

S. HRG. 117–288

NOMINATIONS OF THE 117th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION—PART I

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

Part I

January 19, 2021 thru July 20, 2021

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Relations



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U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

47–861 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2022

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NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:01 a.m. in Room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present. Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Booker, Schatz, Van Hollen, Risch, Rubio, Romney, Paul, Young, Barrasso, Cruz, Rounds, 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.

We are here today to consider nominees for two critical positions, Wendy Sherman, to be Deputy Secretary of State and Brian McKeon to be Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources.

They are both foreign policy veterans with deep experience in Congress and the executive branch. Ms. Sherman has held a series of positions at the State Department and is well versed in international affairs.

And I would be remiss if I did not mention Mr. McKeon's long service as chief counsel and deputy staff director of this committee under then-Chairman Biden. And we appreciate your willingness to return to government service.

We thank your families as well because, inevitably they are part of the sacrifice. And I understand before I begin my opening comments that Senator Cardin would like to introduce Ambassador Sherman.

So I will recognize him for that purpose.
Senator Cardin?

STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator CARDIN. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and Ranking Member Risch, thank you for the opportunity for me to introduce a fellow Marylander, a person I deeply admire, a seasoned diplomat, and, I think a person eminently qualified to take on the responsibilities as Deputy Secretary of State, and that is Wendy Sherman.

On a personal note, I have known Wendy Sherman and her family for my entire adult life. Her family represents the values of giving back to the community, and Wendy has chosen a career in public service for all the right reasons, to make our nation and world safer and to enhance opportunities for all.

So first, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Wendy Sherman and her family for their willingness to continue in public life. We recognize the sacrifices and we thank you for being willing to serve our country.

Ambassador Sherman is extraordinarily qualified to be the Deputy Secretary of State. She started as a social worker and rose to become the chief of staff for Senator Barbara Mikulski.

She knows how to work with senators.

She was the Secretary for Children and Youth in Maryland, and also in Maryland the director of the Maryland Office of Child Welfare. She has executive experience. She knows how to manage and she knows how to lead.

She has incredible experience in the State Department as the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, a counselor for State under Secretary Albright with the rank of ambassador, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, the first woman to hold that position.

And if confirmed, she would be the first woman to hold the Deputy Secretary of State position. She knows the strength of diplomacy and how to use it to advance U.S. interests. I cannot think of a person better suited for this position at this moment.

We are at a critical junction. We have the opportunity to rebuild America's diplomacy, to strengthen relations with allies around the world, and to promote our reputation as a global leader for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

In order to seize this opportunity, we need competent compassionate leaders with deep expertise and integrity at the helm of the U.S. foreign policy. Ambassador Sherman is just such a leader. She is, first and foremost, a dedicated public servant.

Ambassador Sherman has spent her career advocating for people and the public good. Ambassador Sherman is a tested diplomat with particular experience in many of the most urgent challenges that face our global community today. She has gone toe to toe with our adversaries from North Koreans to Iranians, and represented the United States with dignity, strength, and poise.

Her achievements in community organizing and her experience in both the public and private sector give her the knowledge that she needs to carry out these responsibilities.

I want to just mention one example of why I think Ambassador Sherman is the right person for this position, and that is the Iran nuclear agreement. I was ranking member in 2015 when we took up the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, and let me just set the stage because I think many of us knew at that time that there was the threatened veto by the Obama administration.

There was a deep partisan division in the Senate as to how we should review the act. And we worked together, Democrats and Republicans, with the Obama administration. Ambassador Sherman was extremely helpful in making this a reality.

And at the end of the day, that Review Act passed the United States Senate by a 98 to 1 vote and Ambassador Sherman was key in involving Congress as we reviewed that Act. She gave each of us, Democrats and Republicans, a meaningful role in how we could improve the Iran nuclear agreement. She was totally engaged with complete transparency and trust.

Ambassador Sherman and I came out with different sides on the final agreement. But I could not stress enough how impressed I was of her commitment to include all of us in the process. She gave us the opportunity to fully participate in the best traditions of the executive and legislative branches working together to strengthen U.S. foreign policy.

Ambassador Sherman is the type of leader we need at the State Department, who knows how to work with Congress and will always put the national security of America first.

I strongly endorse her nomination to be the next Deputy Secretary of State. And, Mr. Chairman, if I might, I would ask unanimous consent that a letter signed by a hundred former ambassadors endorsing Ambassador Sherman's nomination to be Deputy Secretary of State be made part of our record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[The information referred to is located at the end of this transcript.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

As an esteemed and respected senior member of the committee, you are well served, Ambassador, by that glowing introduction. So thank you, Senator Cardin.

Let me start off with a few remarks to set the scene and then I will turn to the distinguished ranking member.

Ambassador Sherman and Mr. McKeon, before diving into some of the many regional and global issues we face, I want to address the serious challenges facing the department and its workforce. Our career Foreign and Civil Service are an invaluable resource for this nation. Their dedication, professionalism, and sacrifice deserve our gratitude and our support.

But the last few years have been trying for the department. There has been a stunning loss of expertise, steep declines in morale, little accountability for those at the top, and the department still has not achieved a workforce that reflects the diversity of this great country.

It is clear that Secretary Blinken is setting a tone and, critically, an example that will help restore trust and empower career experts. In particular, I appreciate his commitment to ensuring the department's leadership and workforce reflect the diversity of our nation, including the recent announcement of a chief diversity officer.

It will, of course, take more than just a good example and hard work from the Secretary to rebuild the department and its workforce. So I look forward to hearing from both of you how you will contribute to that cause.

You also both know the importance of a strong relationship between the department and Congress, and the value of engaging and securing congressional support on major foreign policy decisions.

In recent years, that relationship has suffered. I appreciate the Secretary's acknowledgement of the problem and commitment to productive engagement with this committee.

I expect to work with him and you to solidify this relationship so it does not vacillate from one administration to another.

While restoring and rebuilding the department, it is essential we face a series of pressing challenges around the world, and I will just highlight a few.

Iran. As I am sure you remember, I was not a proponent of the JCPOA. But I also believe that the Trump administration's decision to withdraw without a serious strategy involving our allies would, ultimately, leave us less safe and Iran emboldened.

Unfortunately, my belief has been realized by Iran's continuing aggression across the Middle East, and the recent IAEA report that Iran's enriched uranium stockpile is now more than 14 times over the JCPOA limit.

Public reports suggest that they are three months away from crossing the nuclear threshold. I support this administration's plan to return to diplomacy. But returning to the JCPOA without concrete actions to address Iran's other dangerous and destabilizing activities will be insufficient.

I believe there is bipartisan support to find a comprehensive diplomatic approach with Iran that includes working closely with our European and regional partners, and I urge you to do everything possible to find this sweet spot because without bipartisan support, no deal will be durable.

Russia continues to challenge the U.S. and our allies around the world. I welcome the President's commitment to lead again on areas requiring cooperation like strategic stability and arms control.

But the U.S. is also obligated to counter the Kremlin as it uses its military to attack neighbors, its media to lie to the world, its oligarchs to corrupt our economies, and its security forces to repress peaceful democratic opposition.

Many on this committee are focused on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. I have supported the legislation to stop the pipeline. It is the congressional will as is evidenced by its passage, and I urge the administration to act with urgency to block this effort.

In our own hemisphere, democratic governance is under deep strain. Cuba remains under the rule of an entrenched dictatorship, Venezuela has been kidnapped by a brutal criminal regime, and fraudulent deeply flawed presidential elections have led to political crises in multiple countries.

Across the region, irregular migration has skyrocketed as citizens face diminished prospects, crime, and lose hope in their home countries. More than 5 million people have fled Venezuela, and hundreds of thousands are abandoning El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Addressing these crises require effective leadership.

I am very concerned about the viability of the peace process in Afghanistan. The Taliban is, clearly, not abiding by all of its commitments under the February 29th agreement, calling into question the future of Afghan security and governance. We need senior level focused attention from the department.

On Africa, this was another casualty, in my view, of the previous administration. We are losing the Sahel. The 2020 Global Terrorism Index found that seven of the 10 countries with the largest increase in terrorism were in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Fragile democratic transitions are in jeopardy in Ethiopia and Sudan, while there is significant democratic backsliding in Uganda, Tanzania, Mali, and the Ivory Coast. Here, too, we need senior level attention and an effective strategy.

I will save China for questions, but it is, clearly, the single most significant foreign policy challenge to the United States. We must not only confront China, but we must compete with it, and I look forward to hearing some of your views in that regard.

Finally, I would be remiss not to note that there are American citizens being held hostage or otherwise unlawfully or wrongfully detained in many countries around the world. Iran is among the worst offenders, including the wrongful detention of Siamak Nimazi, and more recently, Emad Sharghi.

As the lead sponsor of the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage Taking Accountability Act, which was signed into law last year, I want and expect to work with you to make sure the administration is doing everything possible to bring these Americans home now and to implement the Levinson Act quickly and effectively. There is nothing more critical to our foreign policy than the safety of Americans abroad.

With that, I look forward to hearing your remarks and I turn to the distinguished Ranking Member, Senator Risch, for his comments.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I sincerely appreciate that. And thank you to our two nominees. I want to thank you both personally for spending the time you did meeting with me.

Mr. McKeon, I really—on a personal note, I really appreciate your personal history of my office, since your attachment to that office goes back a long ways, and the way we open the closets and find things in there, your history has helped explain a lot of things as we occupy that office.

So thank you for that. I understand you worked there with then Senator, now President Biden in that office and it was—the history was interesting. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Ranking Member, can you expound upon what you meant?

Senator RISCH. I will not.

[Laughter.]

Senator RISCH. But that is a question for you—Senator Lott also had that office, and I have had many interesting conversations with Senator Lott about the office and attributing certain things to certain people is important to me. So that is why I have appreciated Mr. McKeon's enlightenment in that regard and it explains a lot of things.

Well, the two nominations that we have before us today are really of considerable importance to our foreign policy and to the effectiveness, certainly, of the State Department. The Deputy Secretary

of State will serve as chief advisor to Secretary Blinken and serve as Secretary in his absence.

The Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources will serve as the lead officer for the management of personnel and resources at the department. We all know on this committee how important that is.

Neither job is a small task, but both serve critical functions. While the deputy secretaries will face a broad array of foreign policy issues during their tenure at the department, there is a few pressing matters I would like to talk about and I would like to focus on specifically today.

Obviously, I am not going to touch on them all. I think Senator Menendez did an outstanding job of underscoring the hotspots around the world and places that are of real concern to us.

I also want to say that I fully agree with Senator Menendez that China and the Indo-Pacific are critically important regions in the world for United States interests and are going to be the challenge of the 21st century.

The region is home to some of our strongest alliances and partnerships, and it also is the primary arena of competition with the People's Republic of China. The Chinese Communist Party routinely engages in actions that deliberately undermine U.S. interests and values, as well as the world order based on free markets and the rule of law.

This includes anti-competitive economic statecraft, aggressive military posture and coercion, and undermining the tenets of free and open societies.

These are huge challenges for you and for all Americans.

The State Department's highest priority must be to prioritize resource and respond to the challenges posed by the Chinese Government.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is currently negotiating a legislative package on China. There are a number of bills kicking around already on the issue. Both sides of the aisle are robustly engaged, and the American people deserve a bill that is truly bipartisan and includes concrete and effective proposals.

I look forward to continue working with Senator Menendez, my other colleagues on the committee and off of the committee as they are—the jurisdiction cuts across several committees on the bill that would strengthen the U.S. position in this competition, and I hope we can put forward a strong final product.

China is not and cannot be a partisan issue. It is a common issue for all Americans. A central theme for this administration is rebuilding U.S. alliances in the Indo-Pacific. The Biden team has, in fact, already inheriting strong relationships, including with Japan, India, Australia, Taiwan, and other nations.

In addition to the lofty discussions by the current administration on that, I would really like to hear specific steps that the administration is pursuing to support and strengthen U.S. alliances.

One area that is particularly important to our alliances is extended deterrence, which is fundamental and foundational to the health and strength of U.S. alliances. The Biden administration should commit to our declaratory policy and nuclear posture will continue to reflect that reality. A failure to modernize or an em-

brace of policies that dilute or reduce our extended deterrence commitments will make the Indo-Pacific more dangerous for us and for our allies.

Finally, on the Indo-Pacific, North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs continue to threaten both regional stability and U.S. forces and allies in the region.

Ms. Sherman, I would appreciate your assessment of the North Korea issue and your views on sanctions, the role of high-level diplomacy, and other matters relevant to the Biden administration's North Korea strategy, at least as much as we can in an open setting like this. We did not get a chance to talk about that much when we met. So I will be interested in hearing that from you.

Another issue of acute concern for all of us is Iran. It is really unfortunate that the Iran issue has divided us frequently more than it has brought us together, and it is absolutely critical to our relations in the region.

And my views on Iran are well known. I was robustly engaged, as Mr. Chairman knows, when we talked about this years ago, and several of my colleagues joined me in a letter to President Biden last week outlining the Republican consensus on an appropriate policy, moving forward.

I do not know if you have seen that or not, Ms. Sherman, but it does detail mine and other members of this committee's views on that. Those of us that signed it were Republican, but that does not mean that those views are strictly Republican. There are a number of us that have worked across the aisle on this issue.

The Iranians are testing this administration. They tested it again this morning, as most of you know, with an attack on American facilities in the region, and the response at the outset is going to be very important.

I have no doubt that all of you are at the present time discussing that and, I would hope, creating a very worthwhile appropriate response to the testing that is done. This testing, I think, that the Iranians are doing is emblematic of the mindset of these people. We are at a juncture here when people are talking more and more about sitting down and trying to resolve the issues and what do they do but ratchet up actual kinetic attacks against Americans.

These people, as you told me, Ms. Sherman, are not to be trusted and I agree with you on that, in that regard, and I doubt there is many people sitting around the table here that would think otherwise.

Rejoining the old nuclear accord is a nonstarter, as far as I am concerned, and it does not meet U.S. national security interest. The scope is too narrow and the sunsets have passed or remain dangerously close.

Any new deal with Iran must address its regional terrorism, ballistic missiles, and detention of U.S. persons, issues that should be addressed now while the United States has leverage.

Additionally, there must be no sanctions relief or unfreezing of assets as a precondition for negotiation. Negotiations—I am troubled by what I hear are discussions between the administration and South Korea, as far as unfreezing some of those assets. That will not be helpful, I do not believe.

To think you can enter into so-called follow-up agreements on the issues that I just discussed—terrorism, ballistic missiles, and detention of U.S. persons—anyone who would think that you could enter into follow-up agreements with Iran after a nuclear agreement I really believe is delusional.

We were—it has been proven in the past that that did not work. It did not work then. It is not going to work now, and it is all because of the Iranian mindset on these issues.

If you enter into a nuclear deal without dealing with these other malign activities, that is a delusional activity, and I believe, once again, we will walk away bamboozled by the Iranians.

I assure you, Chinese, Russian, and diplomats—excuse me.

Finally, I want to—I want to address and I hope that the Biden administration has demonstrated it has learned from the mistakes of the past. I know we are going to struggle again with if we get to an agreement point how that agreement is ratified by America.

I know everyone here has seen what has happened in the past. If, indeed, this is a partisan agreement, three years from now we will see a cadre of Republicans trying to get the nominee for the—to run as the party standard bearer, and once again, you will go along the line and they are going to say, what will you do with it, and they will say, well, I am going to set it on fire. The next guy will say, well, I am going to shred it. The next guy will say, well, I am going to put it on the floor and stomp on it.

That is what happened last time and, of course, we wound up where we wound up with that. This needs to be something that is embraced by all of us, not one of the parties, and we will wind up again where we are.

When I was—I cannot tell you how many times—I think all of us had this experience—where our European partners and others would come in and say, well, you know, America, you breached your agreement that you entered into.

And I kept telling them, you did not have an agreement with America. You had an agreement with Barack Obama and with John Kerry. An agreement with America is a treaty that goes through the United States Senate and is ratified by a vote by the United States Senate.

Now, I understand that they have already—the administration has already said that is a nonstarter. I am unhappy to hear that. But, hopefully, at least we will have very close to unanimous agreement on—agreement that—as we go forward.

Well, finally, I want to briefly address the administrative role of Deputy Secretary positions. If we did not appreciate the importance of U.S. global health security before, we certainly must now.

As the deputy is charged with coordinating policy and resources, it will be incumbent upon you to ensure that the department is organized and resourced to lead global health diplomacy and coordinate the implementation of a coherent global health security strategy overseas.

I cannot underscore enough how important this is on global health.

It will also be imperative that you seek reforms to the department where necessary. My staff and I have heard from numerous current and former diplomats over the last few years about how

difficult it is to get outside of our embassies and consulates abroad to meet with the locals.

The department's approach has been so cautious that it often stops our diplomats from doing their jobs. I assure you, the Chinese, Russian, and Iranian diplomats are not having these issues, and in order to stay ahead of our adversaries and advance our interests, the State Department needs to rebalance its risk tolerance as far as ambassadors and other people being able to get out from the embassies to do their jobs.

I also look forward to working with you as the department establishes an Office of Sanctions Coordination pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. That should strengthen the role of the department in development and implementation of sanctions policy.

This has been a matter of tension between the first and second branch for some time. Hopefully, the Act will smooth that out.

I welcome your views on all these important issues. Again, I thank you both for being here today and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on these important matters.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

We will now proceed to the testimony of both of our nominees for the committee's information. At some point, Senator Cardin and I will rotate here because we have a vote in the Senate Finance Committee for the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

So if we get up at one point, it is not because of what you said but because we need to go cast a vote.

So we will turn to our nominees.

Ambassador Sherman, as to both of you, your full statement will be entered for the record. We ask you to summarize it more or less in about five minutes. And then we will get to a pre-agreed with the ranking member round of seven-minute questions for each member.

Ambassador Sherman?

**STATEMENT OF HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN OF MARYLAND,
NOMINATED TO BE THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and thank you, Senator Cardin for your very kind and generous introduction.

I am grateful to my husband, Bruce, who sits behind me, for his love and support, and my daughter, Sarah, who inspires me with her work. Bruce, Sarah, my grandsons, Ezra and Oscar, seven and five, watching in Boston, and my sister, Andrea, her husband, Kevin, their son, Eric, along with numerous friends and colleagues have sustained me in their love and counsel.

I am also deeply grateful to President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Secretary Blinken for their trust in nominating me to be Deputy Secretary of State.

If confirmed, I pledge to work every day to sustain that trust and the trust of this committee and the Senate. President Biden has

outlined a foreign policy vision that puts diplomacy center stage where we lead not just by the example of our power but the power of our example, and where our foreign policy benefits and serves the American people.

This vision is one that is deeply personal to me. In 1945, my parents were present at the founding of the United Nations. My father, then an active duty Marine still recovering from injuries he suffered at Guadalcanal, thought it was important that he and my mother attend the founding of a forum to prevent war and spare future generations from suffering their generation endured.

This same sentiment led him to help found what later became the American Veterans Committee. My parents instilled in me a profound commitment to making a safer better world for the American people. That commitment led me to social work and community advocacy, and later to politics and public service as a means of providing improving the lives of my fellow citizens.

As the President has emphasized, diplomacy must be the tool of first resort of American leadership in a more interconnected and competitive world. From the pandemic to the climate crisis to nuclear proliferation, the challenges that threaten the prosperity and security of the American people will only be solved by working together in common purpose with our allies and partners.

To do so, we have to rebuild alliances and partnerships, strengthen our democratic institutions, increase economic opportunity, and enhance respect for democratic principles, including freedom of the press, religious liberty, human rights, and the rule of law.

Engaging in the broadest way possible not only with government officials but with the private sector and all of civil society—youth, women and girls, journalists, and opinion leaders—is critical to our success in this effort.

When I served as the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, I traveled to 54 countries to advance Americans' interests and values. I went to Burma in support of further democratic and economic reforms, and met with both Aung San Suu Kyi and Min Aung Hlaing.

I traveled to Bangladesh after the horrific garment factory accidents to press on worker safety and labor rights. In Africa, I pushed on countering Chinese investment and welcomed rising leaders on the continent as part of the Young African Leaders Initiative.

I traveled to almost every conflict zone and engaged extensively with our transatlantic and Indo-Pacific allies and international partners who work with us to resolve those conflicts.

If confirmed, I will bring a breadth of experience and relationships to bear on the challenges that face our country today. Among all of these challenges posed by the ambitions of China to rival the United States, the determination of Russia to damage and disrupt our democracy, and the nuclear and other threats posed by Iran and North Korea, to compete and win the strategic competition with China we have to invest in America and confront and challenge Beijing where we must, including on human rights and democratic values.

We will act firmly in defense of our national interests in response to actions by Russia that harm us or our allies.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, ask for one more moment. Thank you. With respect to Iran, as the lead of the U.S. negotiating team for the JCPOA, I remain clear eyed about the threat that Iran poses to our interests and those of our allies.

I am ready to address your questions about the JCPOA. But I would note that 2021 is not 2015 when the deal was agreed, nor 2016 when it was implemented. The facts on the ground have changed, the geopolitics of the region have changed, and the way forward must similarly change.

Moving forward on the challenges that our country faces will not be easy. But I firmly believe in the capacity of the United States to meet those challenges through renewed global leadership and the exceptionally talented staff of the State Department.

During my prior service, I experienced the unparalleled professionalism of the State Department civil servants, Foreign Service officers, locally engaged staff, and contractors. I also saw the personal sacrifices and contributions of their families. I hope I will have the opportunity again to work with these extraordinary women and men.

Of course, our diplomacy to be successful in any issue we must engage with you, with Congress. I am honored to now be participating in my fourth nomination hearing before this committee. The first time was as the nominee to be the State Department's Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs in 1993.

I have learned firsthand the need for close and constructive coordination with Congress with consultation, not just with notification. As a former congressional chief of staff, I have a deep appreciation for the role of the Congress and the executive branch.

Secretary Blinken has spoken to this committee of his and the President's commitment to restoring Congress' traditional role as a partner in our foreign policy making, and if confirmed, I pledge to play a leading role in that effort.

With that commitment, I welcome your questions and look forward to our discussion today. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Sherman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

And thank you Senator Cardin for your kind introduction.

I am grateful to my husband Bruce for his love and support and my daughter Sarah, who inspires me with her work. Bruce, Sarah, my grandsons Ezra and Oscar, and my sister Andrea, her husband Kevin, their son Erik, along with numerous friends and colleagues, have sustained me in their love and counsel.

I am also deeply grateful to President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Secretary Blinken for their trust in me in nominating me to be Deputy Secretary of State. If confirmed, I pledge to work every day to sustain that trust and the trust of this committee and the Senate.

President Biden has outlined a foreign policy vision that puts diplomacy center stage, where we lead not just by the example of our power but the power of our example, and where our foreign policy benefits and serves the American people. This vision is one that is deeply personal to me. In 1945, my parents were present at the founding of the United Nations. My father, then an active-duty Marine still recovering from injuries he suffered at Guadalcanal, felt it was important that he and my mother attend the founding of a forum to prevent war and spare future generations from the suffering their generation endured. This same sentiment led him to help found what later became the American Veterans Committee.

My parents instilled in me a profound commitment to making a safer, better world for the American people. That commitment led me to social work and community advocacy, and later, to politics and public service as a means of improving the lives of my fellow citizens.

As the President has emphasized, diplomacy must be the tool of first resort of American leadership in a more interconnected and competitive world. From the pandemic to the climate crisis to nuclear proliferation, the challenges that threaten the prosperity and security of the American people will only be solved by working together and in common purpose with our allies and partners.

To do so, we have to rebuild alliances and partnerships; strengthen our democratic institutions; increase economic opportunity; and enhance respect for democratic principles, including freedom of the press, religious liberty, human rights, and the rule of law. Engaging in the broadest way possible, not only with government officials, but with the private sector and all of civil society—youth, women and girls, journalists and opinion leaders—is critical to our success in these efforts.

When I served as Under Secretary of State, I travelled to 54 countries to advance American interests and values. I went to Burma in support of further democratic and economic reforms and met with both Aung San Suu Kyi and Min Aung Hlaing. I traveled to Bangladesh after the horrific garment factory accidents to press on worker safety and labor rights. In Africa, I pushed on countering Chinese investment, and welcomed rising leaders on the continent as part of the Young African Leaders Initiative. I traveled to almost every major conflict zone, and engaged extensively with our Transatlantic and Indo-Pacific allies and international partners who work with us to resolve those conflicts. If confirmed, I will bring a breadth of experience and relationships to bear on the challenges that face our country today.

Among those challenges are those posed by the ambitions of China to rival the United States, the determination of Russia to damage and disrupt our democracy, and the nuclear and other threats posed by Iran and North Korea. To compete and win the strategic competition with China, we have to invest in America and confront and challenge Beijing where we must, including on human rights and democratic values. We will act firmly in defense of our national interests in response to actions by Russia that harm us or our allies. With respect to Iran, as the lead of the U.S. negotiating team for the JCPOA, I remain clear-eyed about the threat that Iran poses to our interests and those of our allies. I am ready to address your questions about the JCPOA, but would note that 2021 is not 2015 when the deal was agreed, nor 2016 when it was implemented. The facts on the ground have changed, the geopolitics of the region have changed, and the way forward must similarly change.

Moving forward on the challenges our country faces will not be easy, but I firmly believe in the capacity of the United States to meet these challenges through renewed global leadership and the exceptionally talented staff of the State Department. During my prior service, I experienced the unparalleled professionalism of the State Department's civil servants, foreign service officers, locally engaged staff, and contractors. I also saw the personal sacrifices and contributions their families make for our nation. I am grateful that, if confirmed, I will again have the opportunity to benefit from the expertise and dedication of all of the women and men who advance American interests every day in all of the 180 countries with which we have diplomatic relations.

Of course, for our diplomacy to be successful on any issue, we must engage with Congress. I am honored to now be participating in my fourth nomination hearing before this committee. The first time was as the nominee to be the State Department's Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs in 1993.

Since then, in three decades of work in foreign policy and national security, I have learned first-hand the need for close and constructive coordination with Congress. As a former Congressional Chief of Staff, I gained a deep appreciation of the Senate's responsibility to provide oversight of the Executive Branch. Secretary Blinken has spoken to this committee of his and the President's commitment to restoring Congress's traditional role as a partner in our foreign policy making, and if confirmed, I pledge to play a leading role in that effort.

With that commitment, I welcome your questions and look forward to our discussion today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ambassador Sherman.
Mr. McKeon?

STATEMENT OF HON. BRIAN MCKEON OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, NOMINATED TO BE THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to be the Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources.

I want to start by thanking President Biden, Secretary of State Blinken, for selecting me for this position. It is particularly gratifying to appear before this committee, which was my professional home for 12 years when I worked for the Democratic staff supporting then Senator Biden when he was chairman or ranking member from 1997 to 2009.

I spent a lot of hours sitting in confirmation hearings up in 419 and I never imagined I would be on the side of the dais as the President's nominee.

I would not be here without the strong support of my family, particularly my parents and my wife. My parents were both children of the Depression. They are no longer with us, but they taught us the value of hard work and perseverance.

My father, who was a lawyer by training but spent most of his time in politics, sparked my interest in public service and taught me that politics is a noble profession.

My wife, Liz, who worked in this chamber for 25 years for five different senators, has, simply put, made me a better person, giving me unstinting love and support and advice and helping me in tolerating all the long hours that go with government service.

My over 20 years of service in this chamber and eight years in the executive branch have given me a strong appreciation for the many challenges confronting our country, long experience in national security, and a deep knowledge of how the two political branches operate.

I believe I have demonstrated an ability to manage large organizations to get things done and to work across party lines, including on this committee with the staffs of Senator Helms and Senator Lugar.

I also have a great respect for the role of Congress and foreign affairs. The debates in this chamber on the Gulf War, the Iraq War, the Balkans conflicts, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance were, for me, among the most memorable and important of my time here, because in a democratic society matters of war and peace must be publicly debated and require the informed consent of the American people through their representatives here in Congress.

I know from this experience that not all wisdom resides in the executive branch. I firmly believe that we share the same commitment to protecting and advancing the security and well being of our country, although I know we will always—not always agree.

As Secretary Blinken has made clear in his recent message to the workforce, the department must consider Congress to be a full partner in its work.

My first priority, if confirmed, is to help the department build back better to meet the diplomatic and security challenges of this century.

This starts with investing in our greatest asset, the over 75,000 public servants who work in Washington at over 270 posts around the world and in dozens of facilities in the United States.

Our diplomats are on the frontlines of America's security and interests, and they deserve our support and efforts to strengthen their ranks. We must ensure that we recruit, develop, and retain a diverse and professional workforce that is prepared and empowered to advance not only our traditional diplomatic interests but also to address the pressing challenges of this era, such as climate change, global health security, irregular migration, advanced technology, increased economic competitiveness, threats to democratic governance, and not least the long-term strategic competition with China.

Let me say a few words about diversity, which will be a top priority for all of our senior leadership. Stated simply, the Department of State cannot fully represent America unless the workforce is fully representative of America.

We must make real gains in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion through concrete actions to dismantle structural barriers at the department. Meaningful change requires sustained focus on three key areas: talent management, transparency, and accountability.

Secretary Blinken has made clear he will have such a focus and so will I, if confirmed. If confirmed, I also intend to devote considerable attention to ensuring that we are aligning our resources with our policy priorities, both investments in State operations and in State and USAID foreign assistance programs, and that we are good stewards of the taxpayer dollars.

For the last several years, Congress has, on a bipartisan basis, protected the international affairs budget from requested cuts, which has, thankfully, provided a solid foundation on which to build.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to ensure the department has the resources and authorities it needs to meet the challenges we face.

I am committed to ensuring the effective management of these resources. But we will need your help to make necessary investments in our workforce and information technology, and building and maintaining safe and secure embassies and in our foreign assistance programs.

With that, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKeon follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BRIAN P. McKEON

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you as the President's nominee to be Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources.

I would like to start by thanking President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken for selecting me for this position. It is particularly gratifying to appear before this committee, which was my professional home for 12 years, when I worked on the Democratic staff supporting then-Senator Biden during his tenure as Chairman or

Ranking Member from 1997 to 2009. I spent many hours sitting in confirmation hearings; I am not sure that I ever imagined sitting on this side of the dais as the President's nominee.

I would not be here without the strong support of my family, particularly my parents and my wife. My parents, both children of the Depression, taught me the value of hard work and perseverance. My father, a lawyer by training whose main avocation was politics, sparked my interest in public service, and taught me that politics is a noble profession. My wife, who spent 25 years working in this chamber for five different senators, has, simply put, made me a better person. She provided unstinting love, support, and advice, and patiently endured the long hours that I spent away from home over the years, for which I am deeply grateful.

My over 20 years of service working in the Senate, and eight years in the Executive branch, have given me a strong appreciation for the many challenges that confront our country, long experience in international affairs and national security policy, and a deep knowledge of how the two political branches operate. I believe I have demonstrated an ability to manage large organizations, to get things done, and to work across party lines, including through close collaboration with the staffs of Senators Helms and Lugar on this committee.

I also greatly respect the role of Congress in foreign affairs. The debates in this chamber on the Gulf War, the Iraq War, the Balkan conflicts, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance were among the most memorable and important of my time here—because in a democratic society, matters of war and peace must be publicly debated and require the informed consent of the American people, through their representatives in the Congress.

I know intuitively from this experience that not all wisdom resides in the Executive Branch. I firmly believe that we share the same commitment to protecting and advancing the security and well-being of our country, and that we must work together. As Secretary Blinken made clear in a recent message to the workforce, the Department of State must consider the Congress a full partner in its work.

My first priority, if confirmed, is to help the Department of State build back better to meet the diplomatic and security challenges of the 21st century. That starts with investing in its greatest asset—the over 75,000 public servants who work in Washington, at over 270 posts around the world, and in dozens of facilities around the United States. Our diplomats are on the front lines of America's security and interests. They deserve our support and efforts to strengthen their ranks. We must ensure that we recruit, develop and retain a diverse and professional workforce that is prepared and empowered to advance not only our traditional diplomatic interests, but also to address the pressing challenges of this era, such as climate change, global health security, irregular migration, advanced technology, increased economic competitiveness, threats to democratic governance, and, not least, long-term strategic competition with China.

Let me say a few words in particular about diversity, which will be a top priority for all of the senior leadership. Stated simply, the Department of State cannot fully represent America unless its workforce is fully representative of America. We must make real gains in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion through concrete actions to dismantle structural barriers at the Department. Meaningful change will require sustained focus on three key areas: talent management, transparency, and accountability. Secretary Blinken has made clear he will have such a focus, and so will I, if confirmed. As an initial action, the Secretary has followed through on his commitment to this committee by creating a Chief Diversity and Inclusion Office, reporting directly to him.

If confirmed, I also intend to devote considerable attention to ensuring that we are aligning our resources with our policy priorities—both investments in our operations and in State and USAID foreign assistance programs—and that we are good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

For the last several years, the Congress has, on a bipartisan basis, protected the international affairs budget from requested cuts, which has thankfully provided a solid foundation on which to build as we undertake the collective work to revitalize the Department of State. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to ensure the Department has the resources and authorities it needs to meet the many challenges we face. I am committed to ensuring the effective management of the resources made available to us, but we will need your help to make the necessary investments in our workforce, in information technology, in building and maintaining safe and secure embassies, and in our foreign assistance programs that seek to advance our national interests.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear here today. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you both.

We will start our round of seven minutes for members. I am just going to ask you some generic questions on behalf of the full committee, and I will reserve the balance of my time to intercede as I believe is appropriate.

When I met with both of you, we discussed the department will need to rebuild and repair its relationship with the committee after the last few years.

Based on our discussion and the points that you have made in your opening statement, I am confident you understand the importance of a constructive relationship between the department and Congress. So I have a few quick questions along these lines and I would just appreciate a yes or no answer to them.

Do you agree that the State Department is accountable to Congress and the American people?

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes.

Mr. McKEON. I do.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit that the department will keep this committee fully and currently informed on the department's activities?

Ms. SHERMAN. I do.

Mr. McKEON. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you understand and agree that a constructive relationship between the department and this committee requires meaningful engagement and consultation with the committee while policies are being developed, not after the fact, and do you commit to ensuring that type of meaningful engagement?

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes.

Mr. McKEON. Yes, I do.

The CHAIRMAN. And do you commit to working with this committee to provide answers on outstanding requests that your predecessors withheld from Congress through years of stonewalling?

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes, to the extent that I know what they are, Senator.

Mr. McKEON. Same answer, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

With that, I will turn to Senator Risch.

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

Ms. Sherman, let us get right to the heart of the thing to begin with. Your comments about this not being 2015 are greatly appreciated.

I think we all understand that. You say you are clear eyed about the challenge in front of you and I—in your defense, I will say that you are carrying water for different people this time than you were last time. I and a lot of my colleagues here were deeply, deeply disappointed, as you know, in your performance in negotiating in getting to the JCPOA, and I got to tell you, one of the most surreal experiences I have had in the United States Senate is the hearing we had where I was asking you about the annexes or whatever you call them, the supplements to the JCPOA, and you would not tell me what was in them.

And as you know, I serve on the Intelligence Committee so I got the same national security clearance that you do and did at the

time. And yet, you wanted me to support the agreement but would not tell me what was in part of the agreement.

And I could not do that and I will not do that, and I will not do that in the future.

So what—you say you are clear eyed on this. We are all clear eyed, we hope. But tell me, what are your thoughts about putting in front of us another agreement that has got annexes or agreements that we cannot see, and yet you want us to support them? Are we headed down that road again?

Ms. SHERMAN. Well, Senator, thank you very much for your candor and for recalling a situation that was uncomfortable all the way around.

Senator RISCH. I bet it was.[Laughter.]

Ms. SHERMAN. What I want to say to you and to all the members of the committee today is that President Biden has been very clear about what he wants to achieve as has Secretary Blinken with regards to Iran, and it is along the lines of both the letter that you and Republicans sent as well as the sentiments that have been expressed by the Democrats.

And that is that we have to ensure that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon, that there be compliance-for-compliance, as the President has said, and Iran is a long way from compliance, as we all know.

The President and the Secretary have also said that we must work with you and with our partners and allies to address all the other issues of concern regarding Iran, and there are many. their ballistic missile production, their state sponsorship of terrorism, their really concerning behavior in the region, their arms sales, their human rights abuses of their own people, putting American citizens in Evin Prison. I can go on and on about all of the range of concerns.

So, in my view, Senator, and I do not have access to intelligence right now, which is considerably important in this situation. I do not have access to all of the thinking of the administration because I am not in it.

But if confirmed, I would want to learn all of that. So in the Deputies Committee, I can bring my experience. But the decisions that need to be taken will be along the lines of those laid out by the President of the United States and the Secretary of State, and indeed have to be decided on the merits of where we are today, not nostalgia for what might have been.

I think this is a very tough problem set. I think it will require serious discussions, as the chairman said, with the United States Senate on both sides of the aisle to get your views, to understand.

I do think we have the same objectives and I think the issue is how to achieve them, how to sequence various steps to get there, how to work with our allies and partners to make it real.

So I think we have a tough road ahead. You will be very important to that policymaking, as the chairman laid out and as you and I discussed in your office, and I look forward to those conversations and to working in this administration, if confirmed, to deal with what is a very difficult challenge.

Senator RISCH. Well, I agree it is a difficult challenge. As you and I discussed when you were in my office, I consider the malign activity of Iran just as important as the nuclear aspects of it.

And as I told you, the nuclear aspects of it, for me, become less important when I know that there is a country on this planet which has a tolerance that is substantially lower than ours for Iran developing a nuclear weapon.

Indeed, they consider it existential and they have said to me over and over and over again they will never allow that to happen. You guys can sign any agreements you want. You can do whatever you want. But Iran is not going to have a nuclear agreement, and these people mean it when they say it.

So, to me, it is all well and good to talk about enrichment and all that sort of thing. But the other thing is the terrorism, the ballistic missiles, the human rights, and on and on and on, as you have said to me are equally important to the nuclear aspects of this.

