top Agency Positions*, 82 Southern California Law Review, 913 (2009).

⁶⁸ Nine out of 37 positions have turned over at least once. The 37 positions includes 6 Under Secretary, 22 Assistant Secretary positions, and 9 Senate-confirmed positions that lead a bureau equivalent to an assistant secretary.

⁶⁹ Deborah L. Birx, M.D., U.S. Global Aids Coordinator & U.S. Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy, U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/biographies/deborah-l-birx-md/> (last visited July 1, 2020).

Korea.⁷⁰ Before he ended his tenure as Ambassador to Germany, Ric Grenell served simultaneously as the Special Envoy for Serbia and Kosovo Peace Negotiations, and as Acting Director of National Intelligence, ostensibly holding all three positions at once.⁷¹

Slow to Fill the Ranks

Whether by design or neglect, from the outset, President Trump placed little value on filling some of the senior-most national security and foreign policy positions. The White House was slow to fill posts across the Administration and, by many accounts, lacked the traditional transition plans to enable it to be fully staffed quickly.⁷²

As of October 2017, President Trump had nominated only 56 ambassadors, compared with 81 from the same point in the Obama administration.⁷³ Key ambassador postings remained without a nominee, including Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Australia. As of October 2017, out of 22 Assistant Secretary positions, 20 were either vacant or filled in an acting capacity, and of those, only 3 had nominations pending before the Senate.⁷⁴ By November 2017, roughly half of the more than 150 Senate-confirmed positions at the State Department still had no named nominee.⁷⁵

By early 2018, just over a year into the Administration, the numbers were not much better. As of February 2018, 8 of 22 Assistant Secretary positions were vacant or held by those in an acting capacity, with no nominee, including African Affairs, South and Central Asian Affairs, Western Hemisphere Affairs, and Near Eastern Affairs.⁷⁶

While the Administration has repeatedly tried to blame the lack of Senate-confirmed officials on the Senate and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Senate has moved forward dozens of nominees, particularly those that are adequately vetted and qualified. The Senate has confirmed more than 190 nominees to the State Department under the Trump Administration; more than half of those were advanced by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee after April 2018.⁷⁷ Further, the Committee has continuously moved forward nominees promptly who have been appropriately vetted and who meet the standards for Senate confirmation. In 2019, for example, the Committee reviewed and advanced nearly 30 nominees in less than 40 days. Many nominations take longer to advance for a variety of reasons: nominees frequently take one month or longer to submit required confirmation paperwork; the Committee has had to compensate for the Administration's failure to fully vet candidates, adding to review time; and, particularly under this Administration, the occurrence of missing or incorrect information, as well as disqualifying conduct by candidates, has considerably slowed the pace of the Committee's ability to process nominees.

⁷⁰ See, e.g., William Gallo, "Another Trump-Kim Meeting Before November? South Korea Hopes So," *Voice of America*, July 1, 2020; Josh Rogin, "Trump is expected to tap North Korea envoy for deputy secretary of state," *The Washington Post*, Sept. 17, 2019.

⁷¹ President Donald J. Trump Announces Intent to Appoint Individual to a Key Administration Post, *The White House*, Oct. 3, 2019. Grenell was then designated a few months later to serve as the Acting Director of National Intelligence. Statement from the Press Secretary, *The White House*, Feb. 20, 2020.

⁷² See, e.g., Robbie Gramer et al., "How the Trump Administration Broke the State Department," *Foreign Policy*, July 31, 2017; Maggie Haberman & Glenn Thrush, "A Trump Administration, With Obama Staff Members Filling In the Gaps," *The New York Times*, Jan. 19, 2017. "In 21 years of covering the State Department and in eight years of serving there, I've seen rocky transitions...but I've never seen anything like this," said Strobe Talbott, the president of the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based think tank, and a former journalist and Bill Clinton administration official." *Id.*

⁷³ Includes country ambassadors and ambassadors to international organizations. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff Analysis.

⁷⁴ As of October 1, 2017, for 22 Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretaries. *Id.*; Dexter Filkins, "Rex Tillerson at the Breaking Point," *The New Yorker*, Oct. 6, 2017.

⁷⁵ 76 out of 154 positions had no nominee (49 percent). Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff Analysis, Nov. 29, 2017.

⁷⁶ Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff Analysis.

⁷⁷ *Id.*

Key Posts Neglected, and an Interim Team on the Field

A number of the vacancies that President Trump failed to fill left holes in the U.S. presence around the globe. For example, even as the Administration argued that we were entering a new era of great-power competition with China, and despite an ongoing war in Afghanistan, there were no Assistant Secretary nominees for East or South and Central Asia until December 2017 and January 2019.⁷⁸ At a time of unprecedented challenges from Russia, China, and ISIS in Africa, the Administration did not name a nominee to serve as Assistant Secretary for African Affairs until May 2018.⁷⁹ In the face of a worsening humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, increasing irregular migration from Central America, and heightening tensions with Mexico, President Trump failed to nominate an Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs until March 2018—more than 400 days into the Administration.⁸⁰

Other vacancies appeared to reflect the Administration's lack of interest in advancing certain policy priorities, including having Senate-confirmed officials to lead the U.S. engagement on climate and environment issues. Consistent with President Trump's disregard for climate change and environmental issues, he did not nominate anyone to serve as Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment until January 2019.⁸¹

At his nomination hearing in April 2018, then-nominee for Secretary of State Mike Pompeo acknowledged that:

At the State Department, there are too many holes, too many vacancies, too many unfilled positions. When that happens, everyone is stretched thin in the subject matter expertise that we need to deliver America's diplomacy around the world, to conduct its mission, its humanitarian missions, its development missions. Each of the missions which are entrusted to the State Department require talented people on station doing their part, working alongside it.⁸²

Yet, despite his recognition of how vacant posts hamper the Department's effectiveness, under Secretary Pompeo's leadership, the Administration has continued to struggle to nominate qualified individuals, and, once they have people in place, to keep key posts filled. By October 2018, the White House still had failed to nominate anyone for 5 of 37 key senior Senate-confirmed State Department leadership positions and more than two dozen ambassadorial posts.⁸³ **In late 2018, more than 25 countries—including Egypt, Libya, Mexico, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand—had no ambassadorial nominee.**⁸⁴ At the end of 2018, only 2 out of 6 Under Secretary positions were filled by Senate-confirmed officials.⁸⁵

By mid-2019, the Administration had failed to nominate individuals or fill vacancies for at least 28 Senate-confirmed positions, including 16 ambassadorial posts. Among those were the head of South and Central Asian Affairs, for which the Administration's nominee withdrew; the Assistant Secretary for Europe and Eurasian Affairs, the State Department's most senior Europe official, which has not had a Senate-confirmed official since February 2019; and Ambassadors to Estonia, Georgia, and Ukraine—three countries on the front line in the fight against Russian aggression.⁸⁶

⁷⁸ Susan Thornton was nominated to be Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs in December 2017, but withdrawn in August 2018; Robert Williams was nominated in January 2019 to be Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, but withdrawn in April 2019. David Stillwell was subsequently nominated for East Asian and Pacific Affairs in November 2018 and confirmed in June 2019. There has been no subsequent nominee for South Asian Affairs. See PN6, PN141 (116th Congress); PN1327, PN1386, PN2580 (115th Congress).

⁷⁹ Eli Okun, "White House taps nominees for major Africa posts," *Politico*, May 10, 2018.

⁸⁰ Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff Analysis.

⁸¹ See Nadja Popovich et al., "95 Environmental Rules Being Rolled Back Under Trump," *The New York Times*, Dec. 21, 2019; Keith Krach, Nominee to be an Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment, PN 260 (116th Congress), nominated Jan. 24, 2019.

⁸² Nomination Hearing of Mike Pompeo to be Secretary of State, before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Apr. 12, 2018.

⁸³ Senate Foreign Relations Committee Analysis. For the 37 senior positions in the State Department, five positions did not have a single nomination before October 2018.

⁸⁴ Senate Foreign Relations Committee Analysis. As of November 1, 2018.

⁸⁵ As of December 2018. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Analysis.

⁸⁶ Wess Mitchell, the former Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretary, departed in February 2019. Carol Morello, "Top diplomat for European affairs resigns from State Department," *The Washington Post*, Jan. 22, 2019.

Key positions have been filled by non-Senate-confirmed officials for extended periods. As of mid-2020, the Bureau of International Organization Affairs has been led by officials in an acting capacity for more than a year and a half; the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs has been led by non-Senate-confirmed officials for almost three and a half years. As of the time of publication, more than 20 posts, including 2 Under Secretaries, 6 Assistant Secretaries, the Inspector General, and more than 12 Ambassadors, are vacant and have no nominee.⁸⁷

As of July 2020, there is no Senate-confirmed ambassador and no nominee for Afghanistan, Germany, Honduras, or Qatar. Others have gone long stretches without a nominee; Panama went two years without an ambassador until a nominee was named in May 2020.⁸⁸ Ukraine, on the front lines of Kremlin aggression, has not had a Senate-confirmed ambassador since April 2019.⁸⁹

The cumulative effect spills into U.S. engagement abroad and impacts our relationships with host nations. When, due to a vacancy, only an acting official without the rank of ambassador is available, foreign officials may forgo a bilateral meeting rather than meet with someone who they perceive lacks the authority to make decisions and the backing of the President or Secretary. Without ambassadors and other senior officials selected by the president, confirmed by the Senate, and representing the administration with full authority, the relationship, and America's leverage, suffers. As former U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, Barbara Leaf, noted: "Places like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt are very status-conscious societies. Say you have a problem in Turkey: Who can pick up the phone and call [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdoğan? A good ambassador can do that; a chargé [the second-in-command at the embassy] can't."⁹⁰

Hiring Freeze Compounded Staffing Gaps

The Department's ability to fill posts was made even more difficult by the Administration's ill-considered hiring freeze—put in place for all of the federal government in January 2017, but remaining in place until May 2018 at the State Department. The freeze, on top of the significant vacancies, has reverberated through the Department and continued to pose hiring challenges.⁹¹ **The freeze prevented the Department from hiring or promoting civil service employees or locally-employed embassy staff, resulting in a 7 percent decline in civil service workforce and a 20 percent decline in local embassy staff** over the course of the freeze, who are critical to carrying out overseas functions and missions.⁹²

A State Department Inspector General (OIG) review found that the freeze hampered core functions, including providing services to U.S. citizens abroad, and adversely impacted their ability to maintain embassy security.⁹³ The OIG reported that "[s]everal bureaus charged with protecting security, health, and life safety reported to OIG that the hiring freeze had significant detrimental effects on their operations."⁹⁴ For example, the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations reported that it conducted 22 percent fewer overseas safety, health, and environmental management inspections in 2018 than in 2016 due to freeze-related staffing shortages.⁹⁵

⁸⁷ This does not include the announced resignation of Michael Evanoff, Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, who announced on July 14, 2020 that he was leaving the Department effective July 24, 2020. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Analysis.

⁸⁸ Erik Bethel was nominated on May 4, 2020. PN1731 (116th Congress).

⁸⁹ Keith Dayton was nominated on May 14, 2020. PN1901 (116th Congress).

⁹⁰ Doyle McManus, "Almost Half the Top Jobs in Trump's State Department Are Still Empty," *The Atlantic*, Nov. 4, 2018.

⁹¹ See Mark Sandy, Office of Management and Budget, "Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies," M-17-17, (Jan. 25, 2017); Eric Katz, "After 16 Months, State Department Ends Hiring Freeze," *Government Executive*, May 15, 2018.

⁹² U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of the Effects of the Department of State Hiring Freeze*, at 1 (Aug. 2019).

⁹³ *Id.* at 10.

⁹⁴ *Id.* at 9.

⁹⁵ *Id.* at 10.

A stunning **96 percent of embassies and consulates** and **95 percent of bureaus and offices** responding to the OIG reported that the freeze had a negative effect on their overall operations.⁹⁶ Several bureaus and overseas posts noted negative effects on employee welfare stemming from the hiring freeze, including an excessive workload leading to staff burnout.⁹⁷ A separate review of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor revealed that the hiring freeze hindered its ability to adequately respond to increased workload, including on the Bureau's critical role in Leahy vetting—the screening of U.S. security assistance recipients to prevent funds from going to security forces that have committed gross violations of human rights.⁹⁸

Another separate review found that the Bureau of Counterterrorism was unable to establish and fill four positions in the Office of Terrorist Detentions for more than two years, in part due to the hiring freeze. In late 2019, the Bureau reported that more than 20 percent (20 out of 92) of its civil servant positions were vacant, owing partly due to backlogs in hiring carried over from the hiring freeze, despite the fact that the freeze had ended approximately 18 months earlier.⁹⁹ As of December 2018, the Bureau of Human Resources estimated it would take approximately two years to fill Civil Service vacancies created by the freeze.¹⁰⁰

Loss of Expertise

In addition to vacant and acting positions, the Department has witnessed a number of departures during the first three and a half years of the Trump administration, including some of the most experienced career personnel, as well as those in mid-level positions who had yet to climb into leadership ranks. Many career officials or second-in-command who would have traditionally been promoted to a senior position or ambassadorship have instead left or felt forced out.

Particularly in the first two years of the Trump administration, a number of senior officials departed, whether by choice, due to policy disagreements, or because they were sidelined and not offered other senior roles.¹⁰¹ Following a series of expected, but abrupt, departures in the first few days of the Administration, additional senior departures followed during the subsequent months and years—including the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Tom Shannon, who served until June 2018; U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, Roberta Jacobson, who served until May 2018; Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq, Brett McGurk, who served until December 2018, among others. As former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns and former U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and Afghanistan, Ryan Crocker, lamented, such departures amounted to the “most significant departure of diplomatic talent in generations.”¹⁰²

The Department has also lost early- and mid-career staff at alarming levels. Between July 2017 and June 2018, 722 full-time, non-seasonal employees left—about **7 percent of the Department's total staff**, and the fourth-highest rate among major agencies.¹⁰³ Some left because they felt they could no longer defend U.S. policies, and were, as a former Foreign Service Officer wrote in a public op-ed, “struggling to explain to

⁹⁶ *Id.* at 8. Of embassies, 151 responded; and 38 bureaus or offices responded. *Id.* App. B.

⁹⁷ *Id.* at 9-10, 19.

⁹⁸ U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Inspection of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor*, at 5 (Oct. 2018).

⁹⁹ U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Inspection of the Bureau of Counterterrorism*, at 11 (May 2020).

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of the Effects of the Department of State Hiring Freeze*, at 7.

¹⁰¹ Gardiner Harris, “Diplomats Sound the Alarm as They Are Pushed Out in Droves,” *The New York Times*, Nov. 24, 2017. Even before Tillerson was confirmed as Secretary, his staff fired six of the State Department's top career diplomats, including Patrick Kennedy, who had been appointed to his position by President George W. Bush. Kristie Kenney, the Department's counselor and one of just five career ambassadors, was fired a few weeks later. None were given any reason for their dismissals. *Id.*

¹⁰² Nicholas Burns & Ryan C. Crocker, Opinion, “Dismantling the Foreign Service,” *The New York Times*, Nov. 27, 2017.

