

**REVIEW OF THE FY 2022 STATE
DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUEST**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

—————
JUNE 8, 2021
—————

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



Available via <http://www.govinfo.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 2022

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

ROBERT MENENDEZ, *New Jersey, Chairman*

BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, Maryland	JAMES E. RISCH, Idaho
JEANNE SHAHEEN, New Hampshire	MARCO RUBIO, Florida
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, Delaware	RON JOHNSON, Wisconsin
CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, Connecticut	MITT ROMNEY, Utah
TIM KAINE, Virginia	ROB PORTMAN, Ohio
EDWARD J. MARKEY, Massachusetts	RAND PAUL, Kentucky
JEFF MERKLEY, Oregon	TODD YOUNG, Indiana
CORY A. BOOKER, New Jersey	JOHN BARRASSO, Wyoming
BRIAN SCHATZ, Hawaii	TED CRUZ, Texas
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, Maryland	MIKE ROUNDS, South Dakota
	BILL HAGERTY, Tennessee

JESSICA LEWIS, *Staff Director*

CHRISTOPHER M. SOCHA, *Republican Staff Director*

JOHN DUTTON, *Chief Clerk*

C O N T E N T S

	Page
Menendez, Hon. Robert, U.S. Senator From New Jersey	1
Risch, Hon. James E., U.S. Senator From Idaho	3
Blinken, Hon. Antony J., Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC	6
Prepared Statement	8

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

Responses of Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken to Questions Submitted by Senator Robert Menendez	53
Responses of Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken to Questions Submitted by Senator James E. Risch	60
Responses of Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken to Questions Submitted by Senator Benjamin L. Cardin	73
Responses of Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken to Questions Submitted by Senator Rob Portman	74
Responses of Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken to Questions Submitted by Senator Edward J. Markey	75
Responses of Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken to Questions Submitted by Senator Rand Paul	76
Responses of Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken to Questions Submitted by Senator Cory Booker	76
The Committee Received No Response From Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken for the Following Request by Senator Van Hollen	80

REVIEW OF THE FY 2022 STATE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REQUEST

TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:22 p.m. in room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, and via Webex, Hon. Robert Menendez, Chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Merkley, Booker, Schatz, Van Hollen, Risch, Johnson, Romney, Portman, Young, Barrasso, Cruz, and Hagerty.

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

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

Mr. Secretary, welcome. I am pleased to see you before the committee again. It is nice to see the Secretary engage on a regular basis, and we appreciate that. Even though we may not always agree on everything, I appreciate your proactively making yourself available to discuss the budget. It sends an important signal about the value of transparency and our two branches of Government working together on behalf of the American people.

I am also pleased to note that after 4 years in which this committee, on a bipartisan basis, greeted the Foreign Affairs budget proposals with various tones of incredulity, today we have a serious budget proposal that, if enacted, would represent the largest increase to the regular international affairs budget in more than a decade.

That is not to say that we will see eye to eye on all the specific components, to be sure, but we are looking forward to a robust and substantive discussion.

After a year during which the international community has been shaken to its core by the COVID pandemic, it should be clear to everyone that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure in both public health and in international affairs, and especially where the two intersect.

I was pleased to see the Administration's recent announcement that we will be leading on the world stage by providing vaccines to countries desperately in need, although I believe we should prioritize countries who embrace fundamental democratic freedoms and rights.

For the international community to work for Americans, for fundamental, universal values of human rights, democracy, and equitable prosperity, the United States must invest in and lead international institutions and stand up for international law. We must invest in smart economic development and free and fair trade. We must invest in meeting the challenges of climate change, and we must invest in our diplomacy and development professionals, for when we do not, we find that others with different interests and values have the space to act in ways that threaten to upend the global order and undermine our interests.

The Administration's proposal to significantly increase the budget for State and USAID and other international programs reflects the investments we need to be successful in furthering our nation's interests and values, and I want to commend you for seeking to rebalance the budget away from overseas contingency operations and to restore base funding.

Today's hearing is not just about numbers. It is about how we invest those numbers. So let me take a few minutes to highlight a few issues and areas of concern.

Broadly in the Middle East, we need to rebalance a heavily military and arms sales-oriented policy to one that focuses more on strategic, diplomatic, and development investments. While not directly related to the budget, we certainly want to hear about the Administration's efforts to reach a comprehensive diplomatic agreement with Iran that goes far beyond the JCPOA. What is the definition of "stronger"?

In Europe, many of us were disappointed by the Administration's decision to waive sanctions on Nord Stream 2. As I know that when you leave us today you are heading to Europe, I look forward to hearing your perspective about how the U.S. can work to assure Ukraine of our commitment to its security; and critically, in advance of President Biden's meeting with Putin, I hope the Administration sends a very strong message to Moscow. Putin only understands strength.

On Afghanistan, the security situation is increasingly dire, and we have to start thinking about our contingency planning. The committee needs to hear beyond big promises of commitment to the Afghan people what we are going to do.

In Africa, the Administration faces a raft of diplomatic challenges. China and Russia continue to act in ways inimical to our interests and those of the majority of the people in Africa. Tensions between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam could destabilize the entire Horn of Africa. Al Shabaab poses a continuing threat, while in Mozambique another robust terrorist threat has emerged. Coups in Mali and Chad have undermined international counterterrorism and development efforts, and Nigeria requires a fundamental rethink of the framework of our overall engagement.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating social and political pressures, with serious implications for regional stability. We are also seeing a fraying of democratic consensus with deeply flawed elections and far-too-common attacks on the separation of powers, with the potential results of democratic decay all too apparent in the humanitarian crisis in

Venezuela or the irregular migrations streaming from Central America.

I also look forward to hearing what we are doing to get to the bottom of apparent attacks on U.S. personnel and family members that have left many with ongoing and debilitating injuries, and the steps that State is taking to ensure our personnel are protected.

Beyond the immediate health impacts of the COVID pandemic, I also look forward to hearing from you how the United States will address secondary impacts of the pandemic, given that 36 countries and 130 million people could now experience famine this year.

I am also eager to understand how the Administration plans to address the needs of the 235 million people worldwide that require humanitarian assistance and protection, a near 40 percent increase over 2020. Across the globe, authoritarian regimes and non-state actors have impeded humanitarian access to devastating effect, and how the Administration intends to address the horrific trend of sexual and gender-based violence in Tigray, Ethiopia, Burma, Xinjiang, and elsewhere, where governments use sexual violence as a weapon of war against religious and ethnic minorities.

Finally, as the Senate continues with consideration of its China package, including the Strategic Competition Act this committee voted out on a bipartisan basis, I am interested in your views on how to resource and posture ourselves in the Indo-Pacific and successfully compete with China across all dimensions of power.

It is a long list of concerns, Mr. Secretary. You well know that. It is hardly comprehensive, even. That is the world that we have, the challenges that we face as a nation. So we look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas for how we meet this signal moment in our country and our planet's history, and the role you envision for the Department of State in helping our nation to do so.

With that, the distinguished ranking member, Senator Risch.

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

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I join you in the expression of frustration for the tremendous number of issues we have and the minimal time we really have to deal with them here, but it is what it is and we are just going to have to triage and deal with what is most important.

Mr. Secretary, I understand that you are off to the G7 summit immediately after this meeting, and so I would like to start on a positive note. There are some bright spots in the President's international affairs budget request. I was pleased with the emphasis on advancing U.S. global health security. Chairman Menendez and I continue to work on legislation to improve pandemic preparedness and response. It is a high priority for myself, and I think I speak for the Chairman in saying it is a high priority for him also. It is something that this committee really needs to do in light of the things that have happened over the last year and a half. I look forward to seeing how we can align this effort with the Department of State, which obviously plays and will play a large role as we go forward.

Overall, the request is consistent with a troubling pattern where Congress is asked to provide more and more, and the Administra-

tion does not respond in kind, and we would like to see that improve. We see this plainly in the partisan American Rescue Plan, which provided \$10 billion to help combat the COVID-19 pandemic overseas 3 months ago, and I still do not feel that I have an understanding of how this plan will put those resources to good use on the ground.

The President also pledged to share 80 million surplus doses of U.S.-approved COVID-19 vaccines over a month ago, and just last week it provided a snapshot of where they will go. I do not feel I have a comfortable understanding of the information that should be provided with this.

Also, I would really like to see how the Administration will ensure that U.S. financial contributions to COVAX, which are important, are not used to purchase and distribute the substandard Chinese vaccines. We have all seen how those have worked out in the field.

The President has now asked for a 12 percent increase in foreign assistance spending for Fiscal Year 2022. Here again, Congress is asked to provide more money. We need more transparency and more accountability, of course.

The challenges we face overseas are immense, but throwing good money at bad problems has not solved much in the past and will not solve anything today. Increasing foreign aid absent a clear strategy that emphasizes efficiency, effectiveness, and ultimately self-reliance will not advance U.S. strategic interests. Nor will a budget that proposes to throw hard-earned U.S. taxpayer dollars, or worse, our kids' and our grandkids' money, into wholly unaccountable international institutions, including the Green Climate Fund or U.N. agencies in dire need of reform, like the U.N. Human Rights Council and, of course, the World Health Organization, which itself admits that reform is needed.

I believe that advancing an effective strategy to compete with the People's Republic of China must be the United States' top policy priority. I expect to hear today about how this budget addresses this strategic imperative, and we need to fortify U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. The Strategic Competition Act which recently passed out of this committee on a 21-1 vote provides a roadmap. I had hoped, and I think the Chairman had hoped, that we would get a standalone vote on this on the floor. When a bill comes out that is as important as that is and deals with the complexity that it did and comes out on a 21-1 vote, it really should get consideration. Instead, of course, it has been placed in the other bill, which obviously is uncertain where that will go.

The bill that we had authorizes funds to provide strategic direction for countering Chinese influence. It mandates increases for diplomatic engagement, foreign assistance, and security assistance for the Indo-Pacific. Finally, it will help countries better organize infrastructure deals without falling into a Chinese debt trap or compromising their sovereignty.

I am hoping that whatever happens with the large bill, if it does not pass, that we get a vote on our bill, this committee's bill.

With regard to the Iran deal, I am deeply troubled by the direction negotiations are headed. This is no surprise to you, Mr. Secretary, as we have talked about it over and over again. While your

negotiators are in touch with the committee, they are like their predecessors on the original JCPOA, totally unresponsive to congressional objections. These are not consultations, but simply notifications. Not one of the suggestions I have made has been accepted, either in the first JCPOA negotiations or in the ones that are ongoing now.

It is clear that it is intended that we, the United States, rejoin the failed nuclear deal unchanged after the Iranian elections. Your promises to lengthen and strengthen them will come later, but the idea of follow-on agreements is unrealistic and, I would argue, delusional. I cannot understand why anyone would think that if the Iranians will not agree to the things we want them to agree to up front, why in the world would they agree to it after the fact when they get everything that they have asked for in the negotiations? The Iranians will never agree to return to discussions without the threat of continued sanctions.

Additionally, the Administration's plan to pursue sanctions relief not consistent with the original nuclear deal are deeply concerning, especially as you consider rolling back terrorism and other sanctions not covered in the original deal.

Moving to Israel, I applaud the Administration for refusing to bow to progressive demands of our closest friend and ally as they face down a terrorist organization. This is a matter of Iran-backed terrorism against Israel, a sovereign nation, and that is being done by a designated terrorist organization, Hamas, using its own people as human shields. I am disappointed that some of my colleagues in Congress would call this enduring partnership into question.

At the same time, I am concerned that the Administration is rushing to normalize relations with the Palestinian Authority without gaining elimination of the pay-for-slay program and other Palestinian actions that glorify and actually reward violence and terrorism.

On Afghanistan, I have long called for a responsible end to the war, but by doing so in a manner that keeps Americans safe. I believe that what appears to be a rush to a political decision to withdraw without consideration of our counterterrorism priorities will allow Afghanistan to serve as a future platform for terrorist attacks against the United States and our partners. I have concerns that the despicable attack on the girls' school in Kabul is a sign of more to come.

I am also concerned by the President's submission to Putin and abandonment of our European allies by waiving sanctions on Nord Stream 2 AG. You testified in January that Nord Stream 2 was a bad deal, yet this Administration is allowing it to be completed. I understand that you have some thoughts on that that you are going to tell us about today. This decision is really an affront to us. I totally do not understand how the President, within a very short time after being inaugurated, within hours, put a pen to a piece of paper, shut down the Keystone Pipeline, put Canadians and Americans out of work, and yet we do not have that same enthusiasm to shut down the Nord Stream pipeline.

As the President heads to Europe I hope to see the emergence of a real strategy for dealing with Russia, not just more dialogue.

Give Putin an inch and he will take a mile, and I agree with the Chairman wholeheartedly that all he understands is power.

Lastly, in regards to the U.N. this fall, the United States will renegotiate the scales of assessment for U.N. peacekeeping. Currently, the U.N. is assessing the United States at a rate of 27.9 percent. As you know, this is not congruent with U.S. law. No country should pay more than 25 percent, and in 1994 Congress enacted a bill that imposed a 25 percent cap. I would hope the Administration would follow this law. It remains in effect today, and it must be used as the negotiating position.

I look forward to hearing your testimony on these and other items that are a concern.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

Your full statement will be included in the record, Mr. Secretary, and the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. ANTONY J. BLINKEN, SECRETARY OF STATE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, DC

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and all the committee members here today, I very much appreciate this opportunity to talk about the proposed budget and how it will help us achieve our national security priorities and deliver results for the American people, which is our common responsibility and common cause.

This is a critical moment for the United States and for our global leadership. We face major tests, including stopping COVID-19, rising to the challenge of climate change, supporting a global economic recovery that delivers for American workers and their families.

We need to revitalize our alliances and partnerships, out-compete China, and defend the international rules-based order against those who seek to undermine it; renew democratic values at home and abroad; and push back against malign activity by our adversaries.

In a more competitive world, other countries are making historic investments in their foreign policy toolkit. We need to do the same thing. That is why, in this budget, we have requested \$58.5 billion for the State Department and USAID for Fiscal Year 2022.

Just to touch on some of the specifics, the budget will strengthen global health. The United States has been a leader in this field for decades in Africa and around the world. We are asking for \$10 billion for global health programs, including nearly \$1 billion for global health security to help us prevent, prepare for, and respond to future global health crises so we can stop outbreaks before they turn into pandemics that put our safety and prosperity in danger.

The budget would accelerate the global response to climate change and the climate crisis by providing \$2.5 billion for international climate programs, including \$1.25 billion to the Green Climate Fund to help developing countries implement climate adaptation and emissions mitigation programs, which is directly in our interest.

We would double down in this budget in the fight for democracy, which, as we all know, is under threat in too many places. People

talk about a democratic recession around the world. Our budget request includes \$2.8 billion in foreign assistance to advance human rights, to fight corruption, to stem the tide of democratic backsliding, to strengthen and defend democracies. For example, technical training for elections and support for independent media and civil society. We also request \$300 million for the National Endowment for Democracy.

The budget would support a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of irregular migration from Central America. It would invest \$861 million in the region as a first step toward a 4-year commitment of \$4 billion to help prevent violence, reduce poverty, curtail endemic corruption, and expand jobs and educational opportunities.

The budget would reestablish our humanitarian leadership, with a request of \$10 billion in assistance to support refugees, victims of conflict, and other displaced people, and to rebuild our refugees admissions program.

The budget would support our partners in the Middle East by fully funding our commitment to key countries, including Israel and Jordan, and by restoring humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.

It includes a budget request of \$3.6 billion to pay our assessed contributions in full to international organizations, initiatives, and peacekeeping efforts, including to restore our annual contributions to the World Health Organization.

As China and other countries work hard to bend international organizations to their worldview, we need to do our best to ensure that these organizations instead remain grounded in the values, principles, and rules of the world that have made our shared progress possible for so many decades.

Finally, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, to deliver in all these areas, this budget will reinvest in our most vital asset, and that is our people. It will provide new resources to recruit, train, and retain a first-rate, diverse global workforce, with nearly 500 additional Foreign and Civil Service positions, the largest increase for the State Department staffing in a decade. Critically, it would modernize our technology and cybersecurity; protect our embassies and consulates; and include a direct appropriation of \$320 million for consular services worldwide, so we can continue to provide these vital services to Americans and those who seek to travel, study, or do business with the United States.

Our national security depends not only on the strength of our armed forces, but on our ability to conduct effective diplomacy and development. That is how we solve global challenges, that is how we forge cooperation, advance our interests and values, protect our people, and prevent crises overseas from becoming emergencies here at home. That is why diplomacy and development are smart investments for American taxpayers.

A final word, Mr. Chairman. A top priority for me as Secretary is to restore the traditional role of Congress as a partner in our foreign policymaking. That is the spirit that I bring to today's conversation, and I am grateful for this opportunity and the opportunity to have a dialogue and to answer your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Secretary Blinken follows:]

Prepared Statement of Secretary Antony J. Blinken

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and all committee members, thank you for this opportunity to talk about the Biden-Harris administration's proposed budget—and how it will help us achieve our national security priorities and deliver results for the American people.

This is a critical moment for the United States and our global leadership. We face major tests, including stopping the COVID-19 pandemic, rising to the challenge of the climate crisis, and supporting a global economic recovery that delivers for American workers and families. We must revitalize our alliances and partnerships; out-compete China and defend the international rules-based order against those that seek to undermine it; renew democratic values at home and abroad; and push back against malign activity by our adversaries.

In a more competitive world, other countries are making historic investments in their foreign policy toolkit. We must do the same. That's why, in this budget, we've requested \$58.5 billion for the State Department and USAID for Fiscal Year 2022.

Here are some specifics.

This budget will *strengthen global health*. The United States has been a leader in the field for decades, in Africa and around the world. We're asking for \$10 billion for global health programs, including nearly \$1 billion for global health security, to help us prevent, prepare for, and respond to future global health crises so we can stop outbreaks before they turn into pandemics that put our safety and prosperity in danger.

This budget will *accelerate the global response to the climate crisis* by providing \$2.5 billion for international climate programs, including \$1.25 billion to the Green Climate Fund, to help developing countries implement climate adaptation and emissions mitigation programs—which is directly in our own interest.

It will *double down on the fight for democracy*, which is under threat in too many places. Our budget request includes \$2.8 billion in foreign assistance to advance human rights, fight corruption, stem the tide of democratic backsliding, and strengthen and defend democracies—for example, through technical training for elections and support for independent media and civil society. It also requests \$300 million for the National Endowment for Democracy.

This budget will *support a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of irregular migration from Central America*. It will invest \$861 million in the region, as a first step toward a 4-year commitment of \$4 billion, to help prevent violence, reduce poverty, curtail endemic corruption, and expand job and educational opportunities.

It will *reestablish U.S. humanitarian leadership*, with a request of \$10 billion in assistance to support refugees, victims of conflict, and other displaced people, and to rebuild our refugees admissions program.

It will *support our partners in the Middle East* by fully funding our commitments to key countries, including Israel and Jordan, and by restoring humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.

It includes a budget request of \$3.6 billion to pay our assessed contributions in full to *international organizations, initiatives, and peacekeeping efforts*, including to restore our annual contributions to the World Health Organization. As China and others work hard to bend international organizations to their worldview, we must ensure that these organizations instead remain grounded in the values, principles, and rules of the world that have made our shared progress possible for decades.

Finally, to deliver in all these areas, this budget will *reinvest in our most vital asset—our people*. It will provide new resources to recruit, train, and retain a first-rate, diverse global workforce, with nearly 500 additional Foreign and Civil Service positions—the largest increase for State Department staffing in a decade. And it will modernize our technology and cybersecurity; protect our embassies and consulates; and include a direct appropriation of \$320 million for consular services worldwide, so we can continue to provide these vital services to Americans and those who seek to travel, study, or do business with the United States.

Our national security depends not only on the strength of our armed forces but also our ability to conduct effective diplomacy and development. That's how we solve global challenges, forge cooperation, advance our interests and values, protect our people, and prevent crises overseas from turning into emergencies at home. And that's why diplomacy and development are smart investments for American taxpayers.

A top priority for me as Secretary is to restore the traditional role of Congress as a partner in our foreign policy making. That's the spirit I bring to today's conversation, and I'm grateful for this chance to answer your questions.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you, Mr. Secretary. We look forward to engaging in that.

We will start a round of questions, and let me first start on the budget. I have been a robust defender of the State Department's budget in years in which we received budgets that clearly could not meet the mission of the State Department or the interests of the United States. So I am glad to see, as I said in my remarks, a budget that is real and that would be the single most significant increase in a decade, and in general, I support the effort. I may have some suggestions to make as we move forward in the refinement of elements of it, but I do want you to know I support it.

Having said that, I would like to explore with you some regional issues for which this budget is ultimately going to be put to work.

Is it fair to say that when we had the JCPOA, Iran continued to pursue ballistic missiles, Iran continued to destabilize the region, Iran continued to be the single most significant sponsor of terrorism in the world?

Secretary BLINKEN. I think it is fair to say that, Mr. Chairman, although I think, unfortunately, those activities in those areas have only gotten worse.

The CHAIRMAN. I agree, it has gotten worse. I agree with you on that.

Is it fair to say that when we had the JCPOA, that Iran did not seek to change its ways in these areas and others, or seek to get greater relief from sanctions in order to change their ways on these various issues?

Secretary BLINKEN. During the time the JCPOA was enforced, to the extent we were a participant in it, I think that is a fair assessment.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. So here is the concern that I and others have: the Iranians have gotten onto the fact that when they want relief, they accelerate their programs. Now, I was not a supporter of the JCPOA. I think everybody knows that. I also was not a supporter of President Trump arbitrarily and capriciously leaving the agreement without allies at the end of the day, or a strategy to achieve a goal. In fact, Iran has advanced its nuclear program since President Trump left the agreement. It has greater capacity. It has enriched more material. Of course, none of its other malign activity have stopped. They have gotten worse.

So the question is if all we return to is a compliance for compliance basis, which is my takeaway from the conversations I have had with your negotiators, and if we have a history that Iran never sought to get more relief in return for dealing with its other malign activities, what is going to make us believe that, in fact, a return to compliance for compliance is going to produce anything stronger than what we had?

Secretary BLINKEN. Two things, Mr. Chairman. Compliance for compliance, if we get there, and that remains a big if that we can come back to, has to be a first step, not a last step. I agree with that. We have an immediate challenge, which is that, to your point, Iran's nuclear program is galloping forward. It is enriching at higher levels, 20 percent, even 60 percent. In small cases it is using more advanced centrifuges. The breakout time that the agreement established, an agreement that on its terms was working as

verified by our intelligence folks, as well as the international experts, pushed the breakout time to a year. We are now down, based on published reports, to a few months. If this continues, if they continue to enrich at the levels and in the ways that they are doing, it will get down eventually to a few weeks.

So that is a concrete problem. We have an interest in putting that nuclear problem back in the box, because an Iran with a nuclear weapon or with the ability to produce the raw material on very short notice to get one is an Iran that is going to be an even worse actor in terms of its impunity in all of these other areas.

Having said that, I agree with you that, again, this would need to be a first step, not a last step, and we would seek to build on it.

The CHAIRMAN. What does “stronger” mean? Your Administration and you, yourself, in testimony before the committee has said we seek a “longer” —that I get—and “stronger,” but what does “stronger” mean?

Secretary BLINKEN. So, I think we have to look at specific aspects, whether there are areas where we can get even stronger commitments from Iran. Of course, if we do that, we can expect that Iran would ask for things in return. So we would have to gauge whether whatever improvements might be made in terms of stronger would be worth whatever Iran would seek.

The longer piece, as you know very well, is important because a number of the provisions in the agreement sunset, although I would point out that the most critical provisions—that is, the ability to enrich beyond 3.67 percent, the ability to have a stockpile of more than 300 kilograms of enriched uranium—these go until 2030. So there is still some time built in if we come back. I think we need to look at those.

The CHAIRMAN. I hope, Mr. Secretary, that as we are assuaging our European colleagues and cohorts in this effort, that they are truly committed to the “stronger” part, because my experience with them is they want to solve the immediate problem, but getting them to follow on, on the longer-term problems is a much more difficult proposition.

Let me turn to Russia. I am sure many other members will ask you this, but I want to give you an opportunity.

I think many of us on a bipartisan basis were deeply concerned about the Administration’s decision to waive sanctions on Nord Stream 2 AG and its CEO last week. As the President heads to his meeting with Putin, I will reiterate from my perspective; we know what Putin is. As the President himself has said, he is a murderer, he is KGB, and he only understands strength.

I would have thought that one of the most significant ways to show strength is to ensure that the pipeline is killed. Now, you all from your analysis may come to a different conclusion, and I certainly understand the importance of Germany. If you want to give somebody a very strong blow, to send a message, Nord Stream would have been it.

So why don’t you share with us the thinking that went behind on the waiver?

Secretary BLINKEN. Sure, and I appreciate that very much.

First, as you know, construction on the pipeline began in 2018. By the time we took office, it was over 90 percent complete, the physical construction of the pipeline. On May 19, under the legislation, we sanctioned 13 ships and 4 companies, the largest number of entities sanctioned under that legislation since it was put into effect. We also, to your point, issued a national interest waiver under the law with regard to the parent company, Nord Stream 2 AG, and its CEO. That waiver can be rescinded at any time.

Why did we do that? The worst possible outcome from our perspective would be to have construction of the pipeline completed, our relationship with Germany poisoned, no incentive for Germany to come to the table to make good on working to mitigate the serious negative consequences of gas flowing through this pipeline.

The Germans have now come to the table. We are actively engaged with them, and there are a few things that absolutely would need to happen by going forward, as you know and as we have had an opportunity to discuss. Ukraine needs to be made whole if this pipeline is going to go into operation. It will potentially lose transit fees as a result of the pipeline going around Ukraine. That needs to be dealt with.

We must make sure that Russia cannot use gas or energy as a coercive tool in its relations with Ukraine or any other state in Europe. There are ways of doing that, making sure that there is backup so that if gas is denied, we can provide it. Other ways of strengthening and securing Ukraine, various snapback mechanisms so that if Russia acts in an inappropriate way, there is some automaticity in the actions that are taken by us and by Germany. So we are engaged with them on that.

At the same time, as you know, even when the pipeline is physically complete, for it to go into operation, it still requires insurance, it still requires various permits, and we are looking very carefully at all of that.

So what we need to do now is—and it is exactly what we are doing—engage with the Germans to see if we can deal with the negative consequences of this pipeline going into operation. There is a distinction between the physical completion of the pipeline, which in our judgment we simply could not stop. It was too late to stop the joining of those pipes. Its operation is another matter. What we can do for Ukraine and others is also another matter.