The enrichment thing really bothers me. We argued about this last time, and I could not believe that the JCPOA allowed enrichment. There is only one reason that Iran wants to do enrichment and that is if it eventually wants to pursue a nuclear weapon.

I do not believe them when they say, oh, well, this is for peaceful nuclear energy. I know you do not believe them in that regard. I do not think anybody believes them in that regard. But they say those kinds of things frequently.

Is it still the position of the—of the administration that they are going to go it alone and you are not going to submit an agreement as a treaty under the Constitution of the United States to the Congress?

Ms. SHERMAN. I do not know what the ultimate decision will be, Senator, because I do not know where we will be. I think that the Biden administration is absolutely committed to following the law and doing what is appropriate and necessary to whatever gets decided.

But since I do not know, none of us today know what the ultimate outcome will be here, it is hard to make a commitment in advance. And I am not in a position—I am not an administration official. Hope to be, if confirmed by this committee and by the United States Senate, to give you a definitive answer.

Senator RISCH. My time is up. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. McKeon, thank you for your willingness to serve, continue to serve, returning to the political life. We appreciate it very much. I appreciate the opportunity that we had to talk about the management at the State Department.

I want to give you an opportunity to talk about the commitment, if confirmed, to deal with the diversity at the State Department. This committee has for many years been concerned about the opportunities within the State Department for all people, diversity, so our State Department looks like our nation and can represent a global community more effectively.

I was pleased to hear that Secretary Blinken announced a new Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. I do not believe that person has been named yet.

Could you just share with the committee your commitment and strategies to improve diversity at the State Department if you are confirmed?

Mr. McKEON. Yes. Thank you very much, Senator Cardin.

The President has made his commitment and he has made it clear that he wants to have a government that looks like America and that, of course, includes the Department of State.

The department does okay in recruiting underrepresented communities. It is not doing well in retention and promotion, and the data of officials at senior levels bear that out.

The GAO just did a report, I believe, for this committee in the House committee that emphasizes that once again. As you said, the Secretary has appointed or he has announced he will have a Chief Diversity Office. There is, I believe, a person who has tentatively been chosen and is probably embedding. So I hope that announcement will be made soon.

We really need to make it a priority across the board in everything that we are doing and emphasize to all of our leaderships that this has to be a priority in the bureaus and in overseas missions.

What we really need to focus on, among other things, on the retention and promotion side is transparency, giving people opportunities to advance in a fair and objective way and making opportunities available for people to show that they have leadership skills and the capabilities.

And we need to understand why are people leaving, why are they not finding the Foreign Service to be a good professional home.

So the department has done some work on that. There is a lot more that needs to be done, and you can be sure that I am going to spend a lot of time with the Chief Diversity Officer drilling down on this and working to make material progress.

Senator CARDIN. I can assure you that there is great interest in this committee in this, your efforts, and I would ask that, if confirmed, you share with us your strategies and work with us, so we can have accountability at the end of the day.

Mr. McKEON. Definitely will do that, Senator. As the Secretary said in his confirmation hearing, we will be measured in significant part on this issue if we have succeeded or failed to make significant progress in the next few years.

Senator CARDIN. Ambassador Sherman, I want to talk about one of the issues that we have talked about before and that is President Biden's commitment to embrace our values in our foreign policy. We just saw with the report released in regards to the brutal murder of Jamal Khashoggi some transparency, which I think was very much appreciated.

But there is also frustration that because of the position of the Crown Prince, there may not be full sanctions imposed against him under—using Magnitsky sanctions or the like.

So I want to give you an opportunity to express how we will advance U.S. values. There is legislation that Senator Wicker and I

have put in to make the Global Magnitsky statute a permanent statute. It is, certainly, gaining global credibility.

We have also, with Senator Young, introduced legislation that would provide a clearer direction on dealing with anti-corruption around the globe.

Can you just share with me your commitment to advance U.S. values as we embrace countries that we have to have strategic relations with? We recognize that. But it needs to be under the umbrella of advancing U.S. values.

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Cardin, and thank you for your leadership and working with Senator Young as well on both the Global Magnitsky Act and trying to figure out how to better deal with the challenge of corruption around the world, which is, certainly, a very difficult and very critical challenge in so many ways.

Where the horrifying murder of Jamal Khashoggi is concerned, the administration, the Biden/Harris administration, has made it very clear from the start, as has Secretary Blinken, that the administration is recalibrating its relationship with Saudi Arabia.

It has done that by making public the report that had been kept nonpublic for so long about the murder and the accountability for that murder. The President took a very important step by saying that we would no longer sell offensive weapons to Saudi Arabia because we want to see an end to the Yemen war, which is, in fact, a very bipartisan view up here in the Senate, that that conflict should end, that it is a humanitarian disaster.

I think that we will, in other ways, and I think that when the President spoke to the King of Saudi Arabia he was quite clear that we will not be silent on human rights. We will speak up and we have, in fact, sanctioned many people in Saudi Arabia and we have said that many are barred from visas, though that visa list is not made public, Senator, given the rules of privacy around visas.

Senator CARDIN. And I understand that, and the Magnitsky statute is a statute that involves the Congress and the executive branch together, and we will be making recommendations to the administration. In many cases, this will be nonpublic correspondence in order to investigate before sanctions are considered or imposed.

Will you commit to consider the names that we present to you for sanctions in a deliberative manner and work with us to make sure that the intent of the Global Magnitsky statute is in fact carried out?

Ms. SHERMAN. I certainly believe, Senator, that on all issues we should make a commitment to be open to your ideas, your thoughts, your counsel, your advice, and so yes.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Rubio?

Senator RUBIO. Thank you. Thank you both for being here, for your willingness to serve.

Ms. Sherman, let me just ask you quickly as we start out, what is your understanding of former Secretary Kerry's role? Is he going to be involved in Israeli-Palestinian issues? Is he going to be in-

volved in negotiating the Iran issue? Or is he solely going to be focused on the climate issues?

Ms. SHERMAN. My understanding, Senator, is that former Secretary Kerry is the President's Special Envoy on climate and that is his sole responsibility and it is quite a large one. Should take up most of his time.

Senator RUBIO. Since January 2017, have you met with any Iranian Government officials?

Ms. SHERMAN. I have met with Iranian officials. I cannot remember the last time that it happened, Senator.

Senator RUBIO. Who did you meet with?

Ms. SHERMAN. I have met with Foreign Minister Zarif. I have met with my former counterparts, Abbas Araghchi and Majid Ravanchi, who is now the ambassador to the United Nations.

And when I had such meetings, they were on the margins of the Munich Security Conference, where, as you know, everyone attends from all over the world.

Before and after these meetings, Senator, I was, I think, most of the time if not every time in touch with then Under Secretary for Political Affairs Hale to let him know that I was having such a meeting and to let him know that I would certainly stay in touch.

I would represent America's policies, whether I agreed with them or not, and in those meetings my sole purpose was to urge the Iranians not to take actions that were against the deal that would escalate the security situation.

And most importantly, Senator, I am appealed to by almost every family who has someone detained in Evin Prison, and so my major purpose, quite frankly, in those meetings was to urge the Iranians that I know to get Americans out of Evin Prison because it is the most heartbreaking set of meetings anyone can have is to sit with families and hear how horrifying the situation is.

Senator RUBIO. And I would agree with that, and I appreciate your work on that and I appreciate your answer on having been in touch with members of the previous administration.

And let me—you did write an article in July of 2020 where you wrote, among other things, an area I care about is, as a result of Trump's failure people, you know, inside—the people of Cuba and Venezuela face a bitter future.

So I wanted to explore, in particular, just a number of the changes that were made under the Trump administration to see if you think that those were bad ideas. One of them was a measure that prohibited doing business with entities controlled, owned, and operated by the Cuban military, and in particular, one of them was the one that controls all the remittances. They take 10 percent right off the top.

So you can send remittances to Cuba. You just have to do it through a bank. It just cannot be through the hands of this—that takes—skims off 10 percent and you can do business with individual private Cubans. You just cannot do business with entities controlled by the Cuban military and the regime.

Was that a bad idea?

Ms. SHERMAN. I do not know the details well enough, Senator, but I do agree that we should take measures that say to the Cuban

Government that we do not support their way forward and that we support the freedom of the Cuban people.

Senator RUBIO. Well, I only—the details are as follows. The goal of this strategy was to say, if you want to do business with an individual, a private Cuban, in fact, the Trump administration made it easier to send remittances to Cubans who are using that money to open up a private business, to the extent that they are allowed to do it. You are allowed to send remittances.

If they can do it through a bank you can, obviously, take the cash in yourself as an individual. The one thing they said is you cannot send it through this entity, which skims 10 percent off the top. And that is just the beginning of how they take the money that you also have to spend it at their stores. And you cannot do business, not even with the Ministry of Tourism, per se, in some cases, but with the entities controlled by the Cuban military.

The gist of it is if individual Cubans are allowed to engage in commercial activity, the United States can do a lot of things with them. But if it is going to be run through the clearing house of an entity controlled by the military in Cuba, they cannot. That is the prohibited entity.

So I am curious. I mean, that was the heart and soul of the Trump policy. Yet, you say somehow it leads to a bleak future for the Cuban people. And so I am curious of those things you thought were bad ideas as I have described it to you.

Ms. SHERMAN. So, Senator, I believe that it is very important that we support the Cuban people and that we take actions that increase their chances for freedom, their chances for private commercial activity, their ability to get remittances, which increases their own economic power.

The ability that—the primary objectives, is my understanding of the Biden/Harris administration, is to move forward on the freedom and the need for democracy in Cuba, and the greatest emissaries for that are the American people led by Cuban Americans.

And, quite frankly, Senator, you and I have not had a chance to talk. I know how much you know about Cuba. I know how much you know about what we need to do to help support the Cuban people, and I look forward to further discussions with you about that.

So yes, if there are ways to support the Cuban people, I am all for it.

Senator RUBIO. Okay. And you also mentioned Venezuela in that piece. The cornerstone of the Trump approach was the recognition of Juan Guaido, the legitimately elected president or the President of the legitimately elected National Assembly, and imposing sanctions that he and almost the entire opposition supported, which sanctioned how the regime stole money.

Was that a bad idea?

Ms. SHERMAN. I think it was a very good idea to support Guaido as the legitimate leader of Venezuela. What I would have hoped for, Senator, difficult to do, is that we would have done more work to bring together our allies and partners in the region and around the world, quite frankly, not just in Latin America but around the world, to increase the pressure and to support and recognize Guaido to try to end the horrible saga for the Venezuelan people and --

Senator RUBIO. Well, the overwhelming majority of countries in the region did recognize Guaido and did come together via the Lima Group.

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes, indeed, and beyond the Lima Group and around the world. I just think there were more steps that we could have taken. It is a very difficult situation and, again, you and I have not had a chance to talk about this and I look forward to your counsel. I know we share the same objective, and that is for the people of Venezuela to have a life, and right now they do not.

Senator RUBIO. Well, I will just close by saying this. Beyond the Lima Group, the only countries really left at that point at that time were Nicaragua, Cuba, and Argentina under—and Bolivia under Morales. Good luck with that.

Ms. SHERMAN. Beyond Latin America, Senator.

Senator RUBIO. Well, that is—the EU just sanctioned Venezuela as well, and many of those countries did. So thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you both for being here this morning, for your willingness to be considered for these very important posts and for your ongoing willingness to serve this country.

I think you are both the perfect choices for this difficult time, based on your understanding of both the executive branch and Congress, of the State Department, and your commitment to restoring America's role in the world.

So I want to begin and, really, appreciate both of you taking the opportunity to talk with me before we got to this hearing, and one of the issues that I discussed with both of you was how we are going to continue to treat those public servants from the State Department and other parts of our Government who have been affected by what is known as the Havana Syndrome, the attacks against our diplomats in Cuba, China, and other parts of the world.

And there are—as I see it, there are two parts to this problem. One is to ensure that those people who have been attacked are treated properly, are believed, and that they get the medical attention and benefits that they deserve, and Congress has worked on that. We passed legislation in the last Defense Authorization Act to try and better level the playing field for those people who were affected.

But the other piece of that is ensuring that we get to the bottom of who is responsible, and I hope the State Department will work with DOD, who, as I understand, has been designated the lead agency to try and come to understand what is happening.

So I would ask that, if confirmed, will you both commit to addressing the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences report, and more generally, to providing more transparency with Congress and the public on this issue?

Mr. McKEON. Senator Shaheen, as we discussed yesterday, protecting the people we send overseas is our top priority. We have to take care of them. We send them out on behalf of the United States.

And so we are very grateful for the work that you have done and the committee has done and the Congress has done to make sure that benefits are being provided to those who have suffered.

But we do, obviously, need to do work to find out what is the cause of this. I do not really understand why, between the FBI and the CIA and DOD and State Department, we have not been able to figure it out. That is not a slight against anybody who is doing the work. It is just—it is kind of confounding.

So, as you know, the Accountability Review Board on this matter pointed out there was not leadership at the top of the department paying attention to this issue.

So I intend to take on this issue in coordination with Ambassador Sherman. But this will be a high priority to get after this and we will be happy to continue to talk to you about this.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Ambassador Sherman?

Ms. SHERMAN. I completely agree with what Mr. McKeon has said, and I must say, Senator, it is very disturbing that we have personnel who have gone through this and continue to suffer from it.

It is critical that they get the medical attention that they deserve and that we find out what happened so that it does not happen again.

So thank you for your leadership on this, along with others across the aisle. And I know that Secretary Blinken is committed to getting to the bottom of this as well.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you both for that.

One of the challenges we continue to face is the ongoing war in Afghanistan. One of the reports that did not get as much attention as the Khashoggi report in recent weeks was the Afghanistan Study Group that made a number of recommendations that I think are particularly relevant as we see the recent assassination campaign against civil society leaders in Afghanistan and, particularly, against women.

But what that report recommended is that the administration should slow the withdrawal of troops in Afghanistan, abandon the May 1st exit deadline, reduce American forces further only as security conditions improve.

And I wonder if you could respond to that, Ambassador Sherman.

Ms. SHERMAN. Certainly. I have been briefed on the Iraq/Iran study—sorry, the Afghanistan Study Group. It is hard to keep all the study groups straight. And I think they just did extraordinary work that I am sure the administration will take into account as it is undertaking its own review.

There is no question that Secretary Blinken believes that diplomacy has to be at the core of a just and sustainable settlement in Afghanistan, that the role of our troops is really to ensure that we do not have the recreation of al-Qaeda in the future or even a new ISIS foothold as a safe haven.

And so there is very careful deliberation going on with our Defense Department colleagues, it is my understanding, and ultimately, a decision by the President as we approach May 1st about how to proceed.

To your point about women, and I told you this story --I will share it with the other senators—one of the most searing meetings

I have ever been in as a diplomat was with Secretary Albright in a Peshawar refugee camp after the Taliban had driven people out of Afghanistan.

And Secretary Albright and I were able to meet with the women in that camp because we were women, and my daughter was a teenager at the time and a teenager about her age told the story of watching her sister being raped and thrown out the window.

These were women who were doctors and teachers and professionals and homemakers and moms who are just trying to keep their family together, and I was horrified. And I know there is a deep commitment to ensure that whatever ultimately happens for the people of Afghanistan that women never find themselves in such a position again.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you for that. I think there is some anxiety around the administration's announcement of Zalmay Khalilzad continuing as the Special Representative for the U.S. in Afghanistan. He has been distinctly unresponsive to the need to include women in any of the negotiations.

Now, that may have been a function of the previous administration. But I can tell you, in my discussions with him he did not hear me at all when I said this needs to be a priority for the United States.

So I hope you will take that back to the State Department and to the Biden administration and make it clear that in any work that he is doing on our behalf that he is including women at the table.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. SHERMAN. Senator, if confirmed, there will be no doubt that in everything I do at the State Department on behalf of the people of this country, I will make sure women are included.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

Senator CARDIN. [Presiding.] Senator Romney is recognized.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Sherman, as the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs under President Obama, you, obviously, were very much involved in the development of the JCPOA and negotiating the JCPOA.

You know that people like myself and many in my party were very, very concerned that that was not an agreement that was effective in preventing Iran from, ultimately, having a nuclear weapon.

As a matter of fact, my read of that agreement is that it would delay Iran from being able to develop a nuclear weapon but that, ultimately, they would be permitted to develop a nuclear weapon and have the missiles necessary to deliver that to targets of their interest.

Am I correct in that understanding that the agreement would delay but not prohibit Iran from ever having a nuclear weapon?

Ms. SHERMAN. Senator, people read the agreement differently. The objective of the agreement, and the—I believe the outcome of that agreement was that Iran would never obtain a nuclear weapon.

I do completely understand why many senators and many people in Congress and many people in the world believe that if Iran can

continue to create fissile material, the stuff that goes inside a nuclear weapon, that they would be concerned that having that ability gives them the option should they choose to go there.

So I see the problem quite clearly and what I have said this morning, I think, is very important, which is that we are now where we are, which is outside of the agreement.

The Iranians have increased their enrichment capacity. They have increased their development of ballistic missiles. They have increased their bad behavior. The Maximum Pressure campaign may have put chips on the table, but it has not stopped. In fact, they have gone further than they had at the end of the Obama administration.

So we will all have to work together on what is the best strategy, going forward. The President and the Secretary have said that they want to reenter the deal if there is compliance-for-compliance. The Iranians are far away from compliance so there is a long way to go here.

Senator ROMNEY. With time, I am anxious to get your perspective as to how it is this agreement prohibits Iran from ever having a nuclear weapon. My understanding is the agreement allows them to enrich and to create fissile material down the road, and that they, obviously, had the capacity at some point to use that fissile material to develop a nuclear weapon under that agreement.

It does strike me that the purpose of our strategy with regards to Iran's nuclear program is twofold. Number one is to try and to dissuade them from ever having a nuclear weapon and that that is the ultimate objective, and number two, to exact a very high price on Iran such that they, as well as other nations thinking of going nuclear, would understand the consequence of taking that step, that the price is going to be very, very heavy, indeed.

I do not understand how reentering the JCPOA in any way either, number one, dissuades Iran from ever having a nuclear weapon, or makes the price sufficiently high to keep them from pursuing that course.

So I guess I am anxious to get your perspective as to what the purpose would be of reentering an agreement which does not prohibit them from having a nuclear weapon.

Ms. SHERMAN. The Biden administration, is my understanding, Senator, has said that they want to create a deal that is longer and stronger, but is part of a comprehensive strategy that deals with all of the elements of concern with Iran, including delivery systems for a nuclear weapon, and to ensure that any agreement ensures that Iran will not obtain a nuclear weapon.

I would be glad to but I think it probably will get us into the weeds to talk about why the JCPOA did create the assurance that you are looking for. But it is really beside the point now because we are at a very different place. The geopolitics are very different in the region.

There were many things that I disagreed with the previous administration on. But the normalization of relations of countries with Israel, known as the Abraham Accords in the previous administration, was a very good thing. It has changed the geopolitics of the region, and that means that one has to think about this in a different way because there are different elements on the table.

So I think we have to start where we are now and figure out the best way forward, and I would hope that if I am confirmed that I have an opportunity to get your views on this.

And as was laid out at the beginning of this when the chairman asked for commitments from Mr. McKeon and me, that Congress and the Senate and this committee will be there at the takeoff, not just at the landing.

Senator ROMNEY. Do you have any optimism about the prospect of Iran bowing, if you will, to our demands to pull back from their enrichment program and otherwise return to the JCPOA as, perhaps, adjusted in some ways, making it tougher?

With the attack last night by Iranian-backed militias in Iraq, it would suggest that they are flexing their muscle, not showing their weakness. Are we reading that wrong? Is there any prospect for them agreeing to a course which is more consistent with our objectives?

Ms. SHERMAN. I hope so, Senator, but I do not know. I am not privy to intelligence. I am not privy to all of the deliberations in the administration.

But, if confirmed, one has to dig into the details and into the intelligence and into consultations with you, with our allies, with our partners, with Israel, with the Gulf Arab states, with countries around the world that might have information that is useful to making those assessments.

So I cannot give you a definitive answer today. I certainly hope so because the other routes the President, the Vice President, and the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, all of us, all of you, are committed to ensuring that Iran does not present an existential threat to anyone not able to deter our and our allies and partners' actions, and if they had a nuclear weapon that would change that calculus in very significant and very bad ways.

Senator ROMNEY. Like you, Ambassador, I do not have access to that intelligence. I am not a member of the Intelligence Committee, as is Ranking Member Risch.

But I would hope you study very carefully the conditions there in Iran, the health and well being of their leadership, the state of their economy, the public attitudes there.

I think there is some prospect that the Maximum Pressure campaign is actually delivering the kind of impetus that we might be looking for, and that before we bend and provide to Iran the hoped for reduction of our sanctions that we might consider the option of continuing with the Maximum Pressure campaign. I offer that only as a request on my part.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Romney.

Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and thank you, Ambassador Sherman and Mr. McKeon. Thank you for your willingness to serve our nation again, and my thanks to your families as well.

I am particularly pleased to have the two of you with such experience, such skills, such background in the executive branch and State and DOD and the White House, and here in the Senate so that we can help work together to make sure that the foreign policy

priorities and agenda of the executive branch are supported or at least well understood, in close consultation with this committee, going forward.

And I look forward to being partners in demonstrating to the American people how foreign policy and the foreign policy of this administration actually improves their lives, advances their security and prosperity, whether it is from keeping COVID-19 variants from spreading through doing robust vaccination around the world to mitigating threats from our adversaries to addressing the existential threat of climate change.

And I hope you will be partners in working through some of our nation's most urgent national security challenges, from building an enduring and bipartisan strategy for confronting China, cooperating where necessary and possible but being prepared for a robust and sustained competition with China, addressing Iran's nuclear program and its other threats to the region and to the world, recalibrating the U.S.-Saudi relationship in light of the release of the ODNI report on the Crown Prince's role in the murder of Jamal Khashoggi and reviewing authorizations of the use of military force to strengthen and ensure congressional oversight on critical issues of war and peace.

I look forward also in my new role as the chairman of the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee to aligning resources with policy and commitments, and prioritizing the protection of human rights, the defense of democracy, the revitalization of the State Department and promoting the diversity of the workforce.

It is my hope the President's budget request will increase funding to what has been a stagnant foreign affairs budget to restore our leadership by fulfilling climate pledges, strengthening global health and security, and addressing our arrears at the United Nations.

So, Ambassador Sherman, just a brief question. You will be called on to travel the world to continue your service overseas on behalf of the American people. I hope you will also spend time traveling within our nation, speaking to the American people.

Do you agree diplomats in Washington, leaders in the administration, have to do a better job of explaining foreign policy not just abroad but here at home?

Ms. SHERMAN. I quite agree with you, Senator.

When Secretary Blinken asked me and the President agreed for me to be nominated as Deputy Secretary of State, one of the things I said to the Secretary—he was not yet Secretary at that point—but said to the Secretary that I thought it was critical that not only he but myself, if confirmed, Mr. McKeon, if he was confirmed, anyone who was a leader in the State Department ought to be spending as much time in America talking to the American people as we did abroad.

Jake Sullivan, who is the National Security Advisor, said very early on that every day in consideration of national security and foreign policy we need to ask, what does this mean for the American people? What does this mean for working people? What does this mean for the middle class in America?

People do not understand why we do what we do and how it has anything to do with their day-to-day lives. So I thank you for laying out this very critical issue. I think this is something that Democrats and Republicans can agree on, which is that the American people deserve to hear from us why we are doing what we are doing and why it matters to them.

Senator COONS. Well, thank you. And I think as we work to combat the pandemic, we have right in front of us an example of how the health of the world impacts the health of the American people.

As we work to confront climate change, we have an opportunity to look at how our competition with China, our realignments around trade, may well end up also advancing our goal of combating the existential threat of climate change.

I know you have both heard of the Global Fragility Act. We discussed it in our constructive conversations before today. I just want to urge that this bipartisan tool that is available to address the real security challenges in the Sahel mentioned by the chairman in his comments is taken full advantage.

It is something that a group of us worked hard to get introduced and marked up and passed and signed into law, and it gives an opportunity for the State Department, along with AID and DOD, to really lead a strategy.

But it will only work if done in consultation with this committee and with robust funding from Congress. So it is my hope that you will let us know what you need to implement it effectively and that you will utilize, in particular, the multi-donor fund that it has authorized to leverage resources from public and private sector partners elsewhere.

If confirmed, you will have critical influence over whether we stand up for democracy and human rights at a time when China's authoritarian model is posing an increasing challenge to our principles.

How do we balance the need to impose consequences on Beijing for its horrific actions in Xinjiang and its oppression in Hong Kong while also, perhaps, cooperating in some areas like nonproliferation or climate change?

And in my view, our response to China has to bring in domestic policy, robust investments in manufacturing, IP protection, and labor, but include engagement with our allies.

I would be interested, Ambassador Sherman and Mr. McKeon, if you might, in the minute and a half I have left, just some brief comment on how the Foreign Relations Committee can best help in shaping a sustained bipartisan policy with regards to China.

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you very much, Senator.

I agree. I think this is an area where Democrats and Republicans agree. China is a major challenge for the United States, and I think there are three elements to it. We have to compete with China, and President Biden, Vice President Harris, the Secretary have said that begins with investment here at home in infrastructure and 5G and quantum computing and artificial intelligence and jobs for Americans that will take them into the next decades ahead.

We have to compete and win. That includes ensuring that China cannot hack our networks, cannot steal our trade secrets, and cannot steal our corporate secrets.

We need to challenge and confront China where we must in the South China Sea. Certainly, what they do on human rights. Secretary Blinken said, in his view, that the treatment of the Uighurs was genocide. I would agree with him on that and we should not shy away from saying things as they truly are.

And third, there will be some small areas in which we will have to cooperate, and as strange as it may sound, global health may be one of them, starting with getting the real facts about what happened in the pandemic.

And I will turn the last 15 seconds over to my colleague.

Mr. McKEON. As you know, Senator Coons, the President said in the campaign and since that he wants to put democracy and human rights back at the center of our foreign policy. So that means it is integral and it will inform all the decisions we make.

At a minimum, we are going to speak out about China's outrageous behavior and treatment of its citizens in international fora or as well as directly, and we need to look at new tools to amplify what is happening there.

One of them is Radio Free Asia that is funded by the U.S. Agency for Global Media. You may not know that Senator Biden was the author of the legislation to create it and it is one of the things I am proud of having worked on.

So we definitely would want to collaborate with you on the best ways to come to grips with the China challenge because it is going to be a generational one.

Senator COONS. Well, thank you both.

And, Mr. Chairman, if I might just, in conclusion, across questioning and exchanges with a wide range of members of this committee, it is clear that close consultation, briefings both classified and open, and debate with this committee around the path forward on Iran, around the path forward on authorizations of the use of military force, are critical to our success and our ability to craft something that will win bipartisan support here.

And I look forward to working with you on Africa as well, something the chairman mentioned, and I know we have great promise for making progress in this administration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. [Presiding.] Thank you.

Senator Paul?

Senator PAUL. One of the things I agreed with candidate Barack Obama on was that he said in an interview with a Boston paper we should not go to war without congressional authorization unless under imminent attack.

I had the chance to ask him about this after the administration chose to launch attacks on Libya and he said, well, I said unless under imminent attack and Benghazi was under imminent attack. And I said, really? You were talking about imminent attack of a foreign city, not the United States? I think nobody interprets the idea of a president going to war unless under imminent attack to be anything other than a U.S. city or a U.S. interest, at the very least.

So I was shocked by that. What was your position in the Obama administration about the Obama administration's decision to go to war in Libya, Ms. Sherman?

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you, Senator, for the question.

These decisions, as you know, are incredibly difficult to make, and when Libya began I was the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. And I think that most people thought that we were providing support to Europe for a humanitarian intervention.

It turned out to be quite something different. I am glad that today, some years later, we are now potentially facing elections in Libya, that Libya is getting back, perhaps, hopefully—fingers crossed—to a better place for Libyan people.

I will be the first to say, and I think President Obama has said so in his own memoir, that we did not have a full understanding—we have learned from this—that Gaddafi had not built any institutions. He had not created any government.

So when Gaddafi disappeared in Libya, there was nothing. There was absolutely nothing except the potential for a civil war and for an ongoing conflict. So I think we have to be very careful.

Senator PAUL. I appreciate the understanding. In retrospect, it may not have been the best activity. But one of the lessons we might learn, and we might learn from Iraq also, is that regime change does not work, that Thomas Jefferson is not waiting in the wings and American-style democracy is not going to blossom, and when we get rid of a tyrant maybe you get another tyrant.

But I guess the reason I question whether there was a lesson learned is that immediately many people in the Obama administration, the Hillary Clinton camp, et cetera, Samantha Power, Susan Rice, and I am not sure you, were then advocates of going into Syria in a big way.

In fact, your boss basically said, well, the problem was we just did not go in big enough into Syria. What was your opinion on Syria during the Obama administration on sending arms in and getting involved in their civil war?

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you, Senator. I want to correct the record a minute, as I was thinking about this. I was not actually in the Government at the time of the Libya decision. The reason it is so much in my mind is I was on the Defense Policy Board at the time and we had a big discussion about Libya. And the Policy Board believed we should not create a no-fly zone in Libya. We should not help out. We had breakfast with Secretary Gates on a Wednesday morning. He said, we are absolutely not going to do this. And on Thursday, we did it. So that is why it is very fresh in my mind. But I was not in government at the time.

On Syria, I was very torn. I thought there was a disaster happening in Syria and happening for the Syrian people. President Obama was very cautious because he understood that this was a slippery slope, that the American people were tired of war in the Middle East. And so he moved very, very carefully.

It is a struggle in those situations when you see terrible suffering of people, so not an easy decision. I think he tried to be very cautious.

Senator PAUL. But, you know, I think we have to learn some lessons sometime. I mean, many in the Democrat side of things learned the lesson very quickly. Maybe just for partisan reasons they did not like the Iraq war, and it was a disaster. But, really, it was a disaster. I mean, it is still an ongoing disaster. The whole

tipping of the balance between Iran and the rest of the Middle East was tipped by, you know, getting rid of the regime in Iraq.

And so it is this idea that we are going to make the world this great place for democracy, this Wilsonian idea of us, naivete that, you know, we are going to get rid of a regime and it is going to get better, even in Syria.

So we did not go all the way in, you know, with the full might of the U.S. We went partway in. But you could argue that had we not gotten involved and had we discouraged the other Arab nations from getting involved that it would have still been a disaster but maybe 10,000 people die instead of 500,000 people.

So I think the misguided notion that we helped anybody in Syria, it would be easy to argue. The evidence shows that a half a million people died and millions of people are dislocated because we did the half-ass approach to it. We went halfway in there.

And so then Blinken's response, in conclusion, is we should have gone all the way in there. And from my perspective, is we need to stay the hell out of these wars and toppling, you know, one strong man, one tribal leader, we get another one or we get worse.

And all along the Syrian civil war, the fiercest fighters, we would pretend that there were lawyers and doctors fighting, that there were these moderates over there fighting. Al Nusra were the fighters. Al-Qaeda were the fighters. The fiercest fighters were the jihadists.

And so I have never thought that the jihadists would be better than Assad, and I am not a fan of Assad either. But we have to learn some lessons, and I do not think we adequately learn the lessons. We go from Iraq and the power vacuum of Iraq. People say, oh, ISIS came about because we left too soon. Well, maybe ISIS came about because we got rid of Hussein. I mean, what is the original domino that leads to that? It is destabilizing in having no government.

You may be optimistic about Libya. But I see it as one of the biggest terrorist havens in the world. You got competing governments. The last administration was never really clear who they were supporting, whether it was this General Haftar or the U.N. government.

And the thing is, is it is muddled, and we have all these people we give arms to who are then giving arms to both—you know, to opposite sides in this Libyan civil war.

Maybe we would have been better off not getting involved, not bombing Gaddafi into oblivion, not thinking that he was some great saint but knowing that there was at least some stability there. And I wonder if chaos is worse, you know, a worse scenario.

And all I would ask is that we have got to learn these lessons. And I am not so positive—I do not think Blinken has. He is already sending us back into Syria. What do you think of sending more convoys into the conflict in Syria?

Ms. SHERMAN. Well, my understanding, Senator, is that is not what Secretary Blinken is about. What he is about is looking at what our interests are regarding ISIS and a de-ISIS campaign, and to make sure that we have a very small footprint and an appropriate one that is only in our interests.

But I do appreciate, Senator, the issues you raise. These are very hard decisions. You are correct that we should learn lessons of history and try not to repeat them, that regime change is rarely, if ever, successful.

So on some of your points, I would agree with you. I think, nonetheless, we do have American interests that compel us sometimes to use very precious blood and treasure.

But no President, no Secretary of State, no Secretary of Defense, makes these decisions without enormous consideration, and I hope as this administration goes forward with more and more consultation with Congress, as I think the chairman knows, finally, long overdue, there are now Title 10 notifications—pre-notifications to this committee, and I think that is a step in the right direction.

Senator PAUL. I hope you will be a constructive voice. All I will say is that we are bombing now again in Syria without congressional approval and we are sending more convoys in there without congressional approval to a messy war.

It has been going on forever. There is nothing good that is going to come out of our involvement. People say, well, U.S. lives are at risk. Yeah, because we put them there. You know, we put them in the middle of a civil war that is, largely, over, but can continue if we keep putting troops there—to put our troops as a tripwire to get involved in a further escalation of this war.

So I hope there will be sane voices and I hope you will be one of those. But I do not have a great deal of confidence that we have actually gone away from John Bolton. I think we have gone to a liberal form of John Bolton with your new boss and that is something I am very concerned with.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Murphy?

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

Thank you to you both for your continued willingness to serve your country. Senator Paul and I do not always agree on the answers to these weighty questions but I do think he brings a healthy caution regarding American hubris, particularly in the Middle East and I appreciate his line of questioning.

I am hoping to squeeze in three questions here, two, for you, Ambassador Sherman, one for you, Mr. McKeon.

I wanted to come back to the topic of Venezuela. I remember shortly after Elliott Abrams was appointed to be President Trump's envoy, he came into my office and he talked about the big chance that the administration was taking, essentially, sort of playing all of our cards right at the outset, including the recognition of Juan Guaido, and he predicted that if Maduro had not fallen, had not left power by May of 2019, then our chance that we had taken would have been perceived as a mistake.

Last week, the Europeans, essentially, de-recognized Juan Guaido as the leader of Venezuela, essentially confirming that two years later our policy has not worked.

Maduro is still in power. Russia, China, and Cuba are more deeply involved in Venezuela and the United States, having played all those cards early on, we look feckless, not just in Venezuela but throughout the region.

And so does it make sense to continue a policy that by all objective measures has not worked and, if not, what should a new policy look like?

Ms. SHERMAN. If I knew the answer this morning to that question, Senator, you should confirm me quickly without hesitation.[Laughter.]

Ms. SHERMAN. I think this is a very thorny and very difficult situation. I think that the United States and the world community was right to recognize Juan Guaido. I do not think that the previous administration took advantage of all of the things that it might have to try to push that agenda forward.

I do not think we have supported Colombia in the way that we perhaps needed to for taking in all of the refugees out of Venezuela. I think that we have given Maduro a platform to, in fact, say that everybody is feckless and he gets to do whatever he wants to do.

There are ways, perhaps, that we can communicate with the Venezuelan people that we have not. But I do not—I will be the first to say I do not this morning—I am filled with humility in saying that I do not know that there is an easy answer to this problem.

What I can say to you, Senator, is I think it is a very critical one. It is absolutely wrapped up in China's investment in Latin America, Russia's investment in Latin America, about sort of the triad with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, and we have to think through what a strategy going forward might be.

And, if confirmed, I look forward to speaking with you and with everyone on this committee with your ideas and thoughts about the best way we might crack this very difficult challenge.

Senator MURPHY. I hope it is also a prism through which the administration can take a review of American sanctions policy. I think there is an argument to be made that in this case the sanctions may have, ultimately, accrued to the benefit of Maduro to the detriment of Venezuelan citizens, and not gotten us the political return that we had hoped and still hoped for.

On Iran—I know we keep on coming back to this, but I just wanted to clarify an answer that you gave to Senator Romney in your exchange with him. You listed out a number of malevolent behaviors by the Iranians, the things that we hope that they eventually come to the table on.

But I just wanted to confirm that it is still your understanding that the administration's position is that we should get back into the nuclear deal, get back on the same page with the P5+1 and use that as a platform through which to put pressure on the Iranians with respect to its ballistic missile programs, its support for terrorist groups.

I think the Maximum Pressure campaign was built on a fantasy, this idea that we could have a comprehensive negotiation where the Iranians would come to the table on everything all at once. In fact, during the last four years, despite these intense sanctions the Iranians came to the table on none of Secretary Pompeo's list of 12 demands.

So it is still our belief that we should get back into the nuclear agreement and as quickly as possible, understanding that that will

take negotiation, and use that as a platform with which to bring together the world community around other behaviors that we object to by Tehran.

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes, it is my understanding that the Biden/Harris administration, Secretary Blinken, want to get back into the deal but to make it longer and stronger, and to use it as a platform to have negotiations on the other issues of concern that we have with Iran.

Senator MURPHY. And it makes me a little nervous when we sort of hear terms like longer and stronger. Again, I think many of us supported that deal on its terms. We understand that we always had to have a follow-on negotiation to make sure it was lengthened.

But by expanding out the number of things that we want to talk about at this negotiating table, I worry that, you know, we may be setting ourselves up for failure. But I look forward to continuing that discussion with you.

Thank you again for your service. I am really looking forward to supporting your nomination and working with you.

Mr. McKeon, I wanted to expand the conversation that you and I had privately and that is the question about the effectiveness of our diplomacy abroad when we have such difficulty getting outside the wire.

Diplomacy does not just happen in embassies. It needs to happen in communities. And in the wake of Benghazi, we have become much shyer, much more reluctant, much more cautious about putting our diplomats out, especially in dangerous places, and the work that Senator Coons has done on fragile states, I think, is part of the answer here.