¹⁰³ Charles S. Clark, “State Department Under Pompeo Still Coping with Vacancies: Just more than half of top jobs are filled as Trump's third year approaches,” *Government Executive*, Dec. 17, 2018.

foreign peoples the blatant contradictions at home.¹⁰⁴ Others found a particular breaking point or policy decision they no longer felt they could implement.¹⁰⁵

The removal and turnover of deputy chiefs of mission (DCMs) in particular has been notable. DCMs are vital to a well-functioning embassy, possessing years of diplomatic experience and regional expertise. As second-in-command of a diplomatic mission, they are responsible for the day-to-day management and are expected to help ensure continuity and leadership.¹⁰⁶ DCMs have been dismissed or resigned at U.S. embassies in Canada, Iceland, Romania, France, the United Kingdom, and South Africa.¹⁰⁷ In one extreme example, the U.S. Ambassador to Iceland, in place for just over a year, has had seven DCMs.¹⁰⁸ The rate at which DCMs are being removed, and the reasoning behind the removals, has created cause for concern.¹⁰⁹

The DCM for U.S. Embassy London, for example, was dismissed following a speech he gave in which he had positively mentioned President Barack Obama—an offense for which the Ambassador reportedly called the DCM a “traitor.”¹¹⁰ Eric Rubin, President of the American Foreign Service Association stated that the removal of DCMs is becoming an “epidemic.”¹¹¹

By the end of 2017, the Foreign Service Officer corps had lost 60 percent of its Career Ambassadors, the Department’s most knowledgeable and experienced professionals.

In the process, the Department lost significant institutional knowledge and substantive experience. By the end of 2017, the Foreign Service Officer corps had lost 60 percent of its Career Ambassadors, the Department’s most knowledgeable and experienced professionals.¹¹² By early 2018, there was only a single senior career official with the Department equivalent of a four-star general, down from six at the end of 2016.¹¹³ As Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, then-President of the American Foreign Service Association, said pointedly: “Were the U.S. military to face such a decapitation of its leadership ranks, I would expect a public outcry.”¹¹⁴

The damage was also done to early- and mid-career employees. One former Foreign Service Officer noted “the growing exodus of entry-level and midlevel officers, who take with us ground-level expertise that is difficult to replace.”¹¹⁵ The departure of senior experienced experts means that there are more junior employees who lack senior mentorship. Nancy McEldowney, a former ambassador who retired in June 2019 after a 30-year career in the Foreign Service, observed: “There’s a vacuum throughout the State Department, and the junior people now

¹⁰⁴ Chuck Park, “I can no longer justify being a part of Trump’s ‘Complacent State.’ So I’m resigning,” *The Washington Post*, Aug. 8, 2019. See also Steve Inskip, “Ex-State Department Diplomat Criticizes Trump’s State Department,” NPR, Sept. 24, 2018 (quoting Uzra Zeya, former Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy Paris: “The real question was – could I continue to do good, as I define it, in my role serving this president? And I reached the conclusion, simply, that I could not.”).

¹⁰⁵ David Rank, Opinion, “Why I resigned from the Foreign Service after 27 years,” *The Washington Post*, June 23, 2017, (“When the administration decided to withdraw from the Paris agreement on climate change, however, I concluded that, as a parent, patriot and Christian, I could not in good conscience be involved in any way, no matter how small, with the implementation of that decision.”); Rukmini Callimachi & Eric Schmitt, “Splitting With Trump Over Syria, American Leading ISIS Fight Steps Down,” *The New York Times*, Dec. 22, 2018 (I ultimately concluded that I could not carry out these new instructions and maintain my integrity.”).

¹⁰⁶ G.R. Berridge et al., *The Palgrave MacMillan Dictionary of Diplomacy*, at 94 (Jan. 2012); Robbie Gramer, “At Embassies Abroad, Trump Envoys Are Quietly Pushing Out Career Diplomats,” *Foreign Policy*, Feb. 5, 2020.

¹⁰⁷ Robbie Gramer, “At Embassies Abroad, Trump Envoys Are Quietly Pushing Out Career Diplomats,” *Foreign Policy*, Feb. 5, 2020.

¹⁰⁸ Christina Ruffini, “Controversial U.S. Ambassador to Iceland wanted firearm, security for Reykjavik post,” *CBS News*, July 26, 2020.

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., Julia Ioffe, “Trump Is Waging War on America’s Diplomats,” *GQ*, Dec. 3, 2019.

¹¹⁰ Mark Landier, et al., “Woody Johnson Was a Loyal Trump Supporter in 2016. As an Ambassador, He May Be Too Loyal,” *The New York Times*, July 24, 2020.

¹¹¹ Robbie Gramer, “At Embassies Abroad, Trump Envoys Are Quietly Pushing Out Career Diplomats,” *Foreign Policy*, Feb. 5, 2020.

¹¹² Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, “Time to Ask Why,” *The Foreign Service Journal*, Dec. 2017.

¹¹³ Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, “President’s Views,” *The Foreign Service Journal*, Mar. 2018.

¹¹⁴ Ambassador Barbara Stephenson, “Time to Ask Why,” *The Foreign Service Journal*, Dec. 2017.

¹¹⁵ Bethany Milton, “My Final Break with the Trump State Department: What is there left to defend to foreign audiences, other than a promise that we’re a democracy and that there are future elections to come?” *The New York Times*, Aug. 26, 2019.

working in these top jobs lack the confidence and credibility that comes from a presidential nomination and Senate confirmation.¹¹⁶

According to the resignation letter of one career Foreign Service Officer, the Trump administration's "stinging disrespect" for the Department's diplomatic work drove away experienced and talented staff.¹¹⁷ Others similarly described a "complete and utter disdain for our expertise" and a "contempt" for career employees.¹¹⁸ Many diplomats and career employees were asking "if their service is still valued."¹¹⁹

Conclusion

The lack of senior Department officials and personnel attrition levels doesn't just mean empty desks. It translates to a lack of U.S. leadership on the global stage. If senior officials are unable to engage with counterparts—with allies and adversaries alike, in the field in global hotspots or in meeting rooms of multilateral organizations—there is a "slow degradation of America's global leadership."¹²⁰ As former Under Secretary of State under President George W. Bush, R. Nicholas Burns, said: "The United States is at the center of every crisis around the world, and you simply cannot be effective if you don't have assistant secretaries and ambassadors in place...It shows a disdain for diplomacy."¹²¹ Put another way, as former Ambassador to Qatar Dana Shell Smith said, "having so many vacancies in essential places is a disaster waiting to happen."¹²²

Indeed, other countries have noticed the disempowerment of the State Department under President Trump. For example, former Foreign Minister of Ukraine Vadim Pristayko reminisced in a November 2019 interview about the level of interaction with the United States that had existed under former Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia Victoria Nuland.¹²³ Pristayko said, "I think we need to go back to the format that was under Nuland, when she had the full power of the State Department behind her."¹²⁴ In another notable example, also in November 2019, *Publimetro Colombia* released audio of Colombia's Ambassador to the United States, Francisco Santos, and Colombia's Foreign Minister-designate, Claudia Blum.¹²⁵ In offering advice about navigating the Washington power structure, Ambassador Santos said: "The U.S. State Department, which used to be important, is destroyed, it doesn't exist."¹²⁶

The State Department's lack of senior level leadership with Senate-confirmation vested authority and legitimacy, coupled with the hollowing out of its ranks at all levels, exacerbates a declining diplomatic network from President Trump's harmful leadership. When the United States does not lead diplomatically, it weakens America's ability to pursue U.S. national interests and promote American values abroad.

¹¹⁶ Gardiner Harris, "Diplomats Sound the Alarm as They Are Pushed Out in Drones," *The New York Times*, Nov. 24, 2017.

¹¹⁷ Dan De Luce & Robbie Gramer, "U.S. Diplomat's Resignation Signals Wider Exodus From State Department," *Foreign Policy* (citing resignation letter of Elizabeth Shackelford, former Foreign Service Officer for U.S. Mission to Somalia, based in Nairobi).

¹¹⁸ Roger Cohen, "The Desperation of Our Diplomats," *The New York Times*, July 28, 2017 (citing former Ambassador to Qatar Dana Shell Smith); Jack Corrigan, "The Hollowing-Out of the State Department Continues," *The Atlantic*, Feb. 11, 2018.

¹¹⁹ Roger Cohen, "The Desperation of Our Diplomats," *The New York Times*, July 28, 2017.

¹²⁰ Dexter Filkins, "Rex Tillerson at the Breaking Point," *The New Yorker*, Oct. 6, 2017.

¹²¹ Gardiner Harris, "Diplomats Sound the Alarm as They Are Pushed Out in Drones," *The New York Times*, Nov. 24, 2017.

¹²² *Id.*

¹²³ "Пристайко считает, что нужно упразднить должность спецпредставителя США по Украине [Pristayko believes that it is necessary to abolish the position of Special Representative to Ukraine]," LB.ua, Nov. 14, 2019, https://lb.ua/news/2019/11/14/442240_pristayko_schitaet_muzhno.html.

¹²⁴ *Id.*

¹²⁵ Jim Wyss, "Colombian diplomats spill the beans on 'destroyed' U.S. State Department in secret recording," *Miami Herald*, Nov. 21, 2019.

¹²⁶ *Id.*

CHAPTER 2

The Trump Administration's Record on Diplomatic Nominees: Repeated Vetting Failures, Poor Judgement

“Unqualified political appointees have been with us long before Donald Trump. As in so many areas, what he’s done is accelerated that problem and made it a lot worse.”

— *Former Deputy Secretary of State William Burns*¹²⁷

American diplomats are given tremendous responsibility by our government; with a few exceptions, they are in charge of all U.S. government employees in their host country—often numbering in the hundreds. Ambassadors are America’s face to the world; they represent the United States and are responsible for protecting and advancing our national interests with foreign governments, societies, and international organizations. It is for this reason that our nation’s founders saw fit to specify in the Constitution that, while presidents nominate ambassadors, they can only serve with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Senior Department officials oversee the execution of programs worth millions—and sometimes billions—of dollars. They lead skilled groups of professionals that have dedicated their careers to serving the American people. They help shape, and drive U.S. foreign policy. If these individuals do not have the temperament to manage a team of diverse employees, or the decorum to interact with officials in a foreign country, they should not be selected for the job. If they have offensive conduct, statements, or associations in their past, they should be disqualified from representing the United States.

Yet, too many of President Trump’s nominees for senior State Department positions and ambassadorial posts have shown themselves to be unequal to the task. Some have misled Congress during their nomination process; some have made statements that do not reflect American values; others have behaved in ways that do not befit a position of significant power and public trust. While it is true that every administration has its share of questionable appointments, the Trump administration’s choices have gone beyond the pale, jeopardizing the Department’s ability to safeguard our nation’s interests.

This chapter recounts an illustrative group of such nominations. These examples are by no means exhaustive, nor do they capture the full scope of the challenges to the proper stewardship of American

¹²⁷ George Packer, “The President Is Winning His War on American Institutions,” *The Atlantic*, Apr. 2020.

foreign policy that the Administration's nominees present. With each unfit nominee, the Administration sends a clear message: that responsible leadership, sound judgment, and experience are not a prerequisite for serving in a senior national security position; that career employees are not deserving of fair treatment; that diplomacy is not worthy of the best America has to offer.

Lowering the Bar

The Senate has a constitutionally-mandated role to consider presidential nominees for advice and consent.¹²⁸ The Senate's role is to ensure that presidential nominees are sufficiently qualified and suited for the positions to which they have been nominated. Ambassadors, for example, should "possess clearly demonstrated competence to perform the duties of a chief of mission."¹²⁹ While this and past administrations have often filled certain ambassadorships with individuals selected due to political affiliation, nominees should still meet certain minimum standards of qualification, character, and moral fitness.

The White House is supposed to serve as a gatekeeper to ensure that only qualified, experienced, and honest individuals have the honor of representing our nation abroad. Instead, the Trump administration has largely abdicated this responsibility and nominated individuals who would have been eliminated from consideration by previous White Houses and whom prior presidents would not have submitted to the Senate for advice and consent.¹³⁰

Either intentionally or negligently, the Trump administration has substantially lowered the entry requirements for foreign relations nominees. Some have submitted files to the Committee that are so rife with errors or omissions it appears they are not taking the process or the position seriously. Others have failed or refused to disclose details about their background, such as lawsuits and serious complaints, that bear on their fitness for Senate confirmation—despite the fact that reviewing details of a nominee's background is a key component of the nomination process. Others are nominated by the White House despite having made offensive and vicious public statements that have no place in our government, much less foreign diplomacy.

One Republican Senate office even sarcastically invited a nominee to "put on his tinfoil hat and visit our office with evidence for his salacious conspiracy theories and cuckoo allegations."¹³¹ While that particular nomination stalled in the Senate, other nominees have been confirmed by a Senate majority intent on putting President Trump's nominees in place, no matter the damage and cost. Many have continued to serve in senior Department posts, even after concerns about their past conduct or statements were raised during the nomination process.

¹²⁸ U.S. Constitution, Art. II, Sec. 2.

¹²⁹ Foreign Service Act of 1980, Section 304(a), Pub. L. No. 96-465, 94 Stat. 2071 (1980). The Act also recommends that, given these qualifications, "positions as chief of mission should normally be accorded to career members of the Service, though circumstance will warrant appointments from time to time of qualified individuals who are not career members of the Service," and "contributions to political campaigns should not be a factor in the appointment of an individual as a chief of mission." *Id.*

¹³⁰ See, e.g., Brett Samuels, "Trump says media is part of vetting his nominees: 'We save a lot of money that way,'" *The Hill*, Aug. 2, 2019; Evan Osnos, "Trump vs. the 'Deep State': How the Administration's loyalists are quietly reshaping American governance," *The New Yorker*, May 14, 2018. "To vet candidates, the Obama campaign had used a questionnaire with sixty-three queries about employment, finances, writings, and social-media posts. The Trump team cut the number of questions to twenty-five by dropping the requests for professional references and tax returns and removing items concerning loans, personal income, and real-estate holdings. The questionnaire was speckled with typos, and seemed carelessly put together. Robert Rizzo, a prominent lawyer who has helped with every transition since Bill Clinton took office, told *The New Yorker*, "They would call it 'the paperwork.' We'd say, 'Well, it takes months.' They'd say, 'Just to do paperwork?' I'd say, 'It has huge consequences if you do it wrong.'" *Id.*

¹³¹ Don Walton, "Sasse Office to Trump Ambassador Nominee: Bring Your Tinfoil Hat," *Lincoln Journal Star*, Feb. 6, 2018 (referring to Leandro Rizzuto, see later in this chapter).

These vetting failures have meant that under the Trump administration, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, particularly members and staff of the minority, have dedicated significantly more resources than in the past to ensuring that nominees meet certain minimum standards and do not jeopardize the reputation or security of the United States.