Parenthetically—last point—the President spoke to President Zelensky today, invited him to the United States. We are in very active engagement as we go forward on this.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, we are happy to see you did that, and we look forward to seeing what you do as it relates to the potential operational capacity. We don't care what you want. As a last point, I would commend your attention to a Washington Post op-ed that we did on Iran and a different pathway forward—a positive different pathway forward.

Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to associate myself with your questions regarding that.

Look, Mr. Secretary, I do not think there is anybody here who would suggest that the dealings you are going to have with Iran are not tough. They are tough. It is not easy.

What is easy is to say no and push your chair away from the table if you cannot get them to where you need to be, and the JCPOA did not come anywhere close on that.

One of the biggest problems I had was the tremendous amount of cash that was given to the Iranians. There is no doubt in my mind that part of that cash wound up paying for the munitions that were dropped on Israel in recent days. There is no doubt in my mind that part of that cash was paid to arm the Houthis in order to continue their attacks against Saudi Arabia. There is no doubt in my mind that part of that cash was used to construct and deliver missiles into Lebanon that we all know are there and aimed at Israel.

This business of just handing cash over to these people is a bad, bad deal. I suggested last time that if indeed cash is allowed to flow into Iran, that it be put into some kind of a lock box or have some kind of oversight over it so that it cannot be used for the nefarious purposes that Iran wants to use it for. I suggested that last time and I was told, oh, no, they will not agree to that. Well, if they will not agree to that, you know where that money is going to go.

I do not know how somebody could ask us to vote for it when we know that that money is going to be money that causes blood to flow. So I would hope you would take a look at that. As you know, there are billions in South Korea and other countries that the Iranians want freed up and that I have heard discussion would be freed up if indeed another JCPOA deal was reached, and I am very concerned about doing this again. We have seen exactly what happened, and that is going to happen again. It is troubling. It is really, really troubling when you give money to these kinds of people.

So, I do not know, I have irreconcilable differences with the Administration on simply going back into the JCPOA that we were in before. It seems to me that we have gotten ourselves into a position, whether you agree or disagree with what the prior Administration did, it has gotten us to a position where they are deeply weakened compared to when the Administration took office. So I would hope you would take advantage of it and just say no.

That is just the beginning. I mean, they are testing and in development of missiles in absolute violation of resolutions of the U.N. That should not be tolerated. Why sit at a table with people who are going to look you in the eye and say, look, we do not care what you say, we do not care what the U.N. says, we do not care what the rest of the world says, we are going to develop missiles and you can go pound sand? Then we hand them billions of dollars. It does not make sense.

Well, in any event, I wish you well in it. I wish you would say no and keep the sanctions in place. We will be willing partners, at least this Senator will, as far as ratcheting up more of those sanctions against that country.

Let me ask a specific question. On the money that I looked at in this budget that is going to other countries for addressing global warming, I am really lost as to what that is going to go for. It is really vague in there. Can you help me out, what it is going to be used for?

Secretary BLINKEN. Sure. Thank you.

Here is the challenge for us with dealing with global warming, dealing with climate change. We are taking significant steps to curb our emissions. Even if we do everything right, at least in the way that we see it, we are 15 percent of global emissions. So we do everything right, we still have 85 percent of the problem left, and other countries have to come along.

Of course, we do not want to be the ones doing all of the work. We have to get others to do what they need to do, as well, to get—

Senator RISCH. Well, we cannot be, can we? I mean, if we are only 15 percent, we cannot finance the other 85.

Secretary BLINKEN. It is not financing the other 85. There are some countries that need to take meaningful actions to curb emissions that will need assistance in developing and adapting technologies that can help them curb those emissions.

So the Green Climate Fund, for example, is a way of helping countries without the means to do it to adapt technologies that will curb emissions and also build resilience against some of the challenges posed by climate change right now.

Senator RISCH. So is there a plan that we can look at in that regard and identify the countries that are going to get this money and how much they are going to get?

Secretary BLINKEN. I believe there is, and I am happy to share that with you.

Senator RISCH. Please do. Go ahead.

Secretary BLINKEN. I was going to say we will be happy to come back to you with the details on that.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The committee received no response from the witness for the information requested above.]

Senator RISCH. Thank you. I did not allow you to respond on the Iranian situation.

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes, and we have had the opportunity to talk about this—

Senator RISCH. We have.

Secretary BLINKEN. —a number of times.

Senator RISCH. Appreciate you.

Secretary BLINKEN. First, all of the egregious actions, which we share condemnation of with you, that Iran is engaged in are happening under maximum pressure, and more. It has gotten worse, not better. So that effort did not solve the problem, a problem we all acknowledge.

Whether we like it or not, and we do not like it, Iran has been engaged in these activities, including support for Hamas, including support for other terror groups, including support for proxies engaging in destabilizing activities across the board. It was doing that before the JCPOA; it continued to do that during the JCPOA; and it has gotten worse since we got out of the JCPOA.

Our challenge now I think is threefold. One is we have the problem that its nuclear program—and now that it is not abiding by the constraints of the JCPOA—is literally galloping forward, and we talked about that a few minutes ago. The magnitude of their enrichment, enriching more at higher levels, is putting it in a posi-

tion where the breakout time is inexorably getting down from a year to months, to eventually weeks, and that is a problem for us.

Also, if this continues, what it is learning, what it is able to master in the time that it is doing this is going to be very hard to pull back. So we have that incentive. That is one piece.

The second piece—and I agree with both you and the Chairman—that is a necessary step, put this back in the box, but an insufficient one, and we have to build on it. Not only in terms of the agreement itself, in terms of these other actions that Iran is taking that we all profoundly object to.

We will retain all of the tools to do that, to push back on them for these actions. I think we will have greater cooperation and coordination from partners who over the last few years have been focused almost entirely on preserving the nuclear agreement, not actually working with us to help curb some of these other actions.

So we have to be able to do all of that, and what I can tell you is we are determined to do that, but we need to put this nuclear problem back in the box that it was in and move on from there.

Senator RISCH. Well, my time is up. Thank you. Let me just conclude by saying that we both know, and the world knows, that there is another entity that is going to do something about this. Whatever the JCPOA says or does not say, whatever everybody else agrees to, there is another entity that has taken a solemn oath that they will never have—Iran will never have a nuclear weapon. I guess the biggest question would be what happens when you get the call? Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Secretary Blinken, welcome. I see you have been very busy. It's a challenging world.

I certainly agree with Senator Menendez, our Chairman, that we welcome the budget that has been submitted for our foreign policy issues. It certainly reflects the commitment that we have a value-based foreign policy.

I was particularly pleased by your statements here about your commitment to good governance. The press statement for your FY 2022 budget says it includes a significant increase to resources to advance human rights and democratic values, fight corruption, stem the tide of democratic backsliding, and defend against authoritarianism.

Then in the INL budget you have a particular focus on the anti-corruption activities.

So you mentioned some of that during your opening statement, but I would like to drill down to one aspect of fighting corruption which I believe is desperately needed within the State Department, and that's the capacity in each of our missions to understand the circumstances in the host country to get the best intelligence information about their system and what can be done to fight corruption, and then impressing upon the host country our interest in helping them in dealing with anti-corruption measures.

Do we have enough resources in this budget to be able to develop that type of capacity within the missions?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, first of all, for putting a spotlight on that. Thank you for all of the work you have been doing over many years. I think of all of the bad things out there that we are

dealing with, corruption in terms of the corrosive impact that it has on democracy has got to be very near the top of the list. Parenthetically, I think if we look at virtually any popular movement over the last decade or 15 years, whether it is the Tunisian troop bender or whether it is Tahrir Square or whether it is the Maidan in Ukraine, whether it is the protests in Brazil, the common denominator each time is revulsion at corruption. Sometimes it is the reason. It is certainly a reason that we see people at some point just get fed up.

So we are determined to make sure that we have the resources to do exactly what you are talking about in a couple of ways, and we would welcome working with you going forward to make sure that this is as sharp as possible.

First, we need the human resources, the expertise in the Department and the ability to support and deploy that expertise, to your point, to our embassies. So people who have the training, have the background, have the skill set to work on these issues.

I think part of our request that is so significant to me is the additional almost 500 positions, but this is not just asking for 500 positions in a vacuum. There are specific areas where we know we need to build up our capacity that we will look to use this and other flexibilities to address, and this expertise on economic matters, on corruption, is one of them. Technology is another. China is a third. Global health is a fourth. So we are very focused there.

Second, we have to do this in close collaboration and coordination with the other expert agencies in our Government, and I think there is a real commitment to do that. The national security advisor, Jake Sullivan, brings all of us together and is very focused on this. So we have to do that.

Third, I think you saw Vice President Harris just today announce the surging of experts to some countries in Central America to help them, to the extent they are willing to be helped, deal with endemic corruption. So we have some ability to surge expertise.

The long and short of it is, though, I would very much welcome working with you on this to make sure that we do have what we need, and we are certainly very open to ideas for how we can do this more effectively, and then make sure we are resourced appropriately.

Senator CARDIN. I appreciate that. It also helps us, if we then have the information we need to impose sanctions, such as Global Magnitsky, by having that capacity in each of our missions.

The Administration has talked about multinational approaches, and I certainly support multinational approaches. So let me talk about the sustainable development goals that were created in 2015. Goal 16 deals with good governance, which is the areas that we are talking about here and getting our international support for efforts to make significant improvements in governance.

The prior Administration failed to support the U.N. Joint SDG Fund, which is the sole U.N. funding vehicle to energize private sector and other resources to support the SDGs. Given President Biden and your renewed commitment to American multilateralism and sustainable development, what steps will this Administration take in order to advance the SDG goals, particularly Goal 16?

Secretary BLINKEN. I think we need to make sure that we are dedicating our appropriate share of resources to advance these goals. This is one of the reasons we want to try to make right by our commitments to international institutions and to various programs in those institutions that advance the interests of the United States. Parenthetically, when we do not do that, our influence and our ability to shape how these programs are carried out is diminished or lost. So we have an interest in making sure that the focus that these institutions bring to the problem is appropriate and effective.

The long and short of it is we believe we need to fund our commitments and then be at the table, in the room, to help carry them out.

Senator CARDIN. I would just add in multinationalism, the Organization of American States, the OSCE, and other international organizations where the United States leadership can play a critical role to focus those organizations in addition to the United Nations in these values that are critically important to our national security, I would just urge you to work with us to see whether we can't be more effective in getting multinational focus on dealing with corruption.

I want to add my view in regards to the Iran circumstances. I agree with Chairman Menendez. He and I had similar views on the JCPOA and President Trump's decision to leave the JCPOA. I would just make one point. The JCPOA was a lifetime prohibition about Iran being able to have a nuclear weapons program.

Secretary BLINKEN. That is correct.

Senator CARDIN. So we had sunsets that now would be irrelevant to that lifetime commitment. So when you talk about whenever we get back into an agreement, it's got to make sure that there is a lifetime prohibition about Iran ever becoming a nuclear weapons state, and you have functioning agreements that you can identify to make sure they never get within a year of breakout.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Johnson.

Senator JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I was part of the effort led by Senator Cruz and Senator Shaheen to impose sanctions to stop the building of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, and I have to admit honestly that I was surprised at how unbelievably effective those sanctions were, and it stopped it.

When you came before this committee about 5 months ago, I thought you were completely on board with the continued halting of the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. I have to admit I am shocked that now the fact that yesterday and today you are conceding the fact that it is going to get built. That would have been really nice to know 5 months ago.

When did your thinking change on that?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator. Again, as we discussed then, unfortunately, construction started on this bad idea in 2018, and when we last spoke the pipeline was well over 90 percent complete as a physical—

Senator JOHNSON. Yes, when we imposed sanctions and halted it last time. Why not continue to pause the sanctions? I am sorry,

your explanation literally makes no sense. So now we are conceding the building, we are going to have it constructed, and now we are going to somehow impose serious consequences when Germany does not live up to providing the revenue relief for Ukraine when Russia does use it as a weapon?

Secretary BLINKEN. As a practical matter, as we looked at this, we all agreed this pipeline is a bad idea. We have opposed it. The President has been clear about that for a long time. As a very practical matter, with inheriting a pipeline that was 95 percent complete—

Senator JOHNSON. We stopped it the last time.

Let us move on to Iran.

Secretary BLINKEN. No, in fact, we did not, by definition.

Senator JOHNSON. Let us move on to Iran. During the debate over the JCPOA, I offered an amendment to deem that a treaty. From my standpoint, that amendment should have passed 100 to zero. Had it passed 100 to zero, the JCPOA would have been, first, a far better agreement, and you would not be in a position where from one Administration to the next a President can just cancel another's executive agreement.

Now you are engaged in further discussions with Iran. I have my doubts that you will end up with a better agreement. It is going to be worse. It will embolden Iran.

First of all, what justification is there for something that is that significant—and again, if you take a look at the State Department's own manuals in terms of how it defines a treaty, I think it is quite clear that the original JCPOA was a treaty. Do you not think any agreement that you enter into with Iran should be deemed a treaty and should be ratified by the United States Senate?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, as you know, numerous arms control and non-proliferation agreements reached by the United States were not treaties, and there are benefits—you are right—to enshrining something in a treaty. There are also downsides in terms of some of the constraints that it would actually place on us. It is also more complicated when you are dealing with a multi-party agreement, which was the case with the JCPOA. We had, of course, the European partners. We had the Russians, the Chinese, not to mention the Iranians. So looking at the history of arms control and non-proliferation agreements, looking at what would give us maximum flexibility, this was the most effective way forward.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. Well, I respectfully disagree.

Real quick, I did send a letter together with Senator Scott inquiring as to why the State Department ended its investigation regarding the gain of function and the lab leak origination of the coronavirus. I think your response is due on June 10th. I am hoping you will respond and provide us the information we are requesting. Are you aware of that letter?

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes. Thank you, Senator, I am. We will certainly respond to that in a timely fashion. Just for what it is worth to try to clear this up, because there has been, unfortunately, a lot of erroneous reporting on this, the study in question, the work in question was by the Trump administration. They hired a contractor within the State Department to do an internal inquiry into the origins of COVID-19, with a focus on the lab leak scenario.

That work was completed. It was not terminated.

Senator JOHNSON. Okay. So just explain that. I want to move on to another issue, so just respond to my oversight request.

Finally, I want to talk about the budget as it relates to what the Biden administration is proposing to spend I guess to fix Central America. My first trip down to Central America, it was interesting what the presidents of those countries talked about in terms of what they are dealing with. First it was corruption, and then impunity. Obviously, I understand corruption. Impunity, I thought that is odd; what are you talking about there?

The fact of the matter is they are talking about the fact that the drug cartels are untouchable. By the way, the drug cartels in Central America, through our drug interdiction efforts, we stopped or we certainly redirected the flow through the Caribbean and up through Central America, destroying those societies in many respects.

So I do not know what amount of money we can spend in Central America to really address the drug lords. I keep hearing the root cause of this problem is the violence in Central America. I would argue the root cause of the violence in Central America is America's insatiable demand for drugs.

So the border crisis, the current crisis, is completely the result of the actions that President Biden took when he first entered office, ending the successful migrant protection policy, the agreements with those countries and, quite honestly, not completing the 250 miles of border wall that is bought and paid for. I listened to Vice President Harris talking about, oh, we are going to steer the border. I see no evidence of that.

So tell me how you can expect a few hundred million, or I do not really know the exact amount you are really proposing over the next couple of years during this Administration, of pouring into Central America to try and fix the push factor when the push factor is caused by our insatiable demand for drugs, and the flow of migrants—by the way, the presence of those countries were pleading with me and on a bipartisan basis with other Senate colleagues, please fix your laws. This is not good for us to lose our future, to have this outflow of people we need to rebuild our economies.

So please explain how these policies are going to result in anything and how that money is not going to be just completely wasted in Central America.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you. There are a number of things that we need to do, and do it at the same time. We have to have, and we are determined to have, and we will have, a secure border. We have to have rational immigration policies. We have to deal with these drivers.

I think it is fair to say that folks do not just wake up in the morning in Guatemala or Honduras or El Salvador and say, boy, it would be a lot of fun to just give up everything I know, my family, my language, my culture, my community, take this incredibly hazardous journey, put myself in the hands of coyotes, come to the United States, and the border is closed in any event, and that would be a great thing to do.

We know that there are very, very serious things in their lives that are pushing them to take these chances, and these are things that I think we can help address.

To your point, you are right, I think there are a number of factors involved, the corruption and lack of good governance, the impunity in terms of violence. The single biggest driver in most places in my estimation, though, is fundamentally a lack of opportunity, a lack of a job, a lack of a paycheck, being able to put money on the table, feed their families. This is a place where I think we can have a real impact, working primarily with the private sector, which has to be the engine for these kinds of investments. The Government can help and be a catalyst.

We need to see that, of course. Governments need to do the work to put in place some of the laws and structures that make private investment more possible, so we are working on that as well.

Senator, if we do not also deal with these drivers, it is just very hard to overcome the choice that people make to put their lives in someone else's hands to try to come here.

We have to be able to do all of that, and that is where the President is going to go. I would be happy when the time comes—this is not just throwing money at the problem. There are and will be serious metrics, serious oversight, serious benchmarks to what we are trying to accomplish.

The last thing I would mention on this, if I can, part of the challenge is that you have governments that we cannot work effectively with because of corruption and because of gross mismanagement. Well, we will be working with others, with the private sector, with civil society, with NGOs, with organizations that do this work, with local communities, as the case may be, to try to make sure that any funds that we ask our taxpayers to dedicate to this are used wisely and effectively and are not wasted, and I really welcome an opportunity to work with this committee on that.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

For the information of all members, there is a vote that started at 3:07. It is the Chair's intention to continue to work through and rotate as members come in and out, because we have time finite with the Secretary, and we have members who want to ask questions. So I am going to work through these votes.

With that, Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here and for the hard work that you are doing to restore America's credibility in the international community.

In New Hampshire we have a short border with Canada, but I have a number of constituents who have relatives in Canada, we have a number of businesses who do business in Canada. There is a lot of cross-border traffic, and the border closure has been a real hardship for so many of our citizens.

My office heard from a man whose mother had passed away in January in New Brunswick. He wanted to go to the funeral because they could not delay it any later than May 31st. The Canadian Government told him in order to do that, he would have to quarantine for 5 days. He could not take the time off from work. He could not get a waiver.

So I appreciate that this has been a joint agreement between Canada and the United States, but at this point, given the increasing vaccination rate on both sides of the border, I hope that you will commit to doing everything you can to get that border opened so that the hardship that my constituents and other constituents are experiencing will end and they can resume normal relationships with their families and business in the way that will benefit them.

Secretary BLINKEN. I very much appreciate, Senator, those hardships for all of the border states with Canada. This is something that I have engaged my Canadian counterpart on multiple times. We are trying to work through these challenges, and I have gotten some relatively more positive feedback from him recently that I am happy to share with you.

It is a work in progress. If there are specific instances or cases, please bring them to my attention, to our attention, so that I can also share them with our counterparts.

To your point, I think we are, hopefully, getting to the point—we certainly are. Canada is a little bit behind where we are, but we are getting to a better point.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, good, I appreciate that, particularly as we are getting into the tourism season and there is a lot of cross-border traffic between Canada and the United States and it is critical to our states and others along the border.

I want to follow up with the questions that have already been asked about Nord Stream 2 because, as you know, this is something that I have been very concerned about. I just returned from a trip to Kiev with my colleagues, Senators Murphy and Portman, who were also along, and one of the things we heard very loudly from our Ukrainian partners was just how devastating the loss of revenue will be once Russians stop using Ukraine as a transit route.

Also, the concern about giving Russia another weapon to use against Europe, and the other potential ramifications of the fallout from completion of Nord Stream 2.

You talked about trying to make the Ukrainians whole in terms of the transit fees, but can you also discuss what else we can do to support Ukraine if this pipeline becomes operational, and what the Germans might be willing to do in that regard?

Secretary BLINKEN. Certainly. I think there are a number of things that we are looking at that we need to look at and, of course, need Germany and others to look at and ultimately take action on. One is the possibility of actually extending the existing transit agreement for many years into the future so that Ukraine would continue to benefit from the transit fees. If that does not work, I think finding ways to make Ukraine whole for the lost transit fees is something that the Europeans would need to step up to.

The other side of the coin that you just alluded to is making sure that we have in place and Europe has in place appropriate reserves and appropriate means to counter any attempt by Russia to use gas or oil as a coercive political tool so that they cannot be subject to blackmail.

There is another thing that is really important here which sometimes gets missed in the equation, which is Ukraine's own energy potential and efficiency potential is very, very much unrealized, and if Ukraine used energy more efficiently than it does, a lot of the leverage that Russia might acquire will be diminished significantly. So there is a lot of work to be done there.

Finally, I think that when it comes to Russian misbehavior in general in that part of the world, we are looking to our allies and partners to commit up front to taking action, to taking steps in response so that we do not have to scramble if Russia does something bad to try to bring people on.

All of that and more is on the table, and we are looking to Germany in particular to make good on some of these things.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. As you have heard, this is a very important bipartisan issue for this committee and for Congress, and we will be watching closely and trying to be helpful in any way we can as we figure out how to negate the potential weapon that Russia could have against not just Ukraine, but all of Western Europe.

I want to go back to Afghanistan. You alluded to some of the challenges there in your opening statement. We saw on May 8 the bombing of a school in Kabul, a girls school, which resulted in about 80 deaths. Many were the school girls, and we know what the Taliban's position is on women and girls. We have seen the assassination, deliberate assassination efforts against women who are working.

So, what steps is the State Department taking to provide for the safety of women and girls after our military has left the country? Do we have a focal point in the State Department for someone who is working on these issues who we can continue to talk with as we hear from the women leaders in Afghanistan who are so worried about what is going to happen?

Secretary BLINKEN. First, just with regard to the attack that you referenced, I mean, we have witnessed horrible things happening every single day in places that we are all focused on. I have to say, that one in particular, I think it is hard to think of anything more horrific, the deliberate murder of these young girls in a school. That hit me profoundly, as well.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. I would just point out that this committee and the Senate just passed a resolution condemning that attack, which I hope sends an important message not just to the Taliban, but to the women of Afghanistan.

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, I think it is important, and it does, because here is what is important. First, even as we withdraw our forces from Afghanistan, and NATO withdraws its forces, we are not withdrawing from Afghanistan. We are determined to sustain a strong embassy and a strong diplomatic presence. We are working with other partner countries so that they do the same. We are trying to put in place what is necessary to sustain that, and we will look forward to actually sharing that with the committee in the weeks ahead.

As a result, to continue most of the programs that we have had in place, we have committed over the years, as you know better than I do, nearly \$800 million to programs for women and girls in

Afghanistan. We plan to sustain that programming, and even more broadly economic development, humanitarian security force support. I acknowledge it is not going to be necessarily a simple proposition. It comes with real challenges. I believe that with the right embassy presence and the right team, we can sustain these programs, and we can provide appropriate oversight to make sure the money is being well spent. That is one piece.

The other piece is a future Afghanistan that does not uphold these basic rights, including the gains made for women and girls, is going to be a pariah internationally. It is not going to have support from anyone, certainly not from the United States. That also, I think, is going to have to get factored into the thinking of future governance in Afghanistan.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I am out of time, but I certainly hope that is the case and that the United States will continue to lead the charge on getting support from the international community to hold the Taliban accountable for what they are doing.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Romney.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, it is good to see you. I appreciate the work that you are leading and applaud many of the initiatives that you described today and that you are carrying out.

One thing you said today that I wanted to make a comment about, which is that looking at Central America to try to deal with some of the illegal immigration crisis that we are seeing at the border and attempting to deal with some of the root causes, as you described it, of illegal immigration, and some funding provided to the Central Americans to help deal with some of those root causes, I am concerned that a lot of that funding is going to end up in corrupt hands. I would also note that fighting crime and poverty there is quite a task because we have crime and poverty here that we have not been able to solve. How we are going to be able to solve them in someone else's country is beyond me.

I also believe that the great majority of people who come here illegally come here for better opportunity, which is part of our free enterprise system, as opposed to the socialism they are living under, and for freedom from autocracies. So I would note that I think the best solutions to this crisis are completing the barrier, mandatory E-Verify. These are the kinds of things I think will make a difference.

Let me go to another topic. I am concerned about what I read about Mexico and about the number of assassinations that have occurred in Mexico leading up to their elections. I mean, I do not have the sources of information that you have, obviously, but it read as if it was almost a failed state. We are not just talking about a few. I think the number was like over 80 people had been assassinated leading up to the elections.

This is extraordinary. This is a country that is apparently being ridden with crime lords taking over the Government. How bad is it, and is there an effort that we can help support the Government in trying to bring stability to that country?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, I very much share your concern about that, about insecurity in general, about this political violence

as well in particular; and, of course, the violence being perpetrated by these drug gangs, transnational criminal organizations that are involved.

One of the things that we have done is reengage with the Mexicans to restart and hopefully really reenergize the work that we had been doing together on security. So we have a high-level dialogue on security issues that is now restarting, as well as one on economic issues.

So I believe that we can be helpful to the Mexicans in getting a better grip on some of this violence. I acknowledge it is not easy at all, but necessary. There, too, I would welcome working with this committee on good ideas to try to advance that. The bottom line is we are reengaged with the Mexican Government on security issues to see if we can be helpful.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you.

Another topic, going across the world, in Taiwan, I am very concerned that what the Taiwanese are hearing from the Chinese is harming our interests there and the interests of freedom. According to the Ambassador from Taiwan, she indicated that she received social media that said that Americans have so much vaccine that we are using it to provide vaccines for our animals, our pets, our dogs and our cats, and that the lives of Taiwanese are not worth as much as an American dog.

Clearly, it is in our interest in a very critical nation in the world to see vaccinations that we have available going to Taiwan. I am concerned, if COVAX is the source of providing those vaccines, that COVAX will be, if you will, pressured by China, will not give the Taiwanese what they need.

Are we giving directly the vaccinations that Taiwan needs, and can we make the number large enough? I understand it was announced at 750,000 doses. If that is a Pfizer or Moderna dose, that is half that number in terms of vaccinated people. They need something much closer to 2 million.

I just hope that you will bring extra attention to that issue.

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, in short, yes. We are making sure that vaccines do get to Taiwan. Just to be clear about what we are doing and how we are doing it, the President announced, as you know, that we would be pushing out between now and early July 80 million vaccine doses to include a combination of AstraZeneca, but also Pfizer and Moderna, and we are doing some of that in coordination with COVAX. Even in coordination with COVAX, we can direct where the vaccines go, and some of it just directly.