But, you know, we also have a review process for incidences abroad that tends to, you know, make people very, very hesitant to do anything that might put any diplomat at risk.

The risk tolerance in State is fundamentally different than the risk tolerance we have in the Department of Defense, and I think that is a mistake.

I think we should pursue some congressional reforms to the Accountability Review Board process to make people less fearful of punitive action and more willing to learn from mistakes.

What is your thoughts on how we can try to push diplomacy back outside our embassy compound walls?

Mr. McKEON. Senator Murphy, thank you. It is a hard challenge, and I appreciate you being willing to dive into it.

You know, there is no such thing as perfect security. The diplomats that work for our country are in a dangerous business, and evidence of that is on the walls of the C Street lobby in the State Department, the names of those who have been killed while serving the government overseas.

As you said, we have the statute that mandates accountability review. Our board process was enacted in the mid '80s. It does not apply in the same way to DOD or the intelligence community. So I appreciate if you and other members of committee are willing to take a look at that. We should have a conversation about it.

The department began a review under the last Secretary, being led by very senior diplomat, to look at this question which they put

it under the framework of risk mitigation. Though I do not know the timing of his work, but that will also inform our conversation.

Senator MURPHY. Great. I look forward to working with you on that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY. Put your microphone on, Senator.

Senator HAGERTY. There we go. I was saying thank you very much for scheduling this important hearing for two very important positions in the State Department.

Also, Ambassador Sherman, I appreciate your acknowledgement of the success of the Abraham Accords. A tremendous amount of work went into that. I know you had been critical of the previous administration about this earlier.

But I appreciate your acknowledgement of the success because, indeed, it has changed the dynamic in the region. And I encourage the Biden administration to strongly consult with our allies in the Middle East as you consider reentry into the JCPOA.

I would like to turn now, Ambassador Sherman, to a discussion on the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, if I might. You mentioned earlier that the Biden administration will follow the law. I would just like to follow up on Ranking Member Risch's comments here, if I might, because I think it is very important that we talk about the oversight dynamic here.

The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 requires the executive branch to submit to Congress any and all agreements that are related to the nuclear program of Iran. Those need to be submitted for congressional review.

Ambassador Sherman, can you imagine any scenario in which the Biden administration would decide to participate again in the JCPOA concerning Iran's nuclear program or modifies any aspect of the current sanctions regime on Iran and you would not submit this to Congress for review?

Ms. SHERMAN. It is always hard, Senator. I am not a lawyer. But any lawyer would tell you and has told me never to make a completely universal comment about such a question.

But what I will say to you is that this administration, the Biden/Harris administration, Secretary Blinken, are committed to following the law. And if, indeed, whatever is decided falls within the terms of INARA, then we must, indeed, come to Congress.

Senator HAGERTY. I think this is the concern that Ranking Member Risch and I have right now and that is looking at a very specific legal interpretation of the document and not looking at the purpose of the Act.

The purpose of the Act is to ensure congressional review, not to find weasel words or ways to get out of complying with it. So I encourage this administration and you, if you are confirmed, to find a way to comply with the purpose of this Act.

Ms. SHERMAN. I think that is a fair point that the intent is to make sure that Congress has a say, and I think what is and, as Senator Cardin pointed out earlier, I was very engaged with both Senator Cardin and Senator Corker to ensure that INARA, in fact, happened, and that there was a congressional review process. I thought it was terribly important, and very grateful to then Chair-

man Corker and Senator Cardin, who was ranking at the time, for moving forward on a congressional review process.

What I would hope this time is that we have happen what is happening here, which is that you all are there at the takeoff that you are reviewing the considerations of this administration throughout the process, and that the review does not just come at the end but the review happens throughout any process that goes forward.

And if I am confirmed, you have my commitment, not just regarding any agreement with Iran but with what we are doing in foreign policy and national security, writ large.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Ambassador.

Can we turn to the Central Bank of Iran now? That is another source of concern. U.S. policy has sought to deny the Iranian regime, including the Central Bank of Iran, the money, especially the hard currency that it uses to fund terrorism and many other malign activities that threaten the national security of the United States, of Israel, and our partners in the Gulf.

The Treasury Department has concluded that, since at least 2016, Iran's IRGC Quds Force, the terror outfit that exists there, has received the vast majority of its foreign currency from the Central Bank of Iran.

Ambassador Sherman, do you commit to maintaining sanctions on the Central Bank of Iran and hold it accountable for its activities to support terrorism, including any secondary sanctions that are now in place?

Ms. SHERMAN. Senator, I do not know all the ins and outs of the current sanctions that are in place because I have been out of government now for some time.

But I, certainly, do not want to do anything that supports the IRGC to continue its activities in the region that are vastly destabilizing and put our allies and our partners and ourselves at tremendous risk.

Senator HAGERTY. I think these sanctions have taken a great deal of time and effort. I was personally involved in some of the aspects of this. And I would encourage you and I would encourage the Biden administration not to grant sanctions relief to the Central Bank of Iran without a thorough review and make certain that these sanctions are—continue to stay in place until they have stopped in all aspects supporting terrorism.

A further question, Ambassador Sherman. The Iranian regime, clearly, wants the United States to lift sanctions against the Central Bank of Iran. Please, and I would love for your commitment on this to not provide any form of sanctions relief, including through the use of waivers or licenses to the Central Bank of Iran unless we can verifiably ensure that they cease all of their malign activities.

Ms. SHERMAN. I appreciate your view and I will, certainly, want to talk with you further, if confirmed, and as I learn more about the sanctions that are currently in place and how they affect different activities by Iran. Thank you for that.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you very much.

Turn to North Korea for just a minute, you and I have spoken about this before. As you know, when I was ambassador to Japan,

I was there when Kim Jong-un launched two intercontinental ballistic missiles over Japan and, at a different time, tested a hydrogen bomb.

I have no doubt that North Korea is going to remain one of the most critical national security challenges that the United States will have to face this decade. And as we learned during the Trump administration, subordinates come and go in the negotiations, sometimes permanently, perhaps.

Kim Jong-un takes the decisions on the nuclear program. It is critical to strengthen the Maximum Pressure campaign to sharpen the choices for the Kim regime.

Ambassador Sherman, do you support additional sanctions against the Chinese companies that are doing business with North Korea?

Ms. SHERMAN. Again, because I have been out of government, I do not know all that is in place now. But, certainly, we do want to ensure that North Korea understands that unless it comes to the table to really make progress in denuclearization that we will use every tool that we have to prevent them from doing so and, certainly, want China not to be playing an adverse role in that process.

Senator HAGERTY. Yeah, they have been playing a tremendous role, as you and I both know, and I hope we can continue to work toward that goal.

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you. I look forward to it, Senator, if confirmed.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator KAINE?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the witnesses. I want to follow up on Senator Hagerty's line of questions with respect to congressional approval of forward steps on Iran.

I have a very different opinion about the JCPOA than the Republican members of this body, and Senator Risch and I have done this often. But I have exactly the same opinion as all the members of the body about congressional review, and I was the original—sort of one of the original drafters of INARA. Because the Obama administration—the plan was to do a deal with Iran and do it pursuant to waiver authority under the congressional sanctions and not bring it to Congress for eight years.

Eventually, at year eight, they would have to come to Congress to have a statutory lifting of the sanctions. That was the original plan. And even though I thought the negotiation was coming up with a deal that I thought was much better than the status quo ante, and Senator Corker did not think so, we both thought because congressional sanctions were being used as leverage to get the deal that Congress had to be involved. And whatever the forward steps on the deal might be, Congress needs to be involved because you are using a congressional statute that imposes sanctions as leverage in this topic. So I just want to associate myself with the comments that he made.

Now I will go to associating myself with topics raised by Senator Paul. You talked about your parents being there at the founding of the U.N. because your dad was a Marine veteran who had suf-

fered war injuries at Guadalcanal, and he wanted to be there at the founding of an organization that was designed to prevent war.

Sadly, we, as humans, cannot prevent war. No organization can. But we should try to prevent unnecessary war.

And it is interesting the way the Framers of the Constitution and then even the architects of Senate procedures have tried to help us figure out a way to prevent unnecessary war.

So the United States, unlike virtually anywhere else in the world, has a founding document, the Constitution, that says it is not for the executive to decide to go to war. It is for the legislative branch.

Nobody does that. I mean, war is for the king, the monarch, the emperor, the dictator. But not here. The initiation of war is supposed to be by Congress with the President then managing the war because the last thing you need is 535 commanders in chief.

And then within the rules of this body decisions about going to war come out of the Foreign Relations Committee, not out of the Armed Services. I am on the Armed Services Committee.

Most people guess that that is where war resolutions start. They do not, because as you said, prefer diplomacy first, and if diplomacy fails, war can be a sad necessity. But prefer diplomacy first. So it has to start in the Foreign Relations Committee.

Let me ask you this, Ms. Sherman, and I have very high regard for both of you and I will support both your nominations. Iraq right now, are they an enemy or are they a partner?

Ms. SHERMAN. I hope they are a partner, Senator.

Senator Kaine. Yeah, they are a partner. They are not an enemy anymore. There are some challenges with our partner, with Iraq, especially the activities of these Iranian-backed militia groups, which the successive prime ministers have tried to figure out how to control without completely satisfying us.

But they are not an enemy. We still have two war authorizations against the nation of Iraq that have not been repealed. Gulf War 1991, Iraq War Resolution 2002. Boy, how is that to treat a partner and have a war authorization against them?

Today, Senators Lee, Paul, Young, Grassley, Kaine, Durbin, Coons, Duckworth, we are introducing a bill to repeal the two Iraq AUMFs.

And I am not going to ask you for a commitment on that. You are not part of the administration yet. But I would think Congress should not just allow war authorizations to exist in perpetuity.

But we often do. We pass them and then they are just out there and they can be used in mischievous ways.

The President undertook on his own initiation without congressional approval missile strikes against militia positions in Syria that are connected to Iran last Thursday.

At the same time that this happened, the U.S. had an offer on the table with Europeans for Iran to come back to a table for a no-preconditions discussion about what do we do about the JCPOA. Iran was considering that offer.

The administration, from my conversations, was actually pretty optimistic that Iran was going to accept that offer. Then missile strikes happened on Thursday, and then Iran turned down the offer on Sunday.

The President asserted, as a rationale for the missile strikes, that he had unilateral power under Article 2 to do them. He did not refer to the AUMFs, which was good because those would be fig leaves. He just said, I have Article 2 power.

But the challenge is if you allow presidents unilaterally to do things, even things that are prudent, okay, president takes a step with a missile strike. Iran then turns down an opportunity to explore diplomacy.

I cannot imagine anybody at the Pentagon or at the State Department was surprised with the militia airstrikes back at the Air Force—at the Air Force Base where U.S.-led coalition forces were yesterday.

When one side decides, I can do this unilaterally, then the other side decides, I can do this unilaterally because you started it. No, you started it. No, you started it. And then we are in the midst, potentially, of a significant military engagement of war without a discussion in Congress.

I do not care how prudent unilateral executive action is. It can lead to counteraction and counteraction and reaction, and then suddenly, we are in the middle of something that has not been discussed in front of Congress, has not been discussed in front of the American people.

And I just think, again, even the events of the last couple of days since, Ms. Sherman, you and I talked on our Zoom call have demonstrated that the Framers were not really wrong when they said decisions about war and the initiation of war should be sort of aired before the people's legislative body and have an imprimatur. If we are going to do it, it should have an imprimatur on it of more than just one person.

I have shared this view about the missile strikes last Thursday and about the at least temporary collapse of this diplomatic opportunity Sunday, and then the Iraqi strikes against the base with the U.S.-led coalition.

This is the kind of thing that happens and there is no guarantee it will not happen if you have more dialogue with Congress and the public. But you reduce the risk. I think you reduce the risk of unnecessary and un contemplated escalation if you have the kind of consultation that, I think, both Democrats and Republicans on this committee would expect of you.

I know you believe that and I am confident you will push for that to all your might, and that is one of the reasons that I have the confidence that I will support you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Chairman.

Mr. McKeon, I enjoyed visiting this week. When we spoke, you outlined how examining the resourcing of America's development enterprise and our foreign assistance would be one of your top priorities, if confirmed.

This is an area of particular interest to me. It dates back several years. In fact, I co-chaired a CSIS task force in 2017 with Senator Shaheen on reforming our foreign assistance programming.

And one of the recommendations that we made in that convening of former career Foreign Service officers and USAID professionals and other experts was to take a hard look at the overlapping responsibilities and, thus, the duplicative efforts and budgets of the State Department, USAID, and various development finance organizations and to empower USAID to have a bigger voice in the conversation and more of a leading role in American foreign policy.

So that starts with strategic direction from the top. From the outside, what do you find, sir, most concerning about how our foreign assistance is organized?

Mr. MCKEON. Thank you, Senator. I will have to dig out the task force report from 2017 because I am not familiar with it.

As you know, the USAID administrator reports to and is under the direct authority of the Secretary of State. But I think, from experience in the last 20 years, that relationship has probably had more—marked more by tension than collaboration.

So I think one of the first priorities would be to try to reset that working with Ambassador Power, if she is confirmed. She is going to be a great spokesperson for the mission and is not shy.

So I am sure that she will assert her views about the relationship and the direction of our program. So I think first priority is to get the relationship between State and AID in the right place and make sure that the programs are aligned and not duplicative.

Then, as you mentioned, the other agencies. The Secretary of State chairs the board of the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Development Finance Corporation.

And so we, at the State Department, if I am confirmed and the Secretary, we need to make sure we are using that role to ensure that everyone is rowing in the same direction on our programs and are aligned with the President's priorities and strategies.

You have given us great tools with the—with these agencies, the DFC being the newest one, but we need to put them to greatest effect, and I would like to talk to you more about it as I dig into it, if I get into the job.

Senator YOUNG. While I move to our diverse array of various agencies that are tasked with foreign assistance, it is one of the things I discovered when I became a member of this committee is just the constellation of different agencies.

And one avenue to explore is how we can task some of these agencies with operating in countries with lower incomes or worse health outcomes while directing others to specifically address more developed economies and societies, rather than throwing our resources from the various agencies at the same countries.

For instance, how can the United States better utilize our more independent development organizations like the Millennium Challenge Corporation or the Development Finance Corporation and make them more strategic in their investments?

I would like you to sort of speak to that generally, and then answer this specifically. Can the Development Finance Corporation be more focused on middle income countries that face more pressure from Russian and Chinese influence?

Mr. MCKEON. Senator I need to dig into the DFC statute. My understanding from a briefing paper is they are supposed to prioritize their investments in lower income countries. I think there is some

exception for middle or higher income countries in some respects. But the primary focus is supposed to be on the lower income countries. If I have that wrong, please tell me.

Senator YOUNG. Respectfully, I think that is just been the construction of the statute. The statute actually does call for development assistance to lower income countries, and then there is—in the same charge, it indicates that the resources may also be deployed strategically.

So it is like so many of our statutes. It is a vaguely written statute, which I lament, but my own views, which you might have sort of inferred by the question, is that we have an opportunity here to perhaps use DFC in a more strategic fashion vis-&-vis some of our strategic competitors, like Russia and China.

So I would look forward to working with you or others within the administration to—on that effort.

Ambassador Sherman, I do not want to neglect you, and I am grateful for your long-standing service and for your appearance here today.

President Biden has signaled that working with our partners and allies is going to be a foundation of his foreign policy and that he will seek to renew relations with our European partners.

In fact, in his recent address before the Munich Security Conference, he called the transatlantic relationship the cornerstone of all we hope to accomplish in the 21st century.

I agree that we must be engaging with our democratic allies in order to reach agreements on security and trade and technology development and health resiliency and all manner of other things.

But we also have to be willing to embrace our own ability to shape these areas and not the other way around, right. So there is a balance to be struck.

So if the leaders of Europe are unwilling to confront the threats emanating from around the globe, most especially the threats emanating from China and Russia, how would you recommend the United States adjust its strategy to engage with them?

In 10 seconds or less, please.

Ms. SHERMAN. I think it is absolutely critical that we engage with the transatlantic relationship around China and Russia. We are so much stronger together than we are apart, and I think that it will take vigorous diplomacy, which Secretary Blinken is going to lead, and, if confirmed, I hope to help him do exactly what you are suggesting, that we help to drive that agenda.

Europe is not always excited about us being back at the table because they are wary, given some years of us being away. But they also respect and understand the power of the United States of America, and I think that it is time that we lead by our example by what we are doing to compete and build our own infrastructure to do that competition.

But doing it together will make us much more powerful in challenging China, competing with China, and dealing with all of the threats that are put forward by Russia.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

I understand we have Senator Markey virtually.

Senator MARKEY. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much, and thank both of you for your long-term service to our country and we hope that you will be given the opportunity to continue because I think you would be enormous assets to ensuring that we have a safer better world that we are living in for everyone in our society.

If I may, Mr. Chairman, just want to go through a few bits of facts from the past so that we can just establish it as part of this hearing record.

Before you helped to get the world's major powers and Iran to the negotiating table, Iran was about two months away from producing enough highly-enriched uranium for its first nuclear bomb.

Is that correct?

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes, that was the assessment.

Senator MARKEY. And after all sides began implementing the Iran nuclear deal, that breakout time extended to more than a year. Is that correct?

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes.

Senator MARKEY. And Senator Risch asked you about enrichment, so I would like to go back to that. As part of the Iran nuclear deal, Iran reduced, reduced, its stock of low-enriched uranium by 98 percent to 300 kilograms.

But as a result of the Trump administration's unilateral exit from the Iran nuclear deal, that number increased to 12 times over that 300-kilogram limit.

Is that correct?

Ms. SHERMAN. That is my understanding. Yes, sir.

Senator MARKEY. Okay. So, again, while many of my colleagues have spent time criticizing the Iran deal, the effect of that arrangement did dramatically reduce the ability of Iran to have a quick breakout time towards producing a nuclear weapon.

And I just want to make sure that all of that is out on the table, and again, you played an instrumental role in ensuring that that would be part of that agreement.

So compliance-for-compliance is what President Biden is now saying his goal is. So can you just, again, expand a little bit more on what the Biden administration's policy will be in terms of compliance-for-compliance in ensuring that we do go back to a position where Iran's breakout time is lessened dramatically?

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you, Senator.

It is my understanding what the Biden/Harris administration hopes to do is to get Iran to come back into full compliance with the deal.

Then we would be in compliance with the deal and that we would build from that to get a longer and stronger agreement, given that the deal is now some years old and, as you have pointed out, Iran has now increased its stockpile, increased the depth of its enrichment, increased many of its capabilities more—using more sophisticated centrifuges as a result of our leaving the deal, and that we would not only get back to where we were but we would build a better, stronger, longer platform. And then we would address the other issues of concern.

And as you pointed out, Senator, that one-year breakout time is critical because it allows us if for some reason Iran is able to cheat,

though there were the most extraordinary verification and monitoring mechanisms, we would have time to slap back on sanctions or even to take military action.

So we would maintain all of our options to ensure that Iran not obtain a nuclear weapon.

Senator MARKEY. Yeah, and I agree with you. A one-year breakout time gives us time to put additional pressure on, but if it goes down to only two months or one month as a breakout time, our capacity to respond is, obviously, diminished dramatically.

So I think the approach which the Biden administration is taking is the correct one.

If I could just move over to Burma, that recent coup carried out by the Burmese military against the democratically-elected civilian government has been condemned by the Biden administration, and I welcome the steps which the administration has already taken, including imposing targeted sanctions against the military.

What role do you think China should play in partnering with the United States and do we have a capacity to get China to partner with us in order to put pressure on the military in Burma to allow for the civilian democratically-elected government to return to power?

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you for that really important question, Senator.

It is my understanding that Linda Thomas-Greenfield, our ambassador now to the United Nations, is going to use our platform since we are in the presidency in the month of March to have a more serious discussion in the U.N. Security Council about Burma and encouraging China to urge a return to a democratically-elected government and to end the military coup, which in its wake is just having a horrifying impact on the rights and the freedoms of the Burmese people.

We have lots of issues with Burma even before this coup, given the treatment of the Rohingya. But now it is of great concern for all of the people of Burma and their freedom and their way forward.

I applaud Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield for taking this subject up as one of the first things that she does, and Secretary Blinken has made it very clear this is a very high priority for him and to not only look at those sanctions but see that we get everyone engaged in ensuring that we return the government.

Senator MARKEY. Okay, thank you. And I do believe we have to put much more pressure on those military leaders and I hope that that is part of the Biden plan. And no one has done more thinking about the North Korean nuclear program than you have, historically. You have just a rich history of the three generations of the Kim family and their attitudes about this issue.

Could you give us your sense of what the steps should be that are taken by the Biden administration in conjunction with the regional allies, especially in order to reduce this ever-increasing nuclear threat from North Korea?

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you, Senator. It is my understanding that a review is going on in the administration to decide on how best to proceed with North Korea. Very tough challenge.

Quite agree with you it needs to be done with partners and allies in the region, particularly Japan and South Korea. But with everyone who has a stake in ensuring that Kim Jong-un does not develop even more nuclear weapons, greater delivery systems, and pose even a greater threat to the region and to the world.

So I understand that review is ongoing and, if confirmed, I would be glad to be talking with everyone here more about it to get your views and ideas as well.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator MARKEY. Do you—okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cruz?

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome to the both of you. Congratulations on your nominations.

In the last six weeks, the Biden administration has embraced China, has bombed Syria, has empowered Russia and Putin, has refused to stand with Israel on the Golan Heights, and has lifted sanctions on Iranian-backed terrorists.

That is not an encouraging opening for the foreign policy of this country for the next four years. I want to focus on a couple of those areas.

Let us start with an area that should be a potential for bipartisan cooperation. It is a topic that I discussed with both of you at length in the past week, and that is Nord Stream 2.

Nord Stream 2, in the last year, was an incredible bipartisan victory for the United States. The pipeline was over 90 percent completed from Russia to Germany. Congress acted not once but twice, passing strong bipartisan sanctions.

Sanctions supported by Republicans and Democrats on this committee passed it into law, and despite mountains of Russian disinformation, the pipeline ceased minutes before those sanctions were signed into law.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration has been sending mixed signals and those signals have been heard by Putin. And so Putin, after ceasing building the pipeline for a year, has gone back to building the pipeline because Putin and Russia believe the Biden administration will not hold them accountable, will allow them to complete this pipeline, which would put billions of dollars in Putin's pockets to be used against America, against Europe.

The European Parliament, by the way, in December 2018 voted 433 to 105 to oppose Nord Stream 2, and in January 2021, after Putin attempted to murder Navalny, they voted again to condemn it, this time 581 to 50.

Let me start with both of you. Do both of you agree that allowing Nord Stream 2 to be completed would be terrible policy for the United States?

Ms. SHERMAN. Senator, the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, have both said they oppose Nord Stream 2 and do not believe it should be completed.

Mr. McKEON. Senator that is my understanding as well. The President has said it is a bad deal.

Senator CRUZ. Well, if they oppose it, they are not very effective at opposing it because when their administration came into office,

suddenly it commenced, and to be particular, last month the State Department transmitted a mandatory and overdue report to Congress about who is helping Putin build the pipeline. The report included one ship and its owner, which the Trump administration had already sanctioned.

So it simply reiterated what the Trump administration had done. It did not include any entities that are plainly in violation, not even the company that is actually constructing the pipeline Congress has instructed the President to sanction.

Then, yesterday, the Biden administration imposed sanctions for the poisoning of Russian dissident Alexei Navalny, but those sanctions went out of their way not to touch the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

That was not an accident. Now that construction is resumed, we have precious little time. I told both of you that if the Biden administration does not change course, we are going to wake up in six months or a year and this pipeline is going to be built because the Biden administration failed to act.

And so I want to ask you, Ms. Sherman, if confirmed, will you move immediately to ensure that the Biden administration meets its mandatory obligation imposed by Congress to name and sanction all of the entities that are engaged in pipe laying, pipe laying activities, certification, or insurance related to Nord Stream 2?

Ms. SHERMAN. Well, Senator, even if confirmed, I will not have the authority to make those decisions unilaterally. But I can say to you that I will do everything I possibly can to ensure that Nord Stream 2 does not go forward, and I know that the administration will welcome advice and counsel from you and from the Senate and we will move forward on everything that they can do legally to stop the pipeline.

Senator CRUZ. Well, I want to be very clear so that no one in the administration is surprised. This was an incredible victory for U.S. foreign policy and an incredible loss for Putin and Russia.

The sanctions legislation was supported by virtually the entirety of the committee when we voted on it. The vote was 20 to 2, an overwhelming bipartisan majority.

The administration has all of the tools to stop the pipeline, as evidenced by the fact that we stopped it for a year that it worked, that we know it worked.

And it has only been in the last few weeks with the new administration that Putin has felt he has the green light to go ahead. I understand that the Germans want the pipeline built, that the German Government does.

But going soft on Russia is a serious mistake, and once it is built, it likely is impossible to unwind. So the window and the urgency is now.

Ms. SHERMAN. Senator, we share the sense of urgency, and I just want to say although I am not yet a part of the administration and will not be unless confirmed by the Senate, that I do not believe that the Biden/Harris administration has been soft on Russia in any way, shape, or form.

I know we disagree when it comes to Nord Stream 2. But they are very clear. As we heard, Ambassador Burns, who is, I hope, about to be confirmed to be the director of the CIA, said and who

is our ambassador to Russia, that we all should be very clear eyed about Russia being an adversary. Secretary Blinken has spoken at length about ways in which Russia threaten our country and I think there is a commitment to move in a tough way.

Senator CRUZ. Ambassador Sherman, with all due respect—with all due respect, words are cheap. And so if the Biden administration wishes to not be soft on Russia, rather than saying we do not want to be soft on Russia they could actually follow the mandatory law and stop the pipeline.

The test is going to be real simple. If Putin has billions of dollars and Europe is energy dependent on Russia because the Biden administration refused to comply with mandatory bipartisan sanctions, that will be the test and not any political rhetoric about we are tough on Putin.

If you are tough on Putin, do not give him billions of dollars. The State Department needs to file a supplemental interim report on Nord Stream 2 that sanctions every entity and they are refusing to do so.

And if this pipeline gets completed, it will be the fault of this administration. I do not want this to happen. I want that to be a bipartisan victory and a victory for the United States. You both have the opportunity to make sure that happens and so I implore you to do that.

Thank you.

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Just since the chairman reserved his time I am going to take a moment of that time.

President Trump could have used sanctions for the course of his four years in office on Nord Stream. He did not need congressionally-approved sanctions to affect the pipeline. Would that be from your experience a fair statement?

Ms. SHERMAN. That is a fair statement, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. And yet he did not do that. So I join my colleague in my concern for Nord Stream. I mentioned it in my opening remarks, and I urge the administration to do everything they can to stop Nord Stream.

But it would be intellectually unfair to suggest that the Biden administration is going to be the reason why Nord Stream gets built when four years were lost with no sanctions whatsoever.

I understand that Senator Schatz is up next virtually.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to both of you for being willing to serve again.

My first question is for Ambassador Sherman. You know, as people think of Asia, the mind races across the Pacific to China and not the nations in between us and them, and so I want to talk a little bit about Oceania.

It has got 12 million people, 14 island states, 17 territories, and 6 percent of the votes that we may need at the United Nations. And so how do we step up engagement in Oceania?

Ms. SHERMAN. It is a great question, Senator, and you probably understand this part of the world better than most of us do, representing Hawaii, where it is very much a part of your neighborhood in many ways.

I think that it is critical to engage with Oceania and with the island states. They are often, as you point out, critical votes at the United Nations and, certainly, in the General Assembly.

And I know that in the Obama administration we, in fact, created a special forum to have those conversations and to ensure that we had diplomats who traveled to those island nations. That often does not happen because they are far away. Sometimes the travel is difficult. But it is quite critical.

So I thank you very much for raising it and, if confirmed, I certainly will commit to you to pay attention to what is often a swing vote.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you. And I think one area for potential cooperation, you know, we think of climate action as an objective of American foreign policy.

But climate action is a shared response to the climate crisis, especially in the disaster preparation, disaster response space, and as we look at more long-term impacts of sea level rise, especially in island nations and coastal nations, there are opportunities to step up what USAID is doing and other sort of, as you like to use the term, avenues of smart power.

And so I am particularly excited about the opportunities for us to deploy those resources throughout island nations for selfish reasons but also for good humanitarian reasons.

Can you talk a little bit about what is going to be the climate action strategy? I know we have got, you know, a lot of horsepower behind this, including the President of the United States, the former Secretary of State.

But how does that get operationalized in the international context? And I am particularly interested not just in Paris but how we use shared climate response as a tool of diplomacy.

Ms. SHERMAN. So let me make a couple of comments and then Mr. McKeon may want to add to it as well in terms of how we are organizing to tackle this very critical challenge.

The President of the United States, the Secretary, the vice president have made clear that climate and our response to the changing climate is a whole-of-government approach and it is also a whole of State Department approach.

So as much as we have a special presidential envoy for climate in former Secretary Kerry, every part of the department, every bureau of the department, will have a focus on climate as well because, as you well know, some of these island nations are at risk of even disappearing, let alone the changes in the ecosystem of the oceans, which affects fishermen and the ability to have maritime and fishery economies. So it is a critical issue that we will all have to pay attention to.

And your point, Senator, about disaster preparedness is often a place where countries even with whom we do not agree on everything can work together because it is such a necessity, and the United States brings, really, unparalleled capabilities in disaster preparedness and response.

Mr. McKeon, I do not know if you want to add to that.

Senator SCHATZ. Mr. McKeon, before you answer, I would like you to perhaps provide some emphasis on those areas where we can make some permanent structural change within the depart-

ment so that our climate strategy becomes so embedded into American foreign policy objectives that it does not swing in one direction or the other depending on the partisan affiliation of the President herself or himself.

Mr. McKEON. Thank you, Senator.

As Ambassador Sherman said, we really have to integrate the emphasis on climate action throughout the department. It is not just going to be Secretary Kerry's team, but, of course, they will be leading the diplomacy.

But it has to be front of mind for the work of everyone in the department in all of the regional and functional bureaus to think about how in pursuit of their programs and their planning they are integrating a climate action dimension to it, not just in our diplomacy but also in our assistance programs, as you suggested.

So I think we owe you more thinking on this and I am not sure what planning has gone on already because we are not in the department.

But we will come back to you once we are—once we are in the seat, if confirmed, to give you more detail about how we are moving forward on this.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

My final question for Ambassador Sherman, global press freedom is on the decline. Reporters Without Borders found that the protection of rights for journalists has decreased 12 percent since it started reporting on such things in 2013.

What can we do to reverse this trend?

Ms. SHERMAN. Really important, Senator, and we have already had some discussion here this morning about our response on the horrifying death of Jamal Khashoggi. I think it is critical that we engage with journalists around the world, that we talk about press freedom wherever we go.

Yes, journalists are separate and apart, and they are part of holding us accountable and administration accountable. But they are also citizens. They are also standing for freedom.

And, in fact, one of the great parts of the United States is when we find ourselves challenged, as we have in many ways over the last years, it is often the press who hold all of us accountable for what we are doing.

And so we have heard Secretary Blinken speak of the importance of press freedom and making it essential to our human rights agenda around the world and our agenda on democracy.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you to you both for testifying, for being willing to serve again. And I just want to thank the chair and the ranking member and all the staff for welcoming me on to the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. It is very good to have you with us, Senator Schatz.

Senator Van Hollen?

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and I want to thank both of you for your prior public service and your willingness to serve again.

Mr. McKeon, I want to associate myself with the remarks from my fellow Maryland senator, Senator Cardin, about the importance

of your commitment to greater diversity in the Foreign Service and the State Department.

Senator Sullivan and I are the co-chairs of the Foreign Service Caucus and will soon be reintroducing legislation we introduced last year, the Foreign Service Families Act.

It is to provide Foreign Service spouses and families serving overseas with the same opportunities that we rightly provide now to military spouses and families serving overseas.

I am just looking for your commitment that you will review this legislation and provide us with your feedback as soon as possible.

Mr. McKEON. Senator, you definitely—you have that commitment. I have already looked at the bill and it looks, on its face, very straightforward. I am sure colleagues in the department will tell me we might need a tweak here or there to make it more workable for—from the perspective of the department. But we can work with you on that.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that. One of the benefits of going last here is you also get to associate yourself with some of the prior comments, and I do want to associate myself with the comments of Senator Young and Senator Coons, and I know the chairman shares this, about better coordinating all the tools available in our both diplomatic arsenal and our development arsenal. USAID, the International Development Finance Corporation. You and I spoke about that and I look forward to working with you on that as well.

Ambassador Sherman, I teamed up with Senator Toomey to pass two pieces of legislation. One is the BRINK Act, to apply secondary sanctions against entities doing business with the North Korean regime, and the Hong Kong Accountability Act to apply sanctions to those Chinese officials who are tasked with implementing the crackdown on democracy and human rights in Hong Kong.

I would like your commitment to work with us to both fully and effectively apply the sanctions under both those pieces of legislation.

Ms. SHERMAN. It is an easy commitment to make, to make sure that whatever sanctions we have we use them effectively and efficiently.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So let me turn now to a little bit of the Middle East, and JCPOA has been well covered here. President Biden has made clear that he supports what had been for a long time a bipartisan objective of U.S. foreign policy, which is a secure State of Israel and a viable Palestinian state—a two-state solution.

The Biden administration has also indicated that it would oppose unilateral steps by either party that undermines the prospects of a two-state solution, and we need to hold everybody accountable there.

You would agree with, would you not, that expanding settlements in East Jerusalem of the West Bank are unilateral measures that do not serve the interests of protecting the prospects of a two-state solution, would you not?

Ms. SHERMAN. It has been a long-standing position that settlements, in my understanding, do not help to achieve a two-state solution when they go beyond the current outlines of the two states—the potential for two state.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate it. Well, one of them under consideration is an area called E-1, which the Bush administration made clear, Secretary Condoleezza Rice made clear would be a very clear violation of our efforts to preserve the opportunity for a two-state solution. So I hope you will look into that right away.

While ISIS no longer controls any substantial territory, you would agree that it remains a very potent threat to the United States and our allies, would you not?

Ms. SHERMAN. I do agree it remains a threat.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. And you would also agree, I believe, that our Syrian Kurdish allies have been absolutely essential partners in our fight against ISIS and have been a major part of why we have been able to diminish ISIS' influence in the region, would you not?

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So can you commit to working with us to work with Turkey to stop trying to, essentially, kill and destroy our Syrian Kurdish allies who have been such key partners in that fight against ISIS?

Ms. SHERMAN. You know, Senator, I certainly understand why—Turkey's concerns. But, nonetheless, I agree with you that the Kurds have been immensely helpful partners to us and that we need to work with Turkey to find a way forward for them to understand that that partnership does not threaten them if we all manage it in a sane kind of way.

Our relationship with Turkey is very complicated and one in which I think, if confirmed, I would certainly pay some considerable attention to.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that, and the chairman and the ranking member and I have been very involved in the legislation to impose the CAATSA sanctions on Turkey for their purchase and deployment of the S-400. Turkey is talking about another round of purchasing S-400 from Russia. So I hope you will work with us and with Turkey to discourage them from moving forward there.

On the JCPOA, I just want to underscore the fundamental principle behind it, which is it is our policy to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, right?

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. And it is also our view, your view, my view, that resolving that through diplomatic means is better than going to war with Iran, right?

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. And the United States has lots of troops in Iraq right now, do we not?

Ms. SHERMAN. We do indeed.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. And I actually agree with Senator Paul's analysis of the consequence of the—our actions with respect to Iraq, which is the biggest geopolitical winner was Iran, which, of course, neighbors Iraq.

If we were to go to war with Iran, our troops in Iraq would be put in grave danger, would they not?

Ms. SHERMAN. It is my belief that they would be, yes, Senator.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I think it is pretty clear that they would be right in the line of fire. So I encourage you to continue your efforts with respect to JCPOA compliance-for-compliance and I hope that we can get to that position as soon as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that.

I would like to jump in. Ms. Sherman, I am grateful to see you here and very excited to support your nomination on the floor of the Senate.

You and I talked a lot about the Horn of Africa and some of the challenges we see going on within Ethiopia that are really painful and discouraging. Amnesty International said over the weekend and CNN has reported that there have been massacres by Eritrean forces, which have killed hundreds of civilians in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

It is really a point that I think we are at the level of a major humanitarian crisis affecting millions of people, and that there is the possibility of a famine, and I know you are aware of it.

I really did appreciate Secretary Blinken's receptiveness to appointing a special envoy to the Horn of Africa in a statement last week, and I really do hope that we move forward in that direction.

But the Government of Ethiopia continues to deny that there is even ongoing fighting there, and this puts us in a difficult situation. They are even putting out a lot of misinformation that makes it hard to understand what is happening.

And so understanding that the U.S.-Ethiopia relationship is important, as we know, could you just maybe give some more, publicly in this hearing, some more thoughts on how you would engage Prime Minister Abiy to cease hostilities and ensure that humanitarian access is in the region and how we create better governmental accountability?

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you very much, Senator, and thank you for your concern about the Horn of Africa and about what is happening in Ethiopia, which is quite horrifying.

Secretary Blinken, in my understanding, spoke to the prime minister yesterday and made it very clear that we expect him to ensure humanitarian access.

He had said that he would, but the Secretary wanted to make sure that he understood that there would be consequences if he did not, that he has responsibility for ensuring peace in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, that Eritrean troops should leave and others who are not helpful actors should not be in the region.

I think we will have to follow this up, working with our diplomatic presence in Ethiopia, to ensure that that humanitarian access continues, that this conflict ends, and the Ethiopian prime minister understands that the United States is not only watching but we will take action.

And I am very grateful as a citizen, as a person who cares about the rights of people around the world, that Secretary Blinken was so forthright yesterday with the prime minister.

Senator BOOKER. I am really grateful. Can we shift to Libya and Somalia as well, another really difficult area of conflict?

[Senator Booker requested and was granted permission to submit the material referenced above for inclusion in the hearing record. That information is located at the end of this transcript beginning on page 144.]