Misrepresenting Prior Experience

The nomination of Mina Chang to be an Assistant Administrator for Asia at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is a case study in how little vetting the Trump administration appears to do of its own senior officials. Chang, with scant development, management, or budget experience, was nominated to a position that oversees a billion-dollar portfolio and more than one thousand employees.¹³² In April 2019, while awaiting confirmation, Chang was appointed to serve in the State Department as a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Conflict and Stability Operations, a senior position just one level below those requiring Senate confirmation.¹³³

During the vetting process, Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff raised a number of questions about Chang's suitability for the USAID position, including whether her use of funds connected to a non-profit she had run was appropriate.¹³⁴ In addition, in November 2019, *NBC News* reported that Chang had embellished her resume with misleading claims about her professional background. For example, Chang had reportedly inflated her educational achievements and exaggerated the scope of her nonprofit's work.¹³⁵ She also claimed that she had held a position on a United Nations panel that did not exist, falsely claimed she had addressed both the Democratic and Republican national conventions, and implied she had testified before Congress when she had not.¹³⁶ Chang had also claimed that a *Time* magazine cover with her face on it was a result of recognition for her non-profit work, when in fact the cover was fake.¹³⁷

The White House is supposed to serve as a gatekeeper to ensure that only qualified, experienced, and honest individuals have the honor of representing our nation abroad.

Neither the Administration nor Chang responded to requests from the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations for documents and details about Chang's use of her non-profit's funds, but the Administration withdrew her nomination following those requests.¹³⁸ Six days after public reporting on her misrepresented credentials, Chang resigned from her Deputy Assistant Secretary position.¹³⁹ Yet, until her resignation, she was serving as a senior State Department official, reportedly with a top secret clearance that gave her access to sensitive intelligence, arguably making her vulnerable to blackmail by any foreign intelligence service that might have bothered to research her credentials.¹⁴⁰

¹³² Mina Chang, Nominee to be Assistant Administrator, United States Agency for International Development, PN2528, (115th Congress).

¹³³ Denise Natali, Assistant Secretary-Bureau of Conflict & Stabilization Operations, @CSOAsstSec, "I am happy to welcome Mina Chang as #CSO's Deputy Assistant Secretary. DAS Chang brings her expertise in foreign assistance, data science and emerging technologies to help CSO inform US policies, strategies, & programs in #conflictprevention & #stabilization.", <https://twitter.com/CSOAsstSec/status/1122988331627950080?s=20>, Apr. 29, 2019.

¹³⁴ Chang was the founder and CEO of Linking the World, a non-profit organization that claims to "create broad awareness of America's unique role in the world." Linking the World, "Advocacy" <https://www.linkingtheworld.org/advocacy> (last visited Mar. 4, 2020).

¹³⁵ Dan De Luce et al., "Senior Trump official embellished résumé, had face on fake Time cover: State Dept. official Mina Chang claimed to be a Harvard Business School 'alumna' who ran a nonprofit that worked in 40 countries," *NBC News*, Nov. 12, 2019.

¹³⁶ Dan De Luce et al., "Senior Trump official embellished résumé, had face on fake Time cover," *NBC News*, Nov. 12, 2019.

¹³⁷ *Id.*

¹³⁸ *Id.*

¹³⁹ Dan De Luce et al., "Senior Trump admin official Mina Chang resigns after embellishing résumé: Mina Chang resigned Monday, six days after an NBC News report about her resume inflation and hours after NBC asked her about newly discovered false claims," *NBC News*, Nov. 18, 2019.

¹⁴⁰ Reis Thebault, "Trump appointee accused of inflating résumé, faking a Time cover pushes back in resignation letter," *The Washington Post*, Nov. 18, 2019.

Misleading the Senate about Matters under Federal Investigation

The Administration withdrew the nomination of Kathleen Troia (K.T.) McFarland from the Senate after she appeared to mislead the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about her knowledge of the Trump transition team's contacts with Russian officials.¹⁴¹ McFarland had worked closely with former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, who pleaded guilty in December 2017 to lying to the FBI about his interactions with then-Russian ambassador, Sergey I. Kislyak.¹⁴² In response to a question by Senator Booker about whether McFarland had ever spoken with Flynn about Flynn's contacts with Kislyak, McFarland responded that she was "not aware of any of the issues or events described."¹⁴³

However, emails obtained by *The New York Times* in December 2017 indicated otherwise.¹⁴⁴ Further, Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election found that McFarland and Flynn discussed sanctions before the phone call, and that "they both understood that Flynn would relay a message to Kislyak in hopes of making sure the situation would not get out of hand."¹⁴⁵ In a public interview in 2020, McFarland further contradicted her statements to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when she said that she "talked to General Flynn before he had this phone call. I talked to him right afterwards. He told me what he was going to say. He told me what he said."¹⁴⁶

Offensive, Extremist, and Racist Actions

A number of Trump administration nominees have been nominated for ambassadorships despite a history of making statements that, in previous administrations, would serve as an automatic disqualifier for any senior diplomatic post. Nonetheless, several such nominees have been confirmed over Democratic objections.

Prior to being nominated to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Barbados, Leandro Rizzuto Jr., made a number of statements advancing fringe conspiracy theories and attacking President Trump's political opponents.¹⁴⁷ During the 2016 presidential campaign, Rizzuto used his Twitter account to launch and amplify vicious and unfounded attacks on Trump's rivals, including insults against their family members and sexist comments about spouses.¹⁴⁸ Some of his false and derogatory claims were against U.S. Senators, including some who sit on the Committee responsible for reviewing his nomination.¹⁴⁹ First nominated in January 2018, Mr. Rizzuto's nomination did not move forward due to bipartisan opposition. The Administration re-nominated him in 2019; his nomination was sent back twice to the White House by the

¹⁴¹ Kathleen Troia McFarland, Nominee for Ambassador to Singapore, PN605 (115th Congress), PN1437 (115th Congress), (nominated, June 15, 2017, withdrawn, Feb. 5, 2018).

¹⁴² Michael D. Shear & Adam Goldman, "Michael Flynn Pleads Guilty to Lying to the F.B.I. and Will Cooperate With Russia Inquiry," *The New York Times*, Dec. 1, 2017. As of the time of publication, the state of the case against Mr. Flynn was the subject of ongoing litigation. See, e.g., Charlie Savage, "Appeals Court Panel Orders End to Michael Flynn Case," *The New York Times*, June 24, 2020.

¹⁴³ Nomination Hearing of Kathleen Troia McFarland, Responses to Additional Questions for the Record submitted by Senator Booker, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, July 20, 2017, Nomination Hearings of the 115th Congress-1st Session, S. Hrg. 115-413 at 486.

¹⁴⁴ Gardiner Harris, "K.T. McFarland Withdraws Her Nomination to Be Ambassador to Singapore," *The New York Times* Feb. 2, 2018.

¹⁴⁵ Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller, *Report on the Investigation into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election*, Vol. I, at 167, 170 (Mar. 2019).

¹⁴⁶ K.T. McFarland, Interview, "The Story with Martha MacCallum," *Fox News*, May 29, 2020. The Committee provided McFarland numerous opportunities to correct the record and her statements, but she refused to do so.

¹⁴⁷ Nathan McDermott & Andrew Kaczynski, "Trump ambassador nominee promoted fringe conspiracy theories on Twitter," *CNN*, Feb. 5, 2018; Leandro Rizzuto, Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Barbados, PN1379 (115th Congress), PN136 (116th Congress).

¹⁴⁸ Nathan McDermott & Andrew Kaczynski, "Trump ambassador nominee promoted fringe conspiracy theories on Twitter," *CNN*, Feb. 5, 2018.

¹⁴⁹ *Id.*

Senate.¹⁵⁰ The Administration did not give up, however. In May 2020, the Administration appointed him as the most senior official at the U.S. Consulate in Bermuda, clearly circumventing the Senate.¹⁵¹

Kyle McCarter, who was confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Kenya in January 2019, tweeted on Election Night 2016, “Hillary for prison. No, really!”¹⁵² At his confirmation hearing, when asked about the tweet, he replied, “you know, there is a hype in an election that we make—you know, and we question. And I did pose the question. And perhaps that was not called for, but I will tell you, I did pose the question.”¹⁵³ Pressed further, McCarter said, “perhaps it is one of those tweets that you would like to reel in, but you cannot. And that was one of those.” As Ambassador, McCarter continued his offensive social media posts, tweeting about the “Wuhan flu,” a racially and ethnically stigmatizing term for the COVID-19 pandemic pushed by the Trump administration, drawing fierce criticism and raising concerns about the potential to further inflame already documented rising racial tension and discrimination against Asians in Kenya.¹⁵⁴

Before being confirmed as U.S. Ambassador to Slovenia, Lynda Blanchard shared articles on Facebook that made false claims about Democratic politicians.¹⁵⁵ She once shared an article titled, “The Clinton ‘Body Count’ expands – 5 Mysterious deaths in the Last 6 Weeks.”¹⁵⁶ On Election Day 2016, Blanchard posted on Facebook, “May God our Father paint this country red with the Blood of Jesus!”¹⁵⁷

President Trump’s nominees have also attempted to conceal their participation in past racist actions. In 1994, Trump’s nominee for Ambassador to Norway, Mark Burkhalter, was involved in the creation of a racist campaign flyer that distorted a photograph of a Black politician to darken some of his features, give him a prominent afro, make his lips larger, and warp one of his eyes.¹⁵⁸ According to court filings, Burkhalter delivered the materials for the flyer, directed that it be attributed to a fake political action committee with a fake mailing address, authorized payment for some of its printing costs, and approved its release.¹⁵⁹ Burkhalter was sued for libel and, after nearly a year of court proceedings, settled the lawsuit for a monetary payment and signed a letter of admission taking “full responsibility” for the flyer.¹⁶⁰ As a result of his involvement with the flyer, Burkhalter faced charges from the Georgia

A number of Trump administration nominees have been nominated for ambassadorships despite a history of making statements that, in previous administrations, would serve as an automatic disqualifier for any senior diplomatic post.

¹⁵⁰ Leandro Rizzuto, Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Barbados, PN1379 (115th Congress), PN136 (116th Congress). His nomination was most recently returned in January 2020.

¹⁵¹ Morgan Ortigas, Spokesperson, U.S. Department of State, “Lee Rizzuto To Become Principal Officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Bermuda,” May 27, 2020; Zachary Cohen & Andrew Kaczynski, “Trump administration taps failed ambassador nominee who spread fringe conspiracies for diplomatic post,” *CNN*, May 27, 2020.

¹⁵² “Conservative Nominee Tapped for Post in Kenya Gets Grilling from Dems,” *The Charleston Chronicle*, Aug. 14, 2018.

¹⁵³ Kyle McCarter, *Hearing on Nominations*, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 18, 2018.

¹⁵⁴ Kyle McCarter, @USAmbKenya, “Only a fraction of the wananchi are wearing masks & social distancing! None of us know the magnitude of this Wuhan flu but we must take basic known wise precautions. It is only for a short time. We will come back to Prosperity & a culture of Kenya closeness soon. #USAMaraki,” <https://twitter.com/USAmbKenya/status/1251884877454151688>; “U.S. ambassador in Kenya ignites outrage over virus criticism,” *The New York Times*, Apr. 20, 2020; “Letter from Africa: The spread of coronavirus prejudice in Kenya,” *BBC News*, Mar. 9, 2020.

¹⁵⁵ Emily R. Siegel et al., “Donors to the Trump inaugural committee got ambassador nominations. But are they qualified?” *NBC News*, April 3, 2019.

¹⁵⁶ Emily R. Siegel et al., “Donors to the Trump inaugural committee got ambassador nominations. But are they qualified?” *NBC News*, April 3, 2019.

¹⁵⁷ *Id.*

¹⁵⁸ Conor Finnegan, “Trump ambassador nominee must withdraw over role in ‘racist’ flyer, Democrat demands,” *ABC News*, July 3, 2020.

¹⁵⁹ John Hudson, “Trump’s pick for ambassador involved in racist smear against black politician,” *The Washington Post*, July 2, 2020.

¹⁶⁰ Jennifer Hansler, “Top Democrat urges White House to withdraw ambassador pick involved in racist ad targeting Black politician,” *CNN*, July 3, 2020.

State Ethics Commission; those proceedings also lasted nearly a year and resulted in Burkhalter signing a consent order that he personally authorized payment for the flyer, failed to properly disclose the payment, and agreed that he violated Georgia law and would pay a civil penalty.¹⁶¹ Burkhalter's original conduct was reprehensible, but he further demonstrated his lack of fitness to serve as an ambassador by failing to disclose the lawsuit and ethics charges to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.¹⁶²

Other Inappropriate Conduct

Nominees who have demonstrated conduct that falls far short of the minimum standards to be a U.S. diplomat have nonetheless received ambassadorial nominations. For instance, Christine Toretti, nominated in May 2018 to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Malta, had been subject to a restraining order after she left a bullet-riddled target sheet on an acquaintance's chair.¹⁶³ Although the President re-nominated her in 2019, he did not nominate her again in 2020.¹⁶⁴

Conclusion

These are but a few examples of the poorly-vetted, unqualified, and unfit political nominees that President Trump has submitted to the Senate. There are several more whose issues never became public, or who withdrew rather than answer additional questions. Few, if any, of these individuals should be placed in a position of public trust with regards to our nation's security in this or any administration.

Notably, however, the President has continued to re-nominate many of these nominees despite serious objections from both Democratic and Republican Senators—only further contributing to vacancies in Senate-confirmed officials for months on end. In some cases, those who are confirmed but ill-suited for management contribute to a work environment that has driven away talented and dedicated staff, putting the well-being of the Department's workforce at risk.¹⁶⁵

When the Trump administration fails to vet its nominees properly or intentionally ignores red flags, the American people pay the price. When individuals with stained records project our national image abroad, our country is worse off. And when our national security is entrusted to those who—through incompetence and inexperience—cannot protect it, our adversaries benefit.

¹⁶¹ Letter from Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Robert Menendez to White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, July 2, 2020.

¹⁶² As of the publication of this report, Mr. Burkhalter's nomination was still pending before the Committee.

¹⁶³ Patrick Finley, "Tucson doctor gets restraining order against Olson's ex-wife," *Arizona Daily Star*, Nov. 6, 2008; Christine J. Toretti, Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Malta, PN2032 (115th Congress), PN145 (116th Congress).

¹⁶⁴ Christine J. Toretti, Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Malta, PN2032 (115th Congress), PN145 (116th Congress).

¹⁶⁵ For example, the Senate-confirmed Chief of Protocol, Sean Lawler, resigned following serious allegations of misconduct, which included yelling, carrying a whip around the office, and bullying subordinates. "Trump's suspended protocol chief would 'scream,' use profanity, and berate employees, sources say," *CNN*, June 26, 2019; Jennifer Jacobs & Daniel Flatley, "Trump's Protocol Chief Is Quitting Just Before the G-20 Summit," *Bloomberg*, June 25, 2019.

CHAPTER 3

**A Culture of Fear and Mistrust:
Attacks on Career Employees**

“If this administration is going to define disagreement as disloyalty, then it is headed toward a ruinous outcome. It will inevitably lead to the death of expertise...”

— *Ambassador Nancy McEldowney, Retired Director,
Foreign Service Institute*¹⁶⁶

The Department of State's Foreign Service and Civil Service officers take an oath to support and defend the Constitution and to “well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office” that they are entering.¹⁶⁷ These public servants are non-partisan: they execute the policies of both Democratic and Republican administrations with equal force and to the best of their abilities. It is this core characteristic that ensures they serve the mission, and the nation, not any one party or president.