The first 25 million doses is what we describe the allocation for those to include doses for Taiwan. There are another 55 million to follow between now and early July, and then beyond that, two things are very important. One is we will continue, after the 80 million, to provide excess doses in the months ahead as we have them, because we will have them.

Parenthetically, the 80 million doses, we will be, by a factor of 5, the leading country in sharing vaccines with the world, by a factor of 5. China has sold a lot to other countries, but in terms of actually giving them to other countries, by a factor of 5.

Equally important, we are working very hard right now on significantly increasing production capabilities so that we can make

sure that more vaccines are produced more quickly and that we can be the leader in vaccinating the world. Of course, as you know, it is not just the right thing to do, it is profoundly in our interest, because as long as this virus is replicating somewhere, it is going to be mutating. If it is mutating, it could come back to bite us.

So we have a strong incentive to get ahead of this, and I believe that with the work that we are doing, that the President is doing on this, we will be the leader in making sure that the world is vaccinated, including Taiwan.

Senator ROMNEY. I have very little time, and that means you have very little time for this answer. Coming back from Europe and that meeting with the G7, to what extent are you comfortable with or have confidence in the reaction of our other G7 members to the threat that is posed by China?

Secretary BLINKEN. I think, Senator, quickly—and I am happy to go into more detail at another time—I think there is a rising appreciation for the challenges posed by China, including, for example, when it comes to technology and their various networks. We have spent a lot of time talking about that, about resilient supply chains. That concern is rising across the board.

Now, there are differences among certain countries. I think the work the Senate is doing, including I believe this afternoon, is going to have a very meaningful impact, and we appreciate that.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Mr. Secretary, good to talk with you again following this morning's Appropriations Committee hearing.

Just following up on what Senator Romney and you were just discussing, I think this is an important moment for bold vaccine diplomacy by the United States. We have long been a world leader in public health. We have, because of the efforts of this Administration and the previous one, developed the world-leading, most effective vaccines. Because of President Biden's relentless focus on vaccinating the American people, we are now on the threshold of 70 percent vaccination in a number of states, and I do think it is time for bold vaccine diplomacy.

What more could we be doing in the Senate on a bipartisan basis to send a strong signal of support for taking decisive steps? I think the announcement last week was terrific. What I heard in both Taiwan and South Korea, as well as from other countries, was very encouraging. What else would be helpful for you to hear from Congress about this initiative?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you for putting a spotlight on that, because I could not agree more with you and Senator Romney on the importance of this, and also, honestly, the opportunity to show our leadership.

So, I think the next most important step beyond the vaccines that we have available to share is increasing significantly production capacity in the United States, as well as in other parts of the world. If we stay on the current trajectory in terms of the vaccines produced and the pace at which they are being administered, we are not going to get to global herd immunity, roughly 70 percent, as you know very well, until 2024. That is unacceptable, or at least it should be.

We do, I believe, especially if we manage to significantly increase production and then share that production, we can get there a lot faster. I think the President will be coming back to you on this in the relatively near future, things that we can do to boost production.

Senator COONS. As you know, I had a hand in the BUILD Act and in standing up the DFC. I think it is a tool that, in partnership with some of our key allies, could be critical. While in South Korea, I had a number of conversations about vaccine partnership in terms of manufacturing. We would be excited to work with you on that.

Let me move on to the questions that have been raised a number of times today about the Northern Triangle. I will add to that the Sahel, two areas of the world where we have significant fragility, a band of several states in West Africa, a grouping of three states in Central America where corruption, impunity, widespread insecurity, the impacts of climate change are having a dramatic impact.

The Global Fragility Act is a bill that was signed into law that Senator Lindsay Graham and I worked hard on that provides a framework for accountability, for metrics, and for a State Department-led partnership between State, USAID, and DoD on dealing with fragility.

How do you see the Global Fragility Act framework being relevant to places like the Sahel or the Northern Triangle, and how can that help focus the difficult work the Vice President is currently leading in terms of investing and stabilizing three countries that have a very troubled current status, but where successfully stabilizing them is essential to our security and stability as well?

Secretary BLINKEN. A couple of things. First, thank you for mentioning the Sahel, and thank you for your work there as well. I think we have a deep concern about spreading instability in the Sahel. We have roughly 20 million people who are in need in that area—Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, Mauritania—and that, of course, becomes a breeding ground for violent extremism, as we have seen.

We are partnered with a number of other countries to act on countering violent extremism, on governance, on humanitarian. We are the largest humanitarian donor in the neighborhood, as you know. In March, we had an additional \$80 million or so.

To the more specific point, I think the Global Fragility Act is a very important vehicle for us to be able to advance this work. The budget request that we have before you includes \$185 million to help implement the Global Fragility Act. There is \$125 million for the Prevention and Stabilization Fund, I think \$25 million above the Fiscal Year 2021 enacted budget; \$60 million for the Complex Crises Fund, which I think is roughly \$30 million above the Fiscal Year 2021 enacted.

So the resources would support the actual implementation of the Act to try to do what you set out to do, which is to actually anticipate and prevent a conflict, because an ounce of prevention beats a pound of cure. Also, to support these inclusive, locally-driven political processes to try to stabilize some of these conflict-ridden places, working with our external partners to integrate our capabilities.

So right now where we are is we are finalizing the selection of five priority countries or regions based on our assessment of the data, the opportunity for impact, and national security priorities, and we are doing that across the Administration with the relevant departments and agencies. Then as we get that settled, we want to come to you and consult on that, share our thinking, and then refine it and go to the President for final approval.

Senator COONS. Wonderful. My last question I do not mean to seem churlish because you have just dedicated a huge amount of time to testifying in front of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, House Appropriations, Senate Appropriations, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the context that many of us have worked in, your two predecessors appeared once, and we had enormous difficulty getting them back to testify in front of Foreign Relations or Appropriations and to engage around their budgets. That was at a time when they were proposing dramatic cuts in spending.

I am very encouraged by the budget that the Administration is putting forward for the State Department, for AID, for a number of other critical international functions. Can we count on you to come back? Because you are such a good advocate for the State Department as someone who served for decades here in the Senate and in foreign policy. I just want to make sure that we are going to have another opportunity for you to engage with the Appropriations Committee and Foreign Relations Committee as we try to enact a robust budget that meets the needs of this moment.

Secretary BLINKEN. I am committed to engaging this committee, as well as the Appropriations Committees, in a whole variety of ways, whether it is in hearings, in private conversations, in individual conversations. I made a commitment to the Chairman during the confirmation process that I would do that, and I will be held to that.

Senator COONS. Great. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. To the Secretary's credit, he has kept his word on that.

Senator Portman is with us virtually, I understand.

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here.

I will get right down to my questions. As you know from Senator Shaheen's comments, I was on the congressional delegation recently to Lithuania, to Ukraine, and to Georgia. We spent quite a bit of time talking about the Belarus issues and Lithuania, including meeting with the opposition leader.

I want to start by just saying it will not surprise you to hear that I strongly disagree with the Administration's position on Nord Stream 2, which is a reversal of a previous position, and waiving the congressionally mandated sanctions on Nord Stream 2 is going to have a detrimental impact on these other countries in the region, particularly Ukraine, where the pipeline apparently goes through Ukraine, where there is about a \$3 billion fee that is badly needed in Ukraine these days and that is in our interest.

One issue that has come to my attention that I had not fully realized is the threat they are feeling not just from their eastern border, where Russia has recently sent 110,000 troops and left equip-

ment there, by the way, and left most of those troops, but also on the northern border with Belarus, where Russia's military presence is increasing.

So more and more pressure on them, and again something that is not perhaps fully understood is that the pipeline itself in a way was a way to encourage the safety of Ukraine in that Russia would be unlikely to want to destroy its own pipeline should it make a mistake and engage in further aggression towards Ukraine.

So can you comment on why you changed your mind? I see that you have already talked about this today. I was not able to listen to all the testimony. How do you answer Ukraine when they say, among other things, that no one even bothered to talk to President Zelensky about it before this decision was made?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much, Senator. Yes, we did have an opportunity to talk about this a little bit before. Just to focus in on it again, first let me just say President Biden spoke to President Zelensky today. He invited him to Washington in the coming weeks, and they had a very good conversation.

Also, for the record, we did share with our Ukrainian partners our intentions when it came to the pipeline, and maybe that information did not get directly to President Zelensky; it certainly should have.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, I think it certainly should have been communicated to him. By the way, I do appreciate the fact that that phone call was made. Thank you. I am sure you played a big role in that. Not as good as having Georgia and Ukraine present, at least for a 10- or 15-minute session with the NATO summit. That is what I think is really needed, because otherwise it just sends the wrong signal to Russia, and this is something that I know you understand well. These signals are important. It is the narrative and the disinformation that Russia will now engage in that makes it even more difficult for Ukraine.

I will not ask you to go into your explanation. I will find it from the previous questions, but I must say I am disappointed. I know that you yourself had a strong view on this at one point, that Nord Stream 2 was not something that was in our interest.

With regard to an ambassador to Ukraine, we have a good career team there, as you know. You were there recently, and thank you for making the trip. We need an ambassador. I assume you heard this from all the folks in the Government in Ukraine, as we did. I have been there with an ambassador and without an ambassador, and it is a big difference. As you know, we came very close to getting General Dayton through the process last time. Why have you all not nominated someone, and what is your plan on nominating an ambassador for Ukraine?

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator. We are trying to move forward on that as quickly as possible, and we have a process that I am sure you are familiar with at the State Department in terms of putting forward ambassadors. We are in the midst of that process now, and I anticipate that that will happen in relatively short order.

Let me just say, that is a priority for us and for the President. I want to make sure that we have the strongest possible person leading the strongest possible team in Ukraine.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, Mr. Secretary, when you nominate someone, I assume it will be a career person who has a good background, and I am glad you are looking to someone who has experience because it is a critical post. I will be one of those who will be very eager to help you get that through the process as quickly as possible.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you.

Senator PORTMAN. I think both the Chairman and the Ranking Member will agree with me.

On the NATO MAP issue, in 2008 then-Senator Biden introduced a resolution calling for a NATO membership action plan for Ukraine and for Georgia. By the way, that was the same year, as you know, that NATO said they were going to have both Georgia and Ukraine come into NATO, just a question of when. That resolution passed the Senate easily. It had the support of a lot of members, including a senator named Obama and one named Clinton, and one named McCain, totally bipartisan.

Does this Administration still support a membership action plan for Ukraine and Georgia?

Secretary BLINKEN. We support Ukraine membership in NATO. It currently has all of the tools it needs, because since the membership action plan was created, a number of other very important tools were developed to help countries prepare for possible NATO membership, including an annual program that Ukraine benefits from. In our estimation, Ukraine has all the tools that it needs to continue to move forward in that direction, and we are working with it on virtually a daily basis.

The MAP itself would have to be done in full consensus with other NATO members. I think there are some countries that are less supportive than others of that right now. Irrespective of that, Ukraine has the tools it needs to move forward toward being ready for membership in the future.

The other piece of this, though, as you know, given all the time and investment you have made on this, as important as its preparations militarily and strategically is the preparation when it comes to having good governance and dealing with the aggression that is eating at Ukraine from within, and that is corruption and a system that works effectively to deal with it. So what we also need to see from Ukraine is continued progress on that level, as well.

Senator PORTMAN. No question there has been enormous progress made. We need look back only to 2014 when they began and the electoral changes, the judicial reforms, and others, some of the economic reforms, have been substantial. I agree, more needs to be done, and more has to be done, frankly, in order for NATO membership to be completed. I would hope, as I said earlier, about the narrative, that we are not backing off on membership action plan, understanding that you have to convince the other NATO members to go along.

The United States tends to have a significant influence in NATO. We are their champion. We are the country they look to, and they are under enormous pressure right now. This build-up on the eastern border is something that mystifies everybody except that Russia must have some designs on continuing their aggression and

holding on to Crimea and the Donbas. Then again, what is happening in Belarus is an additional very serious concern.

My time is probably over, but the Global Engagement we talked about, and we look forward to following up with you about the Global Engagement Center in the budget request.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. This has been very helpful.

Because members have been putting down their views about the JCPOA, I am going to do the same thing. I was one of the largest proponents of the JCPOA on this committee, and I continue to be, and I believe it was disastrous for the Trump administration to back out of it.

The first sentence of the first paragraph, as I recall, said that Iran reaffirms that it will never seek to purchase, acquire, or develop a nuclear weapon.

Secretary BLINKEN. That is correct.

Senator KAINE. An enforceable agreement.

Secretary BLINKEN. That is correct.

Senator KAINE. Signed before the entire global community, not only with allies of the United States, with adversaries of the United States, Russia and China.

Permanent, enforceable, would give the U.S. grounds for, I think, defensible military action should Iran have violated it.

Secretary BLINKEN. That is correct.

Senator KAINE. The agreement contained many other provisions with respect to limitations on Iran's nuclear program.

Now, many of those provisions were temporary. Some expired in 5 years, some expired in 10, some expired in 15, and some expired in 25. There was one other permanent part of the agreement. At year 8 in the agreement, the Iranian legislature was required to permanently embrace the additional protocol inspection requirements of the IAEA, which at the time and today was state-of-the-art in terms of inspection. So a permanent agreement never to purchase, acquire, develop nuclear weapons, and a permanent inspection regime that would enable us to determine if they were violating their agreement.

What did we give up to get that? What did we give up? The Ranking Member said we gave them a lot of money. We gave them their money. Great work by Chairman Menendez and others in putting a sanctions regime in place had led us to be able to freeze money that was not our money. It was not American taxpayer dollars. It was Iranian money.

So they got their own money back and in exchange agreed to permanently pledge to the entire world that they would never have a nuclear program.

Why the Trump administration would want to tear up that agreement and allow Iran to go back to, okay, I guess we do not have to abide by our side of it anymore. I just am continuously flummoxed by it.

So if you could return to compliance for compliance, it would not turn Iran into a good actor, but they would be a bad actor without

a nuclear program rather than a bad actor rushing toward a nuclear program.

I will never forget as a member of this committee going to Israel in January of 2015 with the then-Chairman, Republican Bob Corker, to sit in Prime Minister Netanyahu's office and ask about what Israel thought about our nuclear negotiations. The Prime Minister was completely against it.

We had a meeting scheduled the next day with Tamir Pardo, the head of Mossad in Tel Aviv. The Prime Minister told us that meeting was canceled, that we were not going to be able to go do it. Our Republican committee chair had the backbone to look him in the face and say if you cancel that meeting, we are canceling all the rest of the meetings here in Israel, we will leave tomorrow, we will not have a single other meeting.

Hastily, the meeting suddenly reappeared on the schedule, and we went to Tel Aviv and we sat down in the offices of Mossad with Tamir Pardo and others, and what they told us is, look, we do not like Iran, we do not know whether this is going to work, but what we do know is that the maximum pressure campaign is not working. We are hurting Iran's economy, but we are causing them to floor it in terms of developing a nuclear weapons program.

So if you could return to compliance for compliance and get Iran once again to say we will never seek to purchase, acquire, or develop nuclear weapons ever, and we will permanently agree to the additional protocol of the IAEA, I would be strongly supportive, on one condition. There is a "but" to this long intro. Get American hostages out of Iran. I do not think doing the deal with American hostages still in Iran is a good idea, and I would say that would need to be a pre-condition for me, and I would hope that the Administration would take that seriously.

We had a hearing this morning in Armed Services, Mr. Secretary, about the U.S.-China relationship, and obviously this has dominated much of the discussion too. I could not help bring up a wonderful quote of George Kennan in Foreign Affairs, 1947, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." Here is his quote. He basically says the way that the U.S. needs to be strong in any bilateral competition of this kind is to be strong internally. "Exhibitions of indecision, disunity, and internal disintegration within this country have an exhilarating effect on the whole Communist movement. At each evidence of these tendencies, a thrill of hope and excitement goes through the Communist world. The most important thing we can do to be strong vis-à-vis China is to be strong internally."

They celebrate when they see us in chaos. They celebrate when they see an attack on the U.S. Capitol by domestic insurrectionists. They celebrate when they see the Congress of the United States fighting over whether we even want to analyze what happened in order to prevent it from happening again.

So you have a big job to go out to the world and get good work done with respect to shoring up China, but we have a lot of work to do here to demonstrate unity of purpose and resolve. I think the bill that we are about to pass on the Senate floor, which is built largely on this committee's nearly unanimous work on a China bill a month or so ago, is a really good piece of this.

The other thing we need to do with respect to China—and then here is my last question for you—is what they most fear about us is not our military, not even our economy. What they most fear about us is our network of allies, because they do not really have them. People understand China is predatory, self-interested, and they are not an ally or a partner in the traditional sense. They do not like NATO. They do not like the Quad. They do not like U.S.-India cooperation. They hated the idea of a Trans-Pacific partnership with the U.S. more engaged in Asia. They hate the network of alliances.

So tell us about the Summit for Democracy and what the Biden administration and the State Department are going to do in planning this gathering of the global democracies to share best practices, to look in the mirror and be self-critical, and to try to improve and strengthen democratic ties. That will be the thing that will most rattle the cage of Chinese leadership.

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, first, Senator, I do not think I have a word to add or to change based on what you just said. Actually, your description of planning for the summit is also right on. I think we are actively doing that. We look forward to hopefully the participation of members of this committee; but well before that, to sharing our thinking in more detail about what we are doing.

To the point that you just made, I think this is an opportunity for countries, democratic countries, to come together to look at the different challenges to democracy that we are each facing, including internally, because there are a lot of common denominators that manifest themselves in different ways. We want to have that conversation, as well as looking at what we can do to strengthen, to shore up, to make more resilient democracies around the world, as well as have a common agenda on a number of the most critical issues, dealing with autocracies being right at the top of the list.

I am looking forward to an opportunity in the relatively near future to starting to share some more detailed thinking and to get thinking from this committee about how we can make this—and, by the way, not just a one off, but part of an ongoing process and an ongoing dialogue among democracies to deal with the challenges we face.

Senator KAINE. I am over my time. Thanks for your indulgence, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, it is good to be with you again today.

Mr. Secretary, I would like to applaud you for your support of the Abraham Accords. As recently as April of this year, you were at the Israeli Embassy here in the United States speaking in a very positive vein about what the Abraham Accords have done to bring peace and stability to a very important region of the world in the Middle East. I would also applaud our national security advisor, Jake Sullivan, who talked about this in late January, specifically saying that the Abraham Accords brought about greater security for the region, greater economic prosperity for the region, and it was in America's interest, and I agree with those statements.

I was just in Israel, as I mentioned to you this morning, and I met with a number of Israeli business leaders while I was there. They have every interest in seeing the progress that was underway, that is underway, continue. I was encouraged by the fact that they are doing business right now. I met with two businessmen who are doing business in the UAE and trying to continue this momentum forward.

I think that it is a very positive development that is undertaken. I think the momentum in that direction has been very positive. I look forward to your comments on how you would continue to move us down that lane.

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, I could not agree with you more. I think two things that we are working on. One is with those countries that are already a part of the Accord. That is, they are moving forward on normalization in one way or another with Israel. We are engaged with them as well as with Israel and looking to see how we can be supportive, how we can help move that process forward. If there are any moments when things get a little bit stuck, maybe we can help unstick things.

To your point, I think people are extremely receptive, and this is going to have, I think, very concrete, positive manifestations in people's lives, in particular because of the increased business, trade, economic relationships, among other things.

Second, though, is we are also looking to see if there are countries that are not yet part of the Accords that might be interested in joining. We are very actively looking at that and talking to countries that may have an interest and encouraging them in that direction.

Senator HAGERTY. I appreciate Senator Coon's comments in this regard, and I would join him to say we look forward to working with you and utilizing the tools that have already been developed with the Development Finance Corporation and others that we can utilize to continue to move down this path, because I think prosperity will breed peace, and I think the momentum is important there.

Another side of this, though, is Iran. Those same people expressed to me a concern about our appeasement of Iran, and were we to continue to move in this direction, it is going to make it more difficult for us in the Middle East. I appreciate the reasons why the Europeans are there in Vienna trying to encourage this, but our partners and our allies in the Middle East are very concerned about our posture toward Iran.

I mentioned this to you earlier this morning. To the extent that Iran were to receive sanctions relief, I am very concerned that those dollars not find their way back to proxies like Hamas and Hezbollah. I just witnessed the devastation on the ground of what that Iranian technology and Iranian funding can do and can deliver in terms of the havoc and death of civilians through that.

I also am concerned about the aid to the Palestinian Authority. With Hamas' involvement in the Gaza Strip, the efforts to rebuild, the Israeli leaders that I met with were very clear to me that those funds find their way into tunnels. They described a water project that had been funded for the Gaza area. The pipes for the water project got converted into weaponry that landed in Israel.

I think it is going to take a tremendous amount of diligence. I would prefer to not do this until Hamas, their grip on the area has been changed, and I am going to be very focused on, again, seeing that we be very good stewards of taxpayer dollars and not allow these dollars in any way or respect to get into the hands of terrorists again.

Iran has, again, restated its willingness and desire to re-arm Hamas and help them build their terrorism infrastructure. So I am extraordinarily concerned about any move that would put more financial capability into the hands of Iran.

I would like to turn our discussion for a bit to the East Asia Pacific region. You and I have discussed this. I think that the Indo-Pacific strategy is absolutely critical to American safety and prosperity. The Biden administration's own plans underscore the fact that China is the only nation that is really capable of mounting resistance to America and becoming a greater and greater threat, not only to America, but to the world every day. The State Department plays a very important role in this region, and looking at the budget, the allocation of resources there, we put more resources in Africa, we put more resources in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs than we do in the East Asia Pacific region, and I just wanted to get your thoughts about the resourcing of the State Department in this area and where you see it going.

Secretary BLINKEN. I very much appreciate that, and I appreciate as well all of the work that you have done, including in prior capacities in this area.

Look, to your point, the Indo-Pacific is the front line of the competition with China. China dedicates about 50 percent of its assistance and 50 percent of its economic diplomacy to the Indo-Pacific. We have asked for in the budget resources to help contend with that, but this has to be a whole-of-government enterprise.

We talked a little bit earlier, for example, about the DFC, something I know you know very well, and other instruments that we have to compete more effectively and that we are determined to bring to bear. I think we are looking at this politically; and, of course, I think it was very important that the President convened the first-ever leaders-level meeting of the Quad, and we are moving forward on that. We actually have working groups among the Quad countries—the United States, India, Australia, and Japan.

Senator HAGERTY. I applaud that effort.

Secretary BLINKEN. Then at the same time there is, of course, the economic aspect to this, where things like the DFC and others come into play. There is the military and deterrent piece that is very important and that we are working on. In other words, we have to work this across the entire Government.

Just to assure you in terms of our focus and our resources, we believe, as you do, that the Indo-Pacific is a critical destination for them.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you. I would just close with one comment. I was very encouraged by your report from the G7 that your counterparts are appreciating and understanding the threat from China, particularly from a technology standpoint, and you and I have talked about this before. The Clean Network Initiative I think is a great piece of work that has been undertaken. I want to con-

tinue to encourage you to undertake that effort, however you decide to name it. I think that it can have a terrific impact in terms of bringing our allies together to support a clean network around the world.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Markey.

I am going to ask Senator Schatz, would you preside here so I can go vote? Thank you.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good to see you again, Mr. Secretary. When you were here last, you committed to oversee an interagency process to determine whether the atrocities committed against the Rohingya minority in Burma constitutes genocide. Since then, the same military leaders who orchestrated atrocities against the Rohingya have seized power in a violent coup against the elected Government, and it is estimated that more than 800 people have been killed in this ongoing crackdown.

Could you update us on what the status of the genocide determination process is and when you expect to make a decision?

Secretary BLINKEN. It is ongoing and actively ongoing. I cannot put a date to it. I need to actually check with my colleagues to see exactly when they expect to complete it, but I can tell you it is very much actively ongoing. At the same time we are doing other work, including supporting the work of the U.N. investigative mechanism to try to collect and preserve evidence that will be very important as well. I am happy to come back to you with a timeline.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. Again, I think the more that can be done on an expedited basis would be the better. Justice delayed is justice denied for these people, so I think it would be very helpful to know that the U.S. Government is on their side.

The Burmese military junta continues to attack peaceful citizen protesters and denies its citizens basic human rights and democratic rule. The recent arrests of foreign journalists, including Americans Danny Fenster and Nathan Maung, highlight the urgency of cutting off this brutal regime's financial flows.

Can you tell us what steps are being taken by the U.S. Government to secure the release of Danny Fenster and Nathan Maung?

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes. We are very concerned with their detentions, journalists doing their jobs, Americans. We had actually consular access to Nathan Maung. We have not had that access to Daniel Fenster, which in and of itself is a violation of the Vienna Convention, among other things. So we are pressing in every way that we can not only to get the access in the first instance, but to get them released and get them home. It is challenging because, of course, our contacts and ability to engage the military regime are extremely limited, but we are working this through other countries, other partners as well.

Senator MARKEY. So whether it is journalism being practiced in the United States or in Saudi Arabia or in Burma, I think it is absolutely imperative that the United States Government stand up to make sure that their names are known and that they know that

they are going to have the United States Government on their side. So the more that can be done, I think the better for every journalist in the world sending that signal.

In March, I called for the United States to take steps to sanction the Myanmar oil and gas enterprise, whose revenues are an estimated \$1.5 billion annually and make up one of the largest remaining streams funding the junta. Will the United States take steps to cut off the flow of oil and gas revenues to the military junta? Some companies have suspended payments, but there is still no comprehensive regime in place to ensure these funds do not continue to support the military.

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes, we are looking at the most effective means we can bring to bear to deny support to the regime. That includes, by the way, engaging other countries that have investments in enterprises that support the regime to consider ending those investments and that support. We will look at anything that can meaningfully do that. We also have to factor in the impact that any step would have on the people of Burma to make sure we are not doing harm to them in the process.

Senator MARKEY. I think it is important for us not to do harm, but I have had extensive conversations with the Burmese activists, members of the national unity Government, and NGOs who argue strongly that we can cut off this funding to the military without major negative impacts to the people of Burma, who are already suffering so much. So I just urge you to use all the tools you have to cut off that funding. Oil revenues, unfortunately, in too many countries of the world is the stream that goes to the plutocrats, the autocrats that run these countries. The more that we deal with the oil and gas issues in all these countries I think the better off we are.

I want to applaud you for prioritizing LGBTQI rights in the first 100 days. As we celebrate Pride Month all around the world, the Pride flag hangs across U.S. embassies, sending a message of tolerance and love. Back here in January, you said that you were going to swiftly appoint an LGBTQI envoy. Could you give us an update on what the status of that promise is?

Secretary BLINKEN. The best update is to say stay tuned. We are actively working on that. We have to, as you know, run through a lot of traps when it comes to making vetting, et cetera. We are actively working on that, and I hope to have a name for you in the near future.