And we can see that this was an internationalized conflict with more countries being involved. Libya, UAE, Russia, Turkey, have all fueled this conflict that I believe is another strike point on the continent.

In Somalia, you see these other groups that are pursuing, really, their own interests that are really to the detriment of Somalia's Government and federalized system.

And so could you maybe give some insights on what you will do to address the issues of foreign interference in a situation that is really fragile and could destabilize even more, and how you will help the regional bureaus of the State Department cross between their silos?

That is the challenge you have in the Near East and Africa bureaus that I am a little concerned about, that structurally we are not really organizationally prepared for the conflict that we are seeing there.

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you, Senator. On Libya, I actually have a small sliver of hope, given the pending elections and the peace process that has begun in Libya. It is very fragile, as you say, led by the Europeans.

And yes, I agree with you there. Lots of it became a proxy place for conflict, and that those who represent those proxies should be out of Libya and let the Libyan people decide their own future.

I was in Libya right at the point where Hadi was about to run as the only presidential candidate. It was fragile then. It remains fragile now, and—I am sorry, Hadi is Yemen. Long in the process here. I apologize.

But I was in Libya at the point of the conflict and before we had to shut down our embassy in Libya. So I hope that there is a more—a chance for peace in Libya, led by Europe with our support.

In terms of Somalia, which I also visited when I was Under Secretary for Political Affairs, and I thought we were on the road to a better future for the Somali people. It has, clearly, gone backwards in just terrible ways.

And so I think we have to engage across bureaus, as you suggest, to make sure that we bring all of our resources to bear. I know that our ambassador to the U.N. will also play a role both in the Libyan and the Somalia circumstances.

And I do not know whether my colleague has something he wants to add on sort of how we are organized to become a better matrix organization and less siloed.

Senator BOOKER. I appreciate you opening the door to Mr. McKeon and maybe I will turn to him. I had this incredible couple paragraphs written here, knowing you are a Notre Dame graduate, to remind you of my exploits as a football player against your school and defeating them soundly. But I am going to—

Mr. MCKEON. After we talked the other day, I watched the video of you making that catch and avoiding tackle from the all-star NFL star.

Senator BOOKER. I appreciate you saying that because my chairman, I am not sure if he even knows that I played.

Mr. MCKEON. I texted some friends, and they were just wondering how you got away from Lou Holtz.

[Laughter.]

Mr. MCKEON. So they would like to hear the story.

The CHAIRMAN. The chairman recognizes that the junior senator from New Jersey excels in everything.[Laughter.]

Senator BOOKER. Thank you very much. I am actually going to just ask you—I just want to maybe say it on the record. You were so gracious. But I have a lot of concerns about diversity, paid internships.

I am going to introduce a bill today about paid internships in the State Department because that is just an issue to me that has always troubled me, as I have traveled around the world, seeing our State Department, these amazing heroic frontline folks, but they do not really reflect the diversity of our country.

And I just would love to just maybe get in the five, 10 seconds I have left maybe some thoughts from you on that effort.

Mr. MCKEON. Yes, thank you.

As I said to you the other day, the department has scraped together a few million dollars to start paying interns. It is not for the entire program. And it appears that I need to dig into it some more.

We might need some legislative authority to facilitate this in addition to the resources. So we will come back to you and look forward to working with you on this legislation.

Senator BOOKER. I look forward to supporting you as well on the Senate floor, and thank you both for your extraordinary service to our nation.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Booker.

So the Chair will reclaim his time, and we appreciate that you have been through two and a half hours without relief. So we will try not to make this too prolonged.

But, Ambassador, is it fair to say that the Trump administration's maximum effort campaigns did cause economic consequences to Iran?

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes, I would say that it did.

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah. But it is also fair to say that Iran is now closer to crossing the nuclear threshold than it was before and during the Maximum Pressure campaign?

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes, it is.

The CHAIRMAN. Is it also fair to say that we could not get one vote for many of our major allies at the United Nations to extend the arms embargo that ceased?

Ms. SHERMAN. That is my understanding, Senator. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Is it also fair to say that the Maximum Pressure campaign has done nothing, ultimately, to get Iran to stop its nefarious activities throughout the region?

Ms. SHERMAN. That is my assessment as well.

The CHAIRMAN. Or, for that fact, to diminish its support for terrorism in the world?

Ms. SHERMAN. It appears so, yes, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. So I say these only because I recognize that the Maximum Pressure campaign cost Iran financially, but it did not meet the goals that I think we, collectively, want. So let me ask you this.

There is no question—well, let me ask you, do you believe that a nuclear-armed Iran is an existential threat to the State of Israel?

Ms. SHERMAN. I do.

The CHAIRMAN. And I share that view, and I also believe that it is a threat to the United States of America, not just about Israel or our allies in the region. So, therefore, I believe that it is President Biden's view that Iran cannot be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon.

Ms. SHERMAN. That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, in that regard, how we achieve that goal is really the question, and so I appreciate the phrase "stronger and longer." Longer, I get what it means. Stronger, I am hoping for definition.

Because the reality is if all—from my perspective, and I have heard my colleagues on both sides here—from my perspective, if all we do is return to the JCPOA, that certainly is not stronger.

And if we extend it, it might be longer, but it is not stronger because there are still sunset issues that are now more prevalent today than they were in 2016 when the agreement went into effect.

And so it also will not have dealt with the ballistic missiles. It will not have dealt with the destabilization of the region. It will not have dealt with its support for terrorism or the violation of its own people's human rights.

And so, you know, the question in my mind is not so much JCPOA. The question is, what is the JCPOA Plus or what do we do, but how do we, in fact, ensure that we have more than illusory promise in terms of what comes, the follow-on, and the connection between any return to some form of the JCPOA with some clearly determined process to deal with these other issues.

Otherwise, my own view will be that we will have failed. And so this—I drive this because while I also, in fairness, for the record, you are not going to be the lead on the Iran portfolio. That has already been designated to others.

But upon confirmation as a deputy you are going to be in all the deputy meetings, and you also have expertise and experience in this regard and you will be called upon to express both the Secretary and the administration's view but also on your expertise.

So could you give me a sense of what that would be in broad strokes, understanding—and I appreciate your comments in response to other questions about looking at the intelligence when you have access to it again because I think a deep dive into the intelligence will be very important to understand what Iran has and has not complied with in its actions and its intentions.

Ms. SHERMAN. Thank you very much, Senator.

I do not know all of the answers at this point because not only have I not made a deep dive into the intelligence because I am not in the administration, I do not know what deliberations have gone on so far in the administration as they try to think through the strategy that is best here.

You know, I have seen what others see from press reports about our offer to open diplomacy, which I think should be the first resort always. I have seen the strike in Syria in retaliation for the threat against Americans.

I have seen the response, perhaps, or just a separate action against Al Asad Airbase. I, you know, read in some of the Iranian press what is going on politically in their country. But I do not know all the pieces of the puzzle anymore. You have to be really inside to get the fingertips for what is going on.

But I do agree with you, Senator, that there has to be very careful deliberations which will include, and I hope already have begun to include, you and the members of this committee and other senators who have interest in this arena to get your advice and counsel, as I have said in this hearing, at the takeoff, not just at the landing, to have true consultation, not just notification, how we sequence sanctions, how we sequence any lifting of sanctions, what we expect from the Iranians, what those who are in the negotiation and in the JCPOA yet believe we need to do going forward.

So there are a myriad of puzzle pieces here and, if confirmed, I would look forward to extensive discussion with you and with others who have interest in this to sort through how the administration goes forward.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you this. If we were still in the agreement and Iran had done what it has done today, would that not be subject to snap back?

Ms. SHERMAN. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. And I would consider that it would be a set of actions that would require snap back, from my own perspective.

Let me ask you this. Sanctions relief for whatever deal may come forward, clearly, we have to be very careful. There are sanctions which I helped fashion that are not about the nuclear portfolio and issue, but about terrorism and other things.

Iran likes to try to claim that all sanctions that we levy are just about their nuclear portfolio. We cannot tolerate that or else we will have nothing in our arsenal of peaceful diplomacy to deal with Iran's other nefarious activities.

Is that a fair statement?

Ms. SHERMAN. It is a fair statement that we have to keep sanctions on that deal with human rights abuses, state sponsorship of terrorism, arms sales, et cetera, what we have done in terms of Hezbollah and Hamas.

So, yes, I think there are many things that need to stay in place.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me turn to another subject for a moment. First of all, my dear friend and colleague, Senator Rubio, on Venezuela, you know, I agree with him and our cause in Venezuela.

I think what you meant in response to his question, and correct me if I am wrong, that one of the things you thought should have been done is to take the international recognition of Guaido and, ultimately, maximize that recognition beyond simple recognition, but an effort to multilateralize sanctions against the Maduro regime. Or am I wrong?

Ms. SHERMAN. No, very well said. Wish I had said it as well.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. So, but—and let me refer to Senator Murphy, who said that the European Union no longer recognizes Guaido.

The European Union never recognized Guaido. Individual member states of the European Union recognized Guaido and some of them have a concern because the basis of that recognition was under the Venezuelan Constitution.

The President of the National Assembly, in the absence of the President or a legitimate president, ultimately is recognized as the interim president of Venezuela.

He is, according to the view of some, no longer the President of the National Assembly because we had an internationally-condemned false elections in Venezuela that elected a new National Assembly.

But it is not because he lost his title. It is because they had an election that has been internationally condemned. Is that a fair statement?

Ms. SHERMAN. I believe so, yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And so how we internationalize this is incredibly important.

Let me turn to Cuba for a moment, which is, along with Iran, one of my passions. You know, do you know that a Cuban worker in Cuba cannot be employed directly by a foreign entity?

Ms. SHERMAN. I did not.

The CHAIRMAN. Hotels in Cuba, or a U.S. company that gets created in Cuba, cannot directly hire a Cuban worker. They go to the state employment agency controlled by the regime. The regime sends the worker, for example, to the hotel. The regime gets paid in dollars by the foreign company and then gives the worker a fraction of their wages in return.

Do you know that Cuban doctors that are sent abroad, ultimately, have their passports taken from them so that they cannot leave the country they are sent to, and that payment for their service by that country is sent to the regime and not paid to a Cuban doctor?

Ms. SHERMAN. I had been aware about the passport issue and I better understand now from you how the payment system works.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you understand that when we talk about we want to help the Cuban people, of which I am all in favor, but when we send a remittance to Cuba as a U.S. citizen for one of our family members that the regime takes 10 percent of it right off the bat, and you do realize that?

Ms. SHERMAN. I had heard of that.

The CHAIRMAN. And then after that, they turn the balance of the remittance not in dollars, which have a far more vibrant buying ability within the island, but they turn it into worthless pesos.

So when we send money, we allow money to be sent under these circumstances, what we are doing is empowering the regime.

Do you realize that a U.S. company that wants to open up in Cuba has to go through one of Castro's two relatives in order to be able to open up and the state becomes a co-owner with them?

Ms. SHERMAN. I had not realized that, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. That is exactly what happens, in tourism and whatnot. You have Castro's son and son-in-law. Both heads of the

Cuban military are parts of the Cuban military and they direct the two corporate entities that do all these.

So I share these with you because I find it interesting, you know, lying on the beach in Veradero and sipping a Cuba Libre, which is an oxymoron, is not going to liberate the Cuban people.

Have you heard of the San Isidro movement?

Ms. SHERMAN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. The San Isidro movement is a bunch of artists and writers who just want freedom of their expression. The Government cracked down on all of those, and so they started a movement in what is a black majority part of Havana to, ultimately, denounce their artistic and freedom of expression movement.

The Government has viciously attacked them and arrested them. These are the realities of Castro's Cuba, not the romanticism that some people seem to have, and I personally have a problem—I like to be consistent. In this town, consistency is not a great virtue. But I like—I try to be consistent.

My advocacy for human rights and democracy globally is not subject to where it lies. So whether it be in Burma, whether it be in Venezuela, whether it be on the Uyghurs and human rights in China, whether it be about the Rohingya, my view is pretty universal.

And the problem I have with some is that when it comes to certain places in the world they are enormous advocates of democracy and human rights; but when it comes to other places in the world, they are willing to look totally the other way and act in a different way than we would seek to act in other places. And I think that is problematic.

I understand the world. There is not a single way we can—do not get to treat everybody in a cookie cutter fashion.

By the same token, when we send different messages—that here is where we will promote human rights and democracy, here is where we will not, here is where we will sanction the consequences of violations of human rights and here is where we will not—then it becomes a really problematic area to stand up for what I believe President Biden is about, which is about standing up for democracy and human rights—based upon the time I served with him on this committee.

So I hope we are thinking about that, whether it is about Cuba or any other place. I want to help the Cuban people, ultimately, live a better life. I would like them to be free. I would like them to choose who governs them. I would like them to be able to worship at the altar that they choose.

But that is not, for the most part, the reality of life in Cuba. So we need to understand the realities, not the romanticism, and when we seek to help; what we cannot do is, ultimately, help a regime that oppresses them.

Finally, I hope you will pay some attention to, upon your confirmation, to the eastern Mediterranean region. I passed into law with Senator Rubio the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act of 2019. It is incredibly important that we look at Greece, Cyprus, Israel, and others in an eastern Mediterranean strategy that is both about energy, but at the—and that can

diversify and, therefore, not have the pipeline issue as important as issue as it is, but at the same time deals with security.

Several of these countries host us in very significant ways, are our security partners. With Turkey being under Erdogan, the—not the reliable NATO ally that we have aspired it to be, not to be the bridge between East and West, not to be—you know, there are more lawyers and journalists jailed in Turkey than in any other place in the world. That is an extraordinary statement about a NATO ally.

And so what we do as it relates to Turkey but also in our own interest. Even if Turkey was a perfect partner, which it is not, the East Med is an incredibly important area and I want to commend that to your attention as you look forward to take duty.

And then, very finally, I hope the President will keep his commitment to recognize the Armenian genocide. The United States Senate by unanimous consent passed it last year. I was proud to sponsor that. The House of Representatives has passed it.

It is time for the President of the United States to do what the rest of the Congress of the United States has represented to the American people, which is to recognize the genocide. Let us call history for what it is.

And in that regard, I also hope that we will look to help the people of Armenia and help to facilitate the release of POWs that the Azerbaijanis have. It is in violation of international law what they are doing.

We need to speak out, which the previous administration did not, and we need to work to try to get that region to look forward to what the Minsk process was. There is some suggestion that this is all over. No, it is not, and we need to get—released the POWs and we have to help Armenia as it gets all of these people, refugees, back into their country.

With that, before I close, I am introducing into the record a letter written by 19 of Brian McKeon's former Republican colleagues during his time on this committee expressing enthusiastic support for his nomination and complete confidence in his character and abilities.

I am quoting from the letter. They note their deep respect for Brian as a leader who exhibits unfailing integrity, fairness, professionalism, devotion to our national interest.

[The information referred to is located at the end of this transcript.]

The CHAIRMAN. Due to COVID precautions, my staff will email the letter directly to the clerk.

With that, and thanks to the committee for your attendance, the record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow, March the 4th.

I urge both of you, if there are questions for the record, to respond to them in—as quickly as possible so that your nominations can be considered at a business meeting of the committee.

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

[Whereupon, at 1:02 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

Letter in Support of Hon. Wendy R. Sheman's Nomination, Signed by Former Ambassadors and National Security Of- ficials

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March 1, 2021

U.S. Senator Robert Menendez
528 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. Senator James E. Risch
483 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch,

We, the undersigned, write to express our strong and enthusiastic support for the nomination of Ambassador Wendy Sherman to be Deputy Secretary of State.

It would be hard to think of a more qualified candidate for the second-ranking position in the State Department than Ambassador Sherman. She brings to the position long experience in foreign affairs and at the State Department particularly. Under President Clinton, she served as Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs (1993-1996) and then as Counselor of the State Department (1997-2001). She was also the Clinton administration's policy coordinator for North Korea and head of North Korea negotiation policy. During the presidency of Barack Obama, Ambassador Sherman returned to the State Department's third-ranking position as Under Secretary for Political Affairs. She has served with distinction in all these positions. Dealing with North Korea and Iran is not for the faint-hearted but Ambassador Sherman proved herself many times over to be a shrewd, persistent and tough negotiator. In the State Department, she is remembered as someone who worked closely with its career employees, made good use of their talents and mentored many. She earned their loyalty and respect. Ambassador Sherman's long and distinguished career of public service make her, in our view, exceptionally well qualified to serve as Deputy Secretary of the State Department.

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In addition to her time at the State Department, Ambassador Sherman has occupied prestigious positions in the non-governmental sector, including director of the Fannie Mae Foundation and director of the Center for Public Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School.

Last but not least, we welcome Ambassador Sherman's appointment as proof of the Biden Administration's strong commitment to diversity at the top levels of the U.S. government.

We urge the Committee to give favorable consideration to her nomination at the earliest possible time.

All of us signing this letter are former diplomats or national security officials. We are also members of the American Academy of Diplomacy but we write in an individual capacity and not in the name of the Academy, which as a matter of policy does not formally endorse candidates for State Department or diplomatic positions.

With best regards,

Gina Abercrombie-Winstanley (former Ambassador).
Bernard Aronson (former Assistant Secretary of State)
Brian Atwood (former Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development (AID)
and Under Secretary of State for Management)
Liliana Ayalde (former Ambassador)
Joyce Barr (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
Adrian Basora (former Ambassador)
Robert Beecroft (former Ambassador)
Robert Blake (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
Peter Bodde (former Ambassador)
Barbara Bodine (former Ambassador)
Avis Bohlen (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
Michele Bond (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
Eric Boswell (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)

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Richard Boucher (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
 Thomas Boyatt (former Ambassador and President of the American Foreign Service Association)
 Aurelia Brazeal (former Ambassador)
 Ken Brill (former Ambassador)
 Kenneth Brown (former Ambassador)
 Peter Burleigh (former Ambassador)
 Johnnie Carson (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
 Robert Cekuta (former Ambassador)
 Wendy Chamberlin (former Ambassador)
 James Collins (former Ambassador)
 Thomas Countryman (former Assistant Secretary of State)
 William Courtney (former Ambassador)
 Ryan Crocker (former Ambassador)
 Glyn Davies (former Ambassador)
 Ruth Davis (former Ambassador, and Foreign Service Director General)
 Jeffrey DeLaurentis (former Ambassador)
 Elizabeth Dibble (former Senior Foreign Service Officer)
 James Dobbins (former Ambassador)
 Paula Dobriansky (former Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs)
 Charles Dunbar (former Ambassador)
 Alan Eastham (former Ambassador)
 Robert Einhorn (former Assistant Secretary of State)
 Harriet Elam-Thomas (former Ambassador)
 Susan Elliott (former Ambassador)
 Jeffrey Feltman (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
 Harold Geisel (former Ambassador, and acting Inspector General)
 Robert Gelbard (former Ambassador)
 Edward Gnehm (former Ambassador and Foreign Service Director General)
 Rose Gottemoeller (former Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security and NATO Deputy Secretary General)
 Lino Gutierrez (former Ambassador)
 Thomas Hubbard (former Ambassador)
 Robert Jackson (former Ambassador)
 Janice Jacobs (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
 Susan Jacobs (former Ambassador)
 Tracey Jacobson (former Ambassador)
 James Jeffrey (former Ambassador)
 Howard Jeter (former Ambassador)
 Deborah Jones (former Ambassador)

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James Jones (former Ambassador)
 Theodore Kattouf (former Ambassador)
 James Keith (former Ambassador)
 Kenton Keith (former Ambassador)
 Laura Kennedy (former Ambassador)
 Patrick Kennedy (former Assistant Secretary of State and Under Secretary of State for Management)
 Kristie Kenney (former Ambassador)
 Michael Klosson (former Ambassador)
 John Kornblum (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
 Daniel Kurtzer (former Ambassador)
 Dawn Liberi (former Ambassador)
 Frank Loy (former Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs)
 William Luers (former Ambassador)
 Deborah Malac (former Ambassador)
 Deborah McCarthy (former Ambassador)
 Donald McHenry (former Ambassador)
 Thomas E. McNamara (former Ambassador)
 William Milam (former Ambassador)
 Richard Miles (former Ambassador)
 Cameron Munter (former Ambassador)
 Larry Napper (former Ambassador)
 Ronald Neumann (former Ambassador)
 Thomas Nides (former Deputy Secretary of State)
 Joseph Nye (former deputy Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance, Science and Technology)
 Phyllis Oakley (former Assistant Secretary)
 Anne Patterson (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
 Douglas Peterson (former Ambassador)
 Thomas Pickering (former Ambassador and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs)
 Steven Pifer (former Ambassador)
 Michael Polt (former Ambassador)
 Nancy Powell (former Ambassador and Foreign Service Director General)
 Charles Ray (former Ambassador)
 Charles Ries (former Ambassador)
 Marcie Ries (former Ambassador)
 Peter Romero (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
 William Rugh (former Ambassador)
 Janet Sanderson (former Ambassador)

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Eric Schwartz (former Assistant Secretary of State)
 Teresita Shaffer (former Ambassador)
 Thomas Shannon (former Ambassador, Assistant Secretary and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs)
 Doug Silliman (former Ambassador)
 Joan Spero (former Under Secretary of State for Economics, Business and Agriculture)
 Pamela L. Spratlen (former Ambassador)
 Sylvia G. Stanfield (former Ambassador)
 Gregory Starr (former Assistant Secretary of State)
 William Swing (former Ambassador and Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for the Congo)
 Francis X. Taylor (former Assistant Secretary of State)
 Arturo Valenzuela (former Assistant Secretary of State)
 Michael Van Dusen (former Vice-President of the Woodrow Wilson International Center and Democratic Chief of Staff for the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives)
 Alexander Vershbow (former Ambassador and NATO Deputy Secretary General)
 Jenonne Walker (former Ambassador)
 Alexander Watson (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
 Earl Anthony Wayne (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
 Bruce Wharton (former Ambassador)
 Phillip Wilcox (former Ambassador)
 Frank Wisner (former Ambassador and Under Secretary of State for International Security)
 William Wood (former Ambassador and Assistant Secretary of State)
 Marie Yovanovitch (former Ambassador)

CC: Senator John A. Barrasso, Senator Cory A. Booker, Senator Benjamin Cardin, Senator Christopher Coons, Senator Ted Cruz, Senator Bill Hagerty, Senator Ron Johnson, Senator Tim Kaine, Senator Edward J. Markey, Senator Jeff Merkley, Senator Christopher S. Murphy, Senator Rand Paul, Senator Rob Portman, Senator Mitt Romney, Senator Mike Rounds, Senator Marco Rubio, Senator Brian Schatz, Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Senator Chris Van Hollen, Senator Todd Young.

**Letter in Support of Hon. Brian McKeon's Nomination,
Signed by 19 Republican Former SFRC Staff Members**

January 29, 2021

The Honorable Bob Menendez, Incoming Chairman
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are all former Republican staff members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) who served under Senator Richard G. Lugar after 2003 when he was Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee. Each of us had the opportunity to work with Brian McKeon during this period when he was Democratic chief counsel on the SFRC. We write on our own initiative to express our enthusiastic support for Brian's confirmation as Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources at the U.S. Department of State. We are motivated by our deep respect for Brian as a leader who exhibits unfailing integrity, fairness, professionalism, and devotion to our national interests.

As you know, the relationship between Democratic and Republican staff members on a committee can be adversarial at times. Brian was a faithful and vigorous defender of the policies and views of Senator Biden and Democratic members of the committee. But he also was a partner who consistently worked with us to find bipartisan solutions to matters before the committee. We trusted Brian's word and frequently counted on his expansive knowledge of global affairs and the mechanisms of U.S. national security decision-making. Our own work and the accomplishments of the committee were enhanced greatly by Brian's leadership.

We are proud to have served with Brian and have complete confidence in his character and abilities. We highly recommend Brian to the Foreign Relations Committee, and have full confidence that he will be a tremendous asset to the State Department and our nation's security in the coming years.

Sincerely,

Daniel Diller, Republican Deputy Staff Director, 2003-2013

Kristen Armitage, Republican Administrative Director, 2003-2007

Jay Branegan, Republican Senior Professional Staff Member, 2003-2013

Shellie Bressler, Republican Senior Professional Staff Member, Global Health Affairs, 2007-2013

Neil Brown, Republican Senior Professional Staff Member, 2005-2013

Paul Clayman, Republican Chief Counsel, 2003-2007

Brooke Daley, Republican Legislative Assistant, 2005-2008.

Ellona Fritschie, Republican Professional Staff Member, 2003-2006

Patrick Garvey, Republican Senior Professional Staff Member, Middle Eastern Affairs, 2003-2012

Chris Ann Keehner, Republican Deputy Chief Counsel, Global Health Affairs, 2003-2007

Mary Locke, Republican Senior Professional Staff Member, State Department and Foreign Assistance Affairs, 2003-2008

Keith Luse, Republican Senior Professional Staff Member, East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 2003-2013

Kate Maloney, Republican Administrative Director, 2003-2005

Alison McCormick, Republican Legislative Assistant, 2006-2008

Carl Meacham, Republican Senior Professional Staff Member, Western Hemisphere Affairs, 2003-2013

Ken Myers III, Republican Senior Professional Staff Member, European and National Security Affairs, 2003-2009

Michael Phelan, Republican Senior Professional Staff Member, African and Afghanistan/Pakistan Affairs, 2003-2019

Nilmini Rubin, Republican Senior Professional Staff Member, International Economic Affairs, 2003-2011

Kim Kavrell Savit, Republican Senior Professional Staff Member, Middle Eastern and Central and South Asian Affairs, 2003-2006

Responses to Additional Questions Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. The FY21 NDAA includes a requirement for the Secretary of State to develop and implement a strategy for countering white identity terrorism globally. The attack on Congress earlier this month underscores the importance of this issue. Do I have your commitment that you will submit this strategy on time if confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to developing a Department of State strategy for countering white identity terrorism globally, in line with the NDAA requirement. Countering white identity terrorism and other Racially or Ethnically Motivated Violent Extremism (REMVE) is a top priority for the Biden-Harris Administration. The State Department has an important role to play on these issues, as we are seeing increasing transnational links between white identity terrorists and other REMVE actors. If confirmed, I will prioritize working closely with the interagency and our partners around the world to address the threat of white identity terrorism and other REMVE, as well as all forms of terrorism and violent extremism—offline and online.

Question. How specifically will you ensure that the State Department prioritizes this issue?

Answer. “white identity” terrorism, including terrorism designations as appropriate, and foreign partner engagement. The United States developed effective tools to counter the spread of ISIS and al-Qa’ida that can be adapted to address this threat. Among these tools, public diplomacy programs that promote people-to-people engagement help increase awareness and build international consensus to counter white identity terrorism.

Question. I am a strong supporter of the U.S.-India relationship, which will be critical in addressing 21st century challenges ranging from climate change to China. In light of this, I introduced the Prioritizing Clean Energy and Climate Cooperation with India Act to boost U.S.-India cooperation on clean energy. If confirmed, what aspects of the Trump Administration’s work on energy in India will you continue and what will you change?

Answer. In view of Prime Minister Modi’s announced target of installing 450 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, if confirmed, I would support the work advancing cost-effective strategies to enhance the flexibility and robustness of India’s electricity grid to encourage India’s clean energy transition over the next decade. In contrast to the previous administration’s approach, in order to support India raising its climate ambition, if confirmed, I would prioritize lower cost alternatives to carbon-intensive energy such as coal-fired power, including by promoting renewable energy, battery storage, and load shifting.

Question. I also believe that the U.S.-India partnership is strongest when based on shared democratic values, and I am concerned by the recent trend away from those values in India. From the recent crackdowns on farmers peacefully protesting the new farming laws and corresponding intimidation of journalists and government critics, to the rising anti-Muslim sentiment and related government actions like the Citizenship Amendment Act, to the continued repression in Kashmir nearly a year and a half after the abrogation of Article 370, there are a significant number of human rights and democracy issues facing India. Do I have your commitment that you will actively raise human rights and democracy issues with the Indian Government, at your level and all levels of the Department?

Answer. I share your belief that the U.S.-India relationship is underpinned by a common commitment to democracy and democratic institutions. The Biden-Harris administration will ensure human rights and religious freedom remain core pillars of U.S. foreign policy, and if confirmed, my engagement with the Indian Government will reflect our values and commitment to human rights.

Question. What is your plan for ensuring that discussion of these important issues does not get lost amidst other priorities in the bilateral relationship?

Answer. The U.S.-India strategic partnership is one of our most critical relationships in the Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I will work with counterparts in the U.S. and Indian Government to deepen our comprehensive partnership based on mutual interests including regional security and economic growth, promoting shared values of democracy and human rights, and cooperation on shared challenges including cli-

mate change, COVID-19 response efforts, and trafficking in persons. By prioritizing our shared interests and values, we can advance broader U.S. national security interests for regional peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Question. A democratic, stable and resilient Ukraine is in the national security interest of the United States, and efforts towards that end receive broad bipartisan support in the Senate. If confirmed, how will your policy approach to Ukraine differ from the approach taken during the Obama and Trump Administrations?

Answer. I am committed to revitalizing our bilateral relationship with Ukraine. If confirmed, I will continue 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. Further, if confirmed I will work with Congress to continue providing the security assistance, including lethal defensive weapons, Ukraine requires to defend itself against Russia's aggression. I will support Ukraine's chosen Euro-Atlantic path, including by pushing for progress on rule of law and economic reforms that strengthen Ukraine's institutions and lead to a brighter future for all Ukrainians.

Question. Do you support the provision of lethal security assistance for Ukraine, beyond providing Javelin missiles?

Answer. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with Congress to continue providing the assistance Ukraine requires to defend itself against Russia's aggression, including lethal weapons, based on a U.S. and Ukrainian assessment of Ukraine's defense requirements. This includes the provision of defensive lethal assistance that has already expanded beyond Javelin missiles, such as armed Mark VI patrol boats this year, for instance.

Question. How will you work to urge Ukrainian officials and its private sector to deny Chinese efforts to take over significant military production capabilities in the country?

Answer. The United States is prepared to work with our Ukrainian partners to advance our shared interests and protect Ukraine's sensitive industries. I was pleased to see Ukraine's decisive action to sanction Chinese firm Skyrizon, which has attempted to take control of Motor Sich, on January 29. This action protects U.S. and Ukrainian national security. The administration has urged and will continue to urge Ukraine to remain vigilant about People's Republic of China (PRC) influence in its strategic industries and to pass legislation creating a mechanism for reviewing investment. If confirmed, I would work closely with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation to support U.S. investors as alternatives to predatory PRC investors.

Question. Do you believe that our Indo-Pacific strategy ought to be a function of our China policy, as was the case with the Trump administration, or that our China policy ought to be a function of our Indo-Pacific strategy? Put another way, can we get China "right" if we don't get the region right, first?

Answer. Our global policy to compete with China and the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific are complementary strategies. Our relationship with China will be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be, and adversarial when it must be. The common denominator is the need to engage China from a position of strength. To do that, the United States needs to support a free and open Indo-Pacific, where our engagement builds broad cooperation with allies and partners in pursuit of common interests, including advancing COVID-19 recovery and returning to sustained economic prosperity, dealing with the climate crisis, upholding international law and multilateral institutions, and reinforcing democracy, human rights, and good governance. As the President has said, how the United States and Asia work together to secure the peace, defend our shared values, and advance our prosperity across the Indo-Pacific, including how we address the China challenge, will be among the most consequential efforts we undertake.

Question. With regards to China and the broader Indo-Pacific region, aside from words of condemnation and economic sanctions: What other tools does the Biden Administration have to counterbalance China's growing influence around the world, including in contentious regions such as the South China Sea, Hong Kong, and Tibet?

Answer. If confirmed, I will promote Department efforts to re-engage with allies, partners, and international organizations to create a level playing field for U.S. businesses across the globe, support those who fight for democracy and human rights in China and across the Indo-Pacific, maintain our technological edge, protect U.S. intellectual property from theft, promote freedom of navigation and overflight

and other lawful uses of the sea, and continue to work with Congress to spotlight and combat malign PRC actions and human rights violations, including in Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang.

Question. There is little question that the Trump administration's failed North Korea policy has left us worse off than we were before. North Korea's nuclear and missile programs are unconstrained, our alliance with the Republic of Korea has been put under great stress, and the sanctions regime is in tatters. President Trump's diplomatic failure with North Korea is the latest in a long-line of failed efforts to achieve a denuclearized North Korea. How will the Biden administration approach North Korea?

Answer. North Korea's weapons of mass destruction program and proliferation activities constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and undermine global nonproliferation efforts. If confirmed, I plan to join the Biden-Harris Administration's ongoing policy review, in consultation with our allies, of the state of play on North Korea. I support the U.S. commitment over the long term to the complete denuclearization of North Korea, while also focusing in the near term on limiting the threat to the United States and our allies.

Question. What is the pathway to denuclearization and a stable, peaceful and prosperous Korean Peninsula?

Answer. Denuclearization of North Korea must remain a top national security priority for the United States. I support the Administration's plan to evaluate and adopt, in consultation with our allies, a strategy to keep the American people and our allies safe and that takes into account pressure options and the potential for future diplomacy with North Korea. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress on efforts to limit the dangers posed by North Korea's WMD and ballistic missile programs.

Question. What does success with North Korea look like?

Answer. Foremost, success entails achieving the complete denuclearization of North Korea and a durable peace on the Korean Peninsula, which would promote stability for our allies, the region, and the world. Further, success would entail an end to malign North Korea-linked actions globally, including cyber-enabled malicious activities and arms trafficking, and involve greater respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in North Korea. If confirmed, I plan to join the Biden-Harris Administration's ongoing policy review, in consultation with our allies, of the current state of play on North Korea.

Question. The war in Yemen is about to enter its 6th year and, in spite of the efforts of UN special envoy Martin Griffiths, little progress has been made toward ending a conflict that has killed more than 17,000 civilians and created the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Iran continues to ship weapons, including ballistic missiles, which have allowed the Houthis to menace Saudi Arabia and continue their war against the internationally recognized Yemeni Government. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia continues to hit civilian targets in Yemen with U.S.-made warplanes and munitions. I am pleased to see that the Administration shares my concerns about the civilian casualties resulting from Saudi Arabia's use of U.S. munitions, and is reviewing arms sales to both Saudi Arabia and the UAE, while ending U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen. What evidence will the Administration need to see regarding the improved use of offensive U.S. weapons systems by those countries before it is comfortable with further sales?

Answer. As President Biden said, the Administration is committed to reinvigorating diplomatic efforts, alongside the UN and others, to achieve a ceasefire and end the war in Yemen. The Administration is recalibrating our relationship with Saudi Arabia to reflect U.S. values. The President announced the ending of U.S. support for offensive operations in Yemen, including relevant arms sales, and appointed Special Envoy Tim Lenderking to spearhead our diplomatic efforts and support to the UN. The Administration paused two arms sales with Saudi Arabia, and, if confirmed, I will support efforts to evaluate other potential sales to help ensure they are consistent with our values and that Congress will be consulted. The Administration will work with our partners to help them reduce the risk of civilian harm.

Question. I am under no illusions about the Houthi's malevolent role in the conflict, but Secretary Blinken's reversal of his predecessor's poorly thought-out FTO designation of the Houthis has prevented Yemen's humanitarian crises from exponentially worsening. At the same time, I am also deeply concerned by the previous administration's freeze on assistance to Northern Yemen. Will the Biden Administration lift this freeze? What steps will the Administration take, alongside the UN

and other international donors, to ensure that the Houthis are not able to divert or place unacceptable conditions on international assistance?

Answer. USAID was forced to partially suspend some assistance to NGOs in northern Yemen in March 2020 due to Houthi interference in partners' operations. This decision is currently under review. As with all humanitarian programs, the United States aims to ensure our partners can deliver assistance in a timely manner without undue interference. Without proper oversight of taxpayer money, we adjust or terminate funding to specific programs as necessary. Over the last year, the U.S. has worked closely with our partners, including the UN and other donors, to advocate with the Houthis to cease interference in aid operations, and there have been some positive changes. The Administration continues to press all parties to allow for the unhindered provision of aid.

Question. I am also concerned by the recent Houthi advance into Marib province, which threatens to displace hundreds of thousands of Yemenis, many for the second or third time. How will the Biden Administration build leverage to push all warring parties to agree to a nationwide ceasefire in Yemen and begin talks aimed at a sustainable political solution to the conflict?

Answer. The President committed to ending all support for the Saudi-led Coalition's offensive operations in Yemen, including relevant arms sales. There is no military solution to the conflict and the Department redoubled its diplomatic efforts to find a political end to the war and address the dire humanitarian crisis. The Secretary named a U.S. Special Envoy for Yemen in order to redouble U.S. efforts to find a peaceful resolution as soon as possible. If confirmed, I will support efforts towards a nationwide ceasefire that quickly moves to negotiations and increases international pressure against the Houthis to convince them to halt their assault on Marib.

Question. The Taliban's commitments on counterterrorism are an indispensable part of the February 29th agreement. Its compliance with those commitments, or lack thereof, must inform the decisions the U.S. makes regarding our future in Afghanistan and will certainly be the basis of future congressional support for assistance to Afghanistan. Do you commit to make the Taliban's compliance with the February 29th Agreement, especially with the counterterrorism provisions, the basis of any decisions the U.S. makes regarding our future in Afghanistan?

Answer. I agree it is important to ensure Afghanistan never again serves as a safe haven for terrorist groups that threaten the security of the United States and our Allies. To this end, I support the Administration's ongoing review of compliance by all parties with their commitments in the February 29 U.S.-Taliban Agreement and the February 29 U.S.-Afghanistan Joint Declaration. This review includes assessing whether the Taliban are fulfilling their commitments relating to counterterrorism, reducing violence, and engaging in meaningful negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Question. Our relationship with Mexico is one of the most important in the world. However, I have serious concerns over the growing challenges to the rule of law in Mexico by armed criminal organizations-especially when certain groups increasingly appear to be equipped with military-grade arms and vehicles. While the Mexican Government rightfully raises concerns about international arms trafficking from the U.S. to Mexico, that only tells half the story. The arrest and botched release of former Mexican Defense Minister Cienfuegos last year, as well as other high profile cases, suggest that criminal organizations have coopted certain officials and institutions at various levels of the Mexican Government. And, despite these challenges, the Lopez Obrador Government has taken steps to complicate bilateral law enforcement cooperation. What is your assessment of challenges to the rule of law in Mexico and how will you work with Mexican authorities on these issues?