In return, these career public servants are supposed to receive “equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment in employment...without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, marital status, or sexual orientation.”¹⁶⁸ These factors are to play no role in personnel decisions, which should be based solely on merit.¹⁶⁹ But in the era of President Trump, who has attacked career employees by name, there have been credible reports of political targeting and retaliation against career State Department employees. State Department documents have revealed that, as early as April 2017, senior White House and State Department officials had tagged some Department employees as “leaker,” “troublemaker,” and “turncoat.”¹⁷⁰

Although some discriminatory and retaliatory measures have occurred by political appointees in lower-level leadership positions, a toxic environment can only flourish when it reflects the culture set at the top. For example, a year-long State Department Inspector General (OIG) investigation found that senior political appointees had also accused employees of being “Obama holdovers,” “traitors,” and “disloyal” based on

¹⁶⁶ Charles Clark, “Two Officials, Two Agencies, Two Exits with Harsh Words for Trump Team,” *Government Executive*, Aug. 1, 2017.

¹⁶⁷ 5 U.S.C. § 3331.

¹⁶⁸ 3 FAM 1511.1; *see also* 3 FAM 2211.

¹⁶⁹ *See* 3 FAM 1212.

¹⁷⁰ Nahal Toosi, “Emails Reveal Conservative Alarm Over ‘Obama holdovers’ in Trump Administration,” *Politico*, March 15, 2018.

their perceived political views, and retaliated against them.¹⁷¹ A subsequent OIG report found that senior political appointees in the Secretary's office removed a career expert before her posting was complete, in part based on perceptions about her political views and ethnic origin.¹⁷² Additional credible and detailed complaints alleged that employees with specialized skills and years of expertise were reassigned or given mundane tasks, such as reviewing and responding to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, in an effort to sideline them or cut them out from work on specific portfolios.¹⁷³

These pernicious practices, compounded with a lack of accountability, have had damaging consequences. Employees—many of them with years of valuable service and experience—have left the Department because they found the work environment too hostile. Others have sought refuge in lower-profile jobs where they can avoid political fights and the attention of political appointees.¹⁷⁴

The State Department's Inspector General until May 2020, Steven Linick, was an independent and nonpartisan senior career official whose mandate was to hold the Department and the Secretary accountable for any misconduct.¹⁷⁵ He oversaw lengthy investigations into political retaliation of career employees and had a reputation for being tough on the prior administration. At the time of his firing, which came the urging of Secretary Pompeo, he was leading an investigation into the potential misuse of resources by the Secretary.¹⁷⁶ Coming amid the removals of five other inspectors general in a span of six weeks, Linick's firing further demonstrated the Trump administration's contempt for, and distrust of, those committed to carrying out their responsibilities without regard to politics.¹⁷⁷ In an unusual move, Linick has been replaced by Stephen Akard, a Trump administration political appointee, who continues to also serve in his role as head of the Office of Foreign Missions.¹⁷⁸

The Administration's Disdain and Distrust of Career Public Servants

President Trump came into office distrustful of career professionals at the Department of State, whom he termed "Deep State" and believed were against him, simply because they had worked to execute the policies of the previous administration.¹⁷⁹

The idea of "loyalists" who needed to be "purged" from federal government began early in the Trump administration, and both of President Trump's Secretaries of State looked the other way when career employees alleged that political calculations were affecting personnel decisions.¹⁸⁰ Influential Republicans outside the Administration and conservative media promoted the narrative that "holdovers" must be "purged" and that

¹⁷¹ U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs*, at 11 (Aug. 2019).

¹⁷² U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices Involving the Office of the Secretary*, at 9 (Nov. 2019).

¹⁷³ See, e.g., Elise Labott, "Exclusive: Frustrated State Department employees hire attorneys, charging 'political retribution,'" *CNN*, May 28, 2018; U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices Involving the Office of the Secretary* (Nov. 2019).

¹⁷⁴ Michael Crowley et al., "How the State Dept.'s Dissenters Incited a Revolt, Then a Rallying Cry," *The New York Times*, Nov. 9, 2019.

¹⁷⁵ The Inspector General is an independent and non-partisan investigation arm of the State Department.

¹⁷⁶ Michelle Kelemen, "Ex-State Department Inspector General Says He Was Given No Valid Reason When Fired," *NPR*, June 10, 2020.

¹⁷⁷ Melissa Quinn, "The internal watchdogs Trump has fired or replaced," *CBS News*, May 19, 2020.

¹⁷⁸ Deirdre Shesgreen, "'Lapdog' or watchdog? The State Department's new inspector general under fire for conflicts of interest, inexperience," *USA Today*, June 1, 2020.

¹⁷⁹ See, e.g., Julie Hirschfeld Davis, "Rumblings of a 'Deep State' Undermining Trump? It Was Once a Foreign Concept," *The New York Times*, Mar. 6, 2017.

¹⁸⁰ For example, the President's allies, including Newt Gingrich, former Speaker of the House and spouse to the Ambassador to the Holy See, encouraged him to "purge" the "Obama loyalists" out of the Department and reduce the number of "bureaucrats" whose only presumed goal was to hold up the Trump administration's agenda. See, e.g., Julie Hirschfeld Davis, "Rumblings of a 'Deep State' Undermining Trump? It Was Once a Foreign Concept," *The New York Times*, Mar. 6, 2017. (quoting Newt Gingrich, "What President Trump is discovering is that he has a huge, huge problem underneath him, and I think he's shocked that the system is as hostile as it is.")

the Administration should focus on ousting “Obama/Clinton loyalists.”¹⁸¹ Trump’s “deep state” rhetoric and attacks on career employees emboldened political appointees throughout the Department to follow through.

As retired Ambassador Ronald Neumann noted, the politicization of the State Department represents a deliberate destruction “based on the belief that the federal government is hostile and now you have to put in loyal people across the board in senior positions to control the bastards – the career bureaucrats.”¹⁸²

The irony, of course, is that, in the words of a former Assistant Secretary, “[i]t’s not in [career employees’] DNA” to disclose State Department matters.¹⁸³ Despite what many in Congress and the public see as a series of chaotic and unwise foreign policy decisions, the Department’s career employees have continued to fulfill the Department’s mission and do their jobs.

Inspector General Finds “Hostile Treatment” and “Unmerited Accusations of Disloyalty”

Less than two months after Secretary Pompeo was confirmed, it was reported that Mari Stull, a senior advisor in the International Organization Affairs (IO) Bureau, was vetting career Department employees based on their political affiliation and personal views, and compiling a “loyalty list” of those she believed met her ideological litmus test.¹⁸⁴

According to employees, Stull reviewed social media pages of career personnel for “ideological deviations” from President Trump’s agenda and researched their work for previous administrations.¹⁸⁵ Those determined untrustworthy were sidelined and kept out of high-level meetings, creating a “level of chaos and dysfunction” that some officials had never before observed in their long careers.¹⁸⁶

Following numerous congressional inquiries, the State Department’s Office of the Inspector General interviewed more than 40 individuals, including current and former senior Department officials, such as then-Deputy Secretary John Sullivan, then-Acting Director General for the Foreign Service William Todd, and then-Under Secretary for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon, about the allegations of political retaliation in the IO Bureau.¹⁸⁷

In August 2019, after a 13-month investigation, the OIG concluded there had been “disrespectful and hostile treatment of employees, accusations against and harassment of career employees premised on claims that they were ‘disloyal’ based on their perceived political views, and retaliation.”¹⁸⁸ According to the OIG’s report, “[n]umerous employees told OIG that Assistant Secretary [of the IO bureau, Kevin] Moley and Ms. Stull made inappropriate accusations of disloyalty and made positive or negative comments about employees based on perceived political views.”¹⁸⁹ Stull, in particular, referred to employees as “Obama

¹⁸¹ Sean Hannity “Trump Must Purge Deep-State Bureaucrats Now,” *Fox News*, Mar. 10, 2017; Nahal Toosi, “Emails reveal conservative alarm over ‘Obama holdovers’ in Trump administration,” *Politico*, Mar. 15, 2018.

¹⁸² George Packer, “The President Is Winning His War on American Institutions,” *The Atlantic*, Apr. 2020.

¹⁸³ *Id.*

¹⁸⁴ Colum Lynch & Robbie Gramer, “Trump Appointee Compiles Loyalty Lists of U.S. Employees at U.N., State,” *Foreign Policy*, June 13, 2018.

¹⁸⁵ *Id.*

¹⁸⁶ *Id.*

¹⁸⁷ U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs*, at 1 (Aug. 2019).

¹⁸⁸ *Id.* at Highlights.

¹⁸⁹ *Id.* at 8.

holdovers,” “traitors,” part of the “Deep State,” and “disloyal.”¹⁹⁰ Moreover, Assistant Secretary Moley and most of the other senior officials in the bureau did nothing to address Stull’s reprehensible behavior, with the OIG finding “significant evidence of systemic deficiencies in leadership and management relating to the treatment of career employees.”¹⁹¹

The OIG’s investigation found a culture of hostility and disrespect had permeated the bureau. The Assistant Secretary and Stull “frequently berated employees,” and engaged in unprofessional behavior, especially toward junior staff.¹⁹² Employees reported to senior officials that Moley and Stull “cultivated” a “negative and ‘vindictive’ environment.”¹⁹³ According to one employee, “working with Stull involved ‘six to eight hostile interactions per day.’”¹⁹⁴

Even after Department leadership expressed concerns to Assistant Secretary Moley about his conduct and the Department Legal Adviser “counseled” Stull, their treatment of employees did not improve.¹⁹⁵ The environment Stull and Assistant Secretary Moley fostered in the IO Bureau took a toll on employees. Between March 2018 and August 2019, approximately 50 employees—more than 15 percent of the total—left the bureau, with many citing its “poor leadership” as the reason for their exit.¹⁹⁶

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Career Employee’s Removal Linked to Perceived National Origin and Political Views

IO Bureau employees were not the only ones in the Department to experience political targeting and retaliation. In early 2018, reports emerged that employees in the Secretary of State’s Office had been subject to retaliation, leading to congressional inquiries and, in response, a separate investigation by the OIG. In November 2019, the OIG concluded that an employee in the Secretary of State’s office had been improperly pushed out based on her national origin and perceptions about her political affiliation.¹⁹⁷

The career State Department employee had started working in the Secretary of State’s Office in July 2016, on a fixed one-year detail from her home office. In March 2017, a conservative website published an article with a series of false claims about her prior work history and affiliations, referring to her as an “Obama aide” who had “burrowed” in the Department and was now “running Tehran policy.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁰ *Id.*

¹⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices in the Bureau of International Affairs*, at 13, 19.

¹⁹² *Id.* at 6.

¹⁹³ *Id.*

¹⁹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁹⁵ *Id.* at 11, 13.

¹⁹⁶ *Id.* at 13.

¹⁹⁷ U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices Involving the Office of the Secretary*, at 10-13 (Nov. 2019). The OIG also examined other allegations by four other employees in other bureaus, but was unable to conclusively determine whether inappropriate action had occurred in two instances, in part because the OIG was “unable to obtain essential information from key decisionmakers.” *Id.* at Highlights.

¹⁹⁸ *Id.* at 5

Shortly after the article was published, a White House staffer and senior Department political appointees began exchanging emails about the employee.¹⁹⁹ One political appointee falsely claimed that the employee had been “born in Iran” and, citing hearsay, that she had “cried when the president won.”²⁰⁰ One appointee forwarded the email chain to Brian Hook, then the Director of Policy Planning under Secretary Tillerson, who responded that the information was “helpful” and that “I’ve emailed friends who tracked the Iran deal for intel on her and waiting to hear back.”²⁰¹ Another senior official, Edward Lacey, who was Hook’s deputy and a career official, subsequently wrote to Hook that:

With few exceptions – notably, me – your immediate predecessors handpicked all of the [Policy Planning] staff – including the career civil servants on detail to us ([the employee] being one of them). Their picks, without exception, were Obama/Clinton loyalists not at all supportive of President Trump’s foreign policy agenda. I succeeded in ousting five whose details expired before your arrival.²⁰²

Not long after Lacey’s email, the employee was pushed out of the Secretary’s office. The OIG’s investigation determined that assumptions by Administration political appointees—which they did not attempt to verify—about the career employee’s perceived political opinions, prior work for the Obama administration (as a career employee), and (incorrect) perceptions about her national origin, “played at least some role” in her early ouster.²⁰³ The OIG concluded that senior political appointees at the Department used those factors to cast doubt on her loyalty to the United States and the Trump administration’s agenda, and that Hook ultimately made the decision to end the employee’s detail early.²⁰⁴ It also found that Hook did not respond to concerning allegations by the employee that, as a result of the false media coverage, she had received threats and feared for her safety.²⁰⁵ Hook offered differing rationales for the early dismissal, which the OIG did not find convincing.²⁰⁶

The OIG did not establish whether Hook took any actions against other career employees. But in April 2017, after a meeting with a staff member on the National Security Council, Derek Harvey, Hook emailed himself a list of notes about career employees, which included notations like “a leaker and a troublemaker” and a “turncoat” next to employee names.²⁰⁷

Both Hook and Secretary Pompeo objected to the OIG report’s conclusions. Hook took the unusual step of writing a rebuttal that he insisted be included in the final OIG report.²⁰⁸ Secretary Pompeo demanded that IG Linick request an investigation into whether information in a *Daily Beast* article on the draft report had leaked from Linick’s office (the report had also been circulated among more than 20 people inside the Department for weeks). A subsequent investigation by the Department of Defense’s Criminal Investigative Service “found no information indicating that any DOS OIG employee provided information from the report to *The Daily Beast* prior to the publication of its article.”²⁰⁹

¹⁹⁹ *Id.* at 5.

²⁰⁰ *Id.* at 6. As the OIG noted, the employee was in fact born in the United States.

²⁰¹ *Id.* at 6.

²⁰² *Id.* at 7.

²⁰³ *Id.* at 10.

²⁰⁴ *Id.* at 9-13.

²⁰⁵ *Id.* at 8.

²⁰⁶ *Id.* at 11.

²⁰⁷ *Id.* at 23; Nahal Toosi, “Emails reveal conservative alarm over ‘Obama holdovers’ in Trump administration,” *Politico*, Mar. 15, 2018. Harvey later went to work for Congressman Devin Nunes on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

²⁰⁸ U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices Involving the Office of the Secretary*, at 42.

²⁰⁹ U.S. Department of Defense Inspector General, *Memorandum of Findings*, at 2 (Mar. 17, 2020).