Senator MARKEY. If I may, in terms of international law, it is legal for asylum seekers to present themselves at the United States border for processing. Could you clarify what the Administration's position is on that? Because the number of refugees and asylum seekers who need help is larger than ever, and it will probably increase. So what is that message to those who are seeking asylum in our country in terms of presenting themselves at our border?

Secretary BLINKEN. You are correct, but I do not want to get out of my lane and make sure that I am deferring to my colleagues who are responsible for these issues, starting with the Department of Homeland Security and the secretary there. As a basic proposition, our entire practice and history up until recently had been that, yes, people have the right to present themselves for asylum

and to have that request considered and acted on. I think one of the very significant challenges that we faced over the years is that we have not had the resources in place to deal with that effectively and efficiently. As a result, people presenting themselves for asylum would not have their case evaluated and adjudicated in a short period of time, and that led to a series of other problems and concerns.

So one of the things I think that would need to be done in order to make good on the long tradition of having people present themselves for asylum is to make sure that there are actually resources in place to do that. For example, judges or others who are able to quickly assess and evaluate whether there is a legitimate claim, because if there is not, people need to return.

Now, as a practical matter right now, the border is not open. We also have Title 42 that is in effect as a result of COVID. In the future we need to reform the system for asylum.

Senator MARKEY. We do not want to change our policy on asylum. We want to make sure that the funding is there so that those who do present themselves are given the protections of American law.

I cannot thank you enough, Mr. Secretary, for the great job you are doing. Thank you.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator SCHATZ [presiding]. Senator Young.

Senator YOUNG. Welcome. Good to see you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Secretary, where a department decides to allocate its resources suggests what its priorities are. We see this clearly in the State Department's allocation of foreign military financing. The Department requests \$6.1 billion in FMF for the upcoming year, of which a mere \$129 million is allocated for partners in East Asia and the Pacific at a time of increasing Chinese military aggression across the region.

The China legislation that this chamber is currently considering for the U.S. Senate, and that I hope passes today, includes a provision from this committee which would more than double the availability of FMF to the Indo-Pacific over the next 5 years, more than \$650 million in total. What would be your priorities for directing these funds, the \$650 million? Then relatedly, more broadly, maybe you could speak to the State Department's priorities for increasing conventional military assistance; that is, foreign military funding, as well as training.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you very much. Let me just say, we welcome working with you on that going forward to make sure that we are directing and dedicating our resources in the most important places and as effectively as possible.

I think we have to look at this in a couple of ways. One, in some instances, particularly in the Asia Pacific, we benefit from already extremely capable allies and partners, including allies and partners that have the means to further make necessary investments in their defense and in our collective security. So that is an important factor.

Of course, as you know, with both Japan and Korea, we have been working very hard to extend the host nation support agreements that we have, as well as make available technology to them

and to other partners. Similarly, we have a long track record of doing that with Australia.

Having said that, I would actually welcome an opportunity to think with you about how we can most effectively direct that kind of assistance and support.

Senator YOUNG. I appreciate that. I will follow up with you and your team in that regard.

Earlier this year, Mr. Secretary, the previous commander of INDOPACOM, the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, called for consistent arms sales to Taiwan and for the United States to help to encourage Taiwan on their investments, including investments which are critical to deterring China.

What capabilities, Mr. Secretary, are most important for Taiwan to possess?

Secretary BLINKEN. I think there are a few things. First and to your point, I think we have had about \$18 billion in foreign military sales since 2017. So there is a strong foundation, and indeed a number of sales have gone forward just within the last weeks and months.

One of the things I think we should focus on is helping Taiwan strengthen its asymmetric capabilities like reserve force reform. There is some focus countries often have on these large weapons systems. That can be important in defense, but the strategies, the asymmetric capabilities, these are I think increasingly important.

Senator YOUNG. How can we build and support a robust foreign military financing agreement with Taiwan so that we might give them greater flexibility in increasing their conventional capabilities?

Secretary BLINKEN. I would certainly be interested in hearing where there are problems, constraints, challenges, and looking to see if there is more we can do and more effectively consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and our commitment to make sure that Taiwan has the means to defend itself.

Senator YOUNG. I think we are going to have to make some difficult decisions there moving forward. I look forward to working with you.

Related to difficult decisions and problem sets, let us pivot to Iran. I know many of my colleagues are deeply concerned about the Administration's hurry to reach a nuclear agreement with Iran, even as the regime provides material support to groups that just spent 2 weeks raining rockets into our ally, Israel. I hope you can appreciate the tension that some see or feel there.

Why does the Department believe that relaxing sanctions and providing more resources for Iran to fund their proxy network would improve the security of the region?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, I think what would improve the security of the region would be to start with making sure that Iran cannot continue to gallop forward with its nuclear program, which unfortunately it is doing since we pulled out of the agreement and it decided as a result not to abide by the constraints. As we were discussing a little bit earlier with our colleagues, what we have seen Iran do under maximum pressure is to significantly increase its capacity when it comes to its stockpile of enriched uranium, more than tenfold what it had during the agreement, when it

comes to spinning more advanced centrifuges, enriching to 20 percent and in some cases to 60 percent. All of this means that Iran is now moving inexorably to a place where the breakout time to produce fissile material for a weapon will move from a year or more under the agreement to now probably a few months, and if this keeps going to a matter of weeks.

As we were discussing earlier, that means that Iran is going to act with even greater impunity in all these other areas where we all agree we need to stop what it is doing.

Beyond that, I would say that, unfortunately, Iran's support for terrorism, for groups like Hamas, destabilizing actions in the region, that was happening before the JCPOA, it was happening during the JCPOA, and it has accelerated since we pulled out of the JCPOA and Iran has lifted not only constraints on the nuclear side, but apparently constraints on its actions in other areas.

Senator YOUNG. I will just end with a couple of sentences, with the Chairman's indulgence here, because I am over my allotted time.

I will just indicate that it remains unclear to me how the Administration intends to reach a longer and stronger nuclear deal. If you spoke to that today, I am unclear how you get there. I know the President campaigned on that, but I am unclear how we get there. I would also indicate that if any deal is struck between the Administration and our negotiators and the Iranians, that that needs—Senator Johnson has indicated that needs to be submitted to this body as a treaty so that we can give sanction to it so it might be more enduring as we look into the future. Thank you.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thanks, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Senator Merkley.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Mr. Secretary.

The previous Administration and State Department under Secretary Pompeo found that China was engaged in genocide in its treatment of the Uyghur community, and under your leadership I believe the State Department has reaffirmed that China is engaged in genocide.

Secretary BLINKEN. That is correct.

Senator MERKLEY. So right now we have a bill on the floor, a competition bill with China, and lots of Chinese issues are getting attention, including this. The sanctions that are in Senator Rubio's and my Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act are in the underlying bill, and also attention to the fact that China is hosting the 2022 Olympic Games while engaged in genocide. The underlying bill has Senator Romney's amendment from committee. I think it had substantial bipartisan support, a sense of Congress that diplomats should not attend.

So I just wanted to ask you today, do you support diplomats from the United States not attending the 2022 Olympics while China is engaged in genocide?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, what we are doing right now is consulting closely with allies and partners to define the common concerns that we have about China, and ideally to establish a shared approach, which I think would be much more effective than everyone going off in their own direction. So we are in the process of

those consultations, and I would be happy to share more as we move forward.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you. As you engage in those shared approaches, I just want to remind you—but I do not need to do it because I know you know this—that this has echoes of 1936 when Hitler, when the Nazi regime hosted the Olympics in Germany while they were already engaged in egregious brutal treatment of Jewish Germans and other political opponents within Germany, and that was considered a massive propaganda victory for Hitler and distracted attention from that brutal treatment.

That is the point about a diplomatic boycott. I think even if our allies end up not agreeing, I think the U.S. should take that stand, and I think the majority of the members of this committee—maybe it was universal in adopting Senator Romney's amendment. So I just want to encourage you to ponder that frame in that conversation with our allies. I think it is an important frame also for our stand on human rights more broadly and advocacy around the planet.

On another China topic, they are financing some 200 to 240 coal projects around the world at the same time that we are already in deep trouble. I was struck by the map that came out in the New York Times 2 weeks ago that showed the last 30 years compared to the previous 30 years, so 1990 through 2020 compared to 1960 to 1990, in terms of both the temperature patterns average and the drought patterns. It was a dramatic, dramatic change between those two periods. We are already approaching 1 to 1.5 degrees Centigrade across parts of the United States.

So I was concerned when the Administration greenlighted the Willow project. That is 160,000 estimated barrels per day, producing as early as 2024 on the North Slope, for an estimated 30 years, so a massive extraction.

I was concerned in part because when you extract that oil, it gets burned somewhere and it has a massive acceleration of the impacts. The big irony is they are having to freeze the permafrost, which I guess we will have to stop calling permafrost, in order to support the equipment to extract the oil which will accelerate the melting.

I am also concerned on the diplomatic front, that if we engage in this type of extraction, new projects—and, by the way, the pipelines that are being greenlighted through this, hundreds of miles of pipeline, are considered to be essentially the pathway for other projects that will follow the Willow project. If we do that, how do we have the standing in the world to talk about Canadian tar sands, to talk about Chinese coal plants, and to lead this world in the biggest challenge humanity has faced, which is a fast pivot off fossil fuels?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, I very much agree with the general proposition that leading by the power of our example is important. When it comes to climate, I cannot comment on domestic internal issues. It is not my brief, but let me say this. I think that we have made very significant commitments when it comes to curbing emissions going forward, and that in turn has helped us leverage much more meaningful commitments from other countries, which are absolutely essential if we are going to solve this problem, as you

know better than I do. We are 15 percent of global emissions. So even if we do everything right at home, we have to bring the other 85 percent along, plus we should not be the only ones tackling this problem.

So what I have seen at least internationally so far—this is all I can attest to—is that rejoining Paris, the summit convened by President Biden of world leaders just a couple of months ago, and the raised ambitions of our own efforts have had a meaningful impact of bringing others to raise their ambitions and to do more, and that is at least what I am seeing so far.

Senator MERKLEY. Well, I do think there have been a lot of actions of the Administration that have been very helpful in that regard. I also feel this decision, and the Nord Stream 2 decision, both involving more fossil fuel infrastructure, more extraction, slow down the pivot that is essential, and I do not think that humanity addresses this challenge without really fierce, determined American leadership.

My final question. I condemn Hamas' use of the rockets against Israel, but I am also concerned about Israel undermining the possibility for peace by continuously establishing new settlements, expanding those settlements, and establishing roadways that split the West Bank into a number of smaller units that make a potential economy in a two-state solution extremely difficult.

Is this a concern that you share, and did you raise this concern in your meeting with Benny Ganzt last week?

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes and yes.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, welcome back. I would like to follow up on some things I asked of you during the confirmation process, and the first is Nord Stream 2, the pipeline. There is strong bipartisan opposition on this committee and throughout the entire Senate to President Biden's deliberate failure to sanction all of the entities that are involved in the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

Protecting this Russian trap is not in the U.S. national security interest. It is a grave mistake. The pipeline threatens the energy security of our friends as well as our allies. We know that Russia uses energy as a geopolitical weapon to coerce, to manipulate. I know you have agreed to that during our confirmation hearing, and it does seem that President Biden is now allowing the Nord Stream 2 pipeline to be added to Russia's energy arsenal.

Putin has said essentially the same thing. On Friday he stated that Ukraine must now show good will if it wants Russian gas transiting through the country to continue. He said that Russia is going to further threaten to cut gas to Ukraine. They have done that over the Donbas conflict. This is even before Nord Stream 2 has been completed.

So I think it is really critical that we act now. I think we have a misguided policy right now coming from your boss, the President. I think it is in our national security interest to impose sanctions on Nord Stream 2 now. Why is it not in our national security interest to impose those sanctions?

Secretary BLINKEN. If the sanctions could, in our judgment, have been effective in actually stopping the physical completion of the pipeline, that would have been one thing. In our judgment, they would not have had that effect. We did, as you know, on May 19, sanction more entities than have ever been sanctioned under the PEESA legislation.

As you know as well, the pipeline construction began in 2018. By the time we took office, it was more than 90 percent complete. As we looked at this, it became clear to us that the actual joining of those last pipes was not going to be stopped by sanctioning the overall entity, Nord Stream 2 AG, or the CEO.

Having said that, two things are very important. One, the waiver that we issued can be rescinded at any time. Second, what has to happen—there are two things that have to happen, and they are, I think, happening. Germany is coming to the table to talk about steps that would need to be taken if anything starts to flow through this pipeline to make sure that any damage done to Ukraine in fact is not done, is undone. As we discussed a little bit earlier, it involves several things. It involves making sure that Ukraine is whole when it comes to any transit fees that it might lose as a result of the pipeline actually going into operation. Second, ensuring that gas, or oil for that matter, cannot be used as a weapon of coercion, of blackmail, by Russia, and there are means to do that. Third, to make sure that countries are acting up front when Russia acts out to respond.

I would also point out that when it comes to the operation of the pipeline, there are very significant remaining factors that have to be taken into account: insurance, permitting. We are looking very hard at those entities as well.

So we need to see going forward what we can put in place to prevent, mitigate, and undo any damage that would be done if the pipeline actually begins operations. As a very practical matter, when it came to the last few meters of this pipeline, it was our judgment that sanctioning that entity would not have had any effect. The worst of all worlds would be a combination of pipeline physically completed, relationship with Germany poisoned, and no incentive for Germany to actually come to the table to engage in trying to mitigate the damage that could be done by the pipeline actually operating.

Senator BARRASSO. I would just point out, Mr. Secretary, that during your confirmation process, because you just talked about the last few meters, you reiterated your opposition to the Nord Stream 2 and you said, “I am determined to do whatever we can to prevent that completion, the last hundred yards.” So the fact that it was 90 percent complete when you came into office and the Administration came into office, your commitment to us was the last hundred yards.

I want to move on to the World Health Organization. While President Biden and the Administration vowed to reform the World Health Organization, I think it threw away its leverage early on by rejoining the World Health Organization and giving it more than \$200 million. The Administration could have insisted reforms be made. The annual World Health Assembly meeting on May 24 was another opportunity to demand action, yet it just reinforced

the systemic problems and the inability of this organization to make real reforms. For example, China succeeded in that meeting in blocking Taiwan's participation at the World Health Assembly.

Look, Taiwan only wanted to be an observer, and arguably Taiwan has one of the world's best records in combatting COVID-19.

In May you stated: "There is no reasonable justification for Taiwan's continued exclusion"—we agree—"from the forum." In addition, the World Health Assembly voted to place Syria and Belarus in leadership positions at the World Health Organization.

You claim the best way to reform the World Health Organization is from within. No reforms are being made. How will we be able to make any meaningful reforms at the World Health Organization if we cannot even prevent dictators like Assad, who slaughters his own people, from having a leadership role in what is the World Health Organization?

Secretary BLINKEN. We have only just gotten reengaged with the World Health Organization. Unfortunately, this is not like flipping a switch. There is, you are right, work to be done, work that we are doing to push that body, that institution, to make the necessary reforms, and we are very intent on that.

I think you saw with the initial phase one report that was done on the COVID origins the initial impulse might have been to say "work done, job complete," but a number of us made very clear the absolute not only inadequacy of that report, but the fact that its methodology and the engagement by China in writing the report was totally insufficient and undermined its credibility, and now the head of the World Health Organization has basically agreed with that and they are pursuing phase two, which is vitally important to try to get to the bottom of what happened.

Senator BARRASSO. Let me just conclude. May 12, we had a committee hearing, bipartisan committee, titled "COVID-19 Pandemic and International Response." Gayle Smith, who is the State Department Coordinator for Global COVID Response and Health Security, was here. I specifically urged her to use the World Health Assembly annual meeting to push for reforms and get them implemented. That certainly did not occur, and I think it is fair to say the actions were unsuccessful.

Secretary BLINKEN. We are working on pushing the organization to reform. As I said, it is not like flipping a switch, but we are very much focused on doing that, and we will come back to you as this moves along to see if we succeed in moving in the right direction.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Schatz.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary, for being here.

I want to talk about climate. I know what you are doing in the big picture. I want to talk to you about climate within the Department, with the Foreign Service officers and throughout.

I worry a bit that climate policy swings back and forth depending on who is President, and to the extent that it is possible, I think it is really important for the Department of State in particular to kind of embed in its work, in its training, in its day-to-day operations, in your bilateral conversations, not just at the Secretary

level, but at the line level, conversations about collaboration on climate action, which is to say transitioning to a clean energy economy, but also climate mitigation strategies which, in the short run, I think are the best platform for bilateral good will building, particularly in Oceania and other places that are immediately facing those impacts.

So can you talk to me a little bit about what the Department itself is doing, not at the foreign policy level, but at the line level?

Secretary BLINKEN. Sure. A few things. First, we do have two things at the Department right now. Of course, we have the work that the former Secretary Kerry is doing as our special envoy on climate diplomacy around the world. We also have, critically, a very important bureau that I hope will soon get confirmed by the Senate, new leadership that is going to be very important.

In our budget request, both in terms of the resources and in terms of the human resources, we know that we need to build up our capacity, our expertise, in a number of areas, and climate is one of those, and the request reflects the desire to do that.

So I am hopeful that we get some of these resources to bring in more expertise to sharpen our training, to bring to bear technology so that we can advance the climate mission more effectively.

Senator SCHATZ. You are looking at some changes in the curriculum for Foreign Service officers?

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes.

Senator SCHATZ. Okay, good.

Let me talk to you about Oceania. I really appreciate the fact that you gave a message to the Pacific Island Conference of Leaders last week, and I know how meaningful it is to have the Secretary of State talk directly with leaders from Oceania and commit U.S. leadership to confront the climate crisis and support vaccine deployment.

I introduced a bipartisan bill with Senator Murkowski to elevate all of Oceania in U.S. foreign policy, and the chairman and ranking member included a number of these provisions in the bill that we are hopefully adopting today on the Senate floor.

Can you just talk to me about why it is important that the United States step up its engagement with all of Oceania and make it a central part of our Indo-Pacific strategy?

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, I think, among other things, it is one area where we see China very actively engaged on a whole variety of levels. Whether it is strategic, whether it is economic, whether it is environmental, we want to make sure that we, in fact, are effectively engaged and certainly not ceding the train.

We also have, as you know very well, in a number of these countries and territories, very significant climate challenges that they are going to be on the front lines of having to deal with, and we want to make sure that we can be effective in helping them deal with it.

So there are a host of reasons why I think it makes sense to try to not only sustain, but increase our engagement. It is also one of the reasons I wanted to make sure early on that I had an opportunity to engage with these countries.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you. A little bit about the South and East China Sea. Everybody knows we are doing freedom of naviga-

tion operations to keep sea lanes and shipping lanes open. Everybody understands what China is doing, which is sort of using these so-called “fishing fleets” as proxies for the Chinese Government.

I worry a little bit about their ability to control escalation, because they are using these proxies, and right now we have a rather binary choice between doing nothing and mobilizing the United States Navy. Now, if it gets kinetic, we win the engagement, but in a lot of ways, everybody loses that engagement.

So I am wondering about the use of the United States Coast Guard or other partners, whether we can start to work in an intermediate space to be present in the East and South China Sea without mobilizing the entire United States Navy, which seems to me to be a little bit of a mismatch in raw power.

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, a few things. First, with regard to the Navy, it is important to note that over the last years, starting back in 2010–2011, we shifted our resource deployment so that 60 percent of the Navy would be in the Asian Pacific, again a process that began back in 2010. That is significant because it is important, obviously, to have the deterrent capacity. It is important to have the capacity to engage in freedom of navigation operations, et cetera. So that is a foundational baseline.

Having said that, I think there are a few things that are also very important. We have worked very hard just in the last few months with Australia, with France, with Germany, with Indonesia, with Japan, with Malaysia, with the Philippines, the U.K., Vietnam—that is, concerned countries in the region, as well as concerned countries outside of it—to join in speaking forcefully and engaging directly when we see China trying to abuse its actions, whether it is unlawful claims that it is making, the militarization of disputed features, provocations with its maritime militia.

So we have a growing group of countries coming together that are focused on this. In addition, we have made very clear and reasserted our own defense commitments to countries—for example, the Senkaku in Japan. We have an agreement, as you know, with the Philippines. We have reaffirmed and reasserted those.

We are certainly looking at other means that can help deal with some of the challenges. We talked a little bit earlier, as well. My own view—and this is not an administration position because it is not something that has come up with the President yet. My own view is that we also very much benefit from ratifying the Law of the Sea.

Senator SCHATZ. That was my final question. So, thank you. You said that this morning. I appreciate that you think it would be useful to the United States to ratify the Law of the Sea Treaty, and I understand you have not talked to the President of the United States about this yet. Can you please talk to the President of the United States and get back to the committee?

Secretary BLINKEN. Absolutely. I would say also that when he was chairman of this committee and/or ranking member, that was something that he supported. In fact, we held hearings back then. I think what is particularly significant is that the people who feel strongest about this in our Government are our colleagues who happen to wear uniforms.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I sat through several Law of the Sea hearings that I was asked to chair, and I have to be honest with you, unless we get over the ideological problems that some people have about entering into these agreements—we spent an enormous amount of time. I think it is incredibly important for a whole host of both security and economic reasons, but we have got to get some people to start rethinking what it is to engage in some of these treaties.

Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Not since the Jimmy Carter administration has an Administration had as many serious foreign policy blunders in such a short period of time. The Biden administration came in and the first week in office ended the “remain in Mexico” policy, which has prompted the worst illegal immigration crisis in 20 years.

In the Middle East, the Biden administration inherited a flowering of peace with the historic Abraham Accords, and the Biden administration came in and began undermining our friend and ally, the state of Israel, sent over \$250 million to the Palestinian Authority, which is in bed with Hamas, which announced even this week that they are continuing to fund the families of terrorists who murder innocent civilians, and they are now doing so, in effect, because money is fungible, with U.S. taxpayer dollars. As a result of those foreign policy blunders, what had been an historic peace became war in recent weeks in the Middle East.

I think there is no area in which the foreign policy blunders have been greater than concerning Russia and Nord Stream 2. You are not surprised that I am making this point to you today.

I think it is useful to pause for a moment and reflect on the successes we had as a nation concerning Russia and Nord Stream 2 and just how President Biden has given those away.

In the summer and fall of 2019, I introduced in this committee bipartisan sanctions to stop the construction of Nord Stream 2, the natural gas pipeline from Russia to Germany. I did so along with Senator Shaheen. It was overwhelmingly bipartisan. Indeed, every Democrat on this committee supported it, and all but one Republican on this committee supported it.

At the time, there was considerable Russian disinformation being pushed in Europe. The Russian disinformation said the pipeline is nearly complete. As they said later that year, the pipeline is 90 percent complete, you cannot stop it, the sanctions cannot work. The Russians pushed that relentlessly, relentlessly, relentlessly. We now know that disinformation was a lie.

The Congress passed that bipartisan legislation into law. It was signed into law, if my memory serves me correctly, at 7:00 p.m. on a Thursday. At 6:45 p.m., 15 minutes before the President signed those bipartisan sanctions into law, the company building the pipeline announced they were immediately halting construction. So the Russian disinformation was exactly that, it was a lie, and the sanctions worked.

From that moment, for the next year, the pipeline laid dormant and fallow and there was no construction. The next year, in December of 2020, I introduced, along with Senator Shaheen, a second

wave of bipartisan sanctions that passed into law, ratcheting up the punishment even more. Then, unfortunately, the Biden administration came in and turned this incredible bipartisan victory for America into a colossal failure. It started in November, shortly after the election in 2020, when an individual, Nicholas Burns, who was identified as an advisor to then President-elect Biden, told a German newspaper that, “the Americans must suspend sanctions in return for a temporary halt to Nord Stream 2.”

Now, that message from the incoming Biden team was heard loud and clear, which is why the Moscow Times quoted the German foreign minister as saying of course we are very interested in discussing the Nord Stream 2 topic with the new Administration in Washington. That initial sign of weakness was heard, and in late December the Russians resumed construction. For a year it had been dormant. In late December they resumed construction in German waters.

It was not yet done. The second wave of sanctions that we passed into law still gave them pause. They threatened to resume construction in deep sea Danish waters on January 15, but they did not dare. They did not dare because they believed the outgoing Trump administration would impose sanctions, and they recommenced construction of the pipeline in Danish waters on January 24, 5 days after President Biden was sworn into office. They did so because they were convinced that the Biden administration would not enforce the sanctions.

You sat before this committee and promised you would use every tool you have to stop the pipeline. You sat in my office and promised—you and I discussed this at great length in my office. You promised you would use every tool you have to stop the pipeline. You put out a public statement in March that explicitly warned, “Any entity involved in the Nord Stream 2 pipeline risks U.S. sanctions and should immediately abandon work on the pipeline.”

Then, unfortunately, the Biden administration decided to waive those sanctions for Nord Stream 2 AG, the umbrella group building the pipeline, and for its CEO. In doing so, the Biden administration all but ensured this pipeline will be completed because, I assume, you have made a decision to embrace Angela Merkel and, in doing so, to allow this pipeline to be completed even though it puts billions of dollars in the pockets of Vladimir Putin, it weakens Europe, it makes Europe more dependent on Russia for energy, and it hurts American jobs.

Why did Joe Biden decide to waive the bipartisan sanctions and give what is in effect a multi-billion-dollar gift to Vladimir Putin?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, it will not surprise you to know that I disagree with your assessment across the board. Just to focus on the pipeline, I think we are apparently not working from the same fact set because under your chronology, miraculously, the construction of the pipeline had been not only halted, but could not have been very far along, and then somehow suddenly—

Senator CRUZ. With respect, it was 90 percent complete in 2019 when the sanctions went into effect. So the statement you made earlier that it was 90 percent complete, there was nothing you can do, that was true a year ago, and the sanctions worked.

Secretary BLINKEN. Well, it was more than 90 percent complete based on the information we had when we came to office.

Senator CRUZ. That was true a year ago when the sanctions were passed.

Secretary BLINKEN. What we saw and what we have seen is the companies finding workarounds, finding alternatives. As one company would drop out, another would drop in. The Russians were able to bring to bear—

Senator CRUZ. Prior to the Biden team suggesting sanctions would not be imposed, had they returned to building the pipeline?

Secretary BLINKEN. We did not suggest the sanctions would not be imposed. I think—

Senator CRUZ. Was the quote from Nicholas Burns not accurate?

Secretary BLINKEN. Mr. Burns was not a member of the Administration. There was no Administration at that point, but beyond that, had the—

Senator CRUZ. Was it purely coincidence that it began on January 24?