Answer. U.S.-Mexico security cooperation remains a top national security priority. It is critical that U.S. efforts to dismantle transnational criminal organizations, reduce impunity and corruption, and strengthen the rule of law in Mexico receive the full cooperation of the Mexican Government. If confirmed, I look forward to comprehensive conversations with the Mexican Government so that this cooperation deepens and works for the benefit of both nations. In the context of those conversations, I will not hesitate to raise any issues with the Mexican Government that I believe to be obstacles to our bilateral security cooperation.

Question. The U.S. has a long-running strategic interest in the stability of the East Africa region, given its proximity to the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Western Indian Ocean. The last administration never developed a holistic plan to consolidate democratic gains, prevent democratic backsliding and pursue our

geostrategic interests. I am working on legislation to develop such an approach, and I hope you will work closely with me on that effort. Ethiopia is one country that will be impacted by my efforts. The transition to democracy there is jeopardized by an ongoing conflict in Tigray, communal violence in other parts of the country and closing political space. Prominent political opposition figures are in jail, along with thousands of opposition supporters, journalists, and others. Under the current circumstances, do you believe Ethiopia can hold credible elections in June? What action should the USG consider in addressing the deep humanitarian, political, and security crisis that is now impacting Ethiopia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the State Department develops and implements a comprehensive strategy for the Red Sea region. One critical element of this is a strategy to address the ongoing issues in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, and the ongoing border dispute with Sudan. A peaceful, stable, democratic Ethiopia at peace with its neighbors is essential for the Horn of Africa and the wider region. The Ethiopian Government has promised national elections in June. Inclusive dialogue among all political actors is a prerequisite to identifying and adopting necessary reforms. All detainees need to be afforded due process. The violence in Tigray must end; humanitarian and human rights workers must receive unhindered access; and independent investigations into reported human rights abuses and violations must proceed.

Question. Sudan, another country along the Red Sea Corridor, is undergoing a fragile transition as well. What specific steps will you take to ensure a successful transition?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support Sudan's democratic transition and Civilian-led Transitional Government, as well as efforts to promote economic reform and development. Further, if confirmed, I intend to ensure consistent engagement with Sudan's civilian leaders to encourage progress in taking the difficult, but necessary, next steps, including governance and security sector reforms, expanded protection of civilians in Darfur, resolution of ongoing conflicts, and accountability for past atrocities.

Question. As I told Undersecretary Hale over a year ago, we are losing the Sahel. The 2020 Global Terrorism Index found that seven of the ten countries with the largest increase in terrorism were in sub-Saharan Africa; Burkina Faso topped the list. But this is not just a security crisis; we need a comprehensive strategy that addresses Diplomatic, Development, and Defense issues (3Ds). Will you make the crisis in the Sahel a top priority for the State Department, and ensure that the interagency pursues a "3Ds" strategy in the region?

Answer. I agree with your concern about rising violent extremism, governance challenges, and humanitarian concerns in the Sahel. The path to lasting stability lies in accountable governance, providing services and economic opportunities, protecting the rule of law, and engaging communities in decisions. The Biden-Harris Administration has committed to undertake an interagency review of our diplomatic, security, and other assistance programs. As part of the review, the Administration will work to understand threats in the region and evaluate our overall approach to address the drivers of insecurity. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of Defense, USAID, and other agencies to ensure that the U.S. Government has and implements a unified strategy to support sustained security and stability in the Sahel.

Question. As Deputy Secretary, how will you ensure close coordination between regional bureaus to develop strategies and integrated approaches to geographic regions such as the Sahel and the Red Sea?

Answer. The President's interim national security guidance underscores that we must be prepared to manage crises and challenges that do not respect borders. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department's regional and functional bureaus to make sure they understand the President and Secretary's policy imperatives in both the Sahel and the Red Sea region and that they work collaboratively through working groups, joint briefings, and persistent coordination to develop strategies around which we can organize our diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance. If confirmed, I will guide the Department to work across bureaucratic and geographic seams to address regional challenges by understanding, engaging, and cooperating with allies and partners; building strong partnerships; and strengthening long-standing connections.

Question. Multilateralism has long been a pillar of U.S. foreign policy, and an avenue for advancing international human rights. However, over the last four years, the U.S. Government went from being a strong champion of human rights and of

the rights of women, girls and LGBTQ individuals, to being an obstacle to those goals at the United Nations and other multilateral forums. It is vital that this Administration send an early signal that it is fully committed to reversing that, and to advancing human rights and gender equality globally. How will you demonstrate, through early action at the State Department, a renewed U.S. commitment and leadership to promote global gender equality, women's and girls' rights, and the rights of LGBTQ persons?

Answer. As President Biden has said, the promotion of democracy and human rights is central to this Administration's foreign policy and if confirmed, I will examine all options to address threats to gender equality and the human rights of women, girls, and LGBTQI+ persons. I fully support the objectives outlined in President Biden's memorandum on advancing the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons around the world. The work to promote gender equality and respect for the human rights of all women, girls, and LGBTQI+ persons is amplified when the United States works multilaterally and coordinates with international partners. If confirmed, I will support the Department's efforts to increase U.S. engagement on these issues bilaterally and across relevant UN fora and regional organizations, as appropriate.

Question. How will you use your role to immediately halt and reverse dangerous rollbacks on women's rights and LGBTQ rights in intergovernmental processes and multilateral forums?

Answer. Advancing the human rights of women, girls, and LGBTQI+ persons is essential to ensure just and equitable societies where all individuals can fully contribute. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with partner nations, civil society, and multilateral institutions, as appropriate, to advance women's health and human rights, including women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. I will also fully support the objectives outlined in President Biden's Presidential Memorandum on Advancing the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ persons around the world and will work with other governments and multilateral institutions to ensure that U.S. diplomacy and foreign assistance promote and protect these rights.

Question. On June 18, 2020, following a year-long investigation by my staff, I published a comprehensive report on the Global Forced Migration Crisis, which examined the urgent plight of millions of people forced to flee their homes due to conflict and persecution. It provided a blueprint for addressing this growing crisis. What actions will you take, including with our partners, to address the global forced migration crisis? How, specifically, will you work to address the root causes of displacement, such as new and unresolved conflicts, support populations on the move and those enduring lengthy displacement, and seek to assist the low-income countries who host the majority of refugees and displaced people?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure State and USAID are strengthening protection and durable solutions for the millions of forcibly displaced people across the globe by pursuing new strategies for addressing the root causes of migration, including climate change; rebuilding the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program; enhancing U.S. engagement in international institutions; and standing up for democratic values and human rights. The State Department will continue to work with our partners and the Department of the Treasury to engage multilateral development banks on support in protracted situations of displacement. In addition, the Department aims its diplomacy at continuing to strengthen the global humanitarian architecture, including through donor engagement, and at promoting respect for international humanitarian principles.

Question. Principled humanitarian action is under attack around the world. Violent conflict has reached record highs, and nearly 235 million people worldwide need emergency humanitarian assistance—a 40 percent increase from last year. There has also been a steep escalation in the deliberate, willful obstruction of humanitarian access to those in need, the targeting of innocent civilians and humanitarian aid workers, and an overall noncompliance with international law. What will you do to minimize the abuse of humanitarian assistance, including the blocking or diverting of humanitarian aid, and to minimize the targeting of civilians and humanitarian aid workers?

Answer. I support the United States taking a strong leadership role in support of principled humanitarian action. If confirmed, I intend to engage publicly and privately where necessary to promote the protection of civilians and humanitarian workers, and humanitarian access, working closely with our global and multilateral partners. Further, I will support the efforts of the State Department to prevent and immediately address any diversion or abuse of U.S. humanitarian assistance. The

Administration's commitment to these principles has already been clear in the Secretary's engagement on the protection of civilians and unhindered humanitarian access.

Question. How can the United States best hold accountable the perpetrators of such abuses, and promote accountability and compliance with the law of armed conflict and human rights law?

Answer. I support using all tools available to promote accountability for those responsible for targeting civilians, including humanitarian aid workers, consistent with international law. If confirmed, I would encourage all parties to armed conflict to comply with international humanitarian law and ensure the protection of those providing humanitarian aid. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the United States supports a variety of tools at our disposal, including investigations and prosecutions at appropriate international and national tribunals, targeted sanctions, and other mechanisms, to promote accountability for those responsible for targeting civilians, including humanitarian aid providers.

Question. We are in a 15-year democratic recession, and this past year has been among the worst we've seen for global democracy. For the first time since 2001, more people live under autocracies than democracies. The COVID-19 crisis has created new opportunities for authoritarians and those leaders who strive to consolidate power to cement their hold on government structures and erode the fundamental human rights of their countrymen. How will you address democratic backsliding and emerging global electoral challenges? These include foreign interference; the manipulation of new media platforms; advancements in artificial intelligence and sophisticated cyber threats; and corruption in electoral processes that undermines governance?

Answer. I share concerns over the need to defend democracy and counter growing authoritarianism globally, including authoritarian responses to the global pandemic that suspend or severely curtail democratic governance, rule of law, and human rights. President Biden committed to host a global summit to bring together democracies around a common agenda to defend and strengthen democratic institutions, including commitments on combating corruption, pushing back on authoritarianism, and advancing human rights, including online. If confirmed, I will support the Administration's goals of promoting good governance at home and abroad with all available diplomatic, programmatic, and other foreign policy tools to counter democratic backsliding and strengthen democratic resilience to malign influence.

Question. How will you invest in democracy programs, particularly in the context of the secondary impacts of COVID-19 on elections and democracies worldwide?

Answer. The United States has long been a leader in promoting democracy and human rights, including advancing civil and political rights abroad. Adhering to democratic principles is essential for an effective global response to COVID-19, and it is imperative that countries not use the pandemic as a means to suspend or severely curtail democratic governance, rule of law, and respect for human rights. If confirmed, I intend to ensure that democracy programs support civil society groups and governments in strengthening protections for human rights by fostering accountable, responsive and inclusive democratic institutions and processes that directly address the secondary impacts of COVID-19.

Question. The Department of Defense annually seeks to duplicate various security assistance authorities heretofore reserved to the Department of State, to the detriment of the Secretary of States fundamental mission to oversee and direct U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, will you personally and aggressively defend the Department of State's prerogatives in this area?

Answer. I am aware of the Defense Department efforts in this area and recall selectively supporting some security assistance authorities for Defense, where for example they provided clearly for the Secretary of State to "concur" in Defense's use of such authorities; were time-limited; did not duplicate State's authorities; and provided for joint formulation. If confirmed, I will certainly study this matter thoroughly, as I share your concerns. Among my key goals will be personally to uphold and defend prerogatives of the Secretary and the Department and to protect the fundamental and primary responsibility of the Secretary to carry out for the President the fundamental mission of overseeing and directing US foreign policy.

Question. Will you commit that you and your staff will work closely with this committee to protect the Secretary of State and the Department of State's primacy in this regard?

Answer. I look forward to working closely with you and the committee to protect the primacy of the Secretary of State and the Department in this regard. I also consider that protecting such primacy means also protecting and enhancing the tools to engage internationally, such as reserving to, or enhancing the broadest range of agile foreign assistance authorities of the Secretary of State. If confirmed, I also look forward to working with you to ensure that such authorities are robust and flexible, particularly given the view by some countries that Defense authorities may be less restrictive than those of the State Department.

Question. Section 10 U.S.C 127(e) allows the Secretary of Defense to provide undefined support to any foreign person that is in any undefined way supporting U.S. Special Forces operations in a country, so long as the Chief of Mission of such country concurs. There is no requirement in the law that the Secretary of State, nor the Department of State, be aware of such activities. Such “support” has included, at least, the provision of lethal defense articles to unknown foreign persons, who could be involved in criminal or even terrorism-supporting activities. It is vital that the Secretary of State be aware of this support. Secretary Blinken, when asked this question, confirmed that he would look into the current practices and procedures in the Department with respect to reporting and concurring with such transfers and, if necessary, make amendments. Will you, if confirmed, ensure that this issue is put to the Secretary for decision, or if delegated to you, that you will direct all Chiefs of Mission not to agree to any such request without first consulting with you or the Secretary of State?

Answer. The Departments of State and Defense are working closely to address the changing global threat environment. If confirmed, I will coordinate closely with the Secretary of State and critical Department stakeholders to review the current Department practices and procedures related to Section 10 USC 127e. In the event this issue is delegated to me, I will take appropriate action to communicate Department procedures to chiefs of mission and will initiate a discussion with Department of Defense counterparts to clarify reporting and concurrence procedures and make amendments as necessary.

Question. It is no secret that the Department’s morale has sunk to historic lows over the past several years under President Trump and Secretary Pompeo. Secretary Blinken has already made great strides in addressing distrust and improving morale at the Department, but much work remains to make sure that the Department’s workforce is empowered and trusted to carry out its critical diplomatic work. What steps will you take to rebuild the morale of the people who serve at the Department and to ensure the Department has a workforce that is supported and empowered to carry out their mission to the best of their ability?

Answer. The people who work for the U.S. Department of State are committed public servants who uphold U.S. policies to protect Americans and their interests abroad. The marginalization and loss of career talent over the last four years coincides with declines in overall employee job satisfaction in annual workforce. That said, the nearly 77,000 State Department employees worldwide remain resilient. If confirmed, I am committed to improving and maintaining State Department to advance our security and prosperity, including by developing a diplomatic corps that fully represents America in all its talent and diversity. That means recruiting, retaining, and providing career development opportunities to officers with the skills to contend with 21st Century challenges and who represent the diversity of the country we represent. I will spare no effort, if confirmed, to ensure their safety and well-being and demand accountability for fostering a more diverse, inclusive and non-partisan workplace.

Question. Last year, I published a report *Diplomacy in Crisis*, which laid out the challenges facing the Department workforce. It cited employee survey data that showed some disturbing trends—for example, steep increases in the number of staff who said they feared reprisal or retribution if they were to report a violation of law. Does that concern you, and how do you plan to reverse that culture?

Answer. I agree that retaliation for participating in the EEO process or anti-harassment program, for requesting a reasonable accommodation, or for opposing discriminatory practices is unlawful, grounds for discipline, and counter to good management; employees do best when they have the ability to speak up and help us improve. If confirmed, I plan to amplify the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer’s, Bureau of Global Talent Management’s, and the Office of Civil Rights’ efforts to promote a culture of speaking up, free from fear of retaliation.

Question. A recent survey of executive-level staff at the State Department conducted by Executive Women at State found concerning trends that inhibit career ad-

vancement for women. More than half of the respondents ranked 15 of the 22 barriers measured in the survey as having a huge or significant impact on the advancement of women at the Department; 75 percent of respondents described gender-related bias as having substantial impact on their career. Do you commit to reviewing this report and its recommendations, and prioritizing a review of how the Department can reduce barriers for women to increase retention and help more women serve in senior roles?

Answer. I am committed to ensuring that women have equal opportunities for career advancement and professional development. Throughout my career, I have benefitted from strong mentors and leaders who have helped me shape my career, and I have worked to mentor others. If confirmed, I will ask those who report to me to serve as models for the Department on mentorship and promulgating the tenets of fairness and transparency in building their teams. I will hold my senior leadership responsible for creating environments where everyone's contribution is valued. I will also prioritize reviewing recommendations on initiatives to help address the gender gap in the Department from our employee affinity groups and associations.

Question. As you know, Ahlam Tamimi is responsible for masterminding a terrorist attack that killed 15 people, including two Americans at a restaurant in Israel in 2001. She has been living in Jordan since 2011 and the United States has continued to try to bring her to justice. Do you commit to pursuing justice for Americans murdered in this brazen attack?

Answer. If confirmed, I will explore all options to bring Ahlam Al-Tamimi to justice. The Department will continue to ask that the Government of Jordan extradite Al-Tamimi, and will continue to raise this issue at the highest levels. The Department will also engage Jordanian officials at all levels on the extradition treaty, which is in force.

Question. Will the administration continue to pressure Jordan to publicly condemn Tamimi and her actions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will explore all options to bring Ahlam Al-Tamimi to justice. The Department will continue to ask that the Government of Jordan extradite Al-Tamimi, and will continue to raise this issue at the highest levels. The Department will also engage Jordanian officials at all levels on the extradition treaty, which is in force.

Question. Will the administration press Jordan to seek parliamentary ratification of the 1995 extradition treaty?

Answer. If confirmed, I will explore all options to bring Ahlam Al-Tamimi to justice. The Department will continue to ask that the Government of Jordan extradite Al-Tamimi, and will continue to raise this issue at the highest levels. The Department will also engage Jordanian officials at all levels on the extradition treaty, which is in force.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In your view, are the Maduro regime's involvement in transnational organized crime and its poor economic and political policies in Venezuela to blame for region's most significant security and humanitarian crisis? Can humanitarian conditions improve on the regime's watch?

Answer. The illegitimate Maduro regime's corruption and repression are responsible for the economic collapse and the resulting humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. Maduro and his enablers tolerate and often cooperate and collude with criminal and terrorist networks, non-state armed groups, and many malign actors that perpetrate human rights abuses and human trafficking. Instead of applying Venezuela's resources to respond to its humanitarian crisis, Maduro and those allied with him pilage state coffers.

I understand the impact the current crisis in Venezuela is having on the region, and the pain it is inflicting on Venezuelans and their families. If confirmed, I am committed to addressing the humanitarian situation affecting millions of Venezuelans both inside the country and the millions who have fled to neighboring countries, pressing for a peaceful, stable, democratic outcome in Venezuela through free and fair elections and helping the Venezuelan people rebuild their lives and their country.

Question. Please describe your views on what would constitute adequate conditions under which free and fair presidential, legislative, and local elections could be conducted in Venezuela.

Answer. There are several conditions that should be met before we can consider any Venezuelan elections free and fair. The illegitimate Maduro regime should free all political prisoners, return political party organizations to their duly chosen leaders, and remove all undue restrictions on individuals and political parties to allow their free participation. All candidates, political parties, and the electorate should have unrestricted access to independent news sources and other sources of information. An independent National Electoral Council should be appointed and allowed to organize the elections free from undue influence. Finally, consistent with the bipartisan Venezuela Emergency Relief, Democracy Assistance, and Development Act (VERDAD) of 2019, elections should be observed and certified as free and fair by an independent electoral observation mission comprised of domestic and international experts.

Question. Please describe the conditions under which you would recommend the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Answer. The United States continues to maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba, which provides an opportunity to communicate directly with the Cuban Government regarding matters of human rights. The Biden-Harris administration's Cuba policy will be governed by two principles. First, support for democracy and human rights will be at the core of our efforts through empowering the Cuban people to determine their own future. Second, Americans—especially Cuban-Americans—are the best ambassadors for freedom and prosperity in Cuba. We have serious differences with Cuba on a range of issues, including Venezuela and human rights, but the administration will engage directly on those differences and on other issues that are in the interest of the United States.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to conduct meaningful consultations with me, my office, and the rest of the committee before and during any negotiations with Cuba?

Answer. Through three decades of work in foreign policy and national security, I have learned firsthand the need for close and constructive coordination with Congress. I recognize there are many different views in Congress on what our approach to Cuba should be. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress on a range of policy topics, including Cuba.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to ensure that U.S. public and private engagement in Cuba does not disproportionately benefit the Cuban military, intelligence, or security services or personnel at the expense of the Cuban people?

Answer. The administration committed to carefully reviewing U.S.-Cuba policy, including our posture regarding economic sanctions on Cuba, to ensure they advance the goals the administration is trying to achieve in empowering the Cuban people to determine their future. If confirmed, I will support the Department's review of the policy with an eye toward assessing its impact on the political and economic well-being of the Cuban people and look forward to consulting with Congress on this issue.

Question. In December 2020, Mexico approved reforms to its national security law, limiting the power of foreign law enforcement agents in the country and restricting their ability to operate. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure effective law enforcement cooperation with Mexico?

Answer. It is critical that the United States and Mexico work together to dismantle transnational criminal organizations and their operations, reduce impunity and corruption, and strengthen the rule of law in Mexico. If confirmed, I look forward to comprehensive conversations with the Mexican Government, and I will not hesitate to raise any concerns I believe to be obstacles to our bilateral law enforcement cooperation.

Question. If confirmed, how will you prioritize the recommendations of the Bureau of International Organizations as compared to the regional bureaus?

Answer. I have long appreciated and valued the expertise available from the Bureau of International Organizations. If confirmed, I will ensure the bureau's perspective is solicited, whenever appropriate, and in all circumstances welcome its recommendations. The bureau's voice and role in U.S. foreign policy is crucial as the administration re-engages with international organizations, restores its partnerships, and returns to its traditional alliances.

Question. Will you support the creation of an Office of Integrity in the United Nations System within the Bureau of International Organizations?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to ensure the State Department is organized and resourced effectively to push back against the rising influence of China and others in the UN system and other international organizations and to select qualified and independent candidates to lead and staff these bodies, including highly specialized agencies.

Question. Nations have increasingly used hostage diplomacy in an attempt to gain leverage through coercion. Multiple Americans are victims of this trend, and Americans are currently wrongfully detained in Russia, China, Iran, and Venezuela, among other countries. What role do you believe the Deputy Secretary has in returning Americans and preventing hostage diplomacy?

Answer. Bringing home U.S. hostages and wrongful detainees is a top priority for the administration and the Department of State. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Secretary and Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs to make every effort to quickly recover all U.S. nationals held hostage or wrongfully detained abroad. Additionally, it will be of the utmost importance to closely coordinate with, and lend support to, family members of hostages and wrongful detainees.

Question. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary of State, in what concrete ways will you work to bring home Americans wrongfully detained abroad and support the work of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs?

Answer. The safety and security of U.S. citizens is one of the highest priorities of the Department of State. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to use all the diplomatic means at our disposal to work for the release of those U.S. citizens wrongfully detained or held hostage and provide support to their families. Specifically, I will support the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs and the interagency in implementing the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-taking Accountability Act. The Levinson Act is critical for harnessing all of the U.S. Government's capabilities to resolve these cases quickly and provide support to families.

Question. The Iranian regime received billions in sanctions relief as a result of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The Obama administration argued that "our best analysts expect the bulk of this revenue to go into spending that improves the economy and benefits the lives of the Iranian people." However, a vast body of follow-on reporting indicates that a majority of sanctions relief was, instead, funneled to the regime's defense budget and to its proxies in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen.

- Do you believe that sanctions relief provided to Iran as a part of the JCPOA improved the economy and the lives of the Iranian people?

Answer. While the DIA testified in 2017 that the majority of sanctions relief was used for domestic purposes, the Biden-Harris administration is under no illusions about Iran's destabilizing activities in the region and about its government's willingness to divert funding that should be used to better the lives of its citizens to those purposes. It is also clear that the reimposition of sanctions has not had the effect of drying up Iran's proliferation of missiles, support for terrorism, and regional activities.

We need to address all of these activities using a variety of tools—deterrence, sanctions on Iranian entities providing support to violent groups and militias in the region, and, in the event we rejoin the JCPOA, in any follow-on talks with Iran—in close consultation and coordination with our allies and partners. If confirmed, I am committed to consulting closely with Congress on the path forward.

Question. What tools and safeguards exist that would prevent Iran from directing future sanctions relief to malign activities?

Answer. The U.S. Government maintains a range of tools to combat terrorist financing, and we will continue to use these to counter Iran's destabilizing activities and support for terrorism.

We will continue to maintain and impose sanctions on Iranian entities and individuals providing support to terrorist groups in the region. The Biden-Harris administration will take action, in coordination with our allies and partners, to both deter and counter Iran's destabilizing activities and to vigorously pursue talks on these critical issues. If confirmed, I am committed to consulting closely with Congress on the path forward.

Question. Do you commit not to pursue sanctions relief or unfreezing of Iranian assets as a precondition for nuclear negotiations with the Iranian regime?

Answer. We are ready to engage in meaningful diplomacy to achieve a mutual return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as a starting point for follow-on negotiations. Our first order of business is consulting with Congress and our allies on the path forward.

Question. You have previously expressed skepticism over the prospects of U.S. re-entry into the JCPOA, indicating that if such a development were to take place, the United States would need to be willing to put “more on the table.” Please describe in detail the prospects for U.S. re-entry into the JCPOA, to include views of UNSCR 2231-mandated Transition Day in 2023 and Termination Day in 2025.

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to ensuring that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon and to addressing the many other issues of concern related to Iran. The administration remains ready to engage in meaningful diplomacy to achieve a mutual return to compliance with JCPOA commitments as a first step, but the work will not end there. The administration intends to build on the JCPOA and use it as a platform to lengthen and strengthen the constraints on Iran’s nuclear program and to address other critical issues.

Question. Exactly what form should “more on the table” take in your view? What do you see as being acceptable to both the United States and Iran?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration remains ready to engage in meaningful diplomacy to achieve a mutual return to compliance with JCPOA commitments. While it is too early to speculate on the specific details, if confirmed, I commit to robust consultation with Congress and our P5+1 partners on the best way forward.

Question. The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (P.L. 114-17) (“INARA”) requires the President to provide to Congress the text and related materials of any agreement with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran within five days of reaching the agreement. Additionally, INARA stipulates that the administration certify that such an agreement is not “inimical to or constitute an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security.”

- Would the requirements of INARA cited above apply to any future nuclear deal with Iran?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran’s nuclear program as called for under INARA and to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including its transmission and certification requirements.

Question. Would the requirements of INARA cited above apply to any process of rejoining or reaffirming U.S. participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran’s nuclear program as called for under INARA. The JCPOA was submitted under INARA in 2015 and underwent close Congressional and public scrutiny. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied.

Question. Would any agreement between the United States and Iran regarding how the United States and Iran might return to compliance with the JCPOA constitute an “agreement with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran”?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran’s nuclear program as called for under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). The JCPOA was submitted under INARA in 2015 and underwent close Congressional and public scrutiny. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied.

Question. What are the reporting requirements of INARA that you believe that the administration is currently subject to?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consult within the administration to identify and confirm those requirements. I am committed to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including its reporting requirements.

Question. In 2014, in your capacity as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, you hosted a roundtable in which you suggested that the JCPOA contained “in one way or another, all the concerns that must be addressed.” While the 2015 agreement did secure time-limited curbs on Tehran’s nuclear program, it failed to address Iran’s destabilizing support for proxy militias and its ballistic missile development. Further, it failed to secure the release of American hostages, like Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian, who remained illegally detained by the Iranian regime until January 2016.

- Is it still your position that the 2015 nuclear agreement contained a sufficient basis for the United States to address all of its most pressing national security concerns?

Answer. The objective of the JCPOA was to ensure that Iran would never obtain a nuclear weapon, which is just one of the myriad issues of national security concern the United States and our allies and partners face regarding Iran. The situation we face in 2021, however, is different from the situation in 2015. The facts on the ground have changed, and our path forward must take this into account. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to addressing not only the concerns about Iran's nuclear program, but also broader concerns, including Iran's unjust detentions of U.S. citizens, its ballistic missile program, and destabilizing regional activities.

Question. Would you recommend the United States pursue re-entry into the 2015 nuclear agreement absent the release of American hostages, including Morad Tahbaz, Baquer Namazi, and Siamak Namazi?

Answer. The safety of U.S. citizens overseas is a top priority for the U.S. Government. The continued unjust detention of U.S. citizens in Iran is atrocious. I have spoken with family members of U.S. citizens detained in Evin Prison and their stories are horrific. As President Biden has said, the administration will aggressively work for the release and return of all our unjustly detained U.S. citizens.

Question. The Biden administration has indicated that it will attempt to address Iran's regional terrorism and ballistic missile activity in follow-on agreements after rejoining the JCPOA. Assuming the United States grants nuclear-related sanctions relief as a part of U.S. re-entry into the JCPOA, what leverage would the Biden administration retain to ensure Iran engages in meaningful discussions on its support of regional terrorism and ballistic missile program? Please be specific.

Answer. As President Biden has said, we are ready to engage in meaningful diplomacy to achieve a mutual return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and then use that as a platform to lengthen and strengthen the constraints on Iran's nuclear program and address other issues of concern. The framework of U.S. sanctions on Iran remains robust, and there are many layers of that sanctions architecture that would remain in place, even in the event of a U.S. return to the JCPOA. This certainly includes the primary U.S. embargo on Iran, and many other U.S. sanctions on Iran. Working with allies and partners, we also have other avenues to place pressure on Iran.

Question. The Abraham Accords have the potentially to fundamentally change the Middle East for the better. The previous administration had an empowered agent in the White House, Jared Kushner, to pursue normalization agreements. We understand that the Biden administration will push this role back down to the State Department—currently at the Deputy Assistant Secretary level. Given the importance of the Abraham Accords, how do you plan to expand and strengthen the Accords without a similar empowered staff?

Answer. The 2020 normalization agreements are an important contribution to peace and security in the Middle East. The Biden-Harris administration will seek to build on the agreements to expand the circle of peace between Israel and its neighbors. If confirmed, we will also closely monitor the status of the normalization efforts to date, encouraging the states that have signed such agreements with Israel to uphold their commitments to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel.

Question. Will you assign responsibility for additional normalization agreements to more senior staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the normalization agreements with the relevant subject matter experts and determining the best way forward, including with respect to staffing responsibilities.

Question. In your hearing testimony, you referenced a number of meetings that you had with Iranian officials after you had concluded your service at the Department of State in 2015. What meetings did you have with any Iranian officials since leaving the State Department in 2015? Were these meetings scheduled ahead of time? If so, by whom?

Answer. To the best of my recollection, I met with Foreign Minister Zarif twice on the margins of the Munich Security Conference, in 2018 and 2019. I also participated in two bipartisan group meetings in New York on the margins of UNGA: in 2018 with President Rouhani, and in 2019 with FM Zarif. Those meetings were facilitated by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2018) and the International Crisis Group (2019). Finally, in October 2017 I participated in a panel with

Deputy FM Abbas Araghchi at a nonproliferation conference sponsored by the Center for Energy and Security Studies in Moscow, and we spoke on the margins.

In every meeting, I urged Iran to stay in full compliance with the JCPOA, even after U.S. withdrawal, and pressed for Iran to end its regional violence and to release American prisoners. I consistently kept Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale apprised of meetings and offered to convey any useful information back to him.

Question. Who were the participants in those meetings? When and where did those meetings occur? In what capacity did you engage in those meetings?

Answer. As noted in the previous answer, the meetings were principally with Foreign Minister Zarif. At the Munich Security Conference, I believe he was accompanied by DFM Abbas Araghchi. When I saw FM Zarif in New York he was also accompanied by the DFM and by Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations. When I saw DFM Araghchi in Moscow, he was alone.

Question. Please describe in detail the purpose of the meetings, the scope of the discussions that occurred in the meetings, the positions you took in those discussions, and how those discussions inform your views on Iran policy issues.

Answer. As I stated in my confirmation hearing, I kept Under Secretary Hale apprised of the meetings and committed to sharing any useful information with him. I attended meetings to urge Iran to not escalate the situation, to stay compliant with the JCPOA, to cease its regional violence, and to release U.S. citizens who had been unjustly detained. As I noted, families have continued to call me and urge me to do whatever I can to help gain release of their loved ones. My views on Iran policy were offered in the confirmation hearing and were not changed by the meetings.

Question. Did you inform any sitting U.S. official that you had planned or were likely to have each of these meetings? If so, please provide details for each meeting.

Answer. As noted, I kept Under Secretary David Hale apprised of the meetings.

Question. After each of these meetings occurred, did you inform any sitting U.S. official that the meetings had taken place and/or share what was discussed? If so, please provide details for each meeting.

Answer. As noted, I offered to apprise Under Secretary Hale of any useful information and did so as appropriate.

Question. Outside of these meetings, have you had any other contacts with any Iranian officials since leaving the State Department in 2015? Please provide details.

Answer. None that I recall.

Question. What are the tools and strategies the Department can best employ to address cross-regional security, political, and economic challenges in the Red Sea, Horn of Africa, Sahel, and Maghreb regions of Africa?

Answer. It is essential that we bring an end to deadly conflicts and prevent the onset of new ones; help African nations address climate change; violent extremism; promote development, health security, environmental sustainability, democratic progress, responsive and responsible governance, and rule of law; assist countries facing economic distress, including health and food insecurity; and support economic and political independence in the face of undue foreign influence. If confirmed, I will ensure we work across bureaucratic and geographic seams to address these regional challenges by cooperating with allies and partners, building strong partnerships, investing in civil society, and strengthening long-standing political, economic, and cultural connections.

Question. Do you believe Special Envoys are the most effective tool in confronting such complex regional issues?

Answer. Special Envoys have been an important tool for responding to complex security and political challenges, in certain cases where sustained, high-level diplomatic engagement is needed. When well-coordinated with regional and functional bureaus and embassies, envoys can help to integrate and lead cross-regional policy efforts, such as building international coalitions to counter transnational threats. Envoys can play an important role in responding to conflicts of a cross-border and cross-regional nature that require complex, negotiated solutions with buy-in from multiple states and actors. If confirmed, I intend to play an active role in the policy discussions surrounding the potential deployment of future envoys.

Question. What other tools should the United States consider?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration recognizes that many of the biggest threats we face are transnational in nature and must be addressed collectively, in-

cluding through international organizations. Nowhere is this more true than in Africa—the African Union (AU) and sub-regional institutions play an important role on governance, economic, and security issues across the continent. If confirmed, I will ensure increased U.S. engagement with the AU and other sub-regional bodies. Additionally, I will work to pursue mutually beneficial partnerships across Africa. Coordination and collaboration are essential, and we must work to align our approaches to holistically address security and governance challenges.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to building greater interagency coordination and strategy regarding U.S. security policy and programs in Africa, namely between the Department of State and the Department of Defense, and specifically with the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM)?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department of Defense and AFRICOM to make sure we are united in our efforts to implement the President and the Secretary's policy imperatives in sub-Saharan Africa and that we work collaboratively to develop unified U.S. Government policies around which we can organize our diplomatic, security, and development engagement.

Question. The U.S.-Germany relationship has been increasingly strained in recent years. Among our points of disagreement are the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, military spending, attitudes towards China, and questions of the use of nuclear weapons. What steps will you hope to take to improve the United States' relationship with Germany?

Answer. Reinvigorating and modernizing relations with U.S. Allies, including Germany, is one of this administration's highest priorities. The administration has already begun this process by conducting extensive consultations with the German Government on a range of issues of mutual concern. The administration also halted the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Germany and lifted the cap on the number of U.S. troops that can be stationed in Germany. If confirmed, I look forward to further strengthening the U.S.-German relationship, consulting closely on our common security priorities, especially at NATO, and partnering based on our shared values on challenges, including climate change, recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and addressing threats posed by China, Russia, and Iran. We will not always agree, but we will look to manage those differences constructively as Allies.

Question. Under German leadership, the European Union just concluded an investment deal with China. How do you view the German Government's attitudes towards China, doing business with China, and their recently published Indo-Pacific Strategy?

Answer. The EU's investment deal with China is a demonstration of the amount of work we have before us to reinvigorate our Transatlantic alliance and develop a more unified response to the challenge posed by China. If confirmed, I will engage actively with the EU, Germany, and other European partners on shared concerns about China. My engagements will include discussions on how to advance our shared economic interests and counter China's aggressive and coercive actions, prevent goods made with forced labor from entering global markets, create a level playing field and promote private enterprise, and highlight China's failure to uphold its international commitments.

The Biden-Harris administration will work jointly with Germany, NATO, the EU, and other partners to address China's predatory economic practices, the challenges China poses to our collective security, and its human rights violations. Ultimately, the onus will be on China to show that its new pledges on forced labor, state-owned enterprises, and subsidies in its new agreement with the EU are not just cheap talk. The United States welcomes Germany's support for a rules-based international order, including in the Indo-Pacific, where Berlin recently announced it will send a naval vessel to demonstrate Germany's active engagement in the region.

Question. Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder recently wrote in *Handelsblatt* that "a moralizing foreign policy" towards China, implying that, when it comes to China, human rights should be placed after economic interests. Do you agree?

Answer. China has engaged in gross human rights violations that shock the conscience and must be met with serious consequences. The President has been clear that the administration will put our democratic values back at the center of our foreign policy and stand up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity. The United States will work with Germany and other allies and partners to condemn human rights violations by China in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and elsewhere. Promoting respect for human rights will be a pillar of U.S. engagement with Germany and other allies with respect to China both in bilateral and multilateral settings.

Question. How do you and the Biden administration intend to work with those European voices and actors that fall on either side of the human rights-economics divide?

Answer. The President has made it clear that revitalizing our ties with allies and partners, including in Europe, is an administration priority. The administration is working to demonstrate that democracies that protect human rights deliver for their people and that human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are essential to meet the challenges of our time. Vibrant democracies that protect human rights are more stable, more open, better partners to us, and more dependable markets for our goods and services. If confirmed, I will strengthen our relations with our allies, work with like-minded partners, and pool our collective strength to promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

Question. Do you believe that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline should be completed?

Answer. The President has made clear his belief that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is a bad deal and that the administration will oppose it, and I strongly agree with this position. Nord Stream 2 expands Russian malign influence, threatens Europe's energy security, makes Allies and partners more vulnerable, and divides Europe. This project has the potential to destabilize Europe and embolden Russian aggression toward the West. I understand that the Department and our embassies in the region are carefully monitoring any activities taken to construct the pipeline and will respond in accordance with our obligations under PEESA and CAATSA. The administration continues to engage with Germany to express the United States' continued opposition to the pipeline and to highlight our concerns. If confirmed, I will continue to use all available tools to counter Russian malign influence, to work with Allies and partners in the region, and to support Transatlantic energy security goals.