Department Leadership's Lack of Response to Political Retaliation

In the time since the allegations of political retaliation became public, the Department has largely ignored them or failed to respond.²¹⁰ The Department refused for nearly two years to provide documents to congressional committees seeking information about allegations of retaliation, and failed to take any action against senior officials who engaged in retaliation against career employees.²¹¹

Ambassador Michael McKinley, who served as a senior advisor to Secretary Pompeo until October 2019, said that after the release of the August OIG report, “[i]t became apparent ... that the Department would not be taking the key corrective actions that many employees had anticipated.”²¹² In an internal meeting with Department employees, Under Secretary for Political Affairs David Hale and then-Deputy Secretary John Sullivan acknowledged that they could have responded to the retaliation allegations earlier.²¹³

In the end, those who engaged in retaliation escaped official accountability. Even after the OIG’s heavily critical August 2019 report, Department leadership took no immediate action: Assistant Secretary Moley remained in his leadership position without consequences, until he retired in late November 2019.²¹⁴ Mari Stull left the Department in December 2018, without being interviewed by the OIG.²¹⁵ Lacey retired before the completion of the investigation into retaliation in the Secretary’s office.²¹⁶ And Brian Hook kept his job as special representative for Iran and senior advisor to the Secretary.

In fact, the only person to suffer career consequences since the OIG investigations was the Inspector General himself, whom President Trump fired at the urging of Secretary Pompeo.²¹⁷ The message to the Department’s employees is clear: wrongdoing by political appointees will not be punished, but those who seek to reveal that wrongdoing should watch their backs.

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²¹⁰ The Department failed to implement an action plan within 60 days, as called for in the August 2019 OIG report. Matthew Lee, “US diplomat accused of political retribution steps down,” *AP*, Oct. 18, 2019. In response to the November 2019 OIG report, the Department only responded to the OIG’s findings regarding one of five employees. Although the OIG’s findings were inconclusive, that was due in part due to evasive answers by political appointees, and in at least one instance, the OIG noted that there was “little information about the underlying rationale” for a distinguished 30-year career employee’s reassignment. U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices Involving the Office of the Secretary*, at 20, 27.

²¹¹ The Department agreed to develop a corrective action plan to address “leadership and management deficiencies” in the IO Bureau, but Assistant Secretary Moley retired before the plan was implemented. See U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs*, at 20; Matthew Lee, “US diplomat accused of political retribution steps down,” *AP*, Oct. 18, 2019.

²¹² Michael McKinley, Deposition before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, House Committee on Oversight and Reform, and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Oct. 16, 2019, at 21.

²¹³ Colum Lynch & Robbie Gramer, “State Department Failed to Shield its Diplomats from Political Reprisals, Officials Concede,” *Foreign Policy*, Sept. 3, 2019.

²¹⁴ Matthew Lee, “US diplomat accused of political retribution steps down,” *AP*, Oct. 18, 2019; Colum Lynch & Robbie Gramer, “State Department Failed to Shield its Diplomats from Political Reprisals, Officials Concede,” *Foreign Policy*, Sept. 3, 2019. Senior Department officials claimed that only the President could fire Moley, despite his clear violations of Department leadership and management policies.

²¹⁵ U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs*, at 2. Stull is now employed at an entity under the umbrella of the Organization of American States—an agency not directly part of the U.S. government, but that likely required State Department support to obtain the position. There are questions about how Stull obtained this employment despite the OIG’s findings against her from her time at the State Department. See Letter from Banking Member Menendez to Deputy Secretary Steve Biegun and Under Secretary for Political Affairs David Hale, Mar. 27, 2020.

²¹⁶ U.S. Department of State, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Allegations of Politicized and Other Improper Personnel Practices Involving the Office of the Secretary*, at 4.

²¹⁷ Catie Edmondson and Michael D. Shear, “Trump Ousted State Dept. Watchdog at Pompeo’s Urging; Democrats Open Inquiry,” *The New York Times*, May 16, 2020 (updated May 19, 2020).

Political Attacks on Nonpartisan Public Servants

Attacks on State Department public servants gained a further unwelcome spotlight during the impeachment inquiry into President Trump, in which several career employees testified. Career officials, who had served across Democratic and Republican administrations alike, suddenly found themselves under a frenzy of attacks as conservative media outlets—and senior administration officials, including the President—referred to them as “radical unelected bureaucrats” and “Never Trumpers.”²¹⁸

Senior Department leadership, including Secretary Pompeo, remained silent in the face of these attacks, even as President Trump personally attacked some of the Department’s most distinguished career officials, including Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch, Ambassador Bill Taylor, and Deputy Assistant Secretary George Kent.²¹⁹

Secretary Pompeo also declined to defend Ambassador Yovanovitch when, months earlier, she was the subject of several false smears by a conservative columnist and others: that she was a disloyal “Obama holdover,” working with George Soros to harm President Trump’s campaign and bolster Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election.²²⁰ The false accusations were refuted and dismissed by her colleagues, including then-Deputy Secretary Sullivan and Under Secretary David Hale, who went as far as to say no one in the Department thought the allegations against Ambassador Yovanovitch were credible.²²¹ Yet Secretary Pompeo never said a public word in support of one of his senior-most female ambassadors, who had served the Department more than three decades, including in several hardship posts.²²²

Senior leadership also rebuffed repeated attempts by Ambassador Yovanovitch and other Department officials to issue a statement defending her against the false claims.²²³ It was later revealed that Secretary Pompeo received a large file of disinformation from Rudy Giuliani that contained additional false smears against Ambassador Yovanovitch and other Department employees.²²⁴ Secretary Pompeo then instructed his senior officials to review the disinformation packet, which was eventually referred to the OIG.²²⁵

Before impeachment, career employees had already suffered three years of mistreatment at the hands of senior leadership and political appointees at the Department. Yet, the impeachment inquiry demonstrated both a stunning culmination and a new low in the Administration’s attacks against career employees, exacerbating an “atmosphere of unease and mistrust” at the Department.²²⁶ The Administration’s response to the testimony of diplomats in the impeachment inquiry displayed its contempt for the very notion of a non-partisan, career diplomatic service. It also served as a warning: the President and his administration would viciously attack any career official who reports or testifies about such wrongdoing, thereby further undermining the rule of law.

²¹⁸ Chandelis Duster, et al., “Trump lashes out at State Department employee ahead of public testimony,” *CNN*, Nov. 17, 2019; Steve Benen, “White House blasts Trump-appointed ‘radical unelected bureaucrats,’” *MSNBC*, Oct. 23, 2019; John Hudson & Carol Morells, “Bill Taylor Spent Years Fighting Corruption in Ukraine. His Last Four Months Under Trump were the ‘Antithesis’ of That,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 23, 2019].

²¹⁹ Jennifer Hansler, “Pompeo declines to defend diplomats attacked by Trump,” *CNN*, November 18, 2019; Rebecca Shahad, “Trump lashes out at Yovanovitch on Twitter during hearing,” *CNBC*, Nov. 15, 2019; Lisa Rein, “Career federal employees are the protagonists in the impeachment drama — at risk to themselves,” *The Washington Post*, Nov. 12, 2019; Yaron Steinbuch, “Trump attacks George Kent and William Taylor for testimony, despite ‘not watching’ hearings,” *NY Post*, Nov. 14, 2019.

²²⁰ Marie “Masha” Yovanovitch, Deposition before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, House Committee on Oversight and Reform, and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs (Joint House Committees), Oct. 11, 2019, at 61-64; Catherine Croft, Deposition before the Joint House Committees, Oct. 30, 2019, at 14-15; The Trump-Ukraine Impeachment Inquiry Report, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (Dec. 2019), at 43-44.

²²¹ David M. Hale, Deposition before the Joint House Committees, Nov. 6, 2019, at 25; John Sullivan, Nominee to be Ambassador to Russia, Testimony, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing, Oct. 30, 2019.

²²² Jennifer Hansler, “Pompeo declines to defend diplomats attacked by Trump,” *CNN*, November 18, 2019.

²²³ McKinley Deposition at 22, Hale Deposition at 26-27, Yovanovitch Deposition at 62-64.

²²⁴ Kenneth Vogel, “Giuliani Provides Details of What Trump Knew About Ambassador’s Removal,” *The New York Times*, Dec. 16, 2019.

²²⁵ William Cummings et al., “Mysterious ‘packet of Ukraine disinformation arrives on Capitol Hill amid Trump impeachment inquiry,” *USA Today*, Oct. 2, 2019.

²²⁶ Robbte Gramer et al., “Fear and Loathing at Pompeo’s State Department,” *Foreign Policy*, Nov. 1, 2019.

Conclusion

The attacks on career employees threaten more than just a single bureau's effectiveness. They undermine a core tenet of public service: non-partisanship. Public servants advance the mission of the agency that employs them. They seek to protect and secure the interests of the American people, and above all, they serve to uphold the Constitution. Politically-motivated attacks on career public servants do not advance the security of the United States or the American people; they only threaten to further divide and erode confidence in the critical work carried out by the Department and its employees. Those that do not stand up and defend the non-partisan public service do a great disservice to the country.

Career public servants should never be subjected to political targeting or other inappropriate or unlawful personnel practices. Secretary Pompeo's so-called "ethos" statement, which hangs in the lobby of the State Department, includes principles such as serving with "unfailing professionalism," acting with "uncompromising personal and professional integrity," taking "ownership of and responsibility for my actions and decisions" and showing "unstinting respect in word and deed for my colleagues."²²⁷ Yet, time and again, the President, Secretary Pompeo, and the senior political leadership of the Department have acted with contempt towards the Department's career employees.

²²⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Professional Ethos," <https://www.state.gov/about/professional-ethos> (last visited July 15, 2020).

CHAPTER 4

A Crisis of Morale

“[The] prevailing mood is low and getting lower, if it can.”

– *Thomas R. Pickering, seven-time U.S. ambassador, including to Russia and the UN, under six presidents from both parties*²²⁸

The previous chapters have illustrated how extended vacancies, an exodus of expertise, an influx of unqualified nominees, and unaddressed reports of retaliation against career employees have damaged the State Department. It should therefore come as no surprise that morale and confidence in the Department’s leadership has dropped precipitously since the Trump administration took office in 2017. Employees and former officials have reported that the Administration’s “stinging disrespect” for the Department’s diplomatic work has driven away experienced and talented staff, and that morale is “plunging ... to its lowest level in decades.”²²⁹

To quantify the effect of these developments on morale, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Democratic staff reviewed data from employee surveys collected annually by the federal government. Responses to the annual Employee Viewpoint Survey (EVS) are intended to measure “employees’ perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions characteristic of successful organizations are present in their agencies.”²³⁰

The results reveal a steady and significant deterioration of morale, effectiveness, and leadership over the past three years—with particularly precipitous declines in several offices and bureaus. Throughout the Department, there are serious concerns that coercive partisanship and prohibited personnel practices have run amok, coupled with a starkly declining confidence in senior leadership, and doubts about the effectiveness of Department operations.

²²⁸ Karen DeYoung et al., “Demoralized State Department personnel question Pompeo’s role in Ukraine crisis,” *The Washington Post*, Oct. 7, 2019.

²²⁹ Dan De Luce & Robbie Gramer, “U.S. Diplomat’s Resignation Signals Wider Exodus from State Department: One diplomat’s stinging resignation letter offers a glimpse into declining morale at the State Department under Trump,” *Foreign Policy*, Dec. 9, 2017; William J. Burns, “The Lost Art of American Diplomacy,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2019.

²³⁰ Office of Personnel Management, About, <https://www.opm.gov/fevs/about/> (last visited June 25, 2020).

EVS surveys are meant, among other things, to serve as a tool to provide agency heads insight into where improvements are needed. The Survey includes responses from employees from May to July 2019. U.S. Department of State, Resources – Bureau of Global Talent Management (Federal Viewpoint Surveys), <https://www.state.gov/resources-bureau-of-global-talent-management/> (last visited June 25, 2020).

This chapter presents some of the more concerning trends reported by the Department's employees—results that are not evident in the aggregated Department-wide data that the State Department has released—which provide critical and troubling insights into the consequences of corrosive and negligent leadership on our diplomatic corps.²³¹ It also examines the effect of the Trump administration's response to the renewed focus on racial injustice and systemic racism, which has further exacerbated already-low morale as a consequence of the Department's ongoing struggle to build a diverse, representative workforce.

Office of the Legal Adviser (L)

The Office of the Legal Adviser (L) provides advice on all legal issues, whether domestic or international, facing the Department. Among their responsibilities, L attorneys help ensure that State Department employees follow the ethics regulations and legal guidelines that give our diplomats authority and credibility when representing America.²³² Recent data indicates that increasing numbers of the State Department's own lawyers believe they cannot disclose suspected violations of laws, rules, and regulations, or are subject to arbitrary action and coercion. This disturbing trend jeopardizes adherence to the rule of law for our foreign policy and national security.

Employees responding to the survey reported startling trends from 2016 to 2019, including:

- **RISING FEAR OF REPRISAL:**
 - » **A seven-fold increase in the percentage of respondents who felt they could not disclose a suspected violation of law, rule, or regulation without fear of reprisal**, from less than 1 percent in 2016 to more than 7 percent in 2019.
- **INCREASED REPORTS OF POLITICAL COERCION**
 - » **A 22 point increase among respondents who reported that arbitrary action, personal favoritism, and coercion for partisan political purposes was tolerated** in their bureau, rising from 1 percent in 2016 to 23 percent in 2019.
- **DECLINING CONFIDENCE IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP:**
 - » **A 34 point increase among those reporting that the Department's senior leaders did not maintain high levels of honesty and integrity**, rising from 0 percent in 2016 to 34 percent in 2019.
- **RISING DISSATISFACTION:**
 - » **A more than doubling in the percentage of respondents reporting that they were considering leaving their job in the next year**, rising from 13 percent in 2016 to 30 percent in 2019.

²³¹ All survey data presented in this chapter is derived from "Negative" percentages presented in 1st Level Subagency Reports compiled from responses to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (EVS) for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019. The EVS is administered to full-time and part-time, permanent, non-seasonal employees. All reported percentages in this chapter refer to the percentage of employees who responded to the survey, which OPM determined was sufficient to constitute a representative sample. For more information about the EVS methodology, see the "OPM FEVS Technical Report," <https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/technical-reports/technical-report/technical-report/2016/2016-technical-report.pdf> (last visited June 25, 2020).

²³² U.S. Department of State, "Office of the Legal Adviser," <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/bureaus-and-offices-reporting-directly-to-the-secretary/office-of-the-legal-adviser/> (last visited June 25, 2020).

Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM)

The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) is responsible for protecting and assisting refugees and vulnerable migrants around the world. It oversees the Department's humanitarian assistance efforts, manages refugee admissions to the U.S., and partners with international and non-profit organizations to carry out these goals. An increased number of PRM staff reported that arbitrary action and personal favoritism was tolerated, and that the Bureau could not recruit people with the right skills to carry out its mission. These concerns are telling for a Bureau whose mission has been severely curtailed by the Trump administration, which has sought to dramatically reduce refugee admissions, and where at least one senior official responsible for that program was sidelined.

Employees responding to the survey from PRM Bureau reported concerning trends from 2016 to 2019, including:

- RISING FEARS OF ARBITRARY ACTION AND COERCION:
 - » **A more than doubling in the percent of respondents reporting that arbitrary action, personal favoritism, and coercion for partisan political purposes was tolerated**, rising from 19 percent in 2016 to 42 percent in 2019.
- RECRUITMENT CONCERNS:
 - » **A 23 point increase in the percentage of respondents reporting that their work unit could not recruit people with the right skills**, rising from 27 percent in 2016 to 50 percent in 2019.
- DECLINING CONFIDENCE IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP:
 - » **An almost ten-fold increase in the percentage of respondents reporting that senior leaders did not maintain high standards of honesty and integrity**, rising from 3 percent in 2016 to 29 percent in 2019.

Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism (CT)

The Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism (CT) leads State Department efforts to counter and defeat terrorism around the world, especially through cooperation with our partners and allies.²³³ CT employees reported increased concerns about recruitment and lacking sufficient resources, which could hamper our efforts against terrorism, affecting Americans both at home and abroad.

Employees in CT Bureau reported the following:

- LESS EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS:
 - » **A doubling in the percentage of respondents reporting that their work unit is unable to recruit people with the right skills**, increasing from 18 percent in 2016 to 36 percent in 2019.
- DECLINING CONFIDENCE IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP:
 - » **A nearly two-fold increase in the percentage of respondents who reported that their senior leaders did not generate high levels of motivation and commitment**, increasing from 28 percent in 2016 to 55 percent in 2019.

²³³ U.S. Department of State, "Bureau of Counterterrorism," <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-civilian-security-democracy-and-human-rights/bureau-of-counterterrorism/> (last visited June 25, 2020).

Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR)

INR is a member of the Intelligence Community and is responsible for harnessing the nation's intelligence resources to inform U.S. policy makers at the State Department.²³⁴ If INR cannot hire the people with the right skills, senior State Department officials may be operating without the full intelligence picture, leaving them at a disadvantage in interactions with U.S. adversaries and others around the world.

Among employees responding in the INR Bureau:

- LESS EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS:
 - » **A nearly three-fold increase in the percentage of respondents reporting that their work unit was not able to recruit people with the right skill set**, increasing from 12 percent in 2016 to 33 percent in 2019.

- DECLINING CONFIDENCE IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP:
 - » **An eight-fold increase in the percentage of respondents reporting that the Department's senior leadership did not maintain high standards of honesty and integrity**, rising from 3 percent in 2016 to 24 percent in 2019.

²³⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Bureau of Intelligence and Research," <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/bureaus-and-offices-reporting-directly-to-the-secretary/bureau-of-intelligence-and-research/> (last visited June 25, 2020).

Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO)

IO staff are responsible for implementing U.S. policy at the United Nations and other multilateral organizations.²³⁵ When other countries share the burden, U.S. policy is made more effective and can be implemented at lower cost. Yet if IO staff are subject to arbitrary action, personal favoritism, and partisan coercion, that weakens our ability to cooperate and coordinate with partners and allies, making it harder to succeed in executing U.S. policy.

Respondents reported the following for the IO Bureau:

- **RISING FEARS OF REPRISAL AND PARTISANSHIP:**
 - » **A more than doubling in the percentage of respondents reporting that arbitrary action and coercion for partisan political purposes were tolerated**, from 24 percent in 2016 to 53 percent in 2019.

- **LESS EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS:**
 - » **A nearly tripling in the percentage of respondents reporting that their agency was unsuccessful at accomplishing its mission**, increasing from 8 percent in 2016 to 23 percent in 2019.

- **DECLINING CONFIDENCE IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP:**
 - » **A nearly tripling in the percentage of respondents reporting that senior leaders at the State Department did not maintain high standards of honesty and integrity**, increasing from 12 percent in 2016 to 35 percent in 2019.

²³⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Bureau of International Organizations," <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-political-affairs/bureau-of-international-organization-affairs/> (last visited June 25, 2020).

A Silent Morale Crisis: Diversity

Already-low morale has been exacerbated by the Trump administration's response to the renewed focus on racial injustice and systemic racism. Even before the death of George Floyd in May 2020, State Department employees reported rising concerns about leadership's handling of diversity issues. The employee survey responses show a 16 point increase from 2016 to 2019 in the percentage of employees reporting policies and programs did not promote diversity in the workplace in the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. In the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the percentage of respondents who felt their supervisor was not committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society increased from nearly 0 percent in 2016 to 10 percent in 2019. In the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, the percentage of respondents who felt their supervisor didn't work well with employees from different backgrounds doubled from 10 percent in 2016 to almost 21 percent in 2019.

Already-low morale has been exacerbated by the Trump administration's response to the renewed focus on racial injustice and systemic racism.

While the overall proportion of racial and ethnic minorities at State increased from 2002 to 2018, the proportion of African Americans and women at the State Department decreased to lower than pre-2002 levels, even as the State Department workforce grew.²³⁶ Out of 189 ambassadors currently serving overseas, only four are Hispanic, and just three are African American career diplomats.²³⁷ Hispanic employees and women are underrepresented at the Department, representing 7 percent and 43 percent of the State Department workforce respectively.²³⁸ In senior leadership, the numbers paint an even more disturbing picture: in 2018, white employees represented 87 percent of Executive leadership, with a three percent decrease in African American leadership from 2002. Racial or ethnic minorities in the civil service were 4 percent to 29 percent less likely to be promoted than their white counterparts, even with similar education, occupation, or years in federal service.²³⁹ For the Foreign Service, in 2019, a majority of promotions went to white men: 5 percent went to African Americans, 7 percent to Hispanics and Asians, 6 percent to other ethnic minorities, and 36 percent went to women.²⁴⁰

Like other federal agencies, State Department employees face sexual harassment and gender discrimination.²⁴¹ In addition to the number of gender discrimination claims filed at the Department spiking in 2018, underreporting and a fear of career derailment for coming forward with harassment and discrimination allegations continue to plague the Department.²⁴² The intersection of race and gender are acute at the Department, where Black women employees decreased from 13 percent in 2002 to 9 percent in 2018 and are at the highest risk of experiencing sexual harassment.²⁴³

²³⁶ Government Accountability Office, *State Department: Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity*, at 16, 20, 23 (Jan. 2020), <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-20-237>.

²³⁷ American Academy of Diplomacy Statement, June 9, 2020, <https://www.academyofdiplomacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-06-09-AAD-Press-Release-State-Must-Improve-on-Diversity-final.pdf>.

²³⁸ Lara Jakes, "A Reckoning with Race to Ensure Diversity for America's Face Abroad," *The New York Times*, June 27, 2020; Hispanic people account for 18.5 percent of the population and women account for 50.8 percent of the population. Government Accountability Office, *State Department: Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity*, at 18, 25 (Jan. 2020), <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-20-237>.

²³⁹ Government Accountability Office, *State Department: Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity*, at 38, Figure 7, 22, Figure 4, 91, Figure 14 (Jan. 2020), <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-20-237>.

²⁴⁰ Lara Jakes, "A Reckoning with Race to Ensure Diversity for America's Face Abroad," *The New York Times*, June 27, 2020.

²⁴¹ Emily Tamkin & Robbie Gramer, "Will State Miss its #MeToo Moment?," *Foreign Policy*, Mar. 5, 2018; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Federal #MeToo: Examining Sexual Harassment in Government Workplaces* (Apr. 2020), <https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2020/04-01-Federal-Me-Too.pdf>.

²⁴² *Id.*

²⁴³ Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of State, *No Fear Act For 1st Quarter 2020*, Feb. 7, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/no-fear-act-for-1st-quarter-2020/>; The number of complaints pertaining to discrimination based on color, national origin, age, disability, and religion also increased from 2015 to the end of 2019. Government Accountability Office, *State Department: Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity*, at 26 (Jan. 2020), <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-20-237>; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Federal #MeToo: Examining Sexual Harassment in Government Workplaces*, at 70, 235 (Apr. 2020), <https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2020/04-01-Federal-Me-Too.pdf>.

Politically-motivated retaliation and reprisal remain a concern, especially among diplomats from historically underrepresented backgrounds. In at least one instance, an Indian American diplomat before she resigned was told that she and an African American colleague were blocked from senior leadership assignments because they did not pass the “Breitbart test,” and were not deemed to be sufficiently politically loyal toward President Trump.²⁴⁴ In a further sign of the fear-based climate at a Department reeling from Secretary Pompeo’s refusal to back Department employees testifying in the impeachment inquiry, current officials who described to the press their frustration and concern on issues of race and diversity in the diplomatic corps only spoke on the condition of anonymity, for fear of retaliation or endangering their careers.²⁴⁵

As non-white, non-male diplomats face their own professional struggles in attempting to advance their careers at the Department, they also bear the additional burden of espousing American ideals to other nations as America and the State Department struggle to confront injustice at home. Beyond the challenges of experiencing harassment from foreign citizens, foreign government officials, and, at times, even other U.S. government officials based on their skin color, gender, and qualities other than the content of their character, diplomats of color have also expressed a lack of support from their supervisors and Department leadership.²⁴⁶

While diversity issues at the Department long predate the Trump administration, they are exacerbated by the Administration’s continued inflammatory and xenophobic response to racial and ethnic issues.²⁴⁷ In the first five months of the Trump administration, the Department’s three most senior African American career officials and the top ranking Hispanic official were removed or resigned from their positions.²⁴⁸ Given President Trump’s racially insensitive comments labeling African nations and Haiti as “shithole” countries, moral equivocations after a white supremacist murdered an anti-racist protester in Charlottesville, and continued disparagement of Mexicans, Muslims, and other diverse groups of Americans, it comes as no surprise that he stands out from his four predecessors for only nominating one African American female ambassador, two and a half years into his term.²⁴⁹

Most recently, some African American diplomats have become so dejected by the Administration’s belittling response to worldwide protests against racial injustice triggered by a spate of police killings of African Americans, including Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, that they are considering quitting the Foreign Service.²⁵⁰ One African American official said, “I think that a lot of foreign service officers of color, particularly black officers, are at a point where they’re just fed up.... We’re dissatisfied, we feel dehumanized, and I think enough is enough.... there is an issue of diversity, recruitment, and retention that they’ve not taken seriously.”²⁵¹

For more than two weeks after the outbreak of protests, diplomats looked to Secretary Pompeo for guidance on how to address the protests to their foreign counterparts and reassurance about the Department’s efforts to address racial injustice.²⁵² Yet, instead, it fell to Deputy Secretary Biegun to send messages to the Department’s employees, causing frustration about Pompeo’s delegation of such a highly-sensitive issue.²⁵³ Other diplomats felt abandoned

²⁴⁴ Lara Jakes, “A Reckoning with Race to Ensure Diversity for America’s Face Abroad,” *The New York Times*, June 27, 2020.

²⁴⁵ Lara Jakes & Edward Wong, “U.S. Diplomats Struggle to Defend Democracy Abroad Amid Crises at Home,” *The New York Times*, June 8, 2020.

²⁴⁶ See, e.g., Ambassador Charles Ray, “How U.S. Border Agents Mistreat Black American Diplomats,” Washington International Diplomatic Academy, June 7, 2020; Tianna Spears, “What do I Want From White People? (An Illustration on Being Black in America),” May 30, 2020, <https://whatsupwithtianna.com/2020/05/30/what-do-i-want-from-white-people-an-illustration-on-being-black-in-america/>; Robbie Gramer, “Fighting for U.S. Values Abroad, Black Diplomats Struggle with Challenges at Home,” *Foreign Policy*, June 11, 2020.

²⁴⁷ Uzra Zeya, Opinion, “Trump is Making American Diplomacy White Again,” *Politico*, Sept. 17, 2018; Robbie Gramer, “As State Department Withers, So Does Diversity in Top Ranks,” *Foreign Policy*, Oct. 25, 2017.

²⁴⁸ Robbie Gramer, “As State Department Withers, So Does Diversity in Top Ranks,” *Foreign Policy*, Oct. 25, 2017.

²⁴⁹ Uzra Zeya, Opinion, “Trump is Making American Diplomacy White Again,” *Politico*, Sept. 17, 2018; see Natalie E. Brown, Nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of Uganda, PN1035 (116th Congress) (nominated August 2019; nomination hearing held May 2020).

²⁵⁰ Robbie Gramer, “Fighting for U.S. Values Abroad, Black Diplomats Struggle with Challenges at Home,” *Foreign Policy*, June 11, 2020.

²⁵¹ *Id.*

²⁵² Abigail Tracy, “With America Engulfed in Crisis, Diplomats Abroad are Left at a Loss,” *Vanity Fair*, June 3, 2020; Conor Finnegan,

“US Diplomats struggle to navigate racial protests, Trump’s messages, charges of hypocrisy,” *ABC News*, June 2, 2020.

²⁵³ Nahal Toosi, “U.S. diplomats ask ‘Where’s Pompeo?’ on Floyd death,” *Politico*, June 6, 2020.

as they faced questions from their counterparts around the world and waited for a statement addressing racial inequality in the U.S. and the Department from Secretary Pompeo.²⁵⁴

In comparison, several top military officers issued videos and statements to their respective branches, addressing Mr. Floyd's death, diversity, and racism; reinforcing American values; and expressing solidarity with affected staff.²⁵⁵ Sixteen days after Floyd's death, Secretary Pompeo sent a Department-wide email emphasizing the need to combat "propaganda" from autocratic societies about human rights in America, in a move fiercely criticized by many Department employees as "too little, too late," embarrassing, disappointing, and "out of touch" from the reality Department employees were facing.²⁵⁶ A week later, the Department's only African American Assistant Secretary of State and a Trump appointee, Mary Elizabeth Taylor, resigned based on the Trump administration's response to racial injustice and the protests.²⁵⁷

In a familiar scenario that has played out time and again during the Trump administration, Secretary Pompeo's deafening silence and failure to stand up for Department employees and issue statements of unequivocal support to and for his employees has baffled and disappointed Department employees.²⁵⁸ Secretary Pompeo's leadership vacuum left diplomats free-wheeling, issuing their own statements addressing racial injustice and reassuring colleagues, offering unintentionally disjointed messages to their foreign counterparts, questioning the Department's true commitment to diversity, and struggling to maintain America's credibility in the world.²⁵⁹

The frustration of career diplomats with senior leadership and the lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion at the Department, exacerbated by President Trump and his nominees, is ongoing. As recently as July 2020, reports surfaced of "cringeworthy" racist and sexist comments that U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom Robert "Woody" Johnson made to London embassy staff.²⁶⁰ Ambassador Johnson reportedly made disparaging comments about minorities and women on a "weekly, if not daily," basis, that diplomats found "deeply offensive" and "demoralizing."²⁶¹ Additionally, Ambassador Johnson would hold official meetings and events at a men-only venue, excluding women, before another diplomat warned him to stop.²⁶²

In stark contrast to the Department leadership's silence in the face of false smear campaigns and unmerited attacks against career employees, the Department offered a full-throated defense of Ambassador Johnson, stating "We stand by Ambassador Johnson and look forward to him continuing to ensure our special relationship with the UK is strong."²⁶³ The Department's quick defense of Ambassador Johnson is emblematic of the Department's willingness to protect President Trump's allies, even at the expense of career employees who may be facing toxic leadership and hostile work environments.

²⁵⁴ Kylie Atwood & Jennifer Hansler, "Pompeo's 'deafening' silence angers diplomats as protests over racial injustice spread globally," *CNN*, June 9, 2020.

²⁵⁵ Nancy A. Youssef, "Military Leaders Send Missives to Troops: 'Stay True' to the American People," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 4, 2020.