Secretary BLINKEN. Had the Germans agreed to—

The CHAIRMAN. The Secretary will suspend.

The Senator used all 7 of his minutes before he asked this question. I have allowed you two interruptions. We are going to let the Secretary finish, and then I need to go to another member who has been waiting for some time.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator, had the idea, for example, of suspension for suspension—that is, the Germans and others suspend all work on the pipeline in return for a suspension of sanctions—that would have been, I think, a positive outcome, and that would have given us time to work to make sure that the pipeline could not be completed. It was our judgment, based on the facts that we had available to us, including from the intelligence community, that the construction was going to be completed, the physical construction, regardless of any step that we took in the last few months.

As you know, we did sanction more entities under PEESA in this last round, May 19, than had ever been sanctioned before. We also need to preserve the ability to insist that Germany work with us if the pipeline is actually going to become operational, distinction between the physical completion of the pipeline and it becoming operational, to mitigate and try to undo the damage that we agree would be done potentially to Ukraine, potentially to others, and that is what the Germans are now doing.

I think the worst possible outcome from our perspective would be physical completion of the pipeline, sanctions that did not stop it, a poisoned relationship with Germany and no incentive on Germany's part to actually work to undo or mitigate the damage that will be done to Ukraine. So that is what we are working on now.

As I mentioned, perhaps before you came in, we do still also have some things that we are looking hard at because, as you know very well, there are permitting requirements, even with the physical completion of the pipeline, before it becomes operational. There are insurance requirements, and we are looking very hard at any entities that might be engaged in those efforts. At the same time, we need to make sure that if this does become operational at some

point, that Ukraine is protected, others are protected. There are ways that we are able to do that, making sure that it is made whole on any lost transit fees, making sure that gas cannot be used as a tool of blackmail or coercion, so having a reserve that can come to its assistance if Russia tried to do that; other steps to automatically come back at Russia if it misbehaves.

So we are putting all of that in place, and I just want to come back to another proposition that is important: the waiver can be rescinded at any time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Van Hollen is recognized, and I am going to ask him to preside as I go vote. There is also, still pending, finally Senator Booker and Senator Murphy, and then we will be finished.

Senator VAN HOLLEN [presiding]. Mr. Secretary, it is good to see you again.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. As I mentioned at this morning's Appropriations Committee hearing, I support the overall contours of the budget that you and the President have submitted. We need a strong Department of State. We need a strong Foreign Service to meet the challenges that we face around the world, and the budget you proposed contains resources to recruit, train, retain a first-rate, diverse workforce.

I think you would also agree that one of the key tools both in recruitment and retention is how we treat our Foreign Service families serving overseas. Four years ago, Senator Sullivan and I founded the bipartisan Foreign Service Caucus here on the Hill, and based on our conversations with the American Foreign Service Association and others, we introduced legislation called the Foreign Service Families Act. It is a piece of legislation before this committee right now, and it essentially provides Foreign Service families serving overseas the same kind of amenities and benefits that many military families serving overseas have.

I mentioned this to you in a phone call about 10 days ago. I am hoping that you can tell the committee today that you have had a chance to review the legislation and that it is supported by the Biden administration.

Secretary BLINKEN. I strongly support the objectives and the goals of this and want to come back and talk to you about it. *Mea culpa*. Since we spoke I have not had the opportunity to focus on it directly, although I asked my team to do so. I think with the press of some events in the last few days, I have not had a chance to catch up with them. So if it is all right, let me come back to you on that.

Certainly as described and in terms of the objectives, I could not agree more. By the way, now that I have had an opportunity to travel a little bit on the job, every place I go I spend time with our embassy and the embassy community, and I share your high regard and determination to support the families of the men and women who are part of our Foreign Service because, as we both know, they are serving too, but they do not get the same support necessarily as those who are actually direct employees of the Government.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that, Mr. Secretary. If your team could just get back to us as soon as possible?

Secretary BLINKEN. Sure.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I talked to the Chairman about this legislation. I think we would like to move it, but obviously we would like input from the Secretary of State.

Just to flag another topic, today Senator Toomey and I sent a letter to Secretary Yellen applauding the Administration for the sanctions it placed on 24 officials in China who had been complicit in the crackdown on Hong Kong, actions taken under the Hong Kong Accountability Act. We noted in that letter, though, that the law which passed unanimously last year requires that sanctions also be placed on any banks that facilitate those individuals, and we have asked the Secretary of the Treasury to report to us. Obviously, these are the kinds of decisions that involve the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury. I want to put that on your radar screen, because we are going to be pushing to make sure that we fully implement that law.

Let me turn to Afghanistan, something you and I have talked about as well in the past, and I appreciate your support to expedite the visas for Afghan interpreters or Afghan staff who have worked most closely with U.S. forces and may therefore be targeted for assassination. That, of course, underscores the fragility of the situation as the United States withdraws its forces, and the risks.

We all recognize that a negotiated political solution is the only way forward in Afghanistan. We have to bring all the parties together, including the Taliban, and I commend Ambassador Khalilzad for the good work he has done. My view is we need to strengthen his hand. We need to show all the parties involved that there is a real peace dividend if they go in that direction.

So we have proposed, again, bipartisan legislation to create reconstruction opportunity zones. These are zones within Afghanistan and certain parts of Pakistan, the parts of Pakistan that were really controlled by the Pakistan Taliban years ago. It would allow the duty-free export from those regions to the United States for certain kinds of goods. It gives the President a lot of flexibility to shape the legislation. When I asked Ambassador Khalilzad about it, he said he thought this was a very, very worthwhile concept. He wanted to work on the details.

I have mentioned this to you. I believe time is of the essence. I think we all remember when the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan way back in the day. The United States had, of course, supported the Mujahideen. We disengaged. We know the sad end of that story. My view is we have to remain very engaged, and that means not just supporting the Afghan military, but making sure people have the tools to try to build a better future.

This has been a proposal that has actually been supported by Democrat and Republican administrations in the past. It passed the House of Representatives overwhelmingly years and years ago. It floundered in the Senate for a variety of reasons. I think the time is now to get it done, and I do not know if you have had a chance since we spoke to take a look at it. We really need the Administration to support this idea in the interests of providing sta-

bility and more opportunities as the United States withdraws its forces.

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, I was seized with this idea after we spoke. Like Ambassador Khalilzad, I think conceptually it is a very good idea. Again, I asked my team not only to look at it themselves, but also to talk to other colleagues, other agencies that would have equities in this. So there again, I need to come back to you. I think, to your point, making it clear that there are real upsides, real opportunity for peace and to anyone who actually plays into that, as opposed to doing things that perpetuate war, is fundamental.

I think with regard to Pakistan, for example, they say they are focused on so-called “geo-economics,” which is good, but I think we need to demonstrate that that can have some real meaning, and they would then factor that into their thinking about the steps they are willing to take to make sure that Afghanistan does not descend into civil war.

So, it is a long way of saying that I really will come back to you on this because I think as an idea, as a concept, it is a very good one. We, of course, have to look at the details. I need to talk to colleagues in the other departments who have equities in this.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that, Mr. Secretary. I do think time is of the essence here given the schedule. This is, in my view, an issue that requires a foreign policy/national security lens. That is the whole purpose of this action. It is a very limited approach, creating ROZs. So I hope that you will take the laboring oar in this effort.

Thank you for your answer and your service.

With that, let me recognize Senator Murphy.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you, Senator Van Hollen.

I know this has been a very long day. This is the second committee that Senator Van Hollen and I have had a chance to talk to you, and I know you are at the end, so I will be very brief.

Secretary BLINKEN. What are you doing tomorrow?

[Laughter.]

Senator MURPHY. We can be right here. These three have only covered about one-fifth of the world.

I wanted to just come back to the Iran nuclear deal for a moment. I think you answered this question in part in response to some comments from the Chair and the Ranking Member. In assessing the efficacy of the maximum pressure campaign, I think we have to have a reckoning with what we got.

The Trump administration put on the table 12 demands. From what I can tell, none of them were met. The country that I pay the closest attention to, Yemen, saw an increased amount of activity from Iran with respect to their proxy forces there. Our forces in Iraq started getting shot at again by Iran’s proxies there.

I guess I sort of come to the conclusion, as we are weighing whether to continue forward with the Trump-era sanctions or waive or release them in exchange for a new commitment from Iran on its nuclear program, I think it is important for us to ask what we got for those sanctions. In fact, is there not evidence that Iran’s behavior in many respects got worse, not better, during that time?

Am I wrong about my assessment here? They broke out of the nuclear program, they started shooting at our troops again in Iraq, they upped their support for many of their proxies in the region, and they refused to come back to the table. It does not seem like we got a lot for the sanctions that were re-imposed and the new sanctions that were imposed during the Trump administration, which calls into question what we would get by keeping them in place for another 4 years.

Secretary BLINKEN. Yes, I share that assessment. I think that is right, and it is, unfortunately, borne out by the facts.

Senator MURPHY. The second topic, and I am surprised Senator Portman did not bring it up because he normally does. We were together as part of this delegation in Ukraine. He and I, as you know, spent a lot of time working on standing up the capacity inside the State Department to combat misinformation. I know you have requested in your budget essentially flat funding for the Global Engagement Center. My read is that there are more potential partners that the Global Engagement Center could work with around the world than there is funding. The Global Engagement Center is not really doing direct counter-propaganda work. They are going out and making sure that independent journalists and truth-tellers and folks who are rooting out propaganda have the support to do so. I know we are still looking for someone to head up that capacity at the State Department.

What role do you envision GEC playing in our efforts to counteract Russian propaganda, but also non-state-actor propaganda, Chinese propaganda around the world?

Secretary BLINKEN. Senator, I think it has a vital role to play and one that we want to see strengthened even further. It is, as you know very well, engaged in campaigns to educate, to expose, to mitigate disinformation and misinformation, and it is already, as it stands, really the premiere platform for information sharing. I think there are about 400 partners across 29 or so countries at this point that take advantage of it. It has worked very effectively, for example, to expose Russian websites that were removed from social media for propagating misinformation. Disinformation from the PRC as well, in third-country elections, it exposed that and put a light on that. It has done very good open-source mapping of some of the PRC's use of surveillance and data collection, for example in Xinjiang. So we are seeing it effective across the board.

I think that the request that we made is appropriate and will enable it not only to sustain, but to actually grow its mission. Having said that, I would welcome working with you to make sure that it is properly resourced and operating as effectively as possible. Yes, we are working on bringing a new leader to the enterprise.

Senator MURPHY. Well, I know your personal commitment to this mission. I thank you for it. I would also commend to both the committee and to you making sure that we have the right integration between the counter-propaganda mission at State through the GEC and the counter-propaganda mission at the Department of Defense. In the prior Administration, I do not know that they were coordinating at the level that they should, something that we can do better on.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary BLINKEN. Thanks, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Murphy.

We have now had 18 members of 22, so I think they have had great respect for your attendance, Mr. Secretary, and their interest.

I just want to close on one or two comments.

I know that Senator Kaine is very good at making the case for the JCPOA, and it is true that Iran signed and said that it would never have a nuclear weapon. However, if you allow its ballistic missile program to move forward and it develops a delivery system for that nuclear material, and if you lift sanctions—and, yes, they roll back for the moment, a year, 2 years, 3 years. When they decide, if they decide, to cross the threshold that they have violated their agreement, the timeframe for them to develop the capacity for that nuclear weapon, without any limitations on ballistic missiles and with their knowledge already as it relates to enrichment, creates a difficult moment in which sanctions will have very little benefit at the end of the day. So I think that to be intellectually honest, we have to recognize that part of it as well.

I have two final questions. One is on Turkey. It is amazing to me that what was a NATO ally—is a NATO ally—but we had great aspirations for. There are more journalists and lawyers arrested in Turkey today and in jails. Turkey is constantly violating, from my perspective, international law when it seeks to threaten Cyprus in its international exclusive economic zone, when it declares an economic zone going to Libya that is not recognized at all, but interferes with Greece's exclusive economic zone, when it engages in the aggression against Armenia through Azerbaijan, when it is playing a nefarious role in Libya.

So what are we doing to counter Turkey under Erdogan? I say Turkey under Erdogan because it is not about the Turkish people, but it is certainly about its leader.

Secretary BLINKEN. We share those concerns, and we have engaged Turkey directly on them, and I can say with confidence that when President Biden sees President Erdogan in about a week's time, these will be front and center on the agenda.

Look, I think our differences with Turkey, including the ones that you have cited just now, are no secret. In many aspects it is not acting as the NATO ally it should be, not the least of which with the acquisition of the S400s from Russia.

Beyond that, the actions that have been taken in the Eastern Mediterranean were deeply disturbing. I think we have been pleased to see it pull back from some of these efforts, including removing its ships from waters that Cyprus considers to be part of its exclusive economic zone and stopping the drilling action, so that is positive.

We have serious concerns as well with human rights, the treatment of journalists, which you were very right to put the spotlight on.

So the President is going to have an opportunity to engage with President Erdogan directly on all of these issues. I will say that we also, I think, have an interest in trying to keep Turkey anchored to the West and aligned on some other critical issues. We do have important and overlapping interests in various ways in Syria when

it comes to counterterrorism, in Afghanistan dealing with some of Russia's and Iran's malign influence. We also have to confront directly these differences that you rightly spotlighted.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, listen, I understand why we want it anchored in the West, but you cannot be anchored in the West and drifting in every direction further away on all the core principles that we believe in as a NATO ally, and also in all the other elements.

Finally, I have to be honest with you, I was disappointed that the Administration greenlighted the 907 waiver renewal despite Azerbaijan's attack on Nagorno-Karabakh. Now, after they got the 907 waiver, interfering with the actual territorial sovereignty of Armenia in the border issue, not releasing the political prisoners—I mean, not the political prisoners, the actual prisoners of the conflict—in violation of international law. I mean, I think they can act with impunity. I think when we waived it, we gave them that green light.

Secretary BLINKEN. We will have to continue taking a look at this. I was and have been working actively on this, particularly getting the return of the prisoners, getting engaged in an actual process discussion, negotiation over an actual resolution, working on those things. It was my hope that we would be able to get a little bit of traction there, but I think we will have to continue to look at this and re-look at this in the future.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I hope you will.

With the thanks of the committee for your service and for your tremendous appearance here today—I mean, you have gone through several hours here. Obviously, your knowledge, intellect, and scope is pretty extraordinary. So we are grateful to have your insights, grateful for your service.

This committee's hearing record will stay open until the close of business tomorrow.

Again, with the thanks of the committee, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:19 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE ANTONY J. BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. The Administration's decision to waive sanctions on Nord Stream 2 AG and its CEO last week was a mistake. I support our relationship with Germany, but the U.S. should not compromise on countering malign Kremlin influence, which is in the national security interest of the U.S., NATO, and our vital European partners like Ukraine. Now that you have waived sanctions on the company responsible for Nord Stream 2, do you assess that a viable path remains for stopping the pipeline?

Answer. The Administration has been clear that we view the Nord Stream 2 pipeline as a Russian geopolitical project that is a bad deal for Germany, Ukraine, and European energy security. The pipeline was over 90 percent complete when the Administration took office and our assessment was that sanctions on Nord Stream 2 AG, its CEO, and its corporate officers would not stop the pipeline's construction. If construction is completed in the coming months, the process of testing, inspecting, certifying, and otherwise operationalizing the pipeline will take more time, and many technical and regulatory hurdles remain. Throughout this process, we will continue to oppose the pipeline and to work to strengthen the energy security of our allies and partners. We will also continue to examine entities involved in potentially

sanctionable activity and engage them about the risks they face if they are involved in Nord Stream 2.

Question. If the pipeline is completed, what are the remaining obstacles to it becoming operational? Can the U.S. exert pressure during that phase to ensure that does not become operational?

Answer. If pipeline construction is completed in the coming months, the process of testing, inspecting, certifying, and otherwise operationalizing the pipeline will take additional time. Throughout this process, we will continue to oppose the pipeline and to strengthen the energy security of our allies and partners. We will also continue to examine entities involved in potentially sanctionable activity and warn them about the risks they face if they are involved with Nord Stream 2.

Question. What does the Administration now expect from Germany after having made this significant concession to exercise the waiver? Will Berlin strengthen its support for Ukraine in the Normandy Format or provide additional assistance to Kyiv in its struggle against Kremlin aggression?

Answer. The Administration's position remains clear—the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is a Russian geopolitical project that threatens European energy security and undermines the security of Ukraine and frontline Central and Eastern European allies and partners. The Administration waived certain sanctions in line with the President's commitment to rebuild relations with our European allies and partners and to create space for diplomacy with Germany. We have urged Germany to take significant, concrete steps to reduce the risks Nord Stream 2 poses to Ukraine and European energy security. As we engage Germany diplomatically, we continue to consult closely with Ukraine and Central and Eastern European allies and partners.

Question. What will the Administration do to bolster our relationship with Ukraine as it continues to face Russian threats?

Answer. The United States will continue to work with our allies and partners to oppose Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea and support diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Sanctions on Russia will remain in place until Russia ends its occupation of Crimea and aggression in eastern Ukraine. We will work with Congress to continue providing security assistance, including lethal defensive weapons, that Ukraine needs to defend itself against Russia's aggression. The United States will continue to support Ukraine's chosen Euro-Atlantic path by providing assistance and pushing for progress on necessary reforms that will ensure a democratic, prosperous, and secure future for all Ukrainians.

Question. Azerbaijan's aggression continues to threaten the Armenian people in the south Caucasus, as we saw again earlier this month with its violation of Armenian sovereign territory. The United States should be clear in pushing back on this illegal aggression, but it is very difficult to do that after the Administration greenlighted a Section 907 waiver renewal despite Azerbaijan's attack on Nagorno-Karabakh last fall. How can the Administration credibly push back on Azerbaijan's illegal actions after demonstrating that Azerbaijan will not face consequences for its aggression?

Answer. The Department will continue to take appropriate measures to ensure any security assistance from the United States to Azerbaijan under the waiver of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act will not hamper efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan and will not be used for any offensive purposes against Armenia. Continued engagement with Azerbaijan is important to advancing regional peace and stability. Most recently, United States officials, working with the Georgian Government, successfully negotiated the return of 15 Armenian soldiers held by Azerbaijan on June 12. We will continue to call on both Armenia and Azerbaijan to relocate their forces to the positions held prior to the May border incidents.

Question. Is the Administration rethinking the ongoing provision of security assistance to Azerbaijan in light of its violation of Armenian territory?

Answer. The USG continuously reviews and monitors U.S. foreign assistance provided to all countries, including Armenia and Azerbaijan, to ensure appropriate use of funds and alignment with U.S. foreign policy goals. I will make sure the Department continues to take appropriate measures to ensure any security assistance from the United States to Azerbaijan will not hamper efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan and will not be used for offensive purposes against Armenia.

Question. What steps has State taken to press Azerbaijan to release the POWs and detainees and end the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage?

Answer. We continue to call on the parties to respect their obligations under international law and ensure the humane treatment of all detainees as well as respect for cultural heritage. We continue to urge the parties to engage fully with the relevant humanitarian actors to complete the exchange process for all prisoners, detainees, and remains expeditiously. We have advocated extensively for the release of the remaining detainees both publicly and privately. Most recently, on June 12, United States officials, working with the Georgian Government, successfully negotiated the return of 15 Armenian soldiers held by Azerbaijan.

Question. I appreciate that the State Department has criticized many of the Turkish Government's unacceptable actions, from the persecution of the LGBTI community to Erdogan's recent anti-Semitic comments. The Administration must be clear and consistent on pushing back on Turkey's malign activities across the board, from its obstruction of the Cyprus peace process to its support for Azerbaijan's aggression against the Armenian people to its destabilizing activities in Iraq, Syria, and Libya. How has State worked to address Turkey's malign activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, the South Caucasus, and the Middle East?

Answer. The Biden administration has urged Turkey regularly and at senior levels to cease activities that undermine regional security. In areas of armed conflict such as Syria, Iraq, and Libya, we encourage Turkey to instead take actions that advance inclusive peace and stability. We have urged all foreign forces, fighters, and mercenaries to depart Libya. We have also held useful bilateral discussions with Berlin Process partners on how to begin to operationalize the departure of foreign fighters, as called for in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2570. On Syria, we have urged Turkey to take steps to address human rights abuses committed by armed Syrian groups it supports. Regarding Cyprus, the United States has made clear that it continues to support a Cypriot-led comprehensive settlement to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation, which would benefit all Cypriots as well as the wider region. The United States was deeply concerned by Turkey's actions last year that raised the risk of conflict between NATO Allies in the eastern Mediterranean, and we welcome the commitment by Turkey and Greece to continue exploratory talks. We reiterate that disagreements should be resolved through diplomacy rather than provocative military actions. The role played by third parties, including Turkey, in last year's fighting in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was deeply unhelpful. We encourage Turkey to support the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan and help the sides work toward a sustainable, long-term political solution.

Question. Beyond the 2010 U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement, what are the Administration's specific near and medium term diplomatic and development objectives in Iraq, and how is U.S. Mission Iraq resourced to successfully achieve these objectives?

Answer. The Administration's near- and medium-term goals in Iraq include supporting Prime Minister Kadhimi's efforts to hold free and fair elections, combat corruption and promote reform and economic cooperation, hold accountable those who perpetrated violence towards peaceful protesters, and work towards the final defeat of ISIS.

The FY 2022 Diplomatic Programs request for Iraq is an increase of \$44.9 million above FY 2021. The FY 2022 request for U.S. assistance to Iraq maintains progress by sustaining ongoing programs, including economic and development assistance. It will enable long-term security and stability as security sector assistance transfers from DoD to State authorities.

Question. Given the shifting nature of U.S. activities in Iraq, does the Administration intend to advocate for Congress moving away from OCO funding as the basis for Iraq-related activities to create a more sustainable foundation for the bilateral relationship?

Answer. The USG is focused on long-term security and economic development priorities in Iraq; the FY 2022 request does not seek assistance as Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO). The FY 2022 President's budget proposes a more robust funding level within the Department's and USAID's "enduring base" appropriation, to resource ongoing programs and operations previously funded through OCO.

Question. Colombia: For two decades, Colombia has been our closest partner in Latin America, and there has been strong bipartisan support for the strategic relationship that our countries have built. However, Colombia today faces immense challenges, including the need to continue implementing its 2016 peace accord, the enduring threats of drug trafficking and armed actors, the socioeconomic impact of a new surge of COVID-19 cases, and the impact of the Venezuelan refugee and migration crisis. On top of this, Colombia is now in its second month of protests and

social unrest. There have been troubling incidents of human rights abuses by security forces and disturbing cases of civilians taking up arms against protesters. At \$455 million, Colombia represents the Administration's largest country request for Latin America, underscoring the continued priority that the U.S. places on this strategic partnership. In that sense, Mr. Secretary, can you lay out the Biden administration's priorities for the U.S.-Colombia relationship, how the budget request helps address the major challenges I mentioned and the ongoing social unrest, and what assistance the U.S. will provide to Colombian efforts to address COVID-19?

Answer. The U.S.-Colombia partnership is grounded in shared democratic values. We aim to support a secure, prosperous Colombia that can effectively respond to the needs of its citizens, defeat transnational criminal groups that threaten hemispheric security, generate economic opportunities for citizens in both our countries, combat climate change, and partner in promoting democratic governance and respect for human rights. Our assistance will help address citizen concerns over rural insecurity and lack of economic opportunity that are among the motivations for recent protests. President Biden announced Colombia's inclusion in an initial tranche of 14 million U.S. vaccine donations, and we will continue providing assistance and resources.

Question. NATO is the most important alliance we have, but I am concerned that it remains in need of modernization. In advance of the June NATO Summit, what is your vision for ensuring that NATO is prepared for the 21st century, including with regard to strategic planning/capacity and burden sharing?

Answer. I will continue to ensure Allies equitably share the responsibility of NATO's collective security. Allies recommitted to the Wales Defense Investment Pledge in its entirety at the June 14 Summit. I will urge Allies to view burden sharing in terms of capabilities, readiness, and force generation, not simply defense spending. I will continue consulting with Allies and with Congress to ensure NATO has sufficient, capable, and ready forces required to maintain a credible defense and deterrence posture and fulfill NATO missions and operations. I will ensure the revision of NATO's Strategic Concept proceeds from sound analysis of the evolving security environment to offer a clear approach to current and future threats and challenges.

Question. Are there steps that we should consider within the context of NATO that would strengthen democratic institutions in member countries and address the rise of anti-democratic actions on the part of member states?

Answer. NATO was founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. NATO is stronger because it is an Alliance grounded in our democratic values, rather than transactions or coercion. No democracy is perfect. That is why the Biden administration is committed to democratic renewal at home and abroad, and why it is important for Allies to hold one another accountable for honoring democratic commitments. The Biden administration has made clear that democracy and human rights are central to U.S. foreign policy. We are closely watching the issue of judicial independence and freedom of expression in particular countries, as are the European Commission and other EU institutions.

Question. Afghanistan: I remain concerned that troop withdrawal will bring terrible consequences for many Afghans. I have no doubt that the Taliban will escalate violence post-U.S. withdrawal to make some gains on the battlefield that could strengthen their hand further. The situation is going to get worse before it gets better. We should be doing everything we can to strengthen the hand of the Afghan Government. The school attack 3 weeks ago is a potent reminder—if one were needed—that the threat to women and girls and minorities remains acute and will likely grow. The department has said the right things in terms of the protection of women in Afghanistan, but I fail to see how this will work post-withdrawal. What is the State Department specifically doing to adapt its programs and policies for women and girls in light of withdrawal?

Answer. The United States will continue to support the rights of Afghan women and girls through diplomacy and by maintaining significant humanitarian and development assistance. Ongoing U.S. programs support the meaningful participation of women in the peace process, strengthen respect for women's rights, create quality educational opportunities, assist women to join the workforce, and expand access to quality healthcare. While the future of Afghanistan is for Afghans themselves to decide, the United States has made clear that future development assistance and international legitimacy depend on their actions with respect to rights and fundamental freedoms, especially those of women, children, and members of minority groups.

Question. The Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program remains a bureaucratically difficult, complex, and slow mechanism for assisting Afghans who supported the U.S. as interpreters and support staff. What steps have you taken to accelerate the approval process?

Answer. The Department of State takes seriously its commitment to assist Afghans at risk due to their prior service to the United States. In conjunction with interagency partners, the Department is participating in a robust NSC-led effort to streamline SIV processing, including through improved interagency information sharing and process improvements. The Department has also added additional staff at Embassy Kabul and in the U.S.-based offices that process Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applications, including the office that processes chief of mission applications. We look forward to working closely with Congress on streamlining the SIV process.