Question. Do you commit to following the law and fully implementing the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act and the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Clarification Act?

Answer. Yes. The State Department submits a report to Congress every 90 days on vessels engaged in pipe-laying and pipe-laying activities, and various entities providing and supporting those vessels, for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, as required by the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA), as amended, with the next report due to Congress in mid-May. I understand the Department submitted the first report required by PEESA, as amended, in February. If confirmed, I will continue to use all available tools to counter Russian malign influence and to work with Allies and partners in the region to support Transatlantic energy security goals. The administration will continue to examine entities involved in potentially sanctionable activity and will designate additional entities as appropriate.

Question. Do you believe the United States should entertain potential proposals from the German Government that might allow the Nord Stream 2 pipeline be completed?

Answer. The administration has made clear to Germany and other European partners that Nord Stream 2 is not just a commercial deal. The administration views Nord Stream 2 as a geo-political project that is a threat not only to Europe's energy security, but to strategic stability on the continent. The United States will continue to work with allies and partners, including Germany, Denmark, Ukraine, Poland, and the Baltic states, to ensure Europe has a reliable, diversified energy supply that enhances, rather than undermines, its collective security.

Question. Do you believe that it would be worthwhile to allow the completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline in hopes of improving the U.S.-German relationship?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has clearly stated that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline should not be completed and has consistently conveyed this to German officials. Germany is an important economic and security ally and, if confirmed, reinvigorating and modernizing relations with U.S. allies will be among my highest priorities. Close friends and allies should be able to talk frankly to one another about disagreements, as we do with German officials on Nord Stream 2. The administration remains hopeful that through diplomatic engagement, bolstered by the tools provided by Congress, Germany will address our concerns raised by the pipeline related to energy security, Ukraine, and malign Russian influence.

Question. Are such proposals currently being entertained?

Answer. The administration continues to engage Germany to make clear our view that Nord Stream 2 is a bad deal and should not be completed. The administration

has not received any formal proposals from the German Government related to Nord Stream 2.

Question. The Biden administration has stated its intent to achieve “a carbon pollution-free power sector by 2035” that puts the United States “on an irreversible path to a net-zero economy by 2050.” To this end, President Biden has ordered that federal agencies move to a fully electric vehicle fleet for automotive transportation needs and begin to use the federal procurement system for smaller equipment to drive demand for low energy-use appliances. What specific steps will you take to achieve these goals at the Department?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to comply with relevant authorities of Energy Policy Act of 2005 (PL 109-58), in full consideration of the administration’s net-zero goal and Federal Acquisition Regulations.

Question. Will these environmental goals impede other Department missions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Department’s operations, logistics and procurement experts to implement relevant policies, strategies and plans in a manner consistent with federal laws and regulations and as outlined in the President’s Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad.

Question. Will the Department be expected to offset carbon emissions from activities such as air travel?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department supports the administration’s goals, which may include future carbon offsets.

Question. Do you agree that extended nuclear deterrence is foundational to U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific, and to the strength of U.S. alliances?

Answer. Extended deterrence plays a foundational role in advancing U.S. national security objectives, including ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific. It does so by providing assurance to allies and partners, which are our greatest strategic asset, and promoting nonproliferation. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress, allies, and partners on this important issue.

Question. Do you believe that adoption of a sole purpose doctrine, a no first use policy, or a posture that fails to modernize U.S. nuclear forces would serve U.S. and allied interests in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. The United States will ensure our strategic deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective and that our extended deterrence commitments to our allies remain strong and credible. As directed by the President, this administration will conduct reviews of various nuclear policies. In that process, we will consult with our allies and partners, including those in the Indo-Pacific, as well as with Congress.

Question. The Trump administration advanced a “free and open” Indo-Pacific strategy, which yielded a lot of concrete cooperation, especially with Japan, Australia, and Southeast Asia. If confirmed, what are the key principles, initiatives, and other elements of the previous administration’s Indo-Pacific strategy that will you continue?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to working with allies and partners to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific region. As President Biden has said, working with allies and partners to secure peace, defend our shared values, and advance our prosperity across the Indo-Pacific will be among the most consequential efforts we undertake. If confirmed, I will join the administration’s review of our Indo-Pacific policy, and I commit to working closely with Congress to make sure we have the right components in place.

Question. What major policy changes would the administration make in U.S. strategy towards the region?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to working with allies and partners to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific region. The administration is conducting a review of our Indo-Pacific policy and, if confirmed, I commit to working closely with Congress to make sure we have the right components in place.

Question. The Obama administration failed to secure congressional support for the Iran nuclear deal. If confirmed, and if the Biden administration pursues an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs, do you commit to regular briefings at both the member and staff levels in advance of and following negotiations with North Korea?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consult with Congress on efforts to limit the dangers posed by North Korea’s weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs.

Question. If confirmed, and if the Biden administration pursues an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs, do you personally commit to appear before this committee prior to the completion of any such agreement for public hearings on the matter?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to consulting with Congress on efforts to limit the dangers posed by North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs.

Question. Do you believe that an agreement with North Korea regarding its weapons programs should be submitted to the Senate as a treaty for the Senate's consent to ratification? If no, please explain in detail.

Answer. Denuclearization of North Korea remains a top national security priority for the United States. I understand the administration, in consultation with our allies, will evaluate and adopt a strategy to keep the American people and our allies safe and that takes into account pressure options and the potential for future diplomacy with North Korea. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress on efforts to limit the dangers posed by North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs, including through any agreements that may be negotiated.

Question. The Indo-Pacific is the most important region for U.S. security and economic growth. It represents nearly half of the global population and is home to some of the most dynamic economies in the world, but is also home to security challenges that threaten to undermine U.S. national security interests, regional peace, and global stability. The Trump administration articulated a strategy to advance a "free and open Indo-Pacific," and has expanded partnerships with regional countries and implemented multiple initiatives in the region to support this goal. Do you agree with the core tenants of a vision for the "free and open Indo-Pacific" strategy advanced over the last several years?

Answer. Yes.

Question. If so, what should the State Department's role be in this strategy? If not, why not?

Answer. While our Indo-Pacific policy is still under review, the State Department will have a major role in supporting a free and open Indo-Pacific, including by reinvigorating our alliances and partnerships, helping the region recover from the global pandemic, promoting democratic resilience, and confronting climate change. As the President has said, we will work with partners in the Indo-Pacific and across the world to protect the free exchange of ideas in open, democratic societies and to ensure the benefits of growth are shared broadly and equitably.

Question. Chinese influence in Europe continues to grow. It has invested billions across Europe and has sought to acquire strategic infrastructure and companies in Europe. European countries are starting to take a much more robust approach to China across the board, including on investment and human rights. What is your assessment of China's objectives in Europe and with regard to the transatlantic alliance?

Answer. The objective of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) is to make Europe more reliant and compliant, by dividing and weakening alliances forged through the European Union and NATO. They attempt this through abusive, unfair, and illegal economic and trade practices, including market-distorting subsidies, intellectual property theft, forced technology transfers, and predatory investments. With economic leverage comes political influence, security vulnerabilities, and the ability to coerce countries. This weakens countries' willingness to oppose the PRC's efforts to reshape the international order, creating a threat to the transatlantic alliance itself.

Question. How should the United States respond to growing Chinese influence in Europe?

Answer. Our engagement with Europe to counter the growing influence of the People's Republic of China should begin with a common understanding of the threats facing our mutual prosperity and national security and must include collaboration with NATO. Working with our Allies and partners, we will address vulnerabilities to Transatlantic security, promote technology innovation, information sharing, and energy security within the Alliance. We will support transparent economic growth and fair labor practices. We are developing foreign assistance programs to reach 24 countries that focus on transaction advisory, cybersecurity, and strategic infrastructure protection.

Question. Last year, I published a report on how the United States and Europe can cooperate on shared challenges related to China, including a chapter on contending with China's anti-competitive economic practices. I argued that the United States and Europe should revitalize trade negotiations, continue important initiatives at the World Trade Organizations such U.S.-EU-Japan efforts on subsidies, fix current sticking points like ongoing disputes between Boeing and Airbus, coordinate on export controls, and strengthen supply chain resilience. How would you advance these goals?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to rebuilding and revitalizing relations with our European allies and working with them as using the full array of tools to counter China's abusive economic practices, both in bilateral and multilateral fora, including the WTO. The administration will work with our allies and partners to ensure the resilience of the United States, as well as global supply chains, particularly under the February 24, 2021, Executive Order on America's Supply Chains. As of March 5, the administration announced a four-month suspension of tariffs on the UK and EU with the goal of a permanent settlement, under the Section 301 Boeing-Airbus case. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts to take on the challenge of China's abusive and illegal economic practices.

Question. What additional areas would you prioritize?

Answer. In addition to those issues discussed in the previous question, presenting positive alternatives to China, which showcase the value of the U.S. model against the techno-authoritarian model proliferated by Beijing, is critical. If confirmed, I will work with our European allies and partners on a coordinated approach to China's abusive economic practices, human rights violations, and other challenges. The EU has made it clear it is willing to cooperate with the Biden-Harris administration on China. The administration will work in bilateral and multilateral fora, including the UN and others, to ensure U.S. national security is protected with respect to investments in critical infrastructure and sensitive technologies, and to push back against PRC attempts to weaken standards, rules, and institutions that support our economic prosperity.

Question. The incoming administration has stated that global health cooperation with China will be a major priority. The United States invested a lot of resources and personnel over many years to pursue health cooperation with China. That included a close relationship between the U.S. CDC and China's CDC, including co-location arrangements where they worked side-by-side for many years. While co-location arrangements ceased because of concerns about the physical security of U.S. diplomats, cooperation still continued. However, in the world's hour of need at the beginning of a serious pandemic originating in China, the Chinese Government's response proved that global health cooperation would always take a back seat to the standing and reputation of the CCP. While some level of cooperation may be necessary, how can we have confidence in these initiatives without reciprocal good faith efforts by Chinese Government interlocutors?

Answer. It is important that we get to the bottom of the early days of the pandemic in China so that we can take steps to prevent future pandemics. The Biden-Harris administration will rebuild and expand the systems to prevent, detect, and respond to biological threats globally, including in China. The administration will work to get our experts back into China so that our scientists have the access and relationships needed to prepare for and respond to the emergence and spread of potential future outbreaks around the globe. If confirmed, I will test whether China is willing to play a constructive role on certain issues, including on global health, but will be guided by a clear-eyed assessment of China's intentions.

Question. How will you overcome this fundamental challenge, and why should the American people trust that use of taxpayer dollars and other resources will bear fruit?

Answer. China poses the most significant challenge of any nation state to the United States and our interests. There are competitive, cooperative, and adversarial aspects to the U.S.-China relationship. We must advance our economic interests, counter China's aggressive and coercive actions, sustain our key military advantages, defend democratic values, and restore our vital security partnerships as we also conduct results-oriented diplomacy with China on shared challenges such as global health. The Biden-Harris administration will test whether China is willing to play a constructive role on certain issues, including on global health, but will be clear-eyed about China's intentions.

Question. What areas of health cooperation will the incoming administration prioritize with China?

Answer. Promoting global health is in China's interests as well as ours. The Biden-Harris administration is willing to test whether China is willing to play a constructive role in certain areas where we may share interests but will be clear-eyed about China's intentions. We will not trade off our core interests or values in discussions with China or any other country.

Question. What will be the role of the State Department in this regard?

Answer. The State Department can play a leading role in elevating global health diplomacy to identify potential global health risks, to work with the international community to detect and prevent epidemics and pandemics before they occur, and to ensure effective international responses when they do. This includes addressing the root causes of these events and strengthening the prevention and response capabilities of local health systems. If confirmed, I will strengthen the Department of State's diplomatic engagement in support of the COVID-19 health and humanitarian response, as well as global health security more broadly, in close alignment with USAID, HHS, CDC, and other agencies involved in this space.

Question. Would you advise the President to send high-level visitors to Taiwan, boost defense ties, explore negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement, strengthen the economic partnership set up by the Trump administration, and advocate for Taiwan in international organizations?

Answer. If confirmed, I support sending senior-level visitors to Taiwan to deepen and broaden our relationship. I support boosting defense ties and strengthening the economic partnership with Taiwan, as well as advocating for Taiwan's participation in international organizations. I understand that USTR is the lead agency on trade, and pending confirmation of the new USTR, I will work with the office of the USTR on a review of trade policy toward Taiwan.

Question. The previous administration authorized many critical capabilities via arms sales to Taiwan over the last several years, including fighters to replace and augment those being worn out from Chinese Air Force incursions, ground-launched anti-ship missiles, mobile artillery rocket systems, and surveillance drones. Do you commit to fulfilling these arms sales with speed and urgency so that the capabilities get to Taiwan in a timely manner?

Answer. My support for Taiwan is rock solid. Taiwan is a leading democracy, a major economy, and a critical security partner. I support a peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues, consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people on Taiwan. If confirmed, I will continue to support efforts to make available defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to defend itself, consistent with the law, U.S. export regulations, and nonproliferation policy.

Taiwan remains a priority for this administration. In my position at the Department of State, working together with the Department of Defense, I will implement that priority wherever feasible to assist Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.

Question. Do you commit to ensuring that the Department of State adheres to a regularized process with regard to Taiwan arms sales, including avoiding the practice of bundling?

Answer. Yes, that would be my intent, if confirmed. Consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and our One China Policy, the United States continues to make available to Taiwan the defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. This longstanding policy contributes to the maintenance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

If confirmed, I will continue to support U.S. policy to assist Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. Doing so increases stability both across the Taiwan Strait and within the region.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Throughout my life, my most important contribution has been to help open doors for women and to advocate for their human rights, and I have sought to stand for any group of marginalized people in the United States and around the world. In politics, I ran Barbara Mikulski's successful campaign for the Senate, helping her to become the first Democratic woman elected to the Senate in her own

right. I was also Executive Director of EMILY's List, helping Democratic women get elected to the U.S. House and Senate. As Undersecretary of State, on virtually every overseas trip, I made it a point to meet with women leaders, women business owners, and women crafts persons to give women visibility and press coverage and regularly spoke out about ensuring that half of the world should be included.

As I traveled as a diplomat, I met with LGBTQI+ youth in Nepal, the first country to allow citizens to check 'other' on their passport, and I met with LGBTQI+ advocates in other countries as they sought their rights. I met with the Rohingya in Bangladesh and had a frank conversation in Burma with Aung San Suu Kyi. I have also worked to help free those unlawfully detained and imprisoned, particularly in Iran, and helped achieve some releases over the years.

Question. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups?

Answer. Studies show how diverse teams outperform other teams based on their ability to innovate and address new challenges creatively. Diversity is America's competitive advantage on the global stage. Addressing today's challenges across the globe will require the Department to harness the wealth of diversity and experiences in our workforce to address increasingly complex challenges impacting our foreign policy as well as the lives of the American people. If confirmed, I commit to fostering an inclusive workplace throughout the Department so that every employee's contribution is valued. If confirmed, I will hold our senior leadership accountable for the conduct of their teams and for perpetuating an environment where each individual is heard and seen.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Department of State is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that my team upholds the values of diversity, inclusion, and mutual respect by setting that example myself and cultivating an environment where every contribution is valued and considered, regardless of differences in race, gender, ethnicity, or other attributes. I will ensure my team takes the proper training to cultivate an office environment that creates opportunity for dialogue and for innovation across diverse backgrounds. If confirmed, I will hold my leadership accountable and will work with the Department's new Chief Diversity and Inclusion officer to ensure our administrative and foreign policies support the values of diversity and inclusion.

Question. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any foreign country?

Answer. My spouse's and my investment portfolio includes mutual funds that may hold interests in companies with an international presence, but these mutual funds are exempt from conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations. I will divest any investments the State Department Ethics Office deems necessary to avoid a conflict of interest.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. Do you agree that Iran is the world's leading exporter and supporter of terrorism?

Answer. Iran remains the foremost state sponsor of terrorism. Its support for terrorism threatens international security, our forces, diplomatic personnel, and partners in the region and elsewhere. The administration is committed to countering any Iranian threat to our personnel and our vital interests and will respond to any such threat using all appropriate means.

Question. Do you believe that the United States should trust the world's leading exporter of terrorism to honor any international agreements?

Answer. The administration is ready to engage in meaningful diplomacy to achieve a mutual return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The JCPOA does not rely on trust; it provides the most intrusive nuclear verification and monitoring procedures ever negotiated. Diplomacy is a tool; it is not a reward or concession. It is a means to advance U.S. interests. I remain clear-eyed about the threat Iran poses to us and our allies.

Question. What policies will you be pressing for to address Iran's non-nuclear threats?

Answer. The administration is ready to engage in meaningful diplomacy to achieve a mutual return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and then use that as a platform to build a longer and stronger deal and also address other areas of concern. The administration also intends to pursue full implementation of relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions involving Iran.

Question. Regarding "compliance for compliance" with the Iranians, can you commit today that you will not be counseling the administration to take the first step or dilute its existing leverage vis-a-vis the Iranians amid this process? Could you please explain to us how you define compliance by the Iranians with the JCPOA?

Answer. The administration is ready to engage in meaningful diplomacy to achieve a mutual return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as a starting point for follow-on negotiations. There are many steps in the process to getting there that we will need to evaluate. If confirmed, I am committed to consulting with Congress and our allies on the path forward.

Question. Do you believe that for any Iran policy to be sustainable, it needs to have bipartisan support?

Answer. The administration agrees that a bipartisan approach to Iran is the strongest way to safeguard U.S. interests for the long term, and if confirmed I will work to engage with Congress on this and other issues. As the Biden-Harris administration develops its Iran policy, it is committed to consulting closely and regularly with Congress, as well as U.S. allies and regional partners, to listen to their ideas and concerns.

Question. Do you believe that the Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is a terrorist organization?

Answer. The Iran Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and it is a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order 13224. I believe Iran remains a state sponsor of terrorism and that, as the IRGC branch focused on extraterritorial activities, the IRGC-Quds Force has been directly involved in planning, directing, and supporting terrorist acts outside of Iran. Iran's support for terrorism threatens U.S. forces, diplomatic personnel, and partners in the region and elsewhere. The administration is committed to countering any Iranian threat to our forces, personnel, and our vital interests, and will respond to any such threat using all appropriate means.

Question. Are you committed to strict enforcement of sanctions against the IRGC and its subsidiaries and affiliates?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to countering Iran's destabilizing activities, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorist groups and violent proxies in the region. The Biden-Harris administration will continue to maintain and impose sanctions on Iranian entities and individuals supporting terrorist activity or responsible for serious human rights abuses, and will work with our allies promote accountability for those involved.

Question. During your nominations hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 3, 2021, you acknowledged that you met with officials of the Iranian regime—a regime that is a U.S.-designated State Sponsor of Terrorism—during your time out of government since 2017. You also stated that you coordinated directly with Under Secretary for Political Affairs Ambassador David Hale concerning your interactions with Iranian regime officials.

- Did you also coordinate directly with any of the following senior U.S. State Department officials who handled Iran in their portfolio: Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Schenker, Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook, Special Representative for Iran Elliott Abrams, Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun, or Secretary of State Michael Pompeo?
- If yes, please identify dates of consultation? If not, why not?

Answer. I did not engage with any of the named individuals beyond Undersecretary for Political Affairs David Hale.

Question. Besides in-person meetings, have you otherwise been in contact with any Iranian regime officials, including via e-mail, text exchange, or secure messaging platforms, between January 20, 2017, and today? If yes, please identify dates of contact and the text of the exchanges.

Answer. To the best of my recollection, since January 2017 I have not had additional contact with Iranian officials beyond the meetings discussed, other than to arrange logistical details for those in-person meetings. I do not have records of those exchanges.

Question. Do you agree that a credible option to use military force is an important component of U.S. policy to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and to deter Iran's regional ambitions?

Answer. Should Iran threaten U.S. personnel, the United States will respond in a way that is calculated, on our timetable, consistent with all applicable domestic and international law, and using a mix of tools seen and unseen.

Question. Do you believe there were gaps in the JCPOA that must be addressed to truly stop Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon?

Answer. As a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran is obligated not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Under the JCPOA, Iran reaffirmed that under no circumstances would it ever seek, develop, or acquire any nuclear weapons and committed to a series of limits on its nuclear activities that would verifiably block any path to producing nuclear material for weapons for their duration. The Biden-Harris administration has made clear it is committed to ensuring that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

Question. You have previously stated that the JCPOA provided the most comprehensive inspection regime ever negotiated. But in 2018, Israel revealed Iran's nuclear archive—which was unknown to the IAEA. Do you agree Iran lied to the IAEA about the possible military dimension (PMD) of its nuclear program?

Answer. The IAEA has made clear that it takes no information provided by Iran on its nuclear program at face value. The IAEA has previously reported that it found evidence of possible military dimensions of Iran's program to be credible, and that a "range of activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device were conducted in Iran prior to the end of 2003 as a coordinated effort, and some activities took place after 2003." The administration will not take Iran at its word regarding assertions about its nuclear program, and fully supports the IAEA as it uses its verification authorities to investigate any indication of undeclared nuclear material or activities in Iran.

Question. Can you describe your understanding of the regime's financial system with respect to terrorism finance, money laundering, corruption, and other illicit activity? Did the JCPOA change this behavior?

Answer. Iran remains the foremost state sponsor of terrorism. Its support for terrorism threatens our forces and partners in the region. President Biden is committed to countering Iran's destabilizing activities, including its ballistic missile program and support for terrorist groups and violent proxies in the region. The United States and our partners negotiated a deal that verifiably prevented Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and subjected it to the most intrusive inspection regime ever negotiated. It was working. The President has made clear that the United States will be prepared to resume participation in the deal if Iran resumes strict compliance, as a starting point for follow-on negotiations to lengthen and strengthen these nuclear constraints, and address other issues of concern, including Iran's ballistic missile program and its destabilizing regional activity.

Question. Do you agree that the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 (INARA) is permanent law and is binding on the Biden administration?

Answer. The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) is binding law. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration is committed to implementing the requirements of INARA.

Question. Do you agree that because INARA requires any agreement with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran to be submitted to Congress for review “regardless of the form it takes”, “whether a political commitment or otherwise”, and “regardless of whether it is legally binding or not”, that any informal agreement, including even an unwritten oral understanding, reached about how the United States and Iran will return to compliance with the JCPOA, or move in the direction of returning to compliance with the JCPOA, must be submitted to Congress for review pursuant to INARA?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran’s nuclear program as called for under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). The JCPOA was submitted under INARA in 2015 and underwent close Congressional and public scrutiny. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including with respect to the transmission requirement.

Question. Do you agree that prior to and during the period for transmission of an agreement to Congress for review pursuant to INARA, and during the period for congressional review provided in INARA, “the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement” required to be transmitted to Congress for review pursuant to INARA?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran’s nuclear program as called for under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). The JCPOA was submitted under INARA in 2015 and underwent close Congressional and public scrutiny. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including with respect to the transmission requirement.

Question. Do you agree that the sanctions that may not be waived, suspended or otherwise obviated under the circumstances described in the preceding question include sanctions that may have been waived, suspended or otherwise obviated pursuant to the JCPOA following congressional review of that agreement pursuant to INARA, but which were subsequently re-imposed by the United States Government?

Answer. I am aware of this provision of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). I understand that the Biden-Harris administration is committed to implementing the requirements of INARA and if confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including with respect to limitations during any congressional review period.

Question. Are you personally committed to upholding the spirit of INARA’s restrictions on sanctions relief for Iran referred to in the preceding two questions but not seeking to extend sanctions relief to Iran in circumvention of those restrictions?

Answer. I am aware that the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) contains certain limitations on sanctions relief during the congressional review period. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration is committed to implementing the requirements of INARA. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied.

Question. Are you personally committed to ensuring that Congress will be able to review pursuant to INARA any agreement that is hereafter reached with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran, irrespective of the level of formality or politically or legally binding nature of such agreement, to include any agreement providing for return to compliance with the JCPOA, as well as any agreement that amends, augments, or supersedes the JCPOA?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran’s nuclear program as called for under Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) and to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including its transmission requirement.

Question. Do you agree that INARA requires the President to “keep the appropriate congressional committees and leadership fully and currently informed of any initiative or negotiations with Iran relating to Iran’s nuclear program, including any new or amended agreement”?

Answer. I am aware of this provision of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). If confirmed, I commit to consulting fully with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under INARA.

Question. Are you personally committed to keeping the appropriate congressional committees and leadership fully and currently informed of any initiative or negotiations with Iran relating to Iran's nuclear program, including any new or amended agreement?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to consulting fully with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under INARA.

Question. Do you agree that INARA requires the President to submit a report to Congress not less frequently than every 180 calendar days "on Iran's nuclear program and the compliance of Iran with the [JCPOA] during the period covered by the report"?

Answer. I am aware of this provision of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under INARA, and to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including its reporting requirements.

Question. Do you agree that INARA requires the President to make a determination and certification to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership not less than every 90 calendar days regarding Iran's compliance with the JCPOA?

Answer. I am aware of this provision of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under INARA, and to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including the requirement to determine whether to make the certification called for in Section 135(d)(6).

Question. Do you agree that, should any new agreement or agreements be reached with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran, INARA will require the President to submit a report to Congress not less frequently than every 180 calendar days "on Iran's nuclear program and the compliance of Iran with [each such new agreement] during the period covered by the report"?

Answer. I am aware of this provision of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under INARA, and to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including its semi-annual reporting requirements.

Question. Do you agree that, should any new agreement or agreements be reached with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran, INARA will require the President to make a determination and certification to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership not less than every 90 calendar days regarding Iran's compliance with each such new agreement?

Answer. I am aware of reporting and certification requirements of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program, as called for under INARA, and to ensuring the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including the requirement to determine whether to make the certification called for in Section 135(d)(6).

Question. Do you agree that the Biden administration will be required under INARA to resume submitting reports and certifications to Congress that are mandated under INARA should the administration announce that the United States has returned to the JCPOA, or is returning to the JCPOA?

Answer. I am aware of the reporting and certification requirements of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program, as called for under INARA, and to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including its reporting requirements.

Question. If you agree that the Biden administration will be required under INARA to resume submitting such reports and certifications to Congress should it announce that the United States has returned to the JCPOA, or is returning to the JCPOA, on what date will the first such report be due, and on what date will the first such certification be due? If you are not able at this time to specify the dates on which such reports and certifications will be due, please specify the method or formula you will use to calculate the respective due dates.

Answer. I am aware of the reporting and certification requirements of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). The United States has not announced it has returned to the JCPOA, and I am not able to specify dates for potential future reporting requirements. If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program, as called for under INARA, and to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including meeting its reporting requirements in a timely manner.

Question. Can you assure the committee that there are no circumstances under which the Biden administration will not abide by the understandings about compliance with INARA spelled out in your responses to the foregoing questions?

Answer. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration is committed to implementing the requirements of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied.

Question. Do you agree that U.S. policy in the region is best advanced when working closely with our ally Israel?

Answer. President Biden has been one of Israel's strongest supporters over the last fifty years. The U.S.-Israel relationship is deeply personal to him and he has met and worked closely with every Israeli Prime Minister since Golda Meir. The President believes the ties between our two countries, rooted in strategic interests and shared values, should transcend domestic politics. In this vein, his administration will not only further strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship, but also ensure that it enjoys bipartisan backing. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals to work closely with Israel, to include building on normalization agreements to strengthen cooperation between Israel and its neighbors.

Question. Do you believe Israel is and should always remain a Jewish State?

Answer. President Biden supports Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state. He continues to believe the two-state solution is the best way to ensure that Israel remains both Jewish and democratic. If confirmed, I will support the Biden-Harris administration's efforts to restore credible U.S. engagement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and look for opportunities for the type of diplomatic progress that can protect Israel's long-term security.

Question. Do you agree with United States policy (and law) that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel?

Answer. This administration recognizes that Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and its ultimate status is a final status issue, which will need to be resolved by the parties in the context of direct negotiations. The administration will handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. Do you agree the United States Embassy in Israel should remain in Jerusalem?

Answer. The U.S. position is that our embassy will remain in Jerusalem, which we recognize as Israel's capital. The ultimate status of Jerusalem is a final status issue, which will need to be resolved by the parties in the context of direct negotiations.

Question. Do you support full funding for United States security assistance to Israel as laid out in the current 10-year Memorandum of Understanding?

Answer. President Biden's commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. As you know, the President played an important role in helping to negotiate the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on security assistance, among the largest aid packages in U.S. history. If confirmed, I will support the administration's pledge to preserve the terms of the MOU without reservation.

Question. The MOU is a comprehensive agreement that outlined the terms and conditions of this assistance to Israel. If confirmed, will you oppose efforts to impose additional conditions or restrictions on this aid?

Answer. The administration will continue to uphold President Biden's strong commitment to Israel and its security. If confirmed, I will advance the administration's position that we oppose efforts to place additional conditions on U.S. military assistance to Israel.

Question. Do you support the United States' commitment to Israel's Qualitative Military Edge?

Answer. The United States is required by law to help preserve Israel's Qualitative Military Edge in the Middle East. If confirmed, I will champion President Biden's priorities related to Israel's security, including our commitment to maintain Israel's Qualitative Military Edge.

Question. If confirmed, will you make ensuring Israel's Qualitative Military Edge is maintained a priority?

Answer. President Biden's commitment to Israel's security is inviolable. If confirmed, I will support the administration's objective to continue U.S. military assistance to Israel and uphold Israel's Qualitative Military Edge, which is critical to ensuring Israel has the means to defend itself.

Question. Do you agree that the only way to reach a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is through direct, bilateral negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians rather than one imposed by outside actors?

Answer. The United States is working toward a more peaceful, secure, and prosperous future for the people of the Middle East. As part of this, the United States seeks to advance the possibility of achieving a negotiated two-state solution, in which Israel lives in peace and security alongside a viable Palestinian state. If confirmed, I will support direct negotiations between the two parties to advance this goal. I will also support the administration's goals of working closely with Israel, engaging the Palestinians, and consulting with partners in the region who have a common interest in supporting efforts to advance lasting peace.

Question. Israel constantly faces terrorist attacks and threats—including rocket attacks by Hamas in Gaza and attacks from Iranian-backed groups in Lebanon and Syria. Do you fully support Israel's right to defend itself from terrorist attacks, including taking pre-emptive action to disrupt weapons shipments from Iran to its terrorist proxies?

Answer. President Biden's commitment to Israel's security is a key foreign policy tenet. The administration will continue U.S. military assistance to Israel and uphold Israel's Qualitative Military Edge, which is critical to ensuring Israel has the means to defend itself. The administration will take action, in coordination with our allies and partners, to both deter and counter Iran's destabilizing activities. There should be no doubt that the President has Israel's back. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals regarding Israel's security.

Question. If confirmed, will you make it a priority to counter the global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction (BDS) campaign against Israel? Will you work to expand Israel's inclusion in the international community and ensure our ally is treated as a normal nation?

Answer. President Biden, Secretary Blinken, and I firmly oppose the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. This movement unfairly singles out Israel and too often veers into anti-Semitism. While the Biden-Harris administration will respect the American people's First Amendment rights, it will not hesitate to voice our disapproval of the BDS campaign or to fight efforts to delegitimize Israel on the world stage. The administration will work tirelessly to support Israel's further integration into the international community.

Question. The International Criminal Court over the last several years has taken actions potentially leading to the prosecution of American and Israeli nationals despite neither country being a member to the court. If confirmed, will you oppose and work to prevent ICC prosecutions of Americans or Israelis?

Answer. The United States shares the goals of the ICC in promoting accountability, respect for human rights, and justice for victims of atrocities. However, the United States has always objected to any attempt by the ICC to investigate U.S. personnel, as the United States is not a State Party to the Rome Statute. If confirmed, I will work to protect U.S. personnel from legal jeopardy before the ICC. I share the administration's serious concerns about the ICC's attempts to exercise jurisdiction over Israeli personnel. Israel is not a State Party, and Palestine is not a State.

Question. Hezbollah's arsenal, particularly its precision guided munitions (PGM), represents a clear threat to U.S. and allied forces across the Middle East. If confirmed, what specific actions will you recommend the U.S. take to address the PGM threat from Hezbollah?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the United States uses all the tools at its disposal to push back on Hezbollah's terrorist and illicit activities. Hezbollah's actions threaten regional stability, as well as Lebanon's security, stability, and sov-

ereignty. Hezbollah's actions demonstrate it is more interested in advancing its own interests than those of the Lebanese people. If confirmed, I will also consult closely with Israel on how to address threats to regional security and stability.

Question. What actions will you take to press all our European allies and the United Nations to designate Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist entity?

Answer. Hezbollah has been designated by the State Department as a Foreign Terrorist Organization since 1997 and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist since 2001. The Department remains concerned about Hezbollah's terrorist and illicit activities around the world and its destabilizing actions in Lebanon. If confirmed, I will continue to advance our long-standing diplomatic efforts to press countries and the European Union to fully designate, ban, or restrict Hezbollah from operating in their territory. Thirteen governments around the world, including in Europe, took significant domestic action along these lines against Hezbollah in recent years. The administration will encourage others to follow suit.

Question. If confirmed, will you work to ensure that the U.S. continues support for the Kurds of Syria during the Biden administration?

Answer. I am committed to supporting our local partners, the Syrian Democratic Forces. They cannot continue to root out ISIS terrorists or guard the tens of thousands of ISIS detainees and families who are still in their custody without U.S. support. If confirmed, I will also support renewed U.S. efforts to stabilize areas of northeast Syria liberated from ISIS, to include an ongoing Syrian Intra-Kurdish Dialogue, which aims to de-escalate tensions with the Syrian opposition and advance more inclusive governance in northeast Syria.

Question. In a July 2020 piece in Foreign Policy titled "The Total Destruction of U.S. Foreign Policy Under Trump", you criticized the Trump administration for having "made no effort to find areas of cooperation with China, such as climate change." Should cooperation or competition be the dominant U.S. policy approach to Beijing?

Answer. As Secretary Blinken has said, "our relationship with China will be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be, and adversarial when it must be. The common denominator is the need to engage China from a position of strength." China has been growing more authoritarian at home and more assertive abroad. Beijing is now challenging our security, prosperity, and values in significant ways that require a new U.S. approach. If confirmed, I will be committed to meeting this challenge.

Question. If you seek to cooperate with the PRC, do you believe that the Chinese Communist Party will cooperate in good-faith?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration approaches China through the lens of strategic competition and recognizes there are adversarial and cooperative aspects to the U.S.-China relationship. The administration is willing to test whether China is willing to play a constructive role on certain issues but will be clear-eyed about China's intentions. China's failure to act consistently with its international obligations and commitments will significantly factor into how the U.S. approaches China on issues where our interests may align. If confirmed, I will keep these past shortcomings in mind in future dealings with Beijing and will consult with Congress on any potential areas of cooperation.

Question. Can you name bilateral agreements between the United States and the PRC that Beijing has honored in full and without later reneging? How do you plan to ensure that Beijing fulfills its part of any agreement on climate change given its long record of broken promises?

Answer. China poses the most significant challenge of any nation-state to the interests of the American people. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to working closely with our allies and partners to press China to act more constructively. If confirmed, I will be unflinching in our diplomacy with China on climate change. Given Beijing's track record of failing to honor its international obligations, the United States will keep eyes wide open and not limit its options in addressing the China challenge just because Beijing makes offers of cooperation. The administration will judge Beijing by its actions, not its words.

Question. Does China have more or fewer coal-fired power plants today than in 2016?

Answer. China has more coal-fired power plants now than it did in 2016. China currently has approximately 1,005 gigawatts (GW) of installed coal power generation capacity, which is roughly half of the world's total. According to the Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air, China also accounts for 41 percent of planned

coal-power construction, approximately 200 GW over the next five to ten years. Although China has made efforts to decommission old coal plants and curtail future builds, it has continued to expand its coal-fired power fleet and added a net 36.8 GW and 29.8 GW of coal-fired generation capacity in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Media report that, in 2020, alone China built more than three times the amount built elsewhere around the world.

Question. If confirmed, how will the State Department, under your leadership, push for international transparency and accountability to ensure we learn what caused the COVID-19 pandemic and how to prevent the next pandemic?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration recognizes COVID-19 is a global challenge that requires a global response and will engage globally to respond to and recover from COVID-19, as well as to prepare for the next threat. The administration will work with allies and partners to strengthen and reform the WHO, push for a transparent investigation into the emergence and spread of COVID-19 to better prepare for future outbreaks, and support multilateral efforts to end the COVID-19 pandemic. The commitment to combat COVID-19, promote public health, and advance global health security, as embodied in National Security Memorandum-1, will save lives, foster economic recovery, and build better resilience against future biological threats.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that the State Department will follow up on the Department's January 2021 disclosure of new information on activities at the Wuhan Institute of Virology? Will you commit to sharing with Congress—and with the public as appropriate—further details on the disclosures including the names of the Wuhan Institute of Virology researchers who were sick in the fall of 2019?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has made clear it supports a robust and transparent investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. An impartial public health investigation into the origins and early spread of any novel outbreak is vital to protecting against future health security threats. The administration will review all information available to us about the origins of SARS-COV-2. It is imperative to have transparency on the early events of the pandemic and determine how COVID-19 spread, so future emergence events with pandemic potential can be averted. If confirmed, I commit to follow up—with Congress and with the public—on disclosures of new information and relevant diplomatic reporting.

Question. If confirmed, will you support the suspension of U.S. funding to research institutions in China engaged in virological studies, including the Wuhan Institute of Virology and all branches of the PRC Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and discontinue all joint research projects involving Chinese scientists and U.S. scientists that receive funding from the U.S. taxpayers so long as none of this impacts U.S. national security, until PRC authorities allow a credible and unfettered international investigation into the origin of SARS-COV-2?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the current policy and funding priorities for any programs the Department may have for joint research projects with China.