²⁵⁶ Robbie Gramer, "Fighting for U.S. Values Abroad, Black Diplomats Struggle with Challenges at Home," *Foreign Policy*, June 11, 2020.

²⁵⁷ Seung Min Kim, "Top State Department Official Resigns in Protest of Trump's Response to Racial Tensions in the Country," *The Washington Post*, June 18, 2020.

²⁵⁸ Kylie Atwood & Jennifer Hansler, "Pompeo's 'deafening' silence angers diplomats as protests over racial injustice spread globally," *CNN*, June 9, 2020.

²⁵⁹ Lara Jakes & Edward Wong, "U.S. Diplomats Struggle to Defend Abroad Amid Crises at Home," *New York Times*, June 6, 2020.

²⁶⁰ Jennifer Hansler et al., "NFL Owner and Trump Ambassador to UK Sparks Watchdog Inquiry over Allegations of Racist and Sexist Remarks and Push to Promote Trump Business," *CNN*, July 22, 2020.

²⁶¹ Matthew Lee & Danica Kirka, "Allegations Against Trump Envoy Roil US Embassy in London," *Associated Press*, July 23, 2020; Jennifer Hansler et al., "NFL Owner and Trump Ambassador to UK Sparks Watchdog Inquiry over Allegations of Racist and Sexist Remarks and Push to Promote Trump Business," *CNN*, July 22, 2020.

²⁶² Jennifer Hansler et al., "NFL Owner and Trump Ambassador to UK Sparks Watchdog Inquiry over Allegations of Racist and Sexist Remarks and Push to Promote Trump Business," *CNN*, July 22, 2020.

²⁶³ Matthew Lee & Danica Kirka, "Allegations Against Trump Envoy Roil US Embassy in London," *Associated Press*, July 23, 2020.

Measurable Damage to Integrity, Leadership, and Workplace Culture

The responses and views by employees shown in the EVS surveys provide valuable, yet disturbing insights. They show the pernicious effect of a culture in which “loyalists” are rewarded and career public servants are viewed with suspicion and sidelined.²⁶⁴ They demonstrate that a sense of inclusion and belonging as an American diplomat is frayed. They give credence to the increased workload and burnout resulting from staff attrition and lack of faith in leadership. And they indicate that far too many employees are working in a culture of fear and survival, not support and professional development.

While resignation letters and EVS survey responses offer hints as to the reasons the Department is hemorrhaging talent it has spent years investing in, the State Department’s annual score in the Partnership for Public Service’s Best Place to Work Agency Ranking offers another clue.²⁶⁵ The mass exodus of senior and mid-level leadership, and a drop in interest of joining the Foreign Service coincides with a large drop in the Department’s ranking of workplace culture and sinking morale levels. After consistently ranking as one of the top five large federal government agencies to work at since 2012, the State Department fell from a ranking of 4 in 2016 to 8 in 2017 after the Trump presidential transition.²⁶⁶ After a year of Trump administration leadership, the Department’s ranking dropped even more in 2018, from 8 to 14.²⁶⁷

The results of these surveys should be a concern for all Americans. If public servants who carry out our national security and foreign policy are working in fear, feel demoralized, and feel unable to report violations of law, our safety and security is endangered. When Department leadership is silent and deferential to a President who puts personal gain above national security and at every turn undermines the ability of our diplomats to represent the United States, the basic functions of diplomacy and our foreign policy are compromised.

Many of these concerning trends started under Secretary Tillerson, but have worsened under Secretary Pompeo, despite Secretary Pompeo’s commitment to bring “swagger” back to the Department. Moreover, as the data reflects responses thorough July 2019, it does not reflect the further reported drops in morale during the House impeachment inquiry due to attacks on career employees, made worse by the Department’s failure to defend them.

Rising fears of retaliation and partisanship, less effective operations, declining confidence in senior leadership, and rising dissatisfaction throughout the State Department have resulted in “an exodus of senior staffers with decades of experience” that is “taking a startling and measurable toll on American foreign relations.”²⁶⁸ A weakened State Department means a weakened America in the global arena. The results of these surveys show that the current trajectory is a demoralized Department that feels less supported, less secure, and, therefore, less able to fulfill its mission.

²⁶⁴ See also Chapter 3.

²⁶⁵ See e.g., Dan De Luce & Robbie Gramer, “U.S. Diplomat’s Resignation Signals Wider Exodus From State Department,” *Foreign Policy*, Dec. 9, 2017; Partnership for Public Service, “Agency Report: Department of State,” <https://bestplacetowork.org/rankings/detail/ST00> (last visited July 14, 2020). These rankings are based on three questions for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management’s Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, administered annually: I recommend my organization as a good place to work. (Q. 40); Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job? (Q. 69); Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your organization? (Q. 71).

²⁶⁶ Partnership for Public Service, Frequently Asked Questions, “Download Historical Rankings,” <https://bestplacetowork.org/about/frequently-asked-questions/#why-arent-past-rankings-shown>.

²⁶⁷ *Id.*

²⁶⁸ Reid Wilson, “Diplomats Describe All-time Low in Morale at State under Trump,” *The Hill*, Oct. 21, 2019.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Recommendations: The Challenges Ahead

The Trump administration's disdain for diplomacy and neglect of the State Department have created unprecedented challenges for U.S. diplomats and the Department's public servants. Senior positions have remained vacant. Career employees have been attacked and their work devalued by the Department's leadership. Inappropriate politicization of the Department and its resources continues to fester. Experienced civil servants and Foreign Service Officers have been driven from serving their nation, leaving gaping holes in our nation's diplomatic and national security capabilities.

Even in the best of times, the work facing the nation's diplomatic corps is formidable. Today, the State Department is on the front lines battling a global pandemic, while their own country's response is failing. Diplomats are promoting human rights and justice abroad, while our own country's shortcomings in our ongoing struggle with systemic racism are painfully evident. They seek to negotiate peace in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, while the White House actively dismisses intelligence critical for safeguarding American lives. The Department is implementing policy for a new era of strategic competition with Russia and China, while President Trump willingly undermines U.S. national security in favor of his own personal and political interests. Maintaining their integrity as diplomats when U.S. credibility on the global stage is waning and the President undermines them with a simple tweet is a daunting task.

While some of the challenges identified in this report are not new—the State Department has long faced systemic institutional challenges—the Trump administration, by design or inattention, has pushed the Department to the brink of failure and collapse. It is in this crisis, however, that we also have an opportunity to change course and reexamine the Department's structure and norms.

Current and future White House and Departmental leadership will need to address these challenges with genuine and sustained effort. If the current trajectory continues, we will be at risk of losing the Department of State as a functioning tool for our national security and foreign policy. While some may applaud this as “draining the swamp,” there can be no question that Americans will pay a price for such a loss in our security, safety, and prosperity. The nation needs to decide what kind of State Department it wants: one that carries out foreign policy based on the expertise and experience of those who serve our country, or one that caters to the personal, political, and financial interests of a President or Secretary of State—to the detriment of U.S. national security.

Congress, as our Article I branch of government, has a vital role in changing the current trajectory. Congress must craft and pass comprehensive legislation to revitalize the Department of State, strengthen protections for our diplomats, and rebuild a battered workforce. Such legislation must also enhance transparency and accountability at the State Department.

A strong, principled, and ethically sound State Department leadership, devoted first and foremost to the Department's mission, is also critical in shouldering this burden. All Department leadership must protect career personnel from the political whims of any White House and at every moment defend against the weaponization of the Department and its resources for political ends. Leadership must address mismanagement and misconduct at the Department swiftly, and hold political appointees to the same high standards expected of career employees.

Changing the current trajectory will also require a more engaged civil society, and, in particular, an active and vocal cadre of former Department and national security officials. If the past few years have shown anything, it is that the burden on career public servants is too heavy; they alone cannot ensure that our government adheres to the rule of law and upholds national security while also advocating for their own wellbeing and careers.

Below are guiding principles to ensure our diplomatic professionals receive the treatment they deserve.

Building a 21st-Century Diplomatic Corps

1. **Rebuild and Retain Expertise in the State Department's Ranks.** Given the deep damage to the top ranks of our nation's diplomats the past three years, a top priority must be rebuilding the diplomatic corps, including enhanced recruitment and retention efforts. Senior posts must be filled by those with commensurate experience and expertise, and promotions must represent the diversity in skills and experience of diplomatic professionals to ensure talented personnel do not leave the Department. The current toxic work environment stemming from mismanagement and President Trump's attacks must be addressed by senior leadership to keep employees from leaving, especially individuals who bring unique expertise and diverse perspectives to the Department.
2. **Reduce Barriers to Restoring Lost Expertise and for Former Diplomats and Civil Servants to Return to the Department.** Over the last three and a half years, the Department has lost significant institutional and diplomatic expertise, both in the foreign and civil services. While fresh perspectives and young talent are a welcome addition, we must find more ways to enable those who have hard-earned national security expertise to rejoin the Department and continue their service. The Department and Congress should consider the merits of increasing avenues to enhance mid-career hiring authorities and ways to move laterally within the federal government between other foreign policy agencies and similar positions with similar skillsets.
3. **Promote More Career Employees to Senior Positions.** Those serving in senior leadership positions are increasingly less representative of the career Foreign Service Officer and Civil Service workforce. In 1975, more than 60 percent of positions at the Assistant Secretary level and above were held by career Foreign Service Officers.²⁶⁹ By 2014, only 30 percent were held by career Foreign Service Officers.²⁷⁰ As of April 2020, career officials at the Department hold only eight percent of leadership positions at the Assistant Secretary level and above.²⁷¹ According to the American Academy of Diplomacy, declining representation of the Foreign Service in senior

²⁶⁹ American Academy of Diplomacy, *American Diplomacy at Risk*, at 15 (Apr. 2015), https://www.academyofdiplomacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/ADAR_Full_Report_4.1.15.pdf.

²⁷⁰ *Id.*

²⁷¹ George Packer, "The President is Winning His War on American Institutions," *The Atlantic*, Apr. 2020.

leadership of the Department results in a loss of long-term field perspective, a loss of Washington experience, and a failure to motivate long-term State employees.²⁷² For those in the Civil Service, the problem is even more acute as the large number of senior leadership positions held mostly by political appointees and a few Foreign Service officials effectively creates a promotion cap for Civil Service employees.²⁷³ Department leadership should consider expedited promotions for qualified career personnel into senior leadership positions. In addition to leading to better-informed policy, maintaining a robust cadre of career diplomatic professionals in senior leadership positions reduces overall politicization of the Department and will encourage career professionals to remain at the Department if they know their hard-earned expertise is valued.

4. **Increase Diversity at Senior Ranks and Throughout the Department.** Diversity, equity, and inclusion at the Department is lacking, and traditionally underrepresented employees at the Department face a difficult and different set of challenges and barriers in their careers. The Department must heed the Government Accountability Office's recommendation to identify and address potential barriers to equal opportunity in the diplomatic workforce, and should also take measurable steps to increase diversity in the senior ranks of the Department. Furthermore, the Department should examine ways to increase transparency in the assignments process to ensure an objective set of criteria and metrics are the primary basis for assignment and that implicit biases do not play a limiting role in an employee's career trajectory. Congress should immediately pass the Department of State Inclusivity Act (S. 3430) to enhance diverse representation of all kinds at all levels of the State Department.
5. **Formalize the State Department Exit Survey Process.** To rebuild the diplomatic corps and retain talent, the Department must accurately identify and address the barriers and challenges personnel face in the workplace. To gain a fuller understanding of the reasons Department employees depart, and ways to improve, the Department must formalize its exit survey process for all employees, adjust annually to address issues raised in these surveys, and make key findings available to Congress.
6. **Initiate a Review of How the "Corridor Reputation" System at the Department Enables or Exacerbates the Challenges Outlined in This Report.** While the Department formally operates on a merit-based system, there is a clear understanding that one's informal "corridor reputation," based on the views of peers and Bureau leadership, plays a large role in career assignments, which can ultimately determine career advancement. Most recently, diplomats have expressed a hesitancy to raise concerns about diversity and harassment, among other issues, for fear of ruining their corridor reputation and being viewed as a "problem child."²⁷⁴ The Department must review the degree to which this corridor reputation system perpetuates historic institutional deficiencies. Congress must initiate a Government Accountability Office review to study how this system interacts with and possibly exacerbates the challenges outlined in this report, and issue recommendations based on their findings.

²⁷² American Academy of Diplomacy, *American Diplomacy at Risk*, at 15-16 (Apr. 2015).

²⁷³ American Academy of Diplomacy, *Strengthening the Department of State*, at 35 (May 2019), <https://www.academyofdiplomacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/AAAD-Strengthening-the-State-web-version.pdf>.

²⁷⁴ See, e.g., U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Federal #MeToo: Examining Sexual Harassment in Government Workplaces*, at 214 (Apr. 2020), <https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2020/04-01-Federal-Me-Too.pdf>; Lara Jakes, "A Reckoning with Race to Ensure Diversity for America's Face Abroad," *The New York Times*, June 27, 2020.

Ensuring Strong, Principled State Department Leadership

7. **Restore and Commit to Minimum Vetting Standards.** To undo the damage done by a series of nominees who lack the experience, expertise, tone, and tenor to serve as our nation's diplomats, the current and future administrations must take seriously their duty to genuinely and properly vet nominees both for their qualifications as well as for any conflicts of interest, misconduct, lack of good judgement, legal troubles, inappropriate statements, or other disqualifying behaviors. All nominees must be held to the same high standards as their career employee counterparts.
8. **Prioritize and Fill Senior Leadership Slots.** The Department's senior positions, including Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Ambassadors, set the stage for good leadership and help drive and implement U.S. foreign policy. There must be a focus on filling these positions early on in the administration, or within a short period of a newly-created vacancy to avoid the damaging effects of persistent vacancies left open for too long or filled by acting officials.

Bolstering Accountability at the Department

9. **Maintain an Independent Inspector General.** Any potential fraud, waste, abuse, and misconduct at the State Department must be addressed by an independent Inspector General, chosen based solely on ability and integrity, and free from any conflicts of interest or political pressure. The ability to report misconduct to the Inspector General without fear of reprisal or political interference in investigations is paramount to the well-being of the State Department and its workforce.
10. **Enforce Accountability for Improper Personnel Practices and Management.** Complaints to Congress and the Inspector General about retaliation and other misconduct at the Department have demonstrated a need for reform of the Department's complaint filing and review processes. Employees report feeling discouraged from lodging a complaint through formal human resource channels because it is reviewed by political appointees who may retaliate against them and ruin their careers. Employee complaints about workforce behavior must be taken seriously and met with accountability by Department leadership, without any politicization. Impunity for misconduct cannot be allowed to continue. The Department must emphasize a zero tolerance policy for retaliation and reprisal, including terminating any employee found to engage in such behavior, no matter their status or position.

Every day, our diplomatic professionals work to ensure American safety and security, sometimes placing their lives on the line in their patriotic service. In exchange, they must be guaranteed the support of their leadership and a work environment free from politicization and discrimination. For the past three years, beset by extraordinary global challenges abroad and attacks and mismanagement at home, the work of the Department's career professionals to safeguard and protect our nation's security has been jeopardized.