Question. I am also concerned about the humanitarian crisis that could result from increased violence. Does the Department have a plan and resources needed to deal with massive refugee flows in the region?

Answer. We remain engaged in Afghanistan through our full diplomatic, economic, and assistance toolkit to support the peaceful, stable future the Afghan people want and deserve. We are actively engaged in contingency planning with international organizations and NGO partners in case of increased internal and cross-border displacement and will continue to assess resourcing requirements as the situation unfolds. Our humanitarian partners are committed to delivering needs-based assistance with impartiality, neutrality, and independence as long as they can safely do so. We are engaged in humanitarian diplomacy to coordinate an international response and encourage neighboring countries to continue accepting Afghans seeking international protection.

Question. Multilateral/Humanitarian: The world is experiencing an unprecedented humanitarian and displacement crisis, with an estimated 235 million people in need of humanitarian assistance this year alone. In Syria, Ethiopia, and countless other crises, authoritarian regimes and non-state actors are blocking food, medicine, and other humanitarian assistance to devastating effect. There is a pressing need for consistent, high level engagement by the United States both internationally and at the U.N. to address the efforts to block humanitarian assistance. In what specific ways is the Department pushing for consistent and high-level U.S. engagement internationally and at the U.N. to address the undermining of humanitarian access? What results have you seen from these efforts so far?

Answer. I believe U.S. humanitarian leadership is more important than ever, particularly amid record-high humanitarian needs and obstruction of aid in crises such as Syria and Ethiopia. To promote accountability for such aid obstruction, we use many tools, including investigations and prosecutions at appropriate national and international tribunals, U.N. resolutions, and targeted sanctions. We continue working with partners, including the G7, to promote humanitarian access and generate resources to improve aid workers' security and safety. Much work remains, but we are putting bad actors on notice, including in the Security Council, and promoting reforms and tools that have helped improve humanitarian access.

Question. The U.N. has warned that 36 countries could experience famine this year, pushing an additional 130 million people to the brink of starvation. That is equivalent to the populations of France and the United Kingdom combined. And we know that food insecurity leads to a number of other devastating and destabilizing conditions. How are you confronting this impending crisis?

Answer. I recognize the grave threat food insecurity poses to national and international security, and to that end we are focused on addressing the three main drivers of hunger: conflict, climate change, and COVID-19 recovery. We chose to focus on conflict and food insecurity as the theme of our UNSC presidency in March. We are the largest donor to the World Food Program, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, and to the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and are actively engaged in preparing high-level deliverables for the G20 and U.N. Food Systems and Nutrition for Growth Summits. Around the world, we are building sustainable, resilient, and climate-smart food systems critical to ending food insecurity.

Question. Human Rights: It is almost impossible to go a week without reading a devastating new report about sexual and gender-based violence in conflict. Sexual violence is being used as a weapon of war in Tigray Ethiopia today, as it has been in Burma, Yemen, Syria, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. There are also alarming predictions about the repression and violence women and girls in Afghanistan will face should the Taliban reassert more control following the U.S. with-

drawal. What can you tell this committee that you are doing to elevate this issue, treating it with the seriousness it deserves?

Answer. Preventing and responding to gender-based violence, including in areas of conflict around the world, is a security and human rights priority for the United States. We have called on the Government of Ethiopia to take immediate action to prevent forces from committing sexual violence in the Tigray region and have demanded that perpetrators be brought to justice and will continue to pursue measures to hold them accountable. In Afghanistan, we have signaled that a future Afghan Government that does not respect women's rights should not expect international legitimacy, acceptance, or assistance and have advocated with all negotiation parties for an inclusive peace process that preserves the rights of all Afghans, including women.

Question. What is the U.S. message to survivors of sexual violence as a weapon of war and how are you working both to hold perpetrators accountable and preventing additional such violence?

Answer. Preventing sexual violence in conflict is a matter of international peace and security. Sexual violence fuels instability, forces people to flee their homes and countries, fractures societies, and is linked to and used in conjunction with other forms of gender-based violence and abuse such as forced marriage, domestic violence, and human trafficking. The United States made explicit the link between security and sexual violence in conflict when we drafted UNSCR 1820 in 2008; and we continue to be a leader in supporting solutions to prevent and respond to all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual violence in conflict, investing in foreign assistance and leading international diplomacy efforts.

Question. Since taking up your position, what have you done to ensure we are working to hold our allies and adversaries to the same standard on human rights? What shifts in our foreign policy must we make to uphold this standard?

Answer. As President Biden stated, we raise issues of human rights with both our allies and adversaries "because that is what we are and that is who we are." Human rights, democracy, and equality are at the heart of our diplomacy. We have re-engaged with allies, civil society, and multilateral organizations, including the UNHRC to advance these goals. We continue to engage in the Universal Periodic Review process, through which we provide recommendations regarding countries' human rights records, whether ally or adversary. We are already making strides in shifting our foreign policy by being unafraid and unapologetic about raising human rights concerns bilaterally and multilaterally.

Question. We are seeing unprecedented assaults against the fundamental rights of free expression and free press around the globe, with egregious violations recently against journalists in Belarus and Burma, including the detention of an American journalist by the junta there. I am proud to lead a bipartisan resolution that reaffirms freedom of the press as a priority of the United States in promoting democracy, human rights, and good governance. What are you doing to show authoritarian regimes that they cannot trample on the rights of journalists without consequence?

Answer. The Administration is committed to promoting respect for freedom of expression and accountability for those who abuse journalists' rights. In response to the Lukashenka regime's forced diversion of a flight to arrest a journalist and continued repression in Belarus, I announced visa restrictions for 46 individuals and Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctions on 16 individuals and five entities. In Burma, we have pressed the military regime to immediately release U.S. citizen and journalist Daniel Fenster and others unjustly detained, cease all violence, and lift restrictions on journalists and media. Finally, I announced the Khashoggi Ban in February, which promotes accountability for governments who threaten and attack journalists and perceived dissidents overseas.

Question. Ethiopia continues to spiral out of control. Despite our best diplomatic efforts, the conflict in Tigray, insecurity in other regions of the country, and the erosion of political space persists. Has the State Department come to conclusions about whether war crimes or crimes against humanity have taken place? What measures is the Administration prepared to take, in addition to previously announced visa restrictions, to encourage Prime Minister Abiy to change course?

Answer. The Department is reviewing information relevant for a determination as to whether atrocity crimes have been committed, and we expect to complete that process soon. In addition to implementing visa restrictions, the Department has restricted economic and security assistance to Ethiopia and imposed defense trade controls, and we are considering all options, including financial sanctions, to end violence across the country and find a political solution to the conflict.

Question. Somalia: Our long-standing effort to stabilize Somalia has met with limited success.

What is your plan to revitalize our Somalia policy to advance our strategic goals in that country?

Answer. The United States has an interest in a peaceful Somalia that is not a terrorist safe haven or source of regional instability. A holistic approach is needed to ensure sustainable gains—instability and lack of adequate governance cannot be addressed by military means alone. The State Department is working closely with interagency partners to develop a strategy that can effectively manage near-term security threats while addressing the political, governance, and economic issues at the root of Somalia's instability. Close coordination and cooperation with the Somalis and international stakeholders, including the U.N., EU, AU, Somalia's neighbors, Turkey, and the Gulf states, will be vital to ensuring an effective approach.

Question. The President requested an additional \$800 million for global health security programs and activities in FY 2022. One of the most important lessons of COVID-19 is that leadership matters, especially in the global arena. How should we engage with our partners to strengthen global health security and ensure we are prepared for the next pandemic?

Answer. The United States is fully committed to working with partners to reform and strengthen the international health architecture in order to spur concrete, effective action to meaningfully improve global health. We will build on WHO and existing institutions, but also take into account the ways in which the world has changed and will continue to change. We will address four key areas of work: strengthening and modernizing existing organizations and systems and identifying the need for new organizations and systems; ensuring compliance with existing international agreements and identifying the need for new tools; ensuring adequate, sustainable, and innovative financing; and ensuring transparent, accountable, and measurable oversight.

Question. Thanks to the leadership of President Biden, the COVID-19 epidemic in the U.S. is beginning to subside, however the disease continues to surge worldwide. Most people around the world are still waiting for vaccinations, especially in Africa. I applaud the Administration's recent announcements about vaccine donations, but it's clear our efforts alone will not achieve the levels of coverage the world needs. What initiatives is the Administration planning to lead at the G-7 meeting for collective action to end the pandemic?

Answer. The leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) set an agenda for global action to end the pandemic and prepare for the future by driving an intensified international effort to vaccinate the world by getting as many safe and effective vaccines to as many people as possible as fast as possible. G7 commitments since the start of the pandemic provide for a total of over two billion vaccine doses, with the commitments since February 2021 providing for one billion doses over the next year. The G7 will seek to create the appropriate frameworks to strengthen our collective defenses against threats to global health by: increasing and coordinating on global manufacturing capacity; improving early warning systems; and supporting efforts to shorten the cycle for the development of safe and effective vaccines, treatments, and tests from 300 to 100 days.

Question. The American Rescue plan provided \$10 billion, but with the urgency and tremendous needs of the crisis continuing to grow, will that be enough to bring the pandemic under control?

Answer. The FY 2022 request will build on American Rescue Plan Act funding and other resources that Congress has provided for pandemic response and global health security. Beyond these specific resources for global health security, the Department and USAID are adapting existing programs and funding resources to address the primary, secondary, and tertiary impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across all sectors and programming areas.

Question. Mozambique: Many of us are rightly concerned with the growing jihadist crisis in northern Mozambique, and the resultant humanitarian emergency. However military action alone is an inadequate response. The President's budget proposes no increase for Development Assistance to Mozambique, but a substantial increase in International Military Education and Training. What is the Department's plan to address the full scope of the situation in northern Mozambique, and how will the proposed funding levels in the FY22 request allow you to implement that plan?

Answer. The ISIS threat and the humanitarian crisis are grave. The United States is working with the Mozambican Government and international partners on

an integrated response that enhances security and addresses local grievances that contribute to the root causes of the violence.

The United States helps Mozambique counter ISIS along four lines of effort, including socio-economic support, security assistance, strategic communications, and international engagement, while providing immediate humanitarian assistance. The proposed funding levels allow the Department to enhance its whole-of-government approach to respond to the crisis and empower the Mozambican Government to confront ISIS-Mozambique.

Question. In the past few weeks, ransomware created by Russia-linked criminal groups forced the shutdown of a critical fuel pipeline along the Eastern Seaboard and meatpacking plants across the country. As you know, these were only the latest in a series of major cyber incidents. Recently, hacking groups linked to the Chinese and Russian governments compromised hundreds of thousands of American businesses and state and federal agencies, including the Departments of State, Energy, Commerce, Justice, and Homeland Security. Clearly, cybersecurity is a critical international issue, and the threat to Americans and our allies is only growing. What is the State Department doing to prioritize and address this threat? How does this budget reflect those priorities?

Answer. We must protect U.S. security and prosperity and push back hard against those that seek to exploit and undermine the open nature of cyberspace. The Department engages with international partners to advance a framework of responsible state behavior in cyberspace and hold states accountable when they transgress it. We are also committed to strengthening global cooperation and capacity to fight cybercrime, including ransomware, and advancing accessions to the Budapest Convention. Our FY 2021 budget reflects \$5.998 million to promote stability in cyberspace, along with \$7 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF). We doubled funds to combat global cybercrime from \$10 million in FY 2021 International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funds to \$20 million INCLE requested in the FY 2022 budget.

Question. The National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence recently observed that “there is currently no clear lead for emerging technology policy or diplomacy within the State Department, which hinders the Department’s ability to make strategic technology policy decisions. It also creates confusion for allies and partners, who regularly express uncertainty regarding which senior official should be their primary point of contact for issues related to key topics such as AI, 5G, quantum computing, biotechnology, or new emerging technologies.”

What do you plan to do about this?

Answer. I agree that we must elevate technology diplomacy and organize the Department for the new era. That is why I asked my two deputies to lead a review of our cyber and emerging technology policy and structure. I understand they have been in close consultations with Congress throughout this process. The review is in the final stages and I will move quickly to implement its recommendations. In the meantime, we have incorporated emerging tech concerns and opportunities into our core diplomatic work. For instance, we have established a Trade and Technology Council with the EU, and we are working in multilateral fora and bilaterally to advance principles to harness emerging technologies consistent with our values and interests.

Question. Will the United States provide Taiwan with additional vaccines beyond the 750,000 already promised?

Answer. On June 19, the United States donated 2.5 million doses of Moderna vaccines to Taiwan through AIT and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO). We have had a close partnership with Taiwan on global health issues and have been working together throughout the pandemic. Taiwan was there to help the United States in the earliest days of the pandemic, providing PPE and other life-saving materials. We remain grateful for its generosity and proud that we are able to support Taiwan in this moment of need. Scientific teams and legal experts from both Taiwan and the United States worked together to ensure the prompt delivery of these safe and effective vaccine doses to Taiwan.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE ANTONY J. BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Last week, the Administration rightly sanctioned several individuals from Bulgaria for extensive corruption-related activities harmful to U.S. interests. Just a couple weeks before that, the Administration waived sanctions against

former Stasi agent, longtime Putin crony, and NS2 CEO, Matthias Warnig. One of the reasons for your determination that the waivers are in the national interest of the United States was that it will “provide space for diplomatic engagement with Germany.” The Biden administration has claimed to be elevating the importance of anti-corruption efforts to U.S. national security. This is admirable, but how can you claim to be credible on combatting corruption by waiving sanctions on arguably one of the most corrupt energy projects in the world, Nord Stream 2?

Answer. My decision to waive certain sanctions in the case of Nord Stream 2 is in line with the President’s commitment to rebuild relations with our European allies and partners and reflects a desire to make something positive out of the difficult situation the Administration inherited. Rather than risk damaging relations through further sanctions, we are using the space provided by these waivers to engage Germany diplomatically to take steps to reduce the risks Nord Stream 2 poses to Ukraine and European energy security.

Question. Last week, the Administration rightly sanctioned several individuals from Bulgaria for extensive corruption-related activities harmful to U.S. interests. Just a couple weeks before that, the Administration waived sanctions against former Stasi agent, longtime Putin crony, and NS2 CEO, Matthias Warnig. One of the reasons for your determination that the waivers are in the national interest of the United States was that it will “provide space for diplomatic engagement with Germany.” What is your plan for this diplomatic engagement, and what requirements will Germany/NS2AG have to meet in order to ensure the waiver is not revoked?

Answer. I will not go into details about ongoing diplomatic discussions, but we have made clear to Germany that we expect it to take serious, concrete steps to address the risks an operational Nord Stream 2 would pose to Ukraine and European energy security. We also continue to consult intensively with Ukraine and frontline Central and Eastern European allies and partners, in order to ensure that our discussions with Germany reflect their priorities and perspectives.

Question. How do you justify sanctioning people for engaging in malign and corrupt activities in Bulgaria—an EU member state with whom we presumably would also like to cooperate—while waiving sanctions on a German national engaged in arguably much more strategically damaging and corrupt activities related to Nord Stream 2?

Answer. My decision to waive sanctions against Nord Stream 2 AG, its corporate officers, and its German-national CEO Matthias Warnig is in line with the President’s commitment to rebuild relations with our European allies and partners, including Germany. The strength of these relationships will lay the foundation for many of our foreign policy priorities, such as the economic recovery; efforts to combat COVID-19; and pushing back on Russia, the PRC, and authoritarianism around the globe. The decision also comes with a clear message to Berlin that the Administration expects it to take serious, concrete steps to address the risks that a completed pipeline would pose to Ukraine and European energy security.

Question. Under what circumstances would you revoke these waivers?

Answer. Like all national interest waivers, these waivers can be rescinded if a determination is made that they are no longer in the national interest.

Question. Should Nord Stream 2 reach completion, how will you work to mitigate the strategic vulnerabilities it will create in Ukraine and Central and Eastern Europe?

Answer. While the Administration continues to oppose Nord Stream 2, the waivers we issued were intended to create the space for diplomatic engagement with Germany to address the risks a completed Nord Stream 2 pipeline would pose to Ukraine and European energy security. Those conversations are ongoing, and we have made it clear that we expect Germany to take serious, concrete action to address those risks. We also continue to consult extensively with Ukraine and other Central and Eastern European allies and partners regarding our opposition to Nord Stream 2 and in order to ensure our conversations with Germany take their priorities and perspectives into account.

Question. Administration officials, including you, cite the fact that NS2 construction was 95 percent complete when it took office to justify waiving sanctions against NS2 and giving a pass to Russia’s premier malign influence project in Europe, but construction on NS2 was also 95 percent complete in December 2019, when Congressionally-mandated sanctions and robust enforcement by the Trump administration halted pipe laying. Based on what evidence or assessment did the Administration

decide that robust enforcement of U.S. sanctions law would no longer be effective in stopping or significantly delaying Nord Stream 2?

Answer. While the Administration continues to oppose Nord Stream 2, the pipeline was more than 90 percent complete when we took office, and we assessed that sanctions on Nord Stream 2, its CEO, and its corporate officers would not stop the construction of the pipeline. The waivers we issued are in line with the President's commitment to rebuild relations with our European allies and were intended to create the space for diplomatic engagement with Germany to address the risks a completed Nord Stream 2 pipeline would pose to Ukraine and European energy security. Those conversations are ongoing, and we have made it clear that we expect Germany to take serious, concrete action to address those risks.

Question. Looking back on your pledge in your confirmation hearing to "do whatever we can," to stop Nord Stream 2, does the Administration also intend to waive the mandatory PEESA sanctions on post-construction certification and testing? What about the mandatory sanctions on NS2 AG under CAATSA section 228, a topic on which Ranking Member McCaul and I sent you a letter last week? Note: Two of the companies sanctioned under the 5/17 PEESA report had already been sanctioned or had very close ties to entities sanctioned already under Obama-era Ukraine sanctions codified under CAATSA. According to Section 228 of CAATSA, mandatory secondary sanctions must be applied to any foreign person who engages in a significant transaction with a previously-sanctioned entity. Since, by the Administration's own admission, NS2 AG did business with previously sanctioned entities, NS2 AG itself should be subject to mandatory secondary sanctions.

Answer. Throughout the process of testing, inspecting, certifying, and otherwise operationalizing the pipeline, we will continue to oppose this project and work to strengthen the energy security of our allies and partners. The language in 7503(a)(1)(B)(ii) of Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA) targets persons that "facilitated deceptive or structured transactions to provide those vessels [identified in the Department's report to Congress] for the construction of such a project." As the Department noted in its response to your letter, this is a different standard than the one laid out in CAATSA section 228. This latter authority is delegated to the Department of the Treasury, which may be consulted further on section 228 implementation.

Question. The budget includes a request for \$1 billion for global health security, "to prevent, detect, and respond to future biological threats and pandemics." How will these resources be managed and prioritized? Will the Department play a direct role in coordination, or will funds simply be transferred to USAID and CDC?

Answer. The nearly \$1 billion requested for global health security for FY 2022 is essential to reinforce U.S. leadership on global health security and includes: \$355 million for USAID global health security programming worldwide; \$90 million to replenish USAID's "Emergency Reserve Fund," which was the initial funding source to address COVID-19; \$300 million for multilateral contributions to support COVID-19 vaccine and other countermeasures research and development (R&D) and delivery; \$250 million for a global health security financing mechanism; and \$20 million to address administrative and staffing needs. We collaborate closely with other departments and agencies to coordinate the execution of the U.S. global health security strategy overseas.

Question. Last week, the Administration announced initial COVID-19 vaccine donations to COVAX and direct bilateral donations to certain countries, rolling out 25 million immediately.

What, exactly, is the U.S. COVID-19 vaccine diplomacy strategy?

Answer. First, we are donating vaccines to the world, including 580 million doses through COVAX and bilaterally. Our principles for sharing U.S. vaccines include maximizing the number of vaccines available equitably for the greatest number of countries and for those most at-risk within countries; preparing for surges and prioritizing healthcare workers and other vulnerable populations based on public health data and acknowledged best practices; and helping our neighbors and other countries in need. Second, we are scaling vaccine production for the world, working with U.S. vaccine manufacturers to increase vaccine supply for the rest of the world. Third, we are working with partners and investing in local vaccine production.

Question. Now that the World Health Organization has provided emergency use authorization for Sinovac and Sinopharm—both of which have low efficacy rates—how does the Administration plan to ensure that U.S. contributions to COVAX are not used to underwrite the purchase and distribution of substandard Chinese COVID-19 vaccines?

Answer. The United States encourages the rapid international distribution of vaccines that meet the robust regulatory standards for authorization by the WHO to assess safety, efficacy, and good manufacturing practices. We will continue to advance our position that any regulatory process to evaluate COVID-19 vaccines needs scientific rigor and that information and data be shared fully and transparently. We are also working in close coordination with COVAX to allocate the more than 500 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines that will be donated by the United States.

Question. Would it be appropriate to shift from financial contributions to in-kind donations of surplus U.S. vaccines?

Answer. We will continue to donate surplus supply as it is delivered to us, and simultaneously this summer, we will begin executing on the donation of 500 million Pfizer doses that we are providing to Gavi for distribution through COVAX. Our actions are serving as a catalyst for other countries to contribute doses and funding for the benefit of the rest of the world.

Question. What needs to happen for the United States to roll out the remainder of the 80 million vaccines by the end of June?

Answer. We will have allocated all 80 million doses in the coming days with shipments going out as soon as countries are ready to receive the doses. The Administration will move as expeditiously as possible, coordinating with COVAX and other countries as well as working through logistical details, regulatory requirements, and other legal considerations to ensure safe and secure transfer of doses. We anticipate an increasing number of shipments every week as we ramp up these efforts. Already, doses have landed in Mexico, Canada, and Taiwan.

Question. What are next steps after that for the United States donating or exporting vaccines to other countries around the world?

Answer. We will continue to donate surplus supply as it is delivered to us and simultaneously will begin executing on the 500 million Pfizer doses we are providing to Gavi for distribution through COVAX. We will work with the G7 and other partners to coordinate multilateral efforts to combat the pandemic. We will also advance our health and health security efforts to prevent, detect, and respond to COVID-19 and other biological threats; increase vaccination; detect outbreaks and variants; respond to surges; and recover economically. We will do so in a way that strengthens our global public health institutions and ability to come together as an international community to defeat this pandemic and the next.

Question. Certain countries—including important U.S. allies like the Philippines—have purchased Pfizer and Moderna vaccines from the United States. When are these vaccines going to be made available to these countries?

Answer. Driven by aggressive USG actions and investments, in partnership with U.S. vaccine manufacturers, to accelerate domestic manufacturing and expand domestic production lines, the United States has vastly increased vaccine supply for the rest of the world in a way that also creates jobs here at home. Pfizer and Moderna have already increased their capacity to produce vaccines for the world and are exporting to partners across the globe. We will continue to take additional steps to help vaccinate the world and end this pandemic globally, including by sharing doses from our own vaccine supply in addition to supporting increasing vaccine supply which enables commercial procurements such as by the Philippines.

Question. Do you commit to advocating for the quickest possible delivery of purchased vaccines for U.S. allies and partners like the Philippines?

Answer. In addition to sharing doses from our own vaccine supply, we are scaling vaccine production for the world, working with U.S. vaccine manufacturers to vastly increase vaccine supply for the rest of the world in a way that also creates jobs here at home. Driven by the aggressive actions that have been taken to accelerate manufacturing and production lines in the United States, Pfizer and Moderna have already increased their capacity to produce vaccines for the world. We will continue to take additional steps to help vaccinate the world and end this pandemic globally.

Question. According to a May 26 CNN report, Biden administration officials reportedly shut down a State Department investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ned Price said last week that was inaccurate and that the investigators had completed their work and finished a report.

Which is true?

Answer. Under the previous Administration, the Bureau for Arms Control and Verification (AVC) commissioned an internal inquiry into COVID origins, and that

work has concluded. The team responsible for the inquiry never drafted a report, but did provide a briefing of their work to Department staff. All relevant parts of the Department, including AVC, continue to work with the interagency on this matter as needed and directed. Additionally, President Biden has committed to keep working with like-minded partners around the world to press China to participate in a full, transparent, evidence-based international investigation and to provide access to all relevant data and evidence.

Question. Should the Department play a more significant role in coordinating U.S. partnerships with foreign entities engaged in research and development (R&D) of pathogens—particularly gain-of-function research—to ensure that all such research is aligned with the national security interests of the United States?

Answer. The Department of State plays a significant role in the interagency processes that address oversight policies for research that might pose national security concerns. These oversight policies require careful consideration of risks and benefits, as well as consideration of our international obligations. I am committed to working with the interagency and the Administration to make sure that the Department of State continues to play a role in the interagency, leading to informed decisions in the best interest of the United States.

Question. What role should the Department play and what are you going to do to ensure a more robust interagency role for the State Department on this issue going forward?

Answer. The State Department has a role in interagency policy discussions about preventing the misuse of scientific advances that could pose a threat to national security, including advances in the life sciences. We ensure that policy development takes into account both our international obligations and the international implications of policy choices, then we work with our allies and partners to encourage others to adopt similar policies. I am committed to working with the interagency and the Administration to ensure the Department of State maintains our robust role in shaping, implementing, and communicating federal policies that protect our national security.

Question. Should the United States engage in highly risky research—such as gain-of-function research—in cooperation with countries that do not have adequate biosecurity standards, that have violated or failed to uphold the International Health Regulations, or where the United States cannot certify that such country is in compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention?

Answer. Factors that bear on the risk of accident or misuse should be carefully reviewed in considering whether to conduct, fund, or otherwise cooperate in such research. Federal funding and oversight policies help guide these decisions for research that might pose particular concerns. I am committed to working with the interagency and the Administration to make sure that federal policy choices are in line with our international obligations and in the national security interests of the United States.

Question. Have you asked the Department to conduct an analysis of whether any funding or foreign assistance—including State Department funds implemented by USAID—has supported entities in China that conduct gain-of-function research or research that presents a dual use concern?

Answer. The Department of State does not fund gain-of-function research, and the United States has policies in place to prevent misuse of life sciences advances. I am not aware of Department of State funding for the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), and I refer you to other departments and agencies for any questions about their assistance.

Question. Will you commit to conducting a thorough review and providing documentation to this committee?

Answer. I am committed to reviewing current policy and funding priorities for any programs the Department of State may have for joint research projects with China and will share that information with Congress as appropriate.

Question. Directed-Energy Attacks on U.S. Diplomats and Personnel: I am deeply concerned by the troubling reports about the number of State Department and other federal employees impacted by the suspected directed-energy attacks known as “Havana syndrome.” The Department has an obligation to do more both to protect its people and hold accountable those responsible. Unfortunately, the information provided by the Department to this committee has been inadequate thus far—even on the most basic issues. How many State Department personnel have been impacted overall?