Question. On April 3, 2020, you signed a statement entitled “Saving Lives in America, China, and Around the World,” which read in part: “No effort against the coronavirus—whether to save American lives at home or combat the disease abroad—will be successful without some degree of cooperation between the United States and China. China’s factories can make the protective gear and medicines needed to fight the virus; its medical personnel can share their valuable clinical experience in treating it; and its scientists can work with ours to develop the vaccine urgently needed to vanquish it.” Do you still believe today that the same regime that infected the world with this deadly virus, and then lied to cover it up, can really be part of the solution?

Answer. Promoting global health is in China’s interests as well as ours. It is not a favor to be bargained for, but a challenge best addressed with China’s cooperation. The Biden-Harris administration will test whether China is willing to play a constructive role on certain issues where we may share interests, such as global health, but will be clear-eyed about Chinese intentions. The administration will not trade off U.S. core interests or values in discussions with China or any other country.

Question. How would you characterize the nature of the Chinese Communist Party? Do you believe their worldview and value system are compatible with our own?

Answer. The Chinese Communist Party is illiberal, authoritarian, and increasingly aggressive. Under the Biden-Harris administration, the United States will ad-

vance an alternative world view that promotes democratic governance and transparency.

Question. What are the ambitions of the Chinese Communist Party? Are they purely domestic in scope? Regional? Global? If global, how do they challenge U.S. interests?

Answer. The People's Republic of China (PRC) seeks to expand its domestic, regional, and global influence and drive wedges between the United States and our partners and allies. The PRC's coercive economic activity and aggressive acquisition of critical technologies through licit and illicit means—coupled with a corresponding expansion of its military footprint and collection capabilities—seek to expand Chinese influence around the globe. These actions pose a threat to U.S. interests and undermine our own military, diplomatic, and economic influence. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of Defense, other national security agencies, and Congress to address this challenge.

Question. In what areas do you think the United States should try to frustrate the CCP's ambitions and undermine the party's ability to achieve their international ambitions?

Answer. The United States is committed to working with our allies and partners to counter China's malign actions around the world. The U.S. should engage in international institutions and make the necessary investments in our military to ensure we can deter any aggression. Economically, we can and must out-compete China, including by preventing U.S. intellectual property and technology from being used in ways that could undermine our competitiveness and security. If confirmed, I will work closely with our allies and partners to confront the challenges posed by China from a position of strength.

Question. Do you believe that the Chinese Communist Party's united front and intelligence activities inside the borders of the United States, as well as inside the borders of our allies and partners, challenge the integrity of our policymaking? Why?

Answer. It is important that we bring greater transparency to bear on malign People's Republic of China influence activities in the United States. China's use of information operations and other coercive and corrupting efforts to undermine and interfere in democracies poses a threat to the United States and our allies and partners. If confirmed, I will push back on Beijing's attempts to write the rules of the information age by working with allies and likeminded partners to support an affirmative, democratic vision for the global information space, while building resilience against these threats and exposing China's malign activity. Further, if confirmed, I will also work to educate important U.S. constituencies, including state and local governments, on these threats.

Question. Do you agree that the goal of the Chinese Communist Party is not merely to make China stronger and more developed, but rather for China to ultimately supplant the United States as the world's dominant economic, political, and military power?

Answer. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) intends for the People's Republic of China, which is growing increasingly illiberal, authoritarian, and aggressive, to become a dominant world power. Its values are often at odds with our own. The administration is committed to working with our partners and allies to address the challenges the CCP poses to democratic values from a position of strength. The Department will communicate this clearly and directly in our public diplomacy efforts. The Department will confront the CCP's growing authoritarianism and escalating efforts to divide and manipulate others and write the rules of the information age. It will work with allies and partners to define an affirmative, democratic vision for the world.

Question. Is Xi Jinping's "Community of Common Destiny for Humanity" compatible with your views of the international order and the ways in which countries conduct diplomacy? If not, why not?

Answer. China seeks to make America and its allies more dependent on China and erode the international system that has provided peace and stability since the end of World War II. Xi's "Community of Common Destiny for Humanity" policy framework is no exception. If confirmed, I will prioritize renewed engagement with our allies and partners. I will rally their support to push back against China, including its attempts to reshape the international order and assert a set of values inconsistent with our own.

Question. How would you assess the United States' policy of engagement with Beijing from 1979 to 2017? In retrospect, did that policy effectively protect and advance of our most vital national interests? Do you support a return to that policy?

Answer. The strategic environment has changed significantly in recent years, as has China itself. While there was once a broad consensus that economic liberalization in China would lead to political liberalization, that has not happened. China has grown more authoritarian at home and more assertive abroad. The CCP is illiberal, authoritarian, and intends for China to become a dominant world power. Beijing is working across the spectrum to compete with and challenge the United States. This necessitates a new U.S. approach. If confirmed, I will commit to addressing China from a position of strength in coordination with allies and partners.

Question. Please explain how you believe the United States should act to defend our national interests when challenged by the Chinese authorities, even if our allies and partners are reluctant to join us.

Answer. The most effective way to defend our national interests when challenged by Chinese authorities is to build positions of strength with U.S. allies and partners. On its own, the United States represents about a quarter of global GDP. When we join with fellow democracies that share more than doubles. China cannot afford to ignore more than half the global economy.

When it is in the United States' interest to act on our own, we will do so. It is essential to confront directly China's economic abuses, defend our values, and protect the long-term prosperity and security of the United States.

Question. While multilateral efforts are preferable, do you support unilateral action to counter China's malign activities if diplomatic efforts to secure multilateral action should fail?

Answer. The challenges that China poses to our security, prosperity, and values, and how we conduct this competition in coordination with our allies and partners, will be crucial for defining the 21st century. PRC actions hurt American workers, blunt our technological edge, threaten our alliances, and undermine international organizations. If confirmed, I will work with partners and allies to counter Beijing's aggressive and coercive actions, sustain our military and economic advantages, and defend our democratic values from a position of strength. However, when it is in the United States' interest to act on our own, we should do so.

Question. If confirmed, in future dialogue with Beijing, will you press for meaningful progress as a precondition for further rounds of dialogue? Do you commit to supporting the administration and Secretary in raising issues that Beijing deems "sensitive"—such as human rights, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet, and the Uyghurs—regardless of whether doing so may affect the CCP's willingness to engage in further dialogue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will stand up for our values when human rights are being abused in Xinjiang and Tibet—or elsewhere in China—or when autonomy is being assaulted in Hong Kong. The administration is willing to test whether the Chinese Government is willing to play a constructive role on certain issues but will be clear-eyed about U.S. interests. The People's Republic of China's (PRC) failure to uphold its international commitments will significantly factor into how we develop our approach to the PRC. If confirmed, I will keep these past shortcomings in mind in future dealings with Beijing. The Biden-Harris administration will put our democratic values at the center of our foreign policy and stand up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity.

Question. Do you support the Trump administration's designation of the National Association for China's Peaceful Unification as a foreign mission of the PRC? What steps will you take to ensure other such front organizations are properly designated, and to inform relevant stakeholders within the U.S.—including state and local governments, universities, and business associations—of the nature and mission of such front organizations?

Answer. China's use of coercive and corrupting tools of influence to undermine and interfere in democracies is a concern for the United States and our allies and partners around the world. The Biden-Harris administration will take action to counter this malign Chinese influence, including by increasing transparency and accountability. The administration will work with our allies and likeminded partners to build resilience against these threats, to expose China's malign activity and, when appropriate, to impose costs. The administration will also work with important U.S. constituencies, including state and local governments and academic institutions, to address these threats.

Question. Do you support the Trump administration's reciprocity requirements that PRC diplomats report certain categories of meetings to the U.S. Government, including meetings with educational institutions and Chinese community groups?

Answer. The United States seeks for our diplomats in China the same open access PRC officials enjoy in the United States. For years, Beijing has systematically obstructed access by U.S. officials. The administration will use all the tools at our disposal to achieve reciprocal access for our diplomats in China.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that human rights concerns are integrated in every senior bilateral engagement, and that specific prisoner cases are raised at the highest levels, both publicly and privately, with the PRC?

Answer. If confirmed, I will put our democratic values at the center of our foreign policy and stand up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity. Effective diplomacy on human rights issues requires not only general statements but also targeted engagement on specific cases. If confirmed, I will integrate advocacy on specific cases into our human rights diplomacy.

Question. Do you see the link between China's pervasive, egregious human rights abuses and its failure on so many other fronts to be a responsible global actor?

Answer. The People's Republic of China seeks international acceptance of its authoritarian alternative to the rules-based international system that has been the mainstay of global security and prosperity over the course of decades. At the same time, Beijing denies or obfuscates that it has an alarming record of violations and abuses of international human rights. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to challenge authoritarian governance and stand up for the human rights of all individuals, including by calling on PRC authorities to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms consistent with China's international obligations and commitments.

Question. In December 2018, Chinese authorities detained Pastor Wang Yi of the Autumn Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu, and one year later, sentenced him to nine years in prison for refusing to accept the CCP controls of his congregation described above. If confirmed, will you agree to raise Pastor Wang's case with leaders in Beijing and advocate for his immediate and unconditional release until they do so?

Answer. I share your concerns regarding the deterioration of freedom of religion and belief in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Religious leaders are at particular risk of PRC repression and are pressured to join state-run religious organizations, as we have seen in the cases of Buddhist lamas, Muslim imams, Protestant pastors, and Catholic bishops and priests. Pastor Wang Yi is no exception and, if confirmed, I will continue the Department's advocacy for his release. Effective diplomatic engagement on human rights issues requires not only general statements but also engagement on specific cases. If confirmed, I will advocate on specific human rights cases.

Question. Former Secretary of State Pompeo rightly determined that the People's Republic of China is committing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities. Secretary Blinken agreed with this determination. Do you concur with former Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Blinken?

Answer. Yes. The People's Republic of China (PRC) has committed crimes against humanity and genocide in Xinjiang. Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups have suffered unspeakable oppression at the hands of China's authoritarian government. The PRC is engaged in atrocities that shock the conscience and must be met with serious consequences. If confirmed, I will speak out consistently with allies and partners to condemn these atrocities, and I will consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible and to deter future abuses.

Question. If confirmed, will you work toward getting like-minded countries to join the United States in a genocide determination?

Answer. Secretary Blinken said in his judgment that the People's Republic of China (PRC) has committed genocide against Uyghurs, and I agree. The PRC also has committed crimes against humanity in Xinjiang against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups, including imprisonment, torture, enforced sterilization, and persecution. The associated abuses in Xinjiang are particularly devastating to ethnic minority women and girls. These atrocities shock the conscience and must be met with serious consequences. If confirmed, I will speak out consistently and jointly with allies and

partners to condemn these atrocities and will consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible and deter future abuses.

Question. Will you endorse the Rubio-McGovern Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act to prevent Beijing from profiting from its abuse of Uyghur and other persecuted groups' labor?

Answer. While I cannot comment on pending legislation, I can confirm that the Biden-Harris administration stands against forced labor and abuses targeting Uyghurs and other minority groups carried out by the People's Republic of China (PRC). If confirmed, I will work with international partners to promote accountability for the PRC's atrocities in Xinjiang, press for the immediate and unconditional release of all those arbitrarily detained, the abolition of the internment camps and an end to forced labor, as well as the cessation of all other human rights abuses in Xinjiang and elsewhere in China. In addition, if confirmed, I will support efforts across the government to limit the profits China gains from forced labor.

Question. Do you believe that the National Liberation Army (ELN) is a terrorist organization?

Answer. The National Liberation Army (ELN) is designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order 13224.

Question. Do you believe that the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) is a terrorist organization?

Answer. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia is designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order 13224.

Question. Cuba harbors terrorists groups like the ELN. Do you support keeping Cuba on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has committed to carefully reviewing decisions made in the prior administration, including the decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism. The administration will also carefully review policy related to Cuba and will provide further information at the appropriate time. The administration does not discuss deliberations or potential deliberations regarding designations.

Question. The Cuban regime denies the Cuban people essential liberties such as free association, expression, belief, and access to information. How would you characterize the Cuban regime's human rights record?

Answer. Cuba has a poor human rights record. The Cuban Government has increased its practice of arbitrary arrest and harassment of human rights defenders, journalists, and anyone who criticizes the Government. If confirmed, I will follow through on the Biden-Harris administration's promise to ensure that democracy and human rights remain at the core of our policy efforts toward Cuba. The administration will engage directly with a large swath of Cuban civil society, with the goal of empowering the Cuban people to determine their own future. The administration will also engage directly the Cuban Government to denounce abuses and push for reform.

Question. The Cuban military plays a large role in controlling the flow of money in the Cuban economy. They use this control to support the Cuban Communist Party and ensure regime survival. Do you support restricting financial transactions with the Cuban military as a way to promote freedom in Cuba?

Answer. The Cuban people face great hardship as they deal with the pandemic, economic upheaval caused by the country's recent monetary measures, and decades of living under an oppressive government that has failed to responsibly manage Cuba's economy. The administration has committed to carefully reviewing U.S.-Cuba policy, including our posture regarding economic sanctions on Cuba, to ensure they advance the administration's goal of empowering the Cuban people to determine their future. If confirmed, I will support the Department's review of the policy with an eye toward assessing its impact on the political and economic well-being of the Cuban people, and I look forward to consulting with Congress on this issue.

Question. Do you agree that Americans should be compensated for property that was confiscated by the Castro regime?

Answer. Many Americans waited decades for compensation due to the Cuban Government's confiscation of their or their family's property. The Department will explore the best ways to support claimants and resolve outstanding claims. The ad-

ministration committed to carefully reviewing U.S.-Cuba policy, including the best way to advance U.S. nationals' claims against the Cuban Government. The administration recognizes the varied views in Congress, and if confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress in developing a path forward.

Question. Do you agree with Secretary Pompeo's decision to no longer exercise the suspension authority in the LIBERTAD Act, which allows Americans to sue in U.S. courts, companies trafficking in their stolen properties?

Answer. The administration has committed to carefully reviewing U.S.-Cuba policy, including U.S. posture regarding the suspension authority in Title III of the LIBERTAD Act. I understand that the administration is exploring ways to best support U.S. nationals' claims. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress on this issue.

Question. Do you agree we should maintain strong sanctions against Cuba and Venezuela as the Cuban regime provides intelligence and other vital support to the Maduro regime in Caracas in exchange for subsidized or free oil?

Answer. The United States should maintain strong sanctions targeting the illegitimate Maduro regime and its enablers, including those complicit in human rights abuses and corruptly siphoning wealth and resources from the Venezuelan people. The administration is also committed to taking all appropriate steps to prevent our sanctions from impacting humanitarian access and delivery.

Question. Do you support Interim President Juan Guaido in the pursuit of the restoration of democracy in Venezuela?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration continues to recognize Juan Guaido as the interim President of Venezuela. If confirmed, I will press for the restoration of democracy in Venezuela through holding of free and fair elections.

Question. Do you support democracy assistance to the Cuban people to promote democracy, civil society and human rights in Cuba pursuant to U.S. law?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will follow through on the Biden-Harris administration's promise to ensure that the advancement of democracy and human rights remains at the core of our policy efforts toward Cuba. The Biden-Harris administration will engage directly with a large swath of Cuban civil society, with the goal of empowering the Cuban people to determine their own future. The administration will also engage with the Cuban Government to denounce abuses and push for reform. I am committed to consulting closely with Congress about Cuba policy, if confirmed.

Question. The Helms amendment states, "No foreign assistance funds may be used to pay for the performance of abortion as a method of family planning or to motivate or coerce any person to practice abortions." If confirmed, can you guarantee there will be a strict adherence to the Helms amendment in the administration of U.S. foreign assistance?

Answer. If confirmed, I will take the Helms Amendment and other legislative restrictions, including other restrictions related to abortion, very seriously and will work with partners to ensure compliance.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. March 15 will mark the 10th anniversary of the brutal crackdown by Syrian president Bashar al-Assad against peaceful protestors, resulting in a violent and protracted civil war. I am concerned that U.S. actions in Syria in the last four years have not reflected a robust decision-making process focused on supporting our allies and countering malign actors. Having visited our Kurdish partners in 2018, I have seen first-hand the value of an engaged U.S. policy on Syria. What actions are available for the United States to take now to improve the outcome in Syria?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration's policy goals in Syria include achieving a comprehensive political resolution under the parameters of UNSCR 2254, ensuring the enduring defeat of ISIS, and promoting the provision of life-saving humanitarian aid to Syrians in need. The administration will use a variety of tools, across a coordinated whole-of-government approach, to push for a sustainable end to the Syrian people's suffering. Any political settlement must address the factors that drive violence and instability in Syria. Additionally, the humanitarian situation is

dire. If confirmed, I will work within the administration to do more to aid vulnerable Syrians displaced within Syria, as well as refugees who fled abroad.

Question. How should the U.S. balance Turkey, the Kurds and Russia in responding to the situation in Northeastern Syria?

Answer. Preventing an ISIS resurgence in Iraq and Syria demands revitalized U.S. engagement. The administration is committed to supporting our local partners, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The United States has shared interests with Turkey in countering terrorism and ending the conflict in Syria and understands Turkey's concerns about U.S. cooperation with the People's Protection Units (YPG) as part of the SDF in the Defeat-ISIS campaign, which we will continue to address. The administration will continue to consult with Turkey on Syria as it seeks areas for cooperation. The United States has always been open to dialogue with Russia on Syria, as long as the dialogue contributes to protecting civilians and to credibly moving forward on a political resolution to the conflict.

Question. I was pleased to see the Biden administration implementing a sanctions regime against those responsible for the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Aleksei Navalny and the continued construction on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. On Nord Stream 2, what next steps should the administration take to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline?

Answer. The administration believes the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is a bad deal and a threat to European energy security, including Ukraine and other vulnerable partners. The administration welcomes Congress's interest and appreciates Congressional efforts to provide the tools needed to combat Russian aggressive actions. In a February 19 report to Congress, the Department identified Russia-based KVT-RUS as an entity knowingly selling, leasing, or providing the vessel FORTUNA for the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project, as required by PEESA, as amended. I understand that the Department will continue to inform companies about the risks of doing business with Nord Stream 2 and use all available tools to examine entities potentially involved in sanctionable activity, as outlined by CAATSA and PEESA, as amended. It will also continue its diplomatic engagement with key European partners and allies to outline our serious concerns regarding the project's geopolitical implications for Europe's energy security.

Question. How do you view the timeline for the administration to act to stop the pipeline? Is there a point after which our options to stop the pipeline are limited?

Answer. The administration's efforts to date aimed at stopping the pipeline, aided by the authorities granted by Congress, have significantly slowed the pipeline's pace of construction. It is of the utmost importance to maintain this high level of engagement and diplomatic pressure to prevent the pipeline's completion. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of State maintains this high level of engagement and diplomatic pressure.

Question. What should next steps for broad, coherent U.S. policy response to Russian aggression look like? How are the Navalny sanctions part of a wider strategy to respond to and deter Russia?

Answer. President Biden has made clear that the United States will act firmly in defense of its national interests in response to actions by Russia that harm us or our allies. On March 2, the administration took action to impose costs on the Russian Federation for the poisoning, arrest, and imprisonment of Aleksey Navalny. The United States will continue to take action to counter Russia's malign actions and will comply with the legal obligations to impose a second round of sanctions under the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991. As the administration works to advance U.S. interests, it will continue to hold Russia accountable for its destabilizing activity, disregard for international law, including its repeated use of chemical weapons in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, and human rights violations.

Question. What additional legal tools does the administration need to stop this pipeline?

Answer. I appreciate Congressional support to stop this pipeline. The administration has a number of sanctions tools at its disposal to stop Nord Stream 2, including the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA), as amended, Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), and the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). As you know, PEESA and CAATSA Section 232 provide more specific tools targeting Russian energy export pipelines, which can be supplemented by IEEPA if needed. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the ample tools Congress has already provided. I will also work to maintain the high

level of engagement with companies and diplomatic pressure to bring an end to the pipeline's construction.

Question. How can the administration better amplify the concerns of our central and eastern European allies to persuade Danish and German authorities to stop the pipeline?

Answer. The administration has made clear to Germany and other European partners that Nord Stream 2 is not just a commercial deal. It views this project as a threat not only to Europe's energy security but also to strategic stability on the continent. The German and Danish authorities are aware of the U.S. position from frequent and high-level interaction and statements, and the administration will continue all such efforts. The United States will also continue to work with our allies and partners, including Germany, Denmark, Ukraine, Poland, and the Baltic states, to ensure Europe has a reliable, diversified energy supply that does not undermine collective security.

Question. From the administration's point of view, what aspects of the pipeline's construction are the most vulnerable to targeted sanctions that could stop the project?

Answer. To date, targeted outreach to Western insurers and certification, engineering, and construction firms, including companies providing pipe-laying vessels, have significantly affected the rate of the pipeline's construction with many entities winding down their operations and untold more refusing to engage with Nord Stream 2 AG given the risk of sanctions. The administration will continue to be clear that companies risk sanctions if they involve themselves in Nord Stream 2 construction and will continue to monitor companies involved in potentially sanctionable activities.

Question. Georgia has been on a dangerous backslide away from democracy for several years now. Recent developments, including the arrest and detention of Russian opposition leader Nika Melia, threats to further destabilize Georgia and the region. What policy responses are available to the United States? How should the U.S. work with European allies to develop an international consensus on Georgia?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Georgian people's choice to pursue closer ties with the EU and NATO and, as Congress has done, voice strong U.S. support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. In its messaging of support for Georgia's future in the context of recent developments, the Department has emphasized the importance of Georgian leaders and politicians modeling the values and norms of the Euro-Atlantic community they aspire to join. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and European allies to help identify opportunities to support Georgia's democratic development, including reforms to foster judicial independence and a level electoral playing field, as well as anticorruption and pro-business reforms. U.S. assistance directly supports these goals. I am committed to ensuring U.S. assistance to Georgia advances U.S. policy objectives.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN BY SENATOR ROB PORTMAN

Question. Last week I sent a letter cosigned by the other GOP ranking members of national security committees to provide our vision for a successful renegotiation with Iran over its nuclear program and its regional aggression. As you are probably aware, I was a vocal critic of the previous JCPOA and I believe that the Biden administration has a rare opportunity to fix the fatal flaws of the previous agreement.

Specifically, my colleagues and I would like to see that the nuclear issue and Tehran's regional aggression be addressed together. Iran remains the number one state sponsor of terror, and it would be a critical mistake to separate the two issues. Additionally, there should be no financial relief for Iran to meet their pre-conditions for diplomatic talks. This is a mistake that is often repeated time and again, not just in our negotiations with Iran, but with rogue regimes worldwide.

- If confirmed, do you commit to addressing Iran's nuclear program and regional aggression together in any future diplomatic negotiations, while opposing any such deal that includes one without the other? Do you agree to not grant concessions as a precondition to diplomatic talks?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration agrees that we need to supplement the JCPOA if we want a deal that is sustainable. There are several issues the deal did

not address, including Iran's ballistic missile development, proliferation, and destabilizing regional activities. Iran also remains the foremost state sponsor of terrorism, threatening international security and U.S. forces, diplomatic personnel, and partners in the region and elsewhere. The administration is ready to engage in meaningful diplomacy to achieve a mutual return to compliance with the JCPOA, and then use it as a platform to negotiate a longer, stronger nuclear deal, and other critical issues.

Question. Do you agree to not grant concessions as a precondition to diplomatic talks?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration will not make decisions based on artificial Iranian deadlines. The President made clear he is committed to ensuring Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon, and the administration believes diplomacy, in coordination with our allies and regional partners, is the best path to achieve that goal. The administration is ready to engage in meaningful diplomacy to achieve a mutual return to compliance with the JCPOA and then use it as a platform to negotiate a longer, stronger nuclear deal and other areas of concern. Iran continues to exceed JCPOA limits on many fronts, so we are a long way from that point.

Question. Senator Cardin and I worked together to push back against the politically motivated global boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement unfairly targeting Israel. These efforts have achieved widespread bipartisan support in the Senate, and we look forward to working with your State Department to ensure that Israel is not unfairly targeted through these efforts.

- What is your view on the strategic US/Israel relationship and can we count on your support to oppose global BDS movements against Israel?

Answer. President Biden, Secretary Blinken, and I firmly oppose the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. This movement unfairly singles out Israel and too often veers into anti-Semitism. While the Biden-Harris administration will respect the American people's First Amendment rights, the administration will not hesitate to voice our disapproval of the BDS campaign or to fight efforts to delegitimize Israel on the world stage.

Anti-Normalization laws in the Middle East

The Trump administration achieved major breakthroughs in Israel's relations with the Middle East. Senator Booker and I plan to re-introduce a bill called "Strengthening Reporting of Actions Taken Against the Normalization of Relations with Israel Act" to capitalize on this moment. This bill requires the Department of State to report instances of Arab Government efforts to undermine people-to-people engagement with Israeli citizens and residents. I believe it is imperative that the normalization of formal relations between Arab Governments and Israel is extended down to these countries' citizens.

- How crucial is it that instances of anti-normalization laws are documented publicly, and what further actions can the administration take to ensure that people are not punished for engaging with Israeli citizens?

Answer. The 2020 normalization agreements are an important contribution to peace and security in the Middle East. The Biden-Harris administration will seek to build on these efforts to expand the circle of peace between Israel and its neighbors, urging states and multilateral organizations with anti-normalization legislation or decrees to revoke them immediately so that negotiations can commence. The administration will also closely monitor the status of the existing agreements to encourage both sides to uphold their commitments to establish full diplomatic relations.

Question. Here in the Senate we have worked hard to provide the right framework for Ukrainian Security assistance-I am proud to have been a principle author of the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, a program that has provided the Ukrainians billions in military aid and training. Under the previous administration, we have provided increased amounts of lethal assistance, and I was glad to see in the NDAA that \$125 million is set aside for lethal assistance-all of this aid is appropriately tied to continued Ukrainian sector reforms, which I am glad to see President Zelensky is committed to.

- Can I get your commitment to continue the support of robust funding for USAI while supporting corruption and continued reforms in Ukraine?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to provide robust security assistance to Ukraine, including lethal defensive weapons, and to support continued reforms in Ukraine. The Department will oversee the execution of \$115 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF), \$3 million in International Military Education and

Training (IMET), and \$6 million in Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) funds that Congress appropriated for Ukraine for FY 2021. Additionally, if confirmed, I will closely coordinate with the Department of Defense in the execution of \$275 million that Congress appropriated for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) in FY 2021, including the process to certify that the Government of Ukraine has taken substantial actions to make defense institutional reforms before the final tranche of \$150 million in USAI funding is released.

Question. For two decades, the Chinese Government has systematically recruited U.S. researchers and sent Chinese military researchers to steal U.S. taxpayer-funded research and intellectual property at U.S. universities and institutes. This has led to the U.S. taxpayer unwittingly funding the rise of China's military and economy. This has to stop.

Last Congress, the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee passed Senator Carper's and I's Securing American Innovation Act. This bipartisan legislation will increase visibility on who is conducting our federally funded research, their potential conflicts of interest, and potentially problematic ties with our adversaries. More importantly, it will provide the State Department the authority to deny visas to foreign researchers whose problematic affiliations and access to export-controlled technologies through fundamental research raise national security concerns. We took a balanced approach with this bill. We need foreign researchers to work with our researchers here, but we need to take common-sense steps to prevent bad actors from coming to the United States.

- Do you agree that these new visa authorities are necessary, and how will they better protect taxpayer-funded research and intellectual property from foreign adversaries?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department guards against the transfer of sensitive technology to foreign adversaries. The Department will implement existing visa ineligibility grounds targeting this activity. Presidential Proclamation 10043, issued in May 2020, suspends the entry of the People's Republic of China (PRC) nationals to study or conduct research if the applicant is affiliated with an identified PRC entity that implements or supports China's military-civil fusion strategy. The United States continues to welcome legitimate students and scholars from China and around the world and promote the United States for international science and technology talent critical to our research enterprise. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress on reviewing legislation to further State's work and role in these efforts.

International Criminal Court Mandate

Question. As you are aware, last year the appeals chamber of the ICC allowed a politically motivated investigation into alleged actions of US and allied personnel in Afghanistan to move forward. This court has no jurisdiction over the US as we are not a signatory to the Rome Statute. I was glad to see that the Trump administration responded with financial sanctions and the restriction of travel visas for foreign individuals assisting the ICC in this manner.

However, just last month, the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber granted authorization for an investigation into alleged crimes in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem to move forward. Like the United States, Israel is not a signatory to the Rome Statute. This is not the first time that the ICC has conducted a politically motivated investigation. My good friend Senator Cardin and I led a bi-partisan letter on this issue along with 67 other Senators asking the State Department to push back on the ICC's decision to prosecute Israel for alleged war crimes in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza. And this month, we plan to send to the Biden administration a follow up to that letter asking for a firmer stance on these politically motivated investigations. Like us, Israel is not a signatory to the Rome Statute and in our view this is harmful to the peace process and again, outside of the ICC's jurisdiction.

- Do you agree that the ICC's expansion of their mandate is detrimental to prospects of a negotiated settlement between Israel and the Palestinian authority and what additional actions can be taken to push back against the expansion of the ICC's legal mandate?

Answer. I share the administration's serious concerns about the ICC's attempts to exercise jurisdiction over Israeli personnel. Israel is not a State Party, and Palestine is not a State. A peaceful, secure and more prosperous future for the people of the Middle East depends on building bridges and creating new avenues for dialogue and exchange, not unilateral judicial actions that exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution.

Question. What steps would you take to protect U.S. service and allied coalition members from the ICC's jurisdiction?

Answer. I share the concerns and the objection by the United States to any attempt by the ICC to investigate U.S. personnel, as the United States is not a State Party to the Rome Statute. If confirmed, I will work to protect U.S. personnel from legal jeopardy before the ICC. I also share the administration's serious concerns about the ICC's attempts to exercise jurisdiction over Israeli personnel. We will continue to uphold our strong commitment to Israel and its security, including by opposing actions that seek to target Israel unfairly.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

Question. For several months, tens of thousands of farmers have been camping out on the outskirts of New Delhi, demanding the repeal of three agricultural laws they say will drive down crop prices and negatively affect their earnings. Multiple rounds of talks between farm union leaders and the central government have taken place, but have not yet resulted in a resolution. As part of its response, Prime Minister Modi's Government has shut down internet service in several districts, impeding access to information and compromising protesters' fundamental right to freedom of expression. It has also arrested activists on suspicion of sedition for allegedly advocating for support of the farmer protests. Internet freedom in India continues to decline as the central government utilizes internet shutdowns to clamp down on dissent, including for these protests and in the Jammu and Kashmir region. As Deputy Secretary of State, what steps will you take to ensure digital access is not obstructed in India?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the growing use of government-imposed Internet shutdowns around the world, including in India, which restrict the rights of individuals online. If confirmed, I will speak out against this worrying global trend and use bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, including through U.N. bodies and the Freedom Online Coalition, to raise our concerns with governments that engage in this practice, including India. I will emphasize the need to protect freedom of expression, which includes the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information, both online and offline.

Question. Many of those protesting come from the northern Indian states of Punjab and Haryana, regions with a significant Sikh population. The Indian Government has labeled some of the farmers and their supporters as "anti-national" and questioned their allegiance to India. What will you do to encourage the Indian Government to respect the right to protest for all its citizens?

Answer. The freedoms of expression, association, religion or belief, and peaceful assembly are universal human rights. If confirmed, I will use the full array of diplomatic tools to encourage the Indian Government to respect these human rights.

Question. In 2019, then-Secretary Pompeo announced that the United States would "no longer recognize Israeli settlements as per se inconsistent with international law" and rescinded a 1978 legal opinion that then-Legal Adviser Herbert Hansell provided to Congress reaching a contrary conclusion that said, "civilian settlements in those territories is inconsistent with international law." This legal justification was never publicly released or provided to Congress. How do you view this issue?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration believes that the two-state solution is the best way to ensure Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state and to give the Palestinians the state to which they are entitled. If confirmed, I will support the administration's focus on urging both Israel and the Palestinians to avoid unilateral steps, such as annexation of territory, settlement activity, demolitions, incitement to violence, and providing compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism, that exacerbate tensions and make it more difficult to preserve the viability of a two-state solution.

Question. If confirmed as Deputy Secretary, would you work to reverse that decision?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the administration's efforts to urge both Israel and the Palestinians to refrain from unilateral steps that exacerbate tensions and undercut efforts to advance a negotiated two-state solution, such as annexation

of territory, settlement activity, demolitions, incitement to violence, and providing compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism.

Question. If confirmed, would you provide Congress with the Trump administration's Hansell opinion to include its legal justification for the decision, and any new decision the Department may reach under Secretary Blinken?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the administration's focus on urging both Israel and the Palestinians to avoid unilateral steps that exacerbate tensions and make it more difficult to preserve the viability of a two-state solution. This will include engaging Congress on significant policy matters related to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. Do you believe the EU's recent commercial agreement with China is already putting the United States on its back foot when seeking to bring a unified front?

Answer. It is a demonstration of the amount of work we have before us to reinvigorate our transatlantic alliance and develop a more unified response to the challenge posed by China. If confirmed, I will engage actively with our EU and other European partners on shared concerns about China. My engagements will include discussions on how to advance our shared economic interests and counter China's aggressive and coercive actions, prevent goods made with forced labor from entering global markets, create a level playing field and promote private enterprise, and highlight China's failure to uphold its international commitments.

Ultimately, the onus will be on China to show that its new pledges on forced labor, state-owned enterprises, and subsidies in the new agreement are not just cheap talk.

Question. Some U.S. partners with whom we will have to cooperate to best tackle the foreign policy challenges of the coming decades are not democracies or are illiberal ones. They occupy key positions in the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia, and we may find ourselves relying on them more. How do you believe the United States should be cooperating with the Governments of Vietnam, the Philippines, India, or our Gulf partners, even as we have concerns about human rights, democratic values, and good governance?

Answer. As you rightly point out, the United States cannot always choose the partners it must work with in addressing the most pressing foreign policy challenges we face. Further, there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to foreign policy, and no country has a perfect human rights record. I believe the United States should approach cooperation on a case-by-case basis, working to advance U.S. interests while also placing democracy and human rights at the center of U.S. foreign policy. As President Biden said, "Diplomacy is back at the center of our foreign policy." The United States must repair our alliances and engage with the world once again to meet accelerating global challenges—from the pandemic to the climate crisis to nuclear proliferation—which will only be solved by nations working together. We cannot do it alone. If confirmed, I will seek to work in partnership with countries where we have a national security interest, while at the same time addressing human rights concerns, promoting good governance, and upholding our democratic values.

Question. The Biden administration has spoken of the need to work closely with allies and partners to develop a coordinated response to the China challenge. What specific differences in approach do you expect to be most difficult to resolve?

Answer. If confirmed, I will put alliances and partnerships at the center of U.S. foreign policy to advance shared norms and values that underpin peace and security and compete with China from a position of strength. The United States will consult with allies and partners on a coordinated approach to the People's Republic of China's (PRC) coercive economic practices, human rights abuses, malign influence operations, and other key challenges. The administration will work with the EU, our Indo-Pacific and NATO allies, the Quad, and others to restore our vital security partnerships, secure the technologies of the future, re-engage in the U.N. system, and address attempts by the PRC to undermine the international rules-based system.

Question. The Biden administration has stated that it hopes to cooperate with China on such pressing global issues as climate change, proliferation, and global health. How would you respond to concerns that the administration might downplay areas of friction with China in order to make progress on these global priorities?

Answer. Combatting climate change; opposing the proliferation of sensitive goods and technology related to WMD, missile systems, and advanced conventional weapons; and promoting global health are in China's interest as well as ours. They are not favors to be bargained for. If confirmed, I will test whether China is willing to play a constructive role on certain issues where we may share interests but will be clear-eyed about Chinese intentions, while advancing the interests of the American people. Our core interests and values will not be traded off in discussions with China or any other country. Further, the Department of State will seek Congressional input on potential areas of cooperation.

Question. India is making great strides in developing renewable energy sources, but continues to rely heavily on coal-fired power generation. Will you seek to work with India on balancing its growing power consumption with a mutual interest in addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions?

Answer. I fully support the administration's ongoing efforts, led by Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry, to work with India on more ambitious climate commitments. As Secretary Blinken noted in his confirmation hearing, the Biden-Harris administration is committed to ensuring developing countries can meet their energy needs while also reducing their emissions and building resilience against the destabilizing impacts of climate change—both of which have clear benefits not only for the recipient countries, but also for the United States and the rest of the world. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to promote affordable energy in the developing world consistent with our nation's energy and climate goals.

In view of Prime Minister Modi's announced target of installing 450 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, if confirmed, I would support the work advancing cost-effective strategies to enhance the flexibility and robustness of India's electricity grid to encourage India's clean energy transition over the next decade. If confirmed, I would prioritize lower-cost alternatives to carbon-intensive energy such as coal-fired power, including by promoting renewable energy, battery storage, and load shifting.

Question. How do you intend to engage Pakistan as a player in U.S. strategy toward the Indo-Pacific region?

Answer. If confirmed, I will push for an open and honest bilateral relationship with Pakistan that stands on its own merits based on our mutual interests. Despite a challenging relationship, I believe that continued cooperation with Pakistan is possible on shared priorities like securing a responsible end to the conflict in Afghanistan, advancing regional security and fighting terrorism, expanding bilateral commerce, and addressing climate change. By fostering productive ties with all countries in the Indo-Pacific region, we hope to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values.

Question. Do you view increasing Chinese influence in Pakistan as an obstacle to U.S. interests?

Answer. I have concerns about many of China's activities globally and will raise and take action on those concerns whenever appropriate. While in principle the United States welcomes investments in infrastructure and economic development that are sustainable and meet international standards, I am concerned PRC-sponsored projects often lack transparency and impose unsustainable debts. If confirmed, I will work to encourage Pakistan to pursue a sustainable development path involving good governance, long-term capacity building, and market principles. U.S. diplomacy and cooperation with Pakistan reflects a vision for a region of independent and prosperous nations at peace with each other and the rest of the world. If confirmed, I will continue to support that objective.