This report serves as a first step in outlining the challenges facing our diplomatic corps—and should serve as a warning of the future cost to our security if they are not addressed promptly. Addressing these challenges will take the immediate and ongoing focus of a broad coalition, including Congress, current and former State Department officials, civil society, and the current and future presidential administrations, dedicated to rebuilding our long-established and world-renowned professional diplomatic corps.

COLUMNS FROM THE WASHINGTON POST, INDY STAR, AND NBC NEWS CONCERNING
PETER KASSIG AND THREE OTHER AMERICANS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES AT THE
HANDS OF ISIS

9/6/2020

Peter Kassig's family says ISIS members must stand trial in U.S.

IndyStar.

NEWS

**Peter Kassig's family calls on Trump
administration to bring ISIS members to
trial in U.S.****Lydia Gerike** Indianapolis Star

Published 1:23 p.m. ET Jul. 24, 2020 | Updated 4:47 p.m. ET Jul. 24, 2020

The family of Peter Kassig, an Indianapolis native and aid worker who was beheaded by the Islamic State in 2014, joined three other families Thursday in asking the Trump administration to bring two ISIS members back to the United States to stand trial.

"There is no nation on Earth better at bringing terrorists to justice than the United States," the families wrote in a Washington Post opinion piece.

Kassig, who converted to Islam and went by Abdul-Rahman Kassig at the time of his death, was captured in 2013 while doing humanitarian work in the Middle East.

British and U.S. authorities say Alexandra Kotey and El Shafee Elsheikh, ISIS members who are part of a group nicknamed the "Beatles," are responsible for 27 killings, including Kassig's.

The Kassigs declined an IndyStar request for further comment in a Friday morning email.

Kassig, who is the adopted son of Paula and Ed Kassig, graduated from North Central High School in 2006.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army Rangers but was honorably discharged for medical reasons. Later, Kassig enrolled in classes at Hanover College and then Butler University.

While on a trip to Lebanon in 2012, Kassig decided to stay in the Middle East and help Syrian refugees. He volunteered at hospitals and founded an aid group called Special Emergency Response and Assistance.

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Peter Kassig's family says ISIS members must stand trial in U.S.

Kassig was in Syria on an aid trip when his ambulance was captured by militants on Oct. 1, 2013. He was kept in captivity for more than a year and converted to Islam while held, although he said it was his choice to do so. He was beheaded in November 2014.

Kotey and Elsheikh, are being detained by the U.S. military in the Middle East. In interviews earlier this week, the two admitted for the first time their involvement in the capture, torture and deaths of Americans Kayla Mueller and James Foley.

The Kassigs and families of Foley, Mueller and Steven Sotloff said the trial is necessary to send a message that the United States will not tolerate violence against its citizens from terrorist groups.

"Like any grieving relatives, we want to know the full truth about what happened to our loved ones, and we want to see our children's murderers held accountable," the families said.

The families also said ISIS uses the detention of its followers as a reason to take hostages and for propaganda purposes in turning people against the United States.

Rep. Andre Carson and Sens. Mike Braun and Todd Young could not be reached for comment for this story.

U.S. officials have already said they want to try the men in the United States, according to NBC News, but the U.K. Supreme Court ruled in March against sharing British intelligence until the United States agreed not to use the death penalty.

"The U.S. government should send a more powerful message: It doesn't matter who you are or where you are. If you harm American citizens, you will not escape," the families wrote. "You will be hunted down. And when you are caught, you will face the full power of American law."

Contact Pulliam Fellow Lydia Gerike at lgerike@gannett.com or follow her on Twitter @LydiaGerike.

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Two of the ISIS terrorists dubbed the Beatles admit involvement in captivity of Kayla Mueller, James Foley

ISIS TERROR

Two of the ISIS terrorists dubbed the Beatles admit involvement in captivity of Kayla Mueller, James Foley

In exclusive interviews, the two men, Alexandra Kotey and El Shafee Elsheikh, for the first time admitted their involvement in the captivity of Mueller.

ISIS terrorists known as 'The Beatles' admit involvement in captivity of slain Americans



July 23, 2020, 8:11 AM EDT / Updated July 23, 2020, 4:00 PM EDT

By Ken Dilanian, Anna Schechter and Richard Engel

WASHINGTON – Two of the British ISIS terrorists dubbed the “Beatles” further incriminated themselves in the mistreatment of Western hostages in Syria, including Americans Kayla Mueller and James Foley, in interviews obtained exclusively by NBC News.

In the interviews, the two men, Alexandra Kotey and El Shafee Elsheikh, for the first time admitted their involvement in the captivity of Kayla, an aid worker who was tortured and sexually abused before her death in 2015.

https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/two-isis-terrorists-dubbed-beatles-admit-involvement-captivity-kayla-mueller-n1234584?cid=sm_npd_nn_tw_ma 1/7

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Two of the ISIS terrorists dubbed the Beatles admit involvement in captivity of Kayla Mueller, James Foley

Kotey said, "She was in a room by herself that no one would go in."

Elsheikh got into more detail, saying, "I took an email from her myself," meaning he got an email address the Islamic State militant group could use to demand ransom from the family. "She was in a large room, it was dark, and she was alone, and ... she was very scared."

In one email reviewed by NBC News, ISIS demanded the Muellers pay 5 million euros and threatened that if the demands weren't met, they would send the family "a picture of Kayla's dead body."

— Kayla Mueller, 26, an American humanitarian worker from Prescott, Arizona with her mother Marsha Mueller. *Reuters file*

Elsheikh also implicated himself in the abuse of American James Foley. "I didn't choke Jim," he said. "If I choked Jim I would say I choked him. I mean, I've – I've hit him before. I've hit most of the prisoners before."

He said that sometimes Foley would let himself become a target to make sure hostages got enough food. Said Elsheikh, "If the guard would ask, 'Is the food enough?' some of the other prisoners were very timid. It was always him who would say, 'It's not enough'" and take the risk of retaliation from guards.

Kotey and Elsheikh are both in U.S. military custody in Iraq amid questions over how and when they will face justice. U.S. and British authorities say the so-called "Beatles" were responsible for 27 killings, including the beheadings of Americans Foley, Steven Sotloff and Peter Kassig, and British aid workers David Haines and Alan Henning.

The families of American hostages murdered by ISIS tell NBC News they are urging the Trump administration to try them in a U.S. civilian court.

"They did so much horror to so many people," Kayla's mother, Marsha Mueller, said. "They need to be brought here. They need to be prosecuted. The other thing that's really important to me about this is I need information about Kayla. We know so little about what happened to her."

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Two of the ISIS terrorists dubbed the Beatles admit involvement in captivity of Kayla Mueller, James Foley

— Marsha Mueller and Carl Mueller, parents of slain ISIS hostage Kayla Mueller. NBC News

She added, "I believe these two have more information than they're sharing with us. And I believe that we would find out more if they were brought here."

"They're admitting that they were there," Kayla's father, Carl Mueller, said. "And of course, they're not going to tell the dark side of the story."

The U.S. families published an opinion piece in The Washington Post on Thursday imploring the Department of Justice to bring the two men to the United States for prosecution.

In captivity, Kayla was taken to live with a senior ISIS official, and was raped by the former ISIS leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, U.S. officials have said. Baghdadi killed himself with a suicide vest as he was being chased last fall by American commandos during a raid in northwest Syria.

Kayla is believed to have died in 2015 in what ISIS said was a Jordanian airstrike. How she was killed has never been confirmed.

In a 2018 interview with the BBC, Kotey and Elsheikh had denied ever meeting Kayla.

"Who?" Elsheikh responded when asked if he'd ever met her.

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"We didn't meet any foreign non-Muslims," Kotey added.

In the new interviews, both Kotey and Elsheikh sought to distance themselves from the torture and killings attributed to them as prison guards, calling themselves "liaisons" to the hostages. But

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each admitted beating captives and playing a role in facilitating communication with their families in an effort to extract ransoms.

— Journalist James Foley while covering the civil war in Aleppo, Syria. *Nicole Tung / AP file*

"I never denied that they was ever hit," Kotey said of the hostages. As an example, he talked about striking a Danish captive in the chest to make a mark that would be visible in a photo that would be sent to his family.

Elsheikh and Kotey were captured in Syria in 2018 by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces.

The Kurds handed them to the U.S. military, and President Donald Trump was considering a plan to send Kotey and Elsheikh to the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, NBC News reported.

American officials tell NBC News that the U.S. is determined to arrange for the two men to face charges in an American courtroom and the efforts to get them here from Iraq continue. A U.S. official said the government is committed to getting justice for these victims in a way that provides the strongest ability to prove in a court of law that they committed the crimes they're alleged to have committed.

That effort was dealt a setback in March, when Britain's Supreme Court ruled that the United Kingdom could not share evidence with American prosecutors as long as the pair were in jeopardy of the death penalty.

— Diane and John Foley, the parents of U.S. journalist James Foley, stand in the war reporters' memorial after the unveiling of a stone in honor of the war reporters killed in 2014, on October 9, 2014 in Bayeux, northwestern France, during the annual Bayeux-Calvados war journalism award week.

CHARLY TRIBALLEAU / AFP - Getty Images, file

The four Beatles

https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/two-isis-terrorists-dubbed-beatles-admit-involvement-captivity-kayla-mueller-n1234584?cid=sm_np_d_nn_tw_ma 4/7

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Two of the ISIS terrorists dubbed the Beatles admit involvement in captivity of Kayla Mueller, James Foley

Former hostages who made it out of ISIS detention say all four members of the "Beatles," given that nickname because of their British accents, were cruel and sadistic captors, including Kotey and Elsheikh.

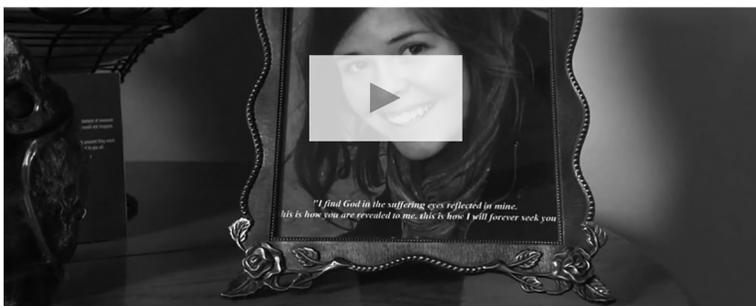
Mohammed Emwazi, the black-clad terrorist known as Jihadi John who beheaded many of the hostages on camera, was vaporized by Hellfire missiles from a CIA drone in 2015. The fourth Beatle, Aine Lesley Davis, was sentenced to seven and a half years in prison in Turkey in 2017.

According to a Department of State narrative designating him as a terrorist, "Elsheikh was said to have earned a reputation for waterboarding, mock executions, and crucifixions while serving as an ISIS jailer."

The State Department said Kotey, as a jail guard, "likely engaged in the group's executions and exceptionally cruel torture methods, including electronic shock and waterboarding."

The two men denied that in the new interviews.

New details emerge about Kayla Mueller's abduction by ISIS



"Everyone is talking about the rights of these two Beatles," Art and Shirley Sotloff said in a statement. "What about the rights of our kids, Steven and Jim and Peter and Kayla? Don't they have the right to have justice served?"

https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/two-isis-terrorists-dubbed-beatles-admit-involvement-captivity-kayla-mueller-n1234584?cid=sm_npd_tw_ma 5/7

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"I think they should be held accountable," said Diane Foley, whose son James was the first U.S. hostage to be beheaded by Emwazi on video, told NBC News. "They definitely should go on trial."

A criminal court is the best place to get to the truth, Chuck Rosenberg, a former federal prosecutor and an NBC News legal analyst, said.

"We've had great success in the federal courts of the United States on terrorism cases," he said. "That is absolutely where they belong. Not in Guantanamo Bay, not before military tribunals, but in the federal courts of the United States."



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The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Our children were killed by Islamic State members. They must face trial.

Opinion by **Diane and John Foley, Paula and Ed Kassig, Marsha and Carl Mueller** and **Shirley and Art Sotloff**

July 23, 2020 at 6:00 a.m. EDT

Diane and John Foley, Paula and Ed Kassig, Marsha and Carl Mueller, and Shirley and Art Sotloff are parents whose children were abducted and killed by members of the Islamic State.

We are the parents of [James Foley](#), [Peter Kassig](#), [Kayla Mueller](#) and [Steven Sotloff](#). As Syria's civil war unfolded, our children saw the Syrian people's suffering and wanted to help, whether by providing humanitarian aid or by telling the world about this disaster.

While carrying out this work, they were abducted by members of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS. They were starved, tortured and beaten. According to witnesses, Kayla was repeatedly raped by the then-leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Jim, Peter and Steven were publicly murdered in the most brutal way imaginable. Nearly six years later, their bodies haven't been found. No one has faced justice for their murders.

Some of the men who allegedly committed these atrocities are now in U.S. military custody in the Middle East. We implore President Trump, Attorney General William P. Barr and the Justice Department to have the detainees brought to the United States to face trial.

Like any grieving relatives, we want to know the full truth about what happened to our loved ones, and we want to see our children's murderers held accountable. These things can happen only if the suspects are put on trial before a jury in an American court of law.

Some of the ISIS members implicated in these crimes, including Mohammed Emwazi, also known as "Jihadi John," and al-Baghdadi, are dead and beyond the reach of earthly justice. But others are being held, right now, on U.S. bases in the Middle East. The detainees include [Alexanda Kotey](#) and [El Shafee Elsheikh](#), two of the surviving ISIS members referred to by their captives as "the Beatles." They are British citizens who reportedly participated in the detention, torture and execution of American hostages.

With the U.S. military reducing its presence in the Middle East, we worry that the detainees will never face trial, just as hundreds of terrorists who were detained on U.S. bases during the Iraq War were let go as the United States withdrew its forces. Having escaped justice, many — including al-Baghdadi before his death — went on to form the Islamic State leadership.

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a message that is repellent to the loved ones of their victims.

The U.S. government should send a more powerful message: It doesn't matter who you are or where you are. If you harm American citizens, you will not escape. You will be hunted down. And when you are caught, you will face the full power of American law.

There is no nation on Earth better at bringing terrorists to justice than the United States. American laws are rigorous and comprehensive. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies are masters of their craft. And U.S. prosecutors have a long track record of success. More than 400 convicted terrorists are now securely behind bars in federal prisons, their crimes having been laid bare in open court.

We implore the Trump administration: Please, for the sake of truth, for the sake of justice, order these Islamic State suspects transferred to the United States to face trial.

In one of her final letters home, Kayla signed off, "With all my everything." That is what Kayla, Jim, Peter and Steven are to us: our everything. Obtaining justice for them would mean the world.

Read more:

David Ignatius: Trump has ushered in a grotesque coda to the war against ISIS

Carl Mueller and Marsha Mueller: ISIS killed our daughter. They cannot have the last word on U.S. hostages.

Diane Foley, Art Sotloff and Shirley Sotloff: Our sons were killed by the Islamic State. Don't let ISIS prisoners in Syria go free.

Jeanne Shaheen and Diane Foley: Don't let Islamic State monsters get away with murder