Answer. The Department has no higher priority than the safety and security of USG personnel and their accompanying family members. The Department has received reports of unexplained health incidents from various regions around the globe. We are working closely with the interagency to standardize reporting and information-sharing to ensure a consistent approach to identifying and caring for those affected. We stand ready to provide you further information on the impact of these incidents.

Question. How many of those affected were overseas and how many were domestic?

Answer. The USG has received both overseas and domestic reports of unexplained health incidents. We are working closely with the interagency to standardize reporting and information-sharing to ensure a consistent approach to identifying and caring for those affected. We stand ready to provide you further information on the impact of these incidents in a classified setting.

Question. What new policies or procedures the Department is putting in place to help ensure our diplomats get the care and protection they deserve?

Answer. As our understanding of unexplained health incidents (UHI) evolves, we also adapt and improve our policies to better protect and care for our workforce. We established the role of care coordinator to assist those under chief of mission security responsibility who have been affected by a possible UHI. On June 1, State launched a pilot baseline testing program to improve our ability to measure the effects of a UHI. We implemented an interagency-approved triage tool, including an initial field assessment, to determine if an individual suffered a UHI. On care, we are discussing appropriate extended care facilities with the interagency community and private sector. We are ready to discuss our countermeasures in a classified setting.

Question. Should Cuba be removed from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism without credibly explaining the targeted attacks on U.S. diplomats in Havana?

Answer. The Administration has committed to carefully reviewing decisions made in the prior Administration, including the decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. I commit to a careful and thorough review of all material related to the decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism.

Our top priority is the safety and security of our people. The Department is working to determine what happened to our personnel and their families and to ensure their well-being and health. That investigation is ongoing and is a high priority. The Department will continue to work with Congress on this very important issue.

Question. It has come to our attention that a number of those impacted may have worked in policy areas or countries of particular interest to Russia such as Nord Stream 2, cyber, certain political-military issues, and other areas. Can you confirm these reports, or has the Department conducted any other survey of the regional and policy distribution of those affected?

Answer. The Department is fully invested in an interagency process seeking to determine the culpability and mechanism for these incidents. To date, no conclusions have been made, including about policy areas and geography of affected employees, but we commit to keeping Congress abreast of developments related to unexplained health incidents impacting U.S. personnel overseas.

Question. Are China and Russia reducing the role of nuclear weapons in their strategies?

Answer. No. That is why this Administration will seek to engage both countries in meaningful dialogue; head off costly arms races; and pursue new arms control arrangements while ensuring our strategic deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective and that our extended deterrence commitments to our allies remain strong and credible.

Question. Doesn't "reducing the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. strategy"—as described in President Biden's interim national security guidance—embolden China and Russia, and cause our allies to further doubt our commitment to them to and to extended deterrence?

Answer. The Administration's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance states that as the United States seeks to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, we will do so, "while ensuring our strategic deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective and that our extended deterrence commitments to our allies remain strong and credible." We will consult with our allies and partners

as we undertake a review of U.S. nuclear posture and policy to inform our pursuit of the objectives outlined in the interim guidance.

Question. Do you support the Department supporting Japan in developing long-range precision strike capabilities?

Answer. In a worsening security environment, the United States and Japan will continue to closely coordinate on how to deter effectively and, if necessary, respond to growing threats to the U.S.-Japan Alliance and regional security in the Indo-Pacific. Long-range precision fires are one component among many contributing to the alliance's offensive and defensive capabilities. I would defer to the DoD for a more detailed analysis on specific roles, missions, and capabilities within the U.S.-Japan Alliance.

Question. What is your stance regarding U.S. leadership in mediating an end to the conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon and do you classify it as an armed conflict at this stage of the crisis? Should the U.S. dedicate greater targeted financial and diplomatic resources to help mediate the conflict?

Answer. The United States has an important role to play in pushing for a resolution to the crisis. We support the Swiss Government's efforts and other meaningful initiatives that could advance peace on the ground, including local initiatives. We have not reached a determination as to whether there is a non-international armed conflict in Cameroon. My decision recently, following cuts in security assistance, to implement a visa restriction policy on individuals believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining peace in Cameroon, reflects our commitment to resolve the Anglophone crisis. We will continue to consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end the violence.

Question. What role should the United States and the U.N. play in verifying the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Ethiopia?

Answer. An immediate end to hostilities and the withdrawal of Eritrean forces are the critical steps to resolving humanitarian access and human rights concerns in Tigray. A mechanism through which the international community can verify that such a withdrawal has occurred will ultimately be required. The United States and the U.N. are among those entities that could potentially play a constructive role in helping to craft and implement such a mechanism. We are consulting with a broad range of international partners on this issue.

Question. If South Sudan's leadership continues to fail in delivering on the current peace agreement, should the United States begin looking at making all of its foreign assistance to the country conditional to implementing that accord or key components of the agreement?

Answer. The lack of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) is unacceptable. The Department is considering options for leveraging U.S. foreign assistance to best support implementation of the R-ARCSS.

Question. Of the \$272.6 million increase for the global workforce, how much of that—both in dollar figure and as a percentage of the total—is going towards positions in the Indo-Pacific region?

Answer. The FY 2022 request includes \$121.6 million in Diplomatic Engagement funding for the global workforce, of which \$23.1 million, or 15 percent, supports new positions for the Department's continued efforts to counter the PRC's concerning influence and advance democratic values within the context of the Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Question. What is the precise number of the additional U.S. direct hires that would be funded by the proposed increase for the "Diplomatic Engagement" account that would be in roles in the Indo-Pacific region or in relevant roles at Main State?

Answer. The Department requested 48 additional Diplomatic Engagement U.S. direct hire positions to support roles in the Indo-Pacific region or in relevant roles at Main State. The positions are requested for the Bureaus of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP), South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA), and the Global Engagement Center (GEC).

Question. Of those increases in functional bureaus, how many would be in roles with direct responsibility for China-related issues, and what are the job descriptions of those jobs?

Answer. There are 128 functional bureau position increases in the Department's FY 2022 request. Of these, three positions focus solely on China issues. One new position will support the Global Engagement Center's China Division programs

countering PRC disinformation and propaganda. Two new Bureau of Intelligence and Research positions will focus on economic, finance, trade, and other China-related research and analysis.

Question. How many of the new positions for the Indo-Pacific will be economic officers? Please provide by a post-by-post breakdown of where these officers will go within the region. Please provide specific descriptions of what their roles will be.

Answer. Of the 48 new positions requested for the Indo-Pacific, 20 will be economic officers. The 20 positions are listed in the table below.

Mission	Post	Cone	Position
Australia	Melbourne	Econ	Reporting
Australia	Canberra	Pol/Econ	Reporting
Burma	Nay Pyi Taw	Pol/Econ	Reporting
China	Beijing	Econ/health	Reporting
Fiji	Suva	Econ/Comm	Reporting
Republic of Korea	Seoul	Econ	Reporting
New Zealand	Auckland	Econ/ESTH	Reporting
Palau	Koror	Pol/Econ	Reporting
Papua New Guinea	Port Moresby	Econ/ESTH	Reporting
Vietnam	Ho Chi Minh City	Econ	Reporting
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Econ	Reporting
India	Chennai (CG)	Pol/Econ	Reporting
India	Hyderabad	Pol/Econ	Reporting
India	Kolkata (CG)	Pol/Econ	Reporting
India	Mumbai (CG)	Pol/Econ	Reporting
India	Mumbai (CG)	Econ	Reporting
India	New Delhi	Econ	Reporting
India	New Delhi	Econ	Reporting
Sri Lanka	Colombo	Pol/Econ	Reporting
Sri Lanka	Colombo	Econ	Reporting

Question. The last time you testified before this committee, I asked you to discuss the Biden administration's Indo-Pacific strategy, including objectives, what specific policy and funding priorities the Department would focus on, and what initiatives you would keep versus discard from the prior Administration. At that time, you indicated the Department was in the middle of a policy review. What are the answers to those questions? What is the status of the policy review? Please be specific.

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to a free and open Indo-Pacific region. As part of an ongoing policy review process, the NSC initiated several interagency discussions to update and further enhance the U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific. As the process moves forward, we will work with Congress to ensure members are informed of the progress and conclusions. Even as the review is taking place, the Department of State is working to revitalize ties with our allies and partners, advance inclusive economic policies that support all U.S. citizens, and promote democratic resilience and respect for human rights. With Congress's support, we are investing in the capabilities of our allies and partners and strengthening effective regional organizations in order to defend the international rules-based order and prevail in strategic competition with China. We are also working

with partners to address shared challenges such as transnational crime, climate change, pandemic recovery, and the threat posed by the DPRK's nuclear program.

Question. Is the Indo-Pacific region the top priority region in President Biden's foreign policy? If not, why not and what is the region considered most important to U.S. interests?

Answer. The Indo-Pacific is the most dynamic and fastest-growing region on earth, making it a leading priority for U.S. foreign policy at the front lines of strategic competition with China. The United States is committed to working closely with allies and partners to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Indo-Pacific and around the world.

Question. The United States has only a handful of free trade agreements with Indo-Pacific partners.

Will you commit to prioritizing a robust trade agenda with Indo-Pacific economic partners?

Answer. Trade policy in the Indo-Pacific is a key part of the Biden-Harris administration's effort to build back better. The Administration's approach to trade is focused on supporting U.S. working families, defending our values, and protecting the long-term prosperity and security of the United States. As President Biden has said, the United States is focused on making investments in U.S. workers and U.S. competitiveness before he signs new trade agreements, including in the Indo-Pacific. The United States is working with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region to identify ways to address specific trade issues such as infrastructure, the digital economy, and energy.

Question. What has the Department already done in this area?

Answer. The United States has engaged bilaterally with the Republic of Korea, Australia, Japan, and Singapore to promote full and faithful implementation of our existing trade agreements. Regionally, we work actively with APEC member economies to facilitate trade and investment and look to improve economic ties with ASEAN. We seek to build the capacity of countries to help them participate in comprehensive, high standard bilateral or multilateral trade agreements that remove barriers and unfair practices. We are also focused on securing, diversifying, and strengthening resilient and scalable U.S. supply chains to ensure we are prepared not only to defeat COVID-19, but to reduce the likelihood that future crises or global challenges can impede our supply chains.

Question. What is the total amount of Foreign Military Financing (FMF) going to the Indo-Pacific region?

Answer. The President's FY 2022 Congressional Budget Justification requests \$164 million in FMF for the Indo-Pacific region. This reflects an increase of 29.8 percent from FY 2020 allocations, the most recently completed fiscal year. FMF for the region amounts to nearly half of our global discretionary FMF and typically includes earmarks for Maldives, Mongolia, Vietnam, and Indonesia. The Administration's FMF requests and Congressional appropriations are significantly constrained by enduring commitments, particularly to countries outside the Indo-Pacific region (e.g., roughly 88 percent of the global FMF account is earmarked for the NEA region), which leaves the Department with limited flexibility in discretionary FMF funds.

Question. What's the percentage of total FMF?

Answer. The President's FY 2022 Congressional Budget Justification requests \$164 million in FMF for the Indo-Pacific region. The request for the region consists of the \$129 million under East Asia and the Pacific, as well as \$35 million in the South and Central Asia Regional line. This amounts to approximately 2.6 percent of the overall global FMF account. Given Congressional earmarks and other commitments, the Indo-Pacific typically receives nearly half of the global discretionary FMF budget annually.

Question. What is the Administration providing to the Middle East and Europe in FMF, both in terms of absolute numbers and a percentage of total budget?

Answer. The Administration requested a total of \$6,175,524,000 in FY 2022 FMF funds, of which \$299,000,000 will support partner countries in the European and Eurasian region (4.8 percent of the total FMF requested budget) and \$5,459,000,000 will support partner countries in the Near East region (88 percent of the total FMF requested budget).

Question. Over the last several months, the Administration has notified Congress of intent to use funds from the Countering Chinese Influence Fund—now helpfully

renamed the Countering PRC Malign Influence Fund. Some of these funds are being used for projects and programs that have very little to do with China—if anything at all. The Department is essentially dipping into this pot of money to fund things it wants to do anyway. Do you commit that this fund will only be used for projects and programs that bear a direct nexus to acts by the Chinese Communist Party that undermine U.S. and partner country interests?

Answer. I commit that all approved Countering Chinese Influence Fund (CCIF) projects and programs will bear a direct nexus to countering malign PRC influence. The PRC's use of coercive and corrupting tools of influence to undermine and interfere in countries is a major concern for the United States and our partners around the world. To ensure alignment with the CCIF's purpose and the Administration's strategic goals, projects funded from the CCIF must demonstrate that countering malign PRC influence is the explicit or primary goal of the program and be located in countries and/or sectors that are highly vulnerable to malign PRC influence.

Question. Do you commit to providing a comprehensive accounting of all funds obligated under this line item to Congress upon request or at the end of the fiscal year?

Answer. I commit to engage in a full review of the Countering Chinese Influence Fund (CCIF) to ensure the funds are used strategically in a manner that advances U.S. economic, diplomatic, military, and technological leadership in our strategic competition with China and in support of a stable and open international system. I also commit to providing you with a comprehensive accounting of funding and program detail information at your request or at the end of the fiscal year.

Question. In January, I asked you about the interest of the People's Liberation Army in overseas bases and logistics facilities. Deputy Sherman recently raised the issue of China's activities at Ream Naval Base on her trip to Cambodia, and General Townsend of U.S. AFRICOM said in early May that China is looking at options all over Africa, including on its West Coast.

Answer. Beyond the PRC's first overseas base in Djibouti, Beijing is very likely planning to establish additional military installations, including bases and logistics hubs, all of which would present a direct challenge to our global interests and those of our allies and partners. We are working closely across the interagency and with our partners and allies to address this issue.

Question. Please describe the Biden administration's policy towards Turkey.

Answer. U.S. strategic interests overlap with Turkey's in many ways, including countering terrorism, ending the conflict in Syria, and deterring malign influence in the region. Turkey makes crucial contributions to NATO missions, vocally supports Ukrainian and Georgian sovereignty and territorial integrity, and works to prevent the Russian-backed Assad regime from precipitating additional humanitarian crises on Europe's doorstep. The United States has a strong interest in keeping Turkey anchored to the Euro-Atlantic community. The Administration will continue to call out actions inconsistent with Turkey's NATO commitments and will continue to raise human rights concerns while seeking cooperation on areas of shared interest.

Question. Are you working to solve the S-400 problem?

Answer. The Administration continues to urge Turkey not to retain the S-400 system and to refrain from purchasing additional Russian materiel. Turkey's S-400 acquisition runs directly counter to the commitments all Allies made at the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw to reduce dependencies on Russian equipment. As the Biden administration has made clear to Turkey, any new purchase of Russian military equipment would risk triggering CAATSA sanctions separate from and in addition to those imposed in December 2020.

We continue to press for resolution of the S-400 issue at senior levels, including during the June 14 meeting between Presidents Biden and Erdogan.

Question. Have you offered Turkey and President Erdogan any options to help them exit this morass [S-400]? If so, please delineate them.

Answer. U.S. administrations have offered Turkey numerous options to resolve the S-400 issue both before and after Turkey began taking delivery of the system in July 2019. The United States offered Turkey the PATRIOT air defense system in 2009 and 2019, and competed for Turkey's 2013 tender for a long-range air/mis- sile defense system. Each offer included a broad range of co-production and co-devel- opment opportunities as well as the most competitive delivery schedules possible, which Turkey declined. We continue to press Turkey for a solution that protects U.S. national security interests and meets the requirements of relevant legislation.

Question. Russian President Putin recently said that with the impending success of Nord Stream 2, “we are ready to continue implementing similar high-tech projects with our European and other partners. We expect the logic of mutual benefit to inevitably have the upper hand over various types of artificial barriers of the current political situation.” Will your State Department work to fight the proliferation of these kinds of Russian malign influence projects?

Answer. The Department of State works closely with other agencies on a whole-of-government basis that combines diplomatic, intelligence, financial, and law enforcement lines of effort to expose and impose costs for Russian malign influence. We also work with likeminded allies and international partners to counter Russian malign influence through a variety of multilateral and bilateral avenues. Denial, disruption, and exposure of Russia’s malign tactics impose a cost on targeted individuals and entities which carry out these efforts. This includes both official Government actors, namely the Russian intelligence services and unofficial proxies. I will continue to support these ongoing interagency efforts.

Question. Since the U.S. has not fully opposed Nord Stream 2 like it indicated it would, how do you anticipate our partners will react to future verbal opposition to Russian projects that may arise?

Answer. The Administration’s position remains clear—the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is a Russian geopolitical project that threatens European energy security and undermines the security of Ukraine and frontline Central and Eastern European allies and partners. Our goal remains to ensure Russia cannot use energy as a coercive tool against Ukraine or anyone else in the region, and we continue to engage diplomatically with Germany on steps it can take to address our concerns about the risks the pipeline poses to Ukraine and European energy security. We also consult regularly with Central and Eastern European allies and partners regarding our opposition to the pipeline and ways we—and Germany—can support European energy security.

Question. Russia Strategy: Please detail the U.S. Government’s policy and strategy towards Russia. In your response, please be sure to address arms control, international organizations, disinformation, Russian military adventurism, Wagner Group, sanctions, U.S. Embassy posture in Russia, European-U.S. unity of message on Russia, and the Kremlin’s abuse of its citizenry.

Answer. We seek a stable and predictable relationship with Russia. At the same time, we will hold it accountable for disregarding international laws, norms, and agreements, including those related to arms control and nonproliferation, and for reckless and adversarial actions like its invasion and occupation of parts of Ukraine and Georgia. Cooperation with our allies enhances our ability to deter and disrupt Moscow’s threats, defend human rights, effectively apply sanctions, and highlight the increasing isolation caused by the Putin regime’s aggression and domestic repression. We also engage directly with Russia to advance and protect U.S. interests, including at the U.N., in the Arctic Council, and via our Strategic Stability Dialogue.

Question. The Biden administration is proposing a legislative change that would allow the United States to join, or rejoin, international organizations where the PLO is a member. As you know, the PA and PLO continue to incentivize and celebrate violence against Israelis through the egregious “pay to slay” program. In 2019 alone, the Palestinians spent \$151 million dollars to support imprisoned terrorists and their families. What concessions have you been able to extract from the PA and PLO on their pay for slay program before suggesting this kind of diplomatic outreach?

Answer. This Administration is committed to encouraging the Palestinian Authority to reform the prisoner and martyr payment system in a manner that is consistent with U.S. interests and addresses the concerns reflected in U.S. law. This has been a longstanding priority of prior administrations and remains a top U.S. priority that I fully support.

Question. Mexican transnational criminal organizations are producing increased quantities of fentanyl and cartels, such as the Sinaloa and the New Generation Jalisco Cartel, are the primary trafficking groups responsible for smuggling fentanyl into the U.S. from Mexico. Please describe how the budget request would ensure that International Narcotics and Law Enforcement programs are focusing on meaningfully reducing the flow of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids from Mexico.

Answer. Among the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs’ (INL) highest priorities is disrupting the production and trafficking of synthetic drugs, including fentanyl. The Department supports Mexico’s recent steps to regulate fentanyl precursor chemicals. The FY 2022 budget request ensures INL

will continue to build the capacity of Mexico to better disrupt transnational criminal organizations, including through improving investigations into precursor chemical diversion. The Department will continue to deepen security cooperation with Mexico and will prioritize developing meaningful solutions to address the synthetic drug threat at the cabinet-level security dialogue that Vice President Harris announced during the June 8 meeting with Mexican President Lopez Obrador.

Question. In March 2020, the United States and Colombia announced a joint action plan to reduce coca cultivation and cocaine production by 50 percent by the end of 2023. The plan would make full use of all available tools, including rural development, interdiction, as well as manual and aerial eradication. Can you explain how the budget request would advance this objective?

Answer. Through the FY 2022 International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) budget request for Colombia, INL programming will complement the Colombian Government's counternarcotics strategy by providing assistance consistent with its five pillars: 1) dismantling criminal organizations; 2) reducing drug supply; 3) decreasing drug demand; 4) combating money laundering; and 5) increasing state presence in rural areas where narcotics trafficking thrives. Integrated implementation of these pillars will decrease the availability of cocaine, reduce cocaine-related overdoses in the United States, and stem migration caused by narco-trafficking-related violence in drug-transit countries.

Question. In what ways can the U.S. better leverage existing bilateral extradition treaties with Mexico and the countries in Northern Central America to combat human smuggling and trafficking throughout the region?

Answer. Our bilateral extradition treaties with Mexico and the countries in northern Central America are powerful tools for combatting crime, including human trafficking and migrant smuggling. I will continue to evaluate the implementation of these treaties and look forward to consulting closely with Congress on these issues.

Question. What conditions need to be met on the ground in Venezuela, and what specific actions does Maduro need to take, before the U.S. can support negotiations between the Maduro regime and Guaido Government? Do you commit to not supporting negotiations until these conditions are met and actions are taken?

Answer. The United States continues to support a negotiated solution to the Venezuelan crisis that leads to free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections and a return of the rule of law and democracy in Venezuela.

Any solution to the Venezuelan crisis must come from the Venezuelan people themselves through Venezuelan-led, comprehensive negotiations that include participation from all stakeholders; allow for the unconditional release of political prisoners; are time-bound; and allow for all Venezuelans to express themselves politically through credible, inclusive, and transparent local, parliamentary, and presidential elections.

Question. The budget proposes a 72 percent increase in funding for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and seeks to remove all conditions upon such contributions. This includes the "Kemp-Kasten amendment," in place since 1985, which prohibits U.S. funding for any organization or program that "supports or participates in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization." Meanwhile, the UNFPA continues to support the management of China's program of coercive abortion and involuntary sterilization, publicly celebrates China's handling of the COVID-19 crisis (which has been characterized by the suppression of human rights), and remains silent on efforts to "erase the unique identity of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims" in Xinjiang. How will the Administration ensure that U.S. contributions to UNFPA adhere to long-standing U.S. law and will not be used to support heinous human rights violations against women and girls, including the Chinese Government's program of coercive abortion and involuntary sterilization and genocidal campaign against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang?

Answer. I take all legislative restrictions very seriously, including those related to the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA). UNFPA keeps the United States contribution in a segregated account and does not fund abortion. In addition, there is a dollar to dollar reduction to the U.S. contribution for every dollar UNFPA spends in China with other donor support. UNFPA has consistently advocated for and promoted fulfillment of the basic right of all couples and individuals in China and globally to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing, and timing of their children. UNFPA does not support or promote abortion as a method of family planning in China or anywhere. UNFPA does not operate in Xinjiang.

Question. The budget request includes \$300 million to pay a portion of the U.N. peacekeeping “arrears” that have accrued over the last 4 years. These arrears are a result of a disagreement between the U.N. and the United States on the “scales of assessment”—a complicated formula used by the U.N. to determine the amount member states are expected to contribute for the general and peacekeeping budgets. Per U.S. law, the United States will only pay up to 25 percent of the U.N. peacekeeping budget. However, the U.N. “assesses” the United States at a rate of up to 27.9 percent. This fall, the scales of assessment will be renegotiated. Will you pledge to withhold payment of U.S. peacekeeping arrears until the U.N. establishes a 25 percent cap on contributions by any single nation?

Answer. In preparation for the triennial scales of assessment negotiations, we are reviewing various options to reach an agreement in the U.N. General Assembly to lower U.S. assessment rates and ensure that other countries pay their fair share. I welcome the opportunity to work with Congress to take the steps necessary to allow the United States to meet our financial obligations. U.S. influence at the U.N.—including the influence we need to push back against China and others and to lead reform efforts—is greatest when we pay our bills in full and on time.

Question. Would you agree that paying back peacekeeping arrears before securing the 25 percent assessment rate would be giving away any leverage in the negotiations?

Answer. U.S. influence at the U.N. is greatest when we pay our bills in full and on time—both the influence we need to push back against China and others and to lead reform efforts, including reform efforts to ensure that U.N. peacekeeping funds are used as effectively as possible. When we do not live up to our financial obligations—both on the U.N. regular budget and the peacekeeping budget—it undermines U.S. credibility and leadership at the U.N. and gives China and others an easy talking point to promote their authoritarian views and policies.

Question. The budget includes programming for democracy, human rights, freedom, and the rule of law which we welcome. It also references the Administration’s plan for a Summit of Democracy.

What definition of democracy will be you using for inviting countries to participate?

Answer. Invitations to the White House-led Summit for Democracy will be offered to governments with a demonstrated democratic trajectory and political will to advance democracy, as well as commitment to the goals and objectives of the summit, including implementing meaningful Summit commitments. Participating governments, including our own, will be expected to deliver on both domestic and international commitments that advance democracy, fight corruption, and protect human rights.

Question. Can you please tell us more details of this Summit and its goals?

Answer. The White House-led Summit for Democracy will reinforce the United States’ commitment to placing democracy and human rights at the center of our foreign policy. It will have three principal themes: defending against authoritarianism, addressing and fighting corruption, and advancing human rights. The summit will include both well-established and emerging democracies as well as representatives from the private sector and civil society. Participating governments will be expected to deliver on both domestic and international commitments that advance democracy, fight corruption, and protect human rights.

Question. The United States is the global leader in responding to humanitarian crises around the world. Yet, from Northern Yemen to Tigray, humanitarian workers are increasingly under attack. Access is being constrained by armed actors and bureaucratic processes. Organizations are harassed. Convoys are attacked. Warehouses are burned and looted. While it is in the interest of the United States to continue providing humanitarian aid, it is not in our interest to see that aid used as a weapon against the innocent men, women, and children it is meant to support. The budget proposes to increase disaster assistance and food aid. How do you intend to ensure that it actually reaches its intended beneficiaries, and is not used as a weapon by armed actors and governments against perceived opponents?

Answer. The United States will continue to work with experienced multilateral, international, and local humanitarian organizations; use tried-and-tested modalities; and leverage new technologies to improve the delivery, monitoring, and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance even in highly insecure environments. We will also continue to press for accountability for those who commit violations or abuses of applicable law, including international humanitarian law, especially violations involving violence against protected humanitarian workers and the vulnerable civilian popu-

lations they serve; attacks against protected humanitarian and healthcare facilities and other civilian infrastructure; or deliberately efforts to delay, divert, destroy or weaponize aid.

Question. How do you propose to expand humanitarian access in Tigray and Northern Yemen, for example?

Answer. I believe this Administration's commitment to diplomacy and multilateralism can re-energize the U.N. and member-states to exert pressure on all parties to expand humanitarian access in conflicts like Tigray and Yemen. Quelling further violence, including attacks on aid workers and on healthcare facilities and establishing immediate and unimpeded access for humanitarian organizations are the first basic steps to creating the conditions for a sustainable political settlement, even in the most intractable conflicts.

Question. Is the manipulation and/or denial of life-saving aid to vulnerable populations a crime against humanity and, if so, how do you intend to hold those who bear the greatest responsibility accountable?

Answer. We condemn in the strongest terms obstruction of humanitarian assistance, and we are deeply concerned by humanitarian crises globally, including the deteriorating food security situation in Ethiopia and in Yemen. As a general matter, we note that intentional starvation of civilians as a method of combat may constitute a war crime or a constituent act of crimes against humanity under certain circumstances. We continue to urge the Government of Ethiopia to hold all those responsible for abuses and violations of human rights accountable. We will also explore all tools available, including the application of our visa restriction policy and other diplomatic tools, as appropriate, for any individuals responsible for restricting aid.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE ANTONY J. BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. Supporting Global Basic Education: According to UNESCO, the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted learning for about 90 percent of the world's student population, and 24 million students around the globe may never return to school as a result of the pandemic. Furthermore, it's projected that the economic downturn caused by COVID-19 could lead to an education financing gap of \$77 billion in low- and middle-income countries over the next 2 years. I introduced the Global Learning Loss Assessment Act with Senator Boozman to encourage the U.S. to play an active role in mitigating this educational crisis before it's too late.

Given these trends, why does the President's Budget Request include a 28 percent decrease in global basic education funding compared to the level enacted in FY21?

Answer. As the largest bilateral donor to basic education in the world, the USG is uniquely positioned to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic quickly and efficiently, building on the strong foundation set by the USG Strategy on International Basic Education. The Administration's FY 2022 request of \$888.6 million for basic and higher education is the highest President's Budget Request for education since FY 2012. In response to the pandemic, the USG will continue to partner with bilateral and multilateral partners, the private sector, and external stakeholders to leverage resources to help partner countries mitigate the loss of instructional time, prepare for heightened uncertainty, and equip education actors and institutions to be increasingly resilient.

Question. How will the State Department and related agencies support global education to prevent a lost generation of learners, knowing that basic education has many long-term, wide-reaching benefits including economic prosperity and security?

Answer. In response to the pandemic, the USG is working with partner countries to mitigate the loss of instructional time and equip education actors and institutions to be increasingly resilient. To do so, USG programs are addressing barriers to school participation, ensuring safe return to learning opportunities, especially for the most marginalized, and building more resilient and equitable education systems with the capacity to better manage future shocks and prevent development backsliding. Despite numerous challenges, the USG reached more than 25.5 million learners through international basic education programs designed to improve measurable learning outcomes and expand access to high-quality education for all in FY 2020.

Question. Multilateral Institutions in the Western Hemisphere: U.S. leadership in multilateral institutions is essential, especially within our own Hemisphere. They

improve U.S. relations with our neighbors, and enable us to counter the influence of malign actors in the region. I introduced the Organization of American States Legislative Engagement Act with Senator Wicker to strengthen the participation of elected national legislators in the activities of the OAS. It became law earlier this year, and I look forward to working with you to implement this legislation. My colleagues and I have also been supportive of new general capital increase for the Inter-American Development Bank, though I am concerned that China appears to be the country whose companies are securing more contracts for infrastructure projects than any other country, while contributing a pittance, less than half a percent of the funding. Can you commit to a robust funding level for multilateral institutions in our Hemisphere, including the OAS and the IDB?

Answer. I am committed to a robust funding level for multilateral institutions in our Hemisphere, including the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The IDB is the largest multilateral lender in the region and a critical organization through which we support the region's sustainable infrastructure, high-standard investment, and transparent economic development. The OAS remains the premier multilateral organization in the Western Hemisphere committed to advancing our regional commitment to the promotion and defense of democracy in accordance with the principles articulated in the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Question. How do you intend to compete more vigorously with China and others in placing qualified Americans into senior positions in multilateral institutions?

Answer. The Department is establishing a new office in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs—the office of Multilateral Strategy and Personnel (IO/MSP)—focused on U.N. elections, multilateral appointments and competitive positions, and upholding the foundational principles and values of the U.N. and multilateral system. The Department is employing a multifaceted approach that includes recruiting qualified and diverse candidates, consulting with them throughout a transparent application process, and advocating for their selection where appropriate. I have prioritized robust strategies to work with the interagency as well as our allies and partners to secure increased numbers of qualified, independent U.S. citizens and likeminded candidates, as appropriate, employed in multilateral institutions.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE ANTONY J. BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROB PORTMAN

Question. In our meeting with President Zelensky, he asked if the Global Engagement Center could assist in setting up their newly formed Center for Combatting Disinformation Center in Ukraine. Do I have your commitment that you will look into this request?

Answer. Yes, the Global Engagement Center (GEC) is already looking into the request. One of the GEC's core responsibilities is to partner and coordinate with likeminded governments on efforts to counter foreign propaganda and disinformation. The GEC recently met with the head of the Ukrainian Center for Combatting Disinformation, and they discussed ways to build off the good work of both organizations and how they can collaborate with one another. The Department and the GEC look forward to working with Ukraine's Center for Combatting Disinformation.

Question. As we talk about the GEC, I am curious as to when you are going to name a new Special Coordinator. The previous Coordinator, Lea Gabrielle stayed on an extra month to help with a transition, and there is still no one named. This is not a Senate confirmed position, but we need a person with great knowledge of the issues to be able to work in a bipartisan manner. Do you know when this appointment will be announced?

Answer. I am committed to having a diverse and qualified leadership team in place, including the Special Coordinator position at the GEC. I am working with the White House and within the Department to identify and select such candidates as quickly as possible.

Question. I understand in your budget request that you are not asking for an increase in GEC funding. Last year's appropriation was \$60 million and Senator Murphy and I have asked for \$150 million this year. Is this accurate? And if so, why aren't you asking for more funding to support the mission? Our adversaries are spending tens of billions of dollars annually on promoting disinformation and as we learned on our recent CODEL, in many cases our allies and partners are asking us

directly for this assistance. The GEC is tasked as the interagency lead, and from our discussions, it is clear that the \$60 million dollar appropriation is not enough to meet the challenge. Do you support an increase in GEC funding?

Answer. The GEC's FY 2022 budget represents a \$5.1 million (8.5 percent) increase over FY 2021 and includes 17 new positions. I am happy to work with you and your colleagues in continuing to strengthen the GEC and our full range of public diplomacy programs. I recognize that authoritarian regimes continue to use disinformation campaigns, strategic corruption, and other coercive tools to enhance their malign influence and to interfere in democracies. The GEC's efforts are an important part of the work we must undertake with allies to counter disinformation, define an affirmative and democratic global information space, and ultimately sustain an information environment of truthful communication.

Question. COVID-19 Vaccines: While the United States is turning the corner on our fight against COVID, other areas of the world are experiencing surges that are creating desperate situations in many countries for many people. India and Nepal are two such examples. I was heartened to see that the United States is investing heavily in COVAX and dedicating our excess supply of vaccines to countries in desperate need. However, there does not appear to be a strategy or guidelines for the distribution of these vaccines. What is the process for deciding what vaccines go where? Will this process be made public? There is a lot of confusion in communities around the United States, including in Ohio, due to a lack of clarity on this issue from the Administration.

Answer. Our principles for sharing U.S. vaccines include maximizing the number of vaccines available for the greatest number of countries and for those most at-risk within countries; preparing for surges and prioritizing healthcare workers and other vulnerable populations based on public health data and acknowledged best practice; and helping countries in need and our neighbors. We also seek to ensure vaccines are delivered in a way that is efficient, equitable, and follows the latest science and public health data. Our doses do not come with strings attached. The singular objective is to get these doses to those in need and save lives.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE ANTONY J. BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. Chinese exit bans continue to impact Massachusetts residents, Cynthia and Victor Liu, and their mother, Sandra Han. The issue was recently raised in diplomatic engagements with our Chinese counterparts. What was the response from Chinese officials, and are there plans for President Biden to raise the issue directly in his talks with President Xi?

Answer. The United States continues to raise wrongful detentions and coercive exit bans with the PRC at every opportunity, including during Secretary Blinken's June 11 phone call with Chinese Communist Party Politburo Member and Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission Yang Jiechi. That will continue. Additionally, the State Department's travel advisory for China warns that the PRC uses wrongful detentions and coercive exit bans for a number of inappropriate purposes, including to pressure family members to return to the PRC from abroad and to gain bargaining leverage over foreign governments. This is unacceptable and we call on Beijing to provide a fair and transparent process any time restrictions on liberty are imposed on U.S. citizens.

Question. Paul Overby is also a Massachusetts resident last seen in Afghanistan in 2014. As the U.S. leaves Afghanistan it's critical Paul not be left behind. Will you prioritize hostage affairs in negotiations to bring him home before our troops leave? Will you additionally commit to connect directly with his wife as soon as is possible?

Answer. Recovering Paul Overby is a top priority for me, and the Biden-Harris administration and it remains a priority in our negotiations. Working closely with the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs Ambassador Roger Carstens, Ambassador Khalilzad continues to raise the recovery of our hostages in Afghanistan, to include Mr. Overby, during his discussions with the Taliban. I will continue to do everything possible to see to it that Mr. Overby is returned to his family using every appropriate tool at our disposal, including a reward of up to \$5 million for information leading to the safe return of Mr. Overby. The Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs and team routinely update Mr. Overby's wife.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE ANTONY J. BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RAND PAUL

Question. After almost 20 years, we have lost over 7,000 killed, suffered over 50,000 wounded, and spent over \$6.4 trillion, in Iraq and Afghanistan alone. And that doesn't even account for our total human and monetary costs in the greater Middle East over the same period of time. President Biden claims that we will end this seemingly endless war in Afghanistan, and I am grateful that he is planning on keeping President Trump's plan to leave the war. However, the FY 2022 budget request should reflect the cost savings that leaving Afghanistan will afford us. Estimates based on Department of Defense data indicate that as much as \$50 billion will be freed by withdrawing troops from Afghanistan. Although the State Department and the Administration did not request funding for Overseas Contingency Operations, funding for traditional OCO was moved to the DoD base budget. The request for the State Department and DoD has increased, and is rapidly rising, even when it should have dropped off. President Biden requested \$58.5 billion for the State Department and USAID, an increase of \$5.5 billion or 10 percent over the FY 2021 enacted level. He also requested \$715 billion for the DoD for FY 2022, a \$10 billion increase from FY 2021, despite his commitment to end the War in Afghanistan. Where did these cost savings go? Well according to the Defense Budget Request, they didn't really go anywhere at all, they moved to the DoD budget, under "Direct War Requirements" and "Enduring Requirements," which together totals roughly \$42.1 billion. Where did the net cost savings go for ending the War in Afghanistan? Why is the cost of the War in Afghanistan going to cost the American taxpayer billions of dollars, and nearly as much money as when we had troops on the ground?

Answer. The Department of State defers to the Department of Defense (DoD) for all issues related to DoD's FY 2022 Budget Request. The Department will have increased operating costs in Afghanistan as Embassy Kabul assumes a number of enabling functions from DoD as the U.S. military draws down its resources. These enabling functions are essential for our continued diplomatic presence in Afghanistan. A Congressional Notification was recently approved to reprogram funding within the Department to prepare for DoD's drawdown, ensure the safety of chief of mission employees, and allow critical diplomatic engagement with the Afghan National Government and local partners.

RESPONSES OF SECRETARY OF STATE ANTONY J. BLINKEN TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CORY BOOKER

Question. Diversity and Additional Human Resources: During your confirmation process, we discussed two major issues related to personnel. First, we discussed the need to ramp up our diplomatic capabilities and presence due to the increasingly complex policy challenges we face. Second, we discussed the value of our diplomatic corps deployed abroad reflecting Americans by increasing diversity among our Foreign Service corps.

The budget makes good on both of those promises by including funding for 255 additional Foreign Service personnel and 230 additional Civil Service personnel, and also includes \$49 million to "broaden recruitment, diversity, and inclusion programs" across the State Department.

How will you deploy these additional human resources across our missions to put diplomacy first while being better positioned to use our capabilities to better compete with our near peer competitors?

Answer. The Department of State is committed to using its staffing resources to revitalize the foreign policy workforce. This includes supporting department-wide program requests to broaden recruitment, diversity, and inclusion programs. New Civil Service and Foreign Service (FS) positions to include FS political, economic, public diplomacy, and management positions will further implement the Indo-Pacific strategy, counter concerning Chinese influence, expand U.S. economic outreach and commercial diplomacy worldwide, broaden public diplomacy engagement, defend U.S. interests, address regional security, and engage with the U.N. and other organizations.

Question. One avenue to increase access to careers at the State Department is through internships. However, as we discussed, State Department internships are mostly unpaid, which is a barrier to entry for minority and low-income students and young professionals. In addition to Ambassador Abercrombie's work to increase diversity at the State Department, I hope you will consider the State paid internship legislation that Senator Scott and I have put forward.

Answer. I support a paid internship program at the Department of State. It is among my highest priorities to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion in our workforce. Paid internships would help address a key barrier to entry for many who are interested in a career with the State Department by mitigating the costs associated with foregoing income during an internship, as well as travel and living expenses in a major metropolitan area. A paid internship program would support Department efforts to reach a broader range of candidates, including those historically underrepresented, and increase access to the valuable opportunity of experiencing national security service and career options. I continue to support pursuing such legislative efforts in both chambers, especially those that provide the flexibility to add this program to supplement existing internship programs, and special hiring authority to have such interns join as employees for key purposes.

Question. Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Conflicts around the world are having a devastating and distinct impact on women and girls. There is heightened awareness of the need to address sexual violence in conflict resolution processes and to ensure that perpetrators of sexual violence do not benefit from de facto or de jure amnesties. However, significant gaps in prevention, accountability, reparations, and protection of victims and witnesses of conflict-related sexual violence persist. Does the United States recognize the need to prioritize gender-based violence and a protection response as being up there with the need to provide other lifesaving responses such as food, water, and shelter?

Answer. The United States is committed to preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV), particularly the protection and empowerment of women and girls, as a human rights imperative. In the context of humanitarian response, addressing GBV is a life-saving priority and is integral to advancing broader U.S. foreign policy and development priorities. The United States implements its commitments to GBV prevention and response through whole-of-government strategies. In addition, the United States remains committed to Safe from the Start, a United States initiative launched in 2013 to increase leadership, accountability, and resources available for lifesaving GBV prevention and response, and ensure quality services for survivors from the very onset of emergencies.

Question. If so, what is the Department doing to ensure access to care, both physical and psychological? What is being done to push for investigations and accountability?

Answer. Justice and accountability for gender-based violence (GBV) remains a Departmental priority, and we continue to press for justice that is survivor-centered and respects the unique needs of survivors of these crimes. Since 2013, the United States has channeled more than \$136 million through Safe from the Start to systematically prevent and respond to GBV at the onset of emergencies, and a significant amount more to fund core and specialized GBV prevention and response through other mechanisms. In addition, the United States remains actively engaged with states, donors, and IO and NGO partners through various bodies, such as the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies, in continuing to develop policies and responses that better address the unique needs of displaced women and girls.

Question. Outside of funding and programming, what diplomatic levers can be brought to bear on this critical issue particularly in areas such as Ethiopia and Myanmar?

Answer. For Ethiopia, the Department has already approved visa restrictions for certain individuals who are responsible for or complicit in undermining resolution of the crisis in Tigray. We have also restricted security and economic assistance to and imposed defense trade controls on Ethiopia due to human rights concerns, and we are exploring all diplomatic tools available.

On Burma, we will continue to use all appropriate tools available to exert pressure on the military junta, deny the regime international credibility, and expose the junta's horrific brutality, including by promoting justice and accountability for human rights abuses and atrocities.

Question. Autocracy vs. Democracy: The Chinese Government's efforts to tighten control at home and expand authoritarian tactics abroad present a threat to global democracy. The world has watched as President Xi Jinping has intensified repression in China by repressing dissent in Hong Kong and imprisoning over a million Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minorities in Xinjiang province.

We have also witnessed increasingly aggressive efforts by the Chinese Government to export repression beyond its borders through the spread of global censorship, the harassment of dissidents outside mainland China, and attempts to under-

mine the effectiveness of international institutions such as the United Nations and its constituent bodies.

How does the State Department propose to counter growing Chinese efforts to promote its state-centered authoritarian type of Government in weak and backsliding democracies around the world?

Answer. Alliances and partnerships serve as force-multipliers for the United States. We are speaking out and working with our allies and partners, and as members of the G20, U.N., and wider international community, to uphold the rules-based international system and international law. Together with our allies and partners, we are calling out the PRC for the atrocities it is committing in Xinjiang and for dismantling the rights, freedoms, and high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. We are also imposing costs on those responsible for human rights violations in China, even as we work to bolster democratic resilience at home.

Question. What policies and programs are the Department pursuing with this budget that will help increase global transparency about Chinese efforts to influence, censor, and undermine access to free media in countries around the world?

Answer. We are strengthening our public diplomacy programs, including the Global Engagement Center's (GEC) efforts, to counter disinformation and define and sustain a global information environment in which audiences around the world can freely access, contribute to, make informed judgments about, and trust transparent and truthful communication. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) programs aim to address the weak governance, corruption, and poor human rights conditions that make countries susceptible to PRC manipulation by empowering local civil society with the skills and resources necessary to advance good governance, human rights, and anti-corruption goals. In addition, the Countering PRC Malign Influence Fund is funding projects to counter the PRC's use of coercive and corrupting tools of influence.

Question. What efforts is the Department undertaking to reassert the United States as the leader on the global stage, particularly at the United Nations? Concurrently, how does the Department propose to counter Chinese obstructionism on the Security Council and other bodies as the United States seeks to promote human rights and universal freedoms?

Answer. The United States is using our reengagement to reassert U.S. leadership across the U.N. system. We are working with likeminded partners on the UNSC to ensure that the UNSC delivers on its mandate of maintaining international peace and security and remains impartial and aligned with U.N. values and principles, including by pushing back against the PRC when necessary. Through our reengagement, we are also promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms by working to ensure the UNHRC shines a spotlight on countries with the worst human rights records and serves as a forum for those fighting injustice and tyranny.

Question. I'm pleased to see that the State Department is working with Treasury to make effective use of the Global Magnitsky Act to go after corrupt actors. Beyond this, what other tools does the Department have at its disposal to support the new national security strategy?

Answer. The Department implements a multifaceted approach to combat corruption, including promoting implementation of the U.N. Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the only global anticorruption treaty and leading international framework that supports our efforts to prevent and combat corruption. The Department plays a key role in the promotion of internationally recognized standards to prevent and combat corruption, engages in bilateral diplomacy to promote reform, provides foreign assistance to strengthen criminal justice systems and other institutions, and implements visa restrictions to promote accountability for corrupt actors.

Question. We have seen an increase in the use of sanctions to further U.S. priorities and democratic norms. Do you believe State and Treasury have the resources to manage the increasing use of sanctions as a major tool in our toolkit?

Answer. Sanctions can be an effective way to drive behavior change and to respond to activities that threaten U.S. national security. The Department of State has multiple offices charged with developing, managing, and supporting sanctions policy and implementation, including offices in the bureaus of Economic and Business Affairs; Counterterrorism; International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs; International Security and Nonproliferation; and Democracy, Human Rights and Labor; among others. These bureaus, which work closely on sanctions policy with State's regional bureaus, will continue robust implementation of sanctions policies and programs as part of broader foreign policy efforts.

Question. Many corrupt foreign leaders hide their money in offshore accounts. What is the Department's view on making the existence of these accounts and their corrupt owners public when the U.S. Government becomes aware of them?

Answer. The President's recent National Security Study Memorandum, which establishes the fight against corruption as a core U.S. national security interest, emphasizes the need to curb illicit finance by reducing offshore financial secrecy, seizing stolen assets, and making it more difficult for those who steal to hide behind anonymity. The Department's programmatic and diplomatic efforts to promote beneficial ownership transparency and prevent money laundering can reinforce this priority and evolve as the strategy takes shape. Working with interagency partners, I will continue to use all tools at my disposal to support efforts to increase transparency around beneficial ownership and use of offshore accounts, while remaining mindful of U.S. law enforcement interests.

Question. What is the Department doing to bolster the capacity of international institutions and multilateral bodies to establish global anti-corruption norms, promote financial transparency, and strengthen the frameworks of financial institutions to prevent corruption?

Answer. The Department plays a key role in the development and promotion of recognized international standards and commitments, including those in the U.N. Convention Against Corruption, which is the leading international framework supporting our global efforts to prevent and combat corruption. We provide foreign assistance to support the role of multilateral bodies in establishing anticorruption norms and promoting their implementation; strengthen justice sector and other oversight institutions in promoting debt transparency and sustainability; and promote public transparency, accountability, and integrity. We also advocate incorporation of these important values during multilateral and bilateral meetings.

Question. I was pleased to see the highest in a decade budget request for humanitarian assistance, reflecting the increased needs caused by climate change, conflict, and migration. To be able to provide humanitarian assistance, our partners need to be able to access those in need. Yet, in conflict after conflict, in every region of the world, they are denied access to vulnerable populations in need of assistance. According to some estimates, crisis-affected populations in more than 60 countries around the world are not getting the humanitarian assistance they need because of access constraints. In 2019, Senator Young and I worked with CSIS to establish a task force on humanitarian access. One of the conclusions of our task force was that the U.S. Government must prioritize aid funding, training, data sharing, and new technologies to help aid workers overcome access challenges to reach the most vulnerable. What is the Department doing to ensure that humanitarian access is being treated as the foreign policy and national security priority it is?

Answer. In addition to the access challenges endemic to insecure environments, since early 2020 humanitarian aid organizations have had to adjust to additional access restrictions and risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. With USG support, these organizations have been able to provide essential assistance and protection by using new technologies, scaling up cash and voucher assistance, and shifting more responsibilities to local staff. In FY 2020, the United States provided \$10.5 billion in humanitarian assistance, and thanks to Congress's generous support, we will increase that programming this year. We will also prioritize access to COVID-19 vaccines for the most vulnerable, marginalized, and hard-to-reach populations and encourage other donors to do the same.

Question. What leverage does the Department have to force non-compliant actors to grant access? What tools are you missing that could make the U.S. Government more effective at getting humanitarian aid to those in need?

Answer. I believe there is an imperative to provide assistance to those in need. If direct bilateral diplomacy with non-compliant actors does not yield immediate results, pressure by like-minded states can be brought to bear, including through measures imposed by the UNSC. Other tools include promoting accountability for human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, and in cases of extreme need, providing assistance to vulnerable populations without the consent of non-compliant actors.

THE COMMITTEE RECEIVED NO RESPONSE FROM SECRETARY OF STATE ANTONY J.
BLINKEN FOR THE FOLLOWING REQUEST BY SENATOR VAN HOLLEN

Secretary Blinken,

Mr. Hamza Ulucay is a former foreign national State Department employee who served at the U.S. Consulate in Adana for nearly 40 years. He was detained by Turkish officials as a consequence of his service to the U.S. Government. I appreciate the U.S. Department of State's hard work to help secure Mr. Ulucay's release and ongoing efforts to ensure that he receives proper representation in the legal battles he continues to fight against the baseless charges by the Turkish Government. However, I am troubled that Mr. Ulucay has been deemed ineligible for a pension for his federal service. On May 23, 2020, I sent a letter marked as "time-sensitive" regarding Mr. Ulucay's situation to the Department of State. I want to know the legal basis for the decision to deny Mr. Ulucay a federal pension. Moreover, I ask that you explore all means to provide extraordinary relief, if necessary, to support this individual who has been a loyal employee of the U.S. Government for decades, and has been subjected to unfounded prosecution by the Turkish Government because of that service. My staff received confirmation from the Department that this letter was received. However, since then, and despite numerous attempts by my staff to receive updates, I have not received a response. I am including the letter below for your reference.

Given Mr. Ulucay's precarious situation, please review this matter and provide a response as expeditiously as possible.

TEXT OF LETTER

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Durakoglu:

I am writing on behalf of Mr. Hamza Ulucay regarding the terms of his separation from employment with the U.S. Department of State.

I am grateful to the Department for all that it has done to support Mr. Ulucay during his unjust detention by the Turkish Government and to secure his probationary release. As you may know, I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Ulucay in 1988 when I was a staff member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Mr. Ulucay was extremely helpful to me then, as I know he has been to the U.S. Consulate in Adana since 1980. I was pleased when he was honored as Foreign Service National of the Year in 1992. I am a proud cosponsor of S. 1075—the Defending United States Citizens and Diplomatic Staff from Political Prosecutions Act of 2019, which supports his release and those of the other Turkish nationals being held unjustly.

I appreciate the Department's extension of Mr. Ulucay's employment for 1 year past the required retirement age. I understand that Mr. Ulucay is also eligible for a special immigrant visa, but that he has not yet been able to avail himself of the opportunity due to travel restrictions imposed upon him by the Turkish Government. I know that the Department's support has been very much appreciated by Mr. Ulucay and his family.

I was troubled, however, to learn that Mr. Ulucay has been deemed ineligible for a pension from his federal service. I understand that U.S. missions abroad have a vast array of local conditions in which they must adapt and operate, and that many depend on local retirement systems to support Foreign Service nationals after employment with the U.S. Government. However, I find it disturbing that the Department of State, despite recognizing that Mr. Ulucay is confronting his current situation as a direct consequence of his service to the U.S. Government, would leave him with two horrible options—to remain in Turkey on a meager pension from the Turkish social security system and at continued risk of retribution and retaliation by the Turkish Government, or, when and if the travel ban imposed upon him by Turkish officials is lifted, to immigrate to the U.S. as a retiree with no means to support himself and his family.

I respectfully ask that the Department of State clarify the grounds on which Mr. Ulucay was deemed ineligible for benefits through the CSRS program, providing the relevant legal citations and employment records. I understand that foreign nationals employed at posts abroad and appointed after December 31, 1987 are ineligible for CSRS benefits under 5 U.S.C. 8331(1). However, Mr. Ulucay began his employment at the U.S. Consulate in Adana in 1980. I hope that you will work with me to resolve this situation.

Given Mr. Ulucay's precarious situation, I ask that you review this matter as expeditiously as possible. If you have any questions and to direct correspondence, please contact Ms. Catherine Provost of my staff at *catherine__provost@vanhollen.senate.gov*.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN,
United States Senator.

cc: The Honorable Antony Blinken, U.S. Secretary of State

[No Response Received]