Question. To what extent will you prioritize cooperating with Islamabad in combatting Islamist militancy and stabilizing Afghanistan?

Answer. Cooperation with Islamabad in combatting terrorist groups in the region is a key part of U.S. efforts to seek a stable, peaceful Afghanistan through a just and durable political settlement, and success in this effort would be crucial to improved U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relations. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the Pakistani Government to play a constructive role in advancing the Afghan peace process as a means to achieve a more stable and secure South Asia. Further, if con-

firmed, I will continue to work closely with Afghanistan's neighbors to press for a significant reduction in violence to facilitate progress in peace negotiations.

Question. Do you support the Abraham Accords and the landmark normalization agreements that occurred during the Trump administration?

Answer. Yes, I support the Abraham Accords and the Trump administration's role in negotiating them. The normalization agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors are a positive step that reflect recognition among Israel and the states that have signed the agreements that they hold many interests in common and can most effectively address them through cooperation. The agreements are the product of years of quiet diplomacy between Israel and its neighbors supported by U.S. administrations from both parties.

Question. Do you intend to help Israel consolidate existing normalization arrangements and normalize its relations with other Arab states, and if so, how?

Answer. The 2020 normalization agreements are an important contribution to peace and security in the Middle East. The Biden-Harris administration will seek to build on the agreements to expand the circle of peace between Israel and its neighbors. The administration will also closely monitor the status of the normalization efforts to date, encouraging the states that have signed such agreements with Israel to uphold their commitments to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel.

Question. How will the administration approach arms sales and issues such as the Western Sahara impasse with Morocco in light of the normalization agreements to date?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration welcomes normalization agreements as an important contribution to regional peace and continues to review policy in numerous areas, including Western Sahara. The administration wants to see the appointment of a Personal Envoy of the U.N. Secretary-General and a renewed U.N.-led political process. Morocco is a major non-NATO ally, and our military-to-military partnership is a regional model. The administration looks forward to continued cooperation, including the upcoming Moroccan-hosted African Lion exercise, the largest joint military training and interoperability exercise in Africa. The State Department continues to ensure all arms sales meet U.S. national security objectives and reflect our values.

Question. Congress has passed two rounds of mandatory sanctions against Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline as part of the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA) and Protecting Europe's Energy Security Clarification Act (PEESCA). These laws necessitate the imposition of sanctions against entities that engage in or support deep-sea pipe-laying for Nord Stream 2. As required under the laws, on February 19, 2021, the State Department submitted a report to Congress only identifying Russia's Fortuna vessel and its owner as engaging in sanctionable activities. However, media and other forms of public reporting, including visual data from reputable ship-tracking portals, indicate that numerous other vessels and companies are supporting the Fortuna's pipe-laying for Nord Stream 2. As required under PEESA and PEESCA, the State Department must immediately identify these entities to Congress and subject them to mandatory U.S. sanctions. When will the State Department submit an updated report to Congress that formally identifies these entities?

Answer. The State Department submits a report to Congress every 90 days on the provision of vessels engaged in pipe-laying and pipe-laying activities, and various entities providing and supporting those vessels, for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, as required by the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA), as amended, with the next report due to Congress in mid-May. If confirmed, I will continue to use all available tools to counter Russian malign influence and to work with Allies and partners in the region to support Transatlantic energy security goals. I understand that the State Department is actively examining entities involved in potentially sanctionable activity and will designate additional persons and entities as appropriate.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. U.S. sanctions have taken a heavy toll on civilians in countries worldwide, particularly amid the COVID-19 pandemic. As a humanitarian matter and as a matter of global public health, would you consider strengthening humanitarian ex-

emptions through a worldwide temporary general license to ensure that sanctioned countries are able to obtain critical humanitarian resources, including the COVID-19 vaccine?

Answer. Many U.S. sanctions programs include provisions aimed at facilitating delivery of medical and other humanitarian supplies. If confirmed, I will continue the State Department's conversations with our allies and multinational and non-governmental organizations on these issues. I will also continue State's cooperation with the Department of the Treasury to use available tools, including issuance of clarifying guidance and expediting of license requests, to facilitate global delivery of humanitarian assistance particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. I would support initiatives by Treasury to explore additional options, which could include issuance of additional licenses to facilitate medical- or vaccine-related transactions.

Question. What specific recommended additional actions will the Biden administration pursue to hold Mohammed bin Salman, and senior Saudi officials, responsible for the murder of Mr. Khashoggi?

Answer. The administration has taken a number of concrete steps to recalibrate the relationship with Saudi Arabia. It followed the law and submitted an unclassified report to Congress on the horrific murder of Jamal Khashoggi. Under the Global Magnitsky Act, it sanctioned a former senior Saudi official and the group whose members were involved in the killing. The Department has taken action pursuant to a new visa restriction policy against 76 Saudi individuals believed to have been engaged in threatening dissidents overseas, including but not limited to the Khashoggi killing. The Department will report on any such extraterritorial activities by any government in the annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.

Question. We will not stop climate catastrophe here at home if we are supporting industries abroad engaging in ecocide. How will the Administration prioritize policies that dramatically reduce U.S. financial and diplomatic exposure in polluting industries abroad?

Answer. Dealing with climate change means investing in resilience and green energy here at home and leading a global effort to reduce carbon pollution. In his recent foreign policy speech, Secretary Blinken described these challenges as being simultaneously domestic and foreign. The administration is taking a whole-of-government approach to put climate change at the center of its domestic, national security and foreign policy, and to working with other nations to advance conservation promote green recovery; revitalize communities and cities; and secure environmental justice.

Question. Does U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, have specific instructions to make the return of Paul Overby—my constituent who went missing in Afghanistan/Pakistan in 2014—part of ongoing U.S. peace negotiations with the Taliban and the Government of Afghanistan?

Answer. I have been advised the Secretary specifically directed Ambassador Khalilzad to continue his efforts to press for the return of Paul Overby and of Mark Frerichs during engagements with the Taliban and with key regional partners.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. On July 7, 2015, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee about Iran. He clearly stated, "Under no circumstances should we relieve pressure on Iran relative to ballistic missile capabilities and arms trafficking."

Only seven days later, you and the Obama-Biden Administration disregarded the views of the American commanders on the battlefield. As the lead negotiator of the Iran nuclear deal, you agreed to lift the arms embargo and restrictions on ballistic missile technologies.

- In any future negotiations, would you continue to disregard the advice our military commanders?

Answer. The President and his national security team will always take the advice of military commanders seriously. Iran's development and proliferation of ballistic missiles, as well as its delivery of weapons to violent proxies across the region, pose a threat to international security and remain significant challenges. These challenges existed despite the U.N. Security Council resolutions that aimed to address them.

The Biden-Harris administration will use a variety of nonproliferation tools to work to prevent the further advancement of Iran's missile program and its ability to proliferate technology to others, and will continue to enforce the U.S. arms embargo on Iran. The administration will also work with our partners to stop shipments of equipment and technology, seek to disrupt Iran's delivery of weapons to violent proxies, and use our engagement in multilateral fora to urge countries to take steps to address these activities.

Question. On October 18, 2020, the international arms embargo on Iran, the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, was officially lifted.

- Considering the fact that you helped draft the agreement eliminating it in the first place, what specific steps, if any, will you take to reinstate the Iran arms embargo?

Answer. The administration will continue to push for full implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions barring the unauthorized transfer of weapons to Lebanon and to the Houthis in Yemen, and also continue to use domestic authorities to dissuade countries from providing arms to Iran.

Question. What is your strategy to stop the dramatic increase of weapons flowing to terrorists and proxy groups in the region?

Answer. The administration will continue to use domestic authorities to dissuade countries from providing arms to Iran and continue to push for full implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions barring the unauthorized transfer of weapons to Lebanon and to the Houthis in Yemen. The administration will also continue to use domestic authorities, including sanctions, to counter Iran's support for terrorism in the Middle East.

Question. The U.S. constitution provides the Senate the power to approve or reject treaties. Under your leadership, the Obama—Biden administration refused to submit the Iran nuclear deal to the Senate for its advice and consent. As one of the lead negotiators of the Iran nuclear deal, you played a major role in drafting the agreement in a way to avoid the ratification process.

- If confirmed, will you continue to disregard the will of the American people by negotiating international agreements and then refusing to submit them to the Senate?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee on matters related to treaties and other international agreements. The Supreme Court has long held that not all international agreements require approval as treaties pursuant to the procedures set out in Article II of the Constitution, and the Congress has recognized this through the enactment of the Case-Zablocki Act, which establishes procedures regarding legally binding international agreements other than treaties. Regardless of the form which particular agreements may take, however, I am committed to engaging with the Senate as a partner in the State Department's efforts to advance our national interests through international agreements.

Question. If the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is altered at all to include new provisions, would you advocate for the administration to submit the accord for congressional review under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act or other laws?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) and to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied.

Question. Authoritarian regimes continue to restrict religious freedoms and the rights of individuals. The violence, oppression and attacks on human dignity cannot be tolerated. It is critically important for the United States to stand up for those who are being persecuted whether it is Christians in Nigeria or Uyghurs in China.

- What additional efforts will you pursue at the State Department to promote international religious freedom?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to use the full range of diplomatic tools—both positive and punitive—to encourage governments to live up to their international obligations and commitments to respect religious freedom. This includes reforming outdated laws, ending abusive or discriminatory practices, releasing individuals imprisoned for their beliefs, and achieving justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators of religious freedom abuses. The State Department will also continue to fulfill its statutory requirements to produce its annual report and annually review

and designate countries and entities for engaging in or tolerating severe or particularly severe religious freedom violations.

Question. Defending human rights and the dignity of every person is a fundamental value for Americans. Yet, the United Nations Human Rights Council has refused to make serious reform to its organization. Efforts by previous administrations failed to achieve the reforms needed. Secretary Blinken recently admitted the council “is flawed and needs reform.”

- What are the flaws of the United Nations Human Rights Council?

Answer. The two principal flaws of the Human Rights Council are its disproportionate focus on Israel and the continued election of countries with problematic human rights records. The continued existence of a separate agenda item on Israel, Agenda Item 7, unduly focuses attention on Israel to the exclusion of the human rights records of every other country. The Administration believes that the Council should treat Israel the same as it does every other U.N. member state. Similarly, the membership on the Council must reflect high standards for upholding human rights. Those with the worst human rights records should not be members of the Council.

Question. What specific reforms does the administration believe need to be taken at the U.N. Human Rights Council and how do you plan to get the organization to make those reforms?

Answer. The United States is committed to seeking reforms of the U.N. Human Rights Council, particularly with respect to the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel and its problematic membership. The United States has seen that when we play an active and constructive role, we can advocate more effectively on Israel's behalf and engage with our allies and friends to keep some of the countries with the worst human rights records off the Council and to encourage countries with better records to run for seats. When we were previously on the Council, the United States was also able to help reduce the number of resolutions focused on Israel. If confirmed, I will ensure the United States prioritizes these specific reforms.

Question. Does the administration plan to demand any commitments from the United Nations Human Rights Council on making those reforms prior to rejoining?

Answer. The United States is pursuing reforms while re-engaging and seeking a seat on the Human Rights Council, as announced by Secretary Blinken during his speech to the Human Rights Council on February 24, 2021. The United States is most effective at the Human Rights Council (HRC) and in other U.N. bodies when we are at the table, in the room, in good financial standing, and use the full weight of our diplomatic might to lead and to pursue appropriate and needed reforms. If confirmed, I will ensure the United States prioritizes needed reforms as part of our re-engagement with the HRC.

Question. For years, the United Nations Human Rights Council has included human rights abusers and refusing to stand up for human rights taking place across the world. A recent example is the election of China and Russia to the United Nations Human Rights Council in October 2020. The Chinese Communist Party engages in torture, detention, and forced labor of religious and ethnic minorities. Russia tramples on free speech and the free press every day. Shockingly, Russia was elected to the council the same week that the EU sanctioned Russian officials for attempts to assassinate a Russian opposition figure. The United Nations should be condemning the actions of Russia and China not electing those responsible to this body.

- Would you advise the United States to vote in favor of Russia, China, or other human rights violators for membership on the United Nations Human Rights Council?

Answer. The continued election of countries with problematic human rights records to the Human Rights Council remains one of the principal flaws of the Council. If confirmed I will advise the United States to vote for nations with strong human rights records for the Council.

Question. During the Trump Administration, there were several historic developments between Israel and its regional Arab neighbors. The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan joined Egypt and Jordan in establishing diplomatic relations with Israel. These agreements have created the path to peace through recognition and engagement rather than isolation and boycotts of Israel.

In January, Secretary Blinken stated, “We very much support the Abraham Accords, we think that Israel normalizing relations with its neighbors and other countries in the region is a very positive development, and so we applauded them. We

hope that there may be an opportunity to build on them in the coming months and years ahead.”

- Do you believe the Abraham Accords are a positive step forward for the region?

Answer. Yes, I firmly believe the normalization agreements are a positive step forward for Israel and the region and are in the United States’ best interest.

Question. What specific steps will you take to build upon these historic successes and create additional peace agreements between Israel and Arab nations?

Answer. The 2020 normalization agreements are an important contribution to peace and security in the Middle East. The Biden-Harris administration will seek to build on the agreements to expand the circle of peace between Israel and its neighbors. If confirmed, I will closely monitor the status of the normalization efforts to date, encouraging the states that have signed such agreements with Israel to uphold their commitments to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel.

Question. Congress continues to be deeply concerned with the Turkish Government’s purchase of the S-400 surface to air missile defense systems from Russia. This decision threatens a range of U.S. interests, including the strength of the NATO Alliance.

- Do you believe a weak U.S. response to Turkey’s actions would embolden other countries to consider buying advanced Russian military systems?

Answer. President Biden has promised to call out Turkish behavior that is inconsistent with its commitments as a NATO Ally. A top priority will be urging Turkey not to retain the S-400 and to refrain from additional Russian arms purchases. The CAATSA sanctions announced in December 2020 impose real costs on Turkey for acquiring the S-400 and advance our global efforts to deter and disrupt purchases of Russian weaponry, which bring Russia revenue, access, and influence. Turkey’s suspension from the F-35 partnership represents an additional significant cost. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to review the impact of the sanctions imposed in response to the S-400 acquisition and to determine whether additional measures are required or warranted.

Question. Are you committed to fully implementing the Countering America’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) with respect to Turkey’s S-400 acquisition and any related purchases by other foreign nations?

Answer. Yes. The imposition of CAATSA Section 231 sanctions on Turkish individuals and entities in December demonstrated the State Department’s continuing commitment to CAATSA. If confirmed, I will not only continue that commitment as it relates to Turkey’s S-400 acquisition but also with respect to any other country that may be considering similar transactions. I would strongly urge anyone considering potentially significant transactions with Russia’s defense or intelligence sectors, or persons operating for, or on behalf of either sector, to avoid such transactions, which may expose them to CAATSA sanctions.

Question. Are current U.S. and NATO efforts to deter Russian aggression in Europe adequate?

Answer. NATO has undertaken significant adaptation over the past decade in response to Russian aggression in the Euro-Atlantic area, including the illegal invasions of Ukraine and Georgia. The Alliance relies on both conventional and nuclear capabilities for deterrence and is also addressing growing gray area challenges. Allies will need to continue work toward meeting equitable burden sharing to maintain effective deterrence. Only with greater investment in defense across the Alliance can we ensure NATO is able to adapt quickly to a changing security landscape with the necessary capabilities and military readiness.

Question. What is your position on the administration maintaining or expanding sanctions intended to get Russia to change its policies with regard to Ukraine, cyberattacks, and other malign activities?

Answer. President Biden has made clear that the United States will act firmly in defense of its national interests in response to actions by Russia that harm us or our allies. On March 2, the administration took action to impose costs on the Russian Federation for the poisoning, arrest, and imprisonment of Aleksey Navalny. The United States will continue to take action to counter Russia’s malign actions and will comply with our legal obligations under the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991. As the administration works together with allies to advance our interests, it will continue to hold Russia accountable, including by sanctions, for its destabilizing activity, disregard for international

law, human rights violations, interference in our elections, unlawful cyber activity, and aggression in Ukraine and Georgia.

Question. How will you approach relations with Saudi Arabia?

Answer. President Biden has committed to recalibrating the U.S.-Saudi relationship to ensure it reflects U.S. interests and values. The Administration has elevated support for human rights and fundamental freedoms, which has already led to positive initial results, such as the conditional release of detained U.S. citizens and activists. Like Secretary Blinken, if confirmed, I will press Saudi Arabia for the removal of conditions on their release, including travel restrictions, and the implementation of reforms to avoid future such cases. Nonetheless, Saudi Arabia remains an important U.S. partner on regional security and counterterrorism, and the U.S. will continue to support Saudi Arabian efforts to defend its people and territory, which is home to thousands of U.S. citizens.

Question. How important of a role does Saudi Arabia play in our efforts regarding Iran, Yemen, Iraq, and the Israel-Palestinian issues?

Answer. Saudi Arabia is a critical partner for containing Iranian aggressive actions. The Biden-Harris administration strongly supports Saudi Arabia's outreach to the Government of Iraq, to include recently reopening its main border crossing with Iraq for the first time since 1990 and ongoing discussions to provide electricity to Iraq, both of which will help to reduce Iraq's dependence on Iran. In Yemen, the Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthis has contributed to Yemen's dire humanitarian crisis; Special Envoy Tim Lenderking is working with Saudi Arabia, regional partners, and the U.N. to resolve the conflict. With respect to Israel, Saudi Arabia supports a two-state solution and has allowed overflights of Israeli-registered aircraft through Saudi airspace to the UAE and Bahrain.

Question. What role, if any, do you see for Saudi Arabia and other regional U.S. partners in talks with Iran?

Answer. The administration is committed to consulting closely with our regional partners regarding U.S. policy on Iran, and in broad terms, it supports dialogue among the countries in the region on issues of regional security and stability.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. Section 15(b) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 states that "The Department of State shall keep the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives fully and currently informed with respect to all activities and responsibilities within the jurisdiction of these committees. Any Federal department, agency, or independent establishment shall furnish any information requested by either such committee relating to any such activity or responsibility." Can you commit to complying with this provision of law by ensuring that information requested by members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is provided expeditiously and transparently? If not, why not?

Answer. I am committed to working with Congress and this committee in accordance with the law to provide all information needed to perform traditional oversight functions as promptly as possible.

Question. The Obama administration was broadly criticized, especially in the context of its Middle East policy, for co-mingling unclassified documents with classified documents. This practice requires that documents be placed in a secure location, unnecessarily limiting access to unclassified documents and stifling public debate. The Biden administration already seems to be repeating such practices: according to an exchange during the State Department press briefing on February 11, a notification describing the lifting of terrorism sanctions on Iran-controlled terrorists in Yemen was unnecessarily transmitted to a Congressional SCIF. Can you commit to ensuring that unclassified information is not unnecessarily comingled with classified information in notifications provided by the State Department to Congress? If not, why not?

Answer. I am committed to working to ensure that information provided to Congress is, to the fullest extent possible, in a format that facilitates its access by authorized personnel, while complying with Executive Order 13526, the Department of State classification guide, and the executive branch rules on the handling and storage of classified information.

Question. Last month the State Department transmitted a mandatory and overdue report to Congress listing entities engaged in sanctionable activities because of their participation in the construction of the Nord Stream 2 (NS2) pipeline, pursuant to the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA), as amended. PEESA mandates the imposition of sanctions on entities listed in such reports. The report included only two entities, the Fortuna and KVT-RUS, both of which the Trump administration had already sanctioned. It did not include any entities which are plainly, publicly required to be listed under PEESA. Reportedly, State Department officials who spoke to Congressional staffers were unable to provide a justification why several entities - including the company responsible for the planning, construction, and operation of NS2 - were left off. This abdication is inexcusable. Can you commit to immediately ensuring the Biden administration meets its mandatory obligation to provide an interim report to Congress pursuant to PEESA and sanction all of the entities that are engaged in pipe-laying, pipe-laying activities, certification, and insurance sanctionable under PEESA? If not, why not?

Answer. The State Department submits a report to Congress every 90 days on vessels engaged in pipe-laying and pipe-laying activities, and various entities providing and supporting those vessels, for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, as required by the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA), as amended, with the next report due to Congress in mid-May. I understand the Department of State submitted its first report on PEESA, as amended, in February. If confirmed, I will continue to use all available tools to counter Russian malign influence and to work with Allies and partners in the region to support Transatlantic energy security goals. I understand that the Department of State continues to examine entities involved in potentially sanctionable activity and will designate additional persons as appropriate, and will comply with statutory reporting requirements.

Question. One of the most egregious dynamics in the initial implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) involved the way that the Obama administration circumvented Congressional deliberation and approval by first attempting to lock in the agreement as international law via United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 2231). After that resolution was passed - which occurred just as the Congressional review period mandated by the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) was beginning - officials from the Government of Iran and the Obama administration suggested that Congress would be abrogating the U.S.'s formal international obligations by rejecting the agreement. Can you commit to ensuring that any future nuclear agreement negotiated between State Department officials and Iran, which involves the suspension or waiver of Congressional sanctions, will only be negotiated in full consultation with Congress? If not, why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to consulting fully with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under INARA.

Question. Can you commit to ensuring that any future nuclear agreement negotiated between State Department officials and Iran, which involves the suspension or waiver of Congressional sanctions, will not be implemented without Congressional approval? If not, why not?

Answer. I am aware that the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) contains certain limitations on sanctions relief during a congressional review period. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration is committed to complying with the requirements of INARA, and if confirmed, I am committed to doing so.

Question. It was recently announced that Iran and South Korea agreed to allow Tehran to access approximately \$1 billion of its assets that are frozen in South Korean banks due to US sanctions. Reports indicate that the South Koreans received approval from Biden administration officials to do so. Please transmit to the committee any waivers, decision memos, or other documents pertaining to this case, and confirm doing so.

Answer. I do not have access to Department records nor the authority on my own to give you Department records. I commit, if confirmed, to work with the committee to try to accommodate any official committee request for such Department information.

Question. On January 10, 2021, the State Department designated Ansarallah, sometimes called the Houthis, and Abdul Malik al-Houthi, Abd al-Khaliq Badr al-Din al-Houthi, and Abdullah Yahya al Hakim, three leaders of Ansarallah, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) pursuant to Executive Order 13224. On February 5 the Biden administration informed Congress of its intention to revoke those sanctions. Officials at the State Department have justified the delisting of what they described as the "broad" designation of Ansarallah on humanitarian

grounds, e.g. that large parts of Yemen's population live under areas controlled by the group. They have not provided an explanation for the delisting of the three leaders, and in fact they have publicly, repeatedly, and falsely denied or downplayed the relief provided to these Iran-backed terrorists. For example, on February 11 State Department spokesman Ned Price falsely told journalists "there is no change" to the sanctions on these individuals. He was asked about the issue again the next day, and said "the Secretary had an intent to remove this broad designation of the movement." The public statement issued by the State Department did not mention the revocation of the SDGT designation on the Houthi leaders, but noted that they "remain sanctioned under E.O. 13611." Can you commit to ensuring that State Department officials stop publicly misleading journalists and the American public about sanctions relief provided by the Department and the Biden administration to Iran-backed terrorists? If not, why not?

Answer. I understand that the three Ansarallah leaders in question were designated under the U.N. Security Council's Yemen sanctions regime in 2015 and domestically under E.O. 13611, related to acts that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Yemen. Therefore, they remain on the Treasury Department's Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List and are subject to asset freezing and any attendant travel restrictions. As a consequence of the revocation of Ansarallah's Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) group designation under E.O. 13224, there was no longer a basis to retain the SDGT designations of these individuals as leaders of Ansarallah, which were derivative of the broader SDGT designation of the group. If confirmed, I intend to continue our support of U.N.-led efforts, including a robust implementation of the U.N. and E.O. 13611 sanctions, to call attention to and condemn Ansarallah's destabilizing activities. The State Department's emphasis will continue to be on using diplomacy to build international pressure on Ansarallah to change its behavior and ultimately end the war.

Question. Please describe why the State Department lifted the SDGT designations on Abdul Malik al-Houthi, Abd al-Khaliq Badr al-Din al-Houthi, and Abdullah Yahya al Hakim.

Answer. I understand that simultaneous with the designation of Ansarallah, sometimes called the Houthis, as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, these individuals were designated as SDGTs on the basis that they were leaders of an SDGT, namely Ansarallah. As a consequence of the revocation of Ansarallah's SDGT designation, there was no longer a basis to retain the designations of these individuals as leaders of an SDGT. However, they remain designated under the U.N. Security Council's Yemen sanctions regime and domestically under E.O. 13611 related to acts that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Yemen, and therefore remain on Treasury's Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List and are subject to asset freezing and any attendant travel restrictions.

Question. The Central Bank of Iran (CBI), has been designated as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SGT) pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 13224 for providing material support to terrorist organizations. Can you commit to not lift, rescind or significantly modify - or to agree within the interagency process to lift, rescind or significantly modify - this terrorism designation of the CBI, in the absence of a determination that the CBI has ceased providing material support to terrorist organizations? If not, why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the administration's efforts to counter Iran's support for terrorism, including through the appropriate use of sanctions and regular coordination with our partners and allies. Iran is the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism, which poses a threat to security and stability in the Middle East, and we will continue to use all tools available to counter Iran's support for terrorism. The President has made clear that the United States will be prepared to resume participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) if Iran restores strict compliance, as a starting point for follow on negotiations to lengthen and strengthen constraints and address other issues of concern, including Iran's regional activity.

Question. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is designated as a terrorist organization both as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and as an SDGT pursuant to EO 13224. Can you commit to not lift, rescind or significantly modify - or to agree within the interagency process to lift, rescind or significantly modify - these terrorism designations on the IRGC, in the , in the absence of a determination that the Government of Iran has ceased providing material support to terrorist organizations.

Answer. Iran's support for terrorism threatens our forces and partners in the region and elsewhere. If confirmed, I intend to continue working with our allies and partners to counter Iran's destabilizing activities in the region, including its support for terrorist groups and violent militias and its ballistic missile program, and maintain international, collective pressure on Iran. The President is committed to countering Iran's destabilizing activities using the array of tools at our disposal, including sanctions to deal with Iran's support for terrorism.

Question. You and other officials responsible for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) have repeatedly described it as the most rigorous inspection regime ever negotiated. Despite this inspection regime, the IAEA was unable to locate the illicit Nuclear Archive subsequently seized by Israel, which included designs and materials relevant to the creation of nuclear weapons. They were also unable to find locations which, having been revealed by Israeli officials, subsequently proved to have evidence of nuclear work that the IAEA says Iran has not accounted for. Please describe what you perceive to have been the flaws in the JCPOA inspection regime do you believe were responsible for these failures by the IAEA?

Answer. The IAEA has a decades-long successful track record of monitoring the non-diversion of declared nuclear material globally. While the IAEA thoroughly investigates all available information, including based on its own verification and monitoring activities, it is not an intelligence organization. It can only act on information that is either acquired by it in the performance of its verification mandates or presented to it. President Biden has made clear he is committed to ensuring that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon. The administration has full confidence in the IAEA to pursue any indications of undeclared or diverted nuclear material that could contribute to any renewed Iranian pursuit of a nuclear weapon.

Question. Please describe what new measures would you insist are included in any future nuclear agreement with Iran to ensure that the IAEA has the ability to identify such materials and activities?

Answer. The IAEA has said it has the tools it needs to perform its verification mandates in Iran so long as Iran fully implements its JCPOA commitments. This includes implementation of the Additional Protocol to Iran's NPT-required safeguards agreement that provides enhanced information and access regarding Iran's nuclear program, including with respect to undeclared locations about which the IAEA has questions. The JCPOA provides the IAEA with the most intrusive verification procedures ever negotiated, including to investigate any indications of undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran. The administration has full confidence in the IAEA to pursue any such indication.

Question. During your nominations hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 4, 2021, you acknowledged that you had met with officials of the Government of Iran during your time out of government. You also stated that you coordinated directly with Under Secretary for Political Affairs Ambassador David Hale concerning your interactions with Iranian regime officials. Please list any additional senior State Department officials responsible for Iran policy with whom you consulted or coordinated your engagement with Iranian officials, such as Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Schenker, Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook, Special Representative for Iran Elliott Abrams, Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun, or Secretary of State Michael Pompeo.

Answer. I coordinated with Undersecretary Hale and did not engage with others listed in this question.

Question. Please identify the dates on which you coordinated or consulted with these officials.

Answer. To the best of my recollection, I met with Foreign Minister Zarif twice on the margins of the Munich Security Conference, in 2018 and 2019. I also participated in two bipartisan group meetings in New York on the margins of UNGA: in 2018 with President Rouhani, and in 2019 with FM Zarif. Those meetings were facilitated by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2018) and the International Crisis Group (2019). Finally, in October 2017 I participated in a panel with Deputy FM Abbas Aragchi at a nonproliferation conference sponsored by the Center for Energy and Security Studies in Moscow, and we spoke on the margins.

In every meeting, I urged Iran to stay in full compliance with the JCPOA, even after U.S. withdrawal, and pressed for Iran to end its regional violence and to release American prisoners. I consistently kept Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale apprised of meetings and offered to convey any useful information back to him.

Question. Please describe any additional contact you had with officials from the Government of Iran Besides in-person meetings, have you otherwise been in contact with any Iranian regime officials, including via e-mail, text exchange, or secure messaging platforms, between January 20, 2017, and today? If yes, please identify dates of contact and the text of the exchanges.

Answer. To the best of my recollection, since January 2017 I have not had additional contact with Iranian officials beyond the meetings referenced in the previous question, other than to arrange logistical details for those in-person meetings. I do not have records of those exchanges.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. WENDY R. SHERMAN BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. What is the status of the Clean Network Initiative at the U.S. Department of State? As of November 2020, over 50 countries, 180 telecommunications companies, and dozens of other leading tech companies had joined the State Department's Clean Networks Initiative and pledged to advance common principles with regard to securing 5G and other digital technologies against untrusted foreign vendors and suppliers. The Biden administration, however, appears to have removed any references to the Clean Network Initiative from the State Department's website.

Answer. The Biden-Harris Administration views 5G security as a high priority and is working with allies and partners to ensure their 5G networks are free of untrustworthy vendor equipment and to support a vibrant and diverse supply chain of trustworthy telecommunications equipment and services. The United States will pursue a comprehensive strategy that addresses the full range of these issues. As is routine practice, the Department archives webpages during the transition of administrations. Webpages from 2017 to 2021 remain available to the public at <https://2017-2021.state.gov/index.html>.

Question. What is the status of the Blue Dot Network at the U.S. Department of State? In November 2019, the United States joined Australia and Japan in launching the Blue Dot Network concept that seeks to bring together governments, the private sector, and civil society under shared standards for international infrastructure development. If the Blue Dot Network is fully realized to promote quality infrastructure investment that is open, transparent, and compliant with international standards—including by eventually mobilizing the deep capital markets of the United States and other market-based democracies—it can help to counter to China's predatory One Belt One Road (OBOR) infrastructure initiatives.

Answer. I understand that the Blue Dot Network seeks to promote the development of quality, sustainable infrastructure around the world by certifying projects that uphold global infrastructure principles. I understand that the State Department, USAID, and the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation continue to work with our Australian and Japanese partners to develop the technical details of the initiative, including a methodology and metrics for certifying quality infrastructure projects in the developing world.

Question. In any negotiations that may occur with the authoritarian regime in North Korea, do you commit to pursuing an end-state that achieves complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization? What do you perceive as the risks of further nuclear proliferation in East Asia if we fail to achieve that end-state?

Answer. North Korea's proliferation-related activities constitute a serious threat to international peace and security and undermine global nonproliferation efforts. If confirmed, I plan to join the Biden-Harris administration's ongoing policy review, in consultation with our allies, of the current state of play on North Korea. I support the U.S. commitment over the long term to the complete denuclearization of North Korea, while also focusing in the near term on limiting the threat to the United States and our allies.

Question. Do you concur that any U.S. international agreement to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea must also eliminate the threat of North Korean regime's ballistic missile program?

Answer. Denuclearization of North Korea remains a top national security priority for the United States. North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs constitute a serious threat to the United States and our allies and partners. If confirmed, I plan to join the administration in conducting a thorough policy review, in consultation with our allies, of the current state of play on North

Korea. I support the U.S. commitment over the long term to the complete denuclearization of North Korea, while also focusing in the near term on limiting the threat to the United States and our allies.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit that the State Department will consult closely and proactively with Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and their personal staff before providing humanitarian assistance in order to ensure that any such U.S. assistance benefits directly the suffering North Korean people and is not vulnerable to diversion by the Kim Jong Un regime?

Answer. As part of its North Korea policy review, the Biden-Harris administration will carefully consider the country's egregious human rights record and work closely with partners and allies to promote respect for human rights in the closed country. The administration remains deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation in North Korea and is committed to ensuring any humanitarian assistance benefits the most vulnerable populations, including pregnant women, children, and the elderly in detention, in North Korea, and not the Kim Jong Un regime. The administration will continue to press for monitoring and access necessary to ensure the assistance reaches its intended recipients. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress on this crucial issue.

Question. Does the Biden administration intend to appoint a new Special Representative for North Korea? If not, why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to join the administration's ongoing review, in consultation with our allies, of the current state of play on North Korea. I am not aware of any new personnel announcements at this time.

Question. Do you agree that the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 (INARA) is permanent law and is binding on the Biden administration?

Answer. The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) is binding law. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration is committed to implementing all of the requirements of INARA.

Question. Do you agree that any agreement-including any annexes or any informal agreement, even an unwritten oral understanding-involving the United States and Iran regarding how the two countries will return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or will move in the direction of returning to compliance with the JCPOA must be submitted to Congress for review pursuant to INARA?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). The JCPOA was submitted under INARA in 2015 and underwent close Congressional and public scrutiny. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including with respect to the transmission requirement.

Question. Are you personally committed to ensuring that Congress will be able to review, pursuant to INARA, any agreement that is hereafter reached with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran-irrespective of the level of formality or of the politically or legally binding nature of such agreement-including any agreement providing for return to compliance with the JCPOA, as well as any agreement that amends, augments, or supersedes the JCPOA?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) and to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including its transmission requirement.

Question. Do you agree that, should any new agreement or agreements be reached with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran, including a decision to participate again in the JCPOA, INARA will require the President to submit a report to Congress not less frequently than every 180 calendar days "on Iran's nuclear program and the compliance of Iran with [each such new agreement] during the period covered by the report"?

Answer. I am aware of this provision of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under INARA and to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including its reporting requirements.

Question. Do you agree that, should any new agreement or agreements be reached with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran, including a decision to participate

again in the JCPOA, INARA will require the President to make a determination and certification to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership not less than every 90 calendar days regarding Iran's compliance with each such new agreement?

Answer. I am aware of this provision of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). If confirmed, I am committed to fully consulting with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under INARA and to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied, including the requirement to determine whether to make the certification called for in Section 135(d)(6).

Question. Can you provide an assurance that there are no circumstances under which the Biden administration will not abide by the understandings about compliance with INARA spelled out in your responses to the foregoing questions?

Answer. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration is committed to implementing all of the requirements of Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied.

Question. When you were negotiating the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) during the Obama administration, were you aware at the time that the Iranian regime was concealing a nuclear weapons archive? I request you to begin your answer with a yes or no. The Government of Israel revealed the existence of this undeclared, covert nuclear weapons archive in April 2018.

Answer. No. However, the United States and others were well aware of Iran's long history of concealment regarding elements of its nuclear program, especially as related to its past military dimensions. That is why we worked with our allies and partners to ensure that the JCPOA provides the most intrusive verification procedures ever negotiated, including to investigate any indications of undeclared nuclear material or activities in Iran, as well as any information that came to light after implementation of the JCPOA. President Biden has made clear he is committed to ensuring Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

The IAEA has made clear that it takes no information provided by Iran on its nuclear program at face value. The IAEA has previously reported that it found evidence of possible military dimensions of Iran's program to be credible, and that a "range of activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device were conducted in Iran prior to the end of 2003 as a coordinated effort, and some activities took place after 2003." The administration will not take Iran at its word regarding assertions about its nuclear program, and fully supports the IAEA as it uses its verification authorities to investigate any indication of undeclared nuclear material or activities in Iran.

Question. When you were negotiating the JCPOA during the Obama administration, were you aware that the Iranian regime was storing undeclared nuclear material at a warehouse reportedly called Turqzabad? I request you to begin your answer with a yes or no. In May 2020, the State Department noted that in late 2018 "public allegations surfaced that Iran had been hiding material and equipment at a site in Tehran called Turqzabad, only three miles from where the infamous 'nuclear archive' had been stored."

Answer. No. The Turqzabad site was first publicly disclosed by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in late 2018. To date, the IAEA has detected particles of chemically processed uranium at the undeclared location but has not yet made any conclusion regarding the potential storage of nuclear material there. The IAEA continues to investigate the source of the detected particles. The JCPOA provides the most intrusive verification procedures ever negotiated, including to investigate any indications of undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran, and the administration has made clear its strong support for the IAEA's investigation of safeguards-relevant information that has come to light after implementation of the JCPOA.

Question. When you were negotiating the JCPOA during the Obama administration, were you aware of any other undeclared sites under the control or influence of the Iranian regime where nuclear material may be present?

Answer. Iran has a long history of denial and concealment regarding its past nuclear weapons program. The JCPOA addressed potential undeclared locations by providing for the most intrusive verification procedures ever negotiated, including to investigate any indications of undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran. President Biden has made clear he is committed to ensuring that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

The IAEA has made clear that it takes no information provided by Iran on its nuclear program at face value. The IAEA has previously reported that it found evi-

dence of possible military dimensions of Iran's program to be credible, and that a "range of activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device were conducted in Iran prior to the end of 2003 as a coordinated effort, and some activities took place after 2003." The administration will not take Iran at its word regarding assertions about its nuclear program, and fully supports the IAEA as it uses its verification authorities to investigate any indication of undeclared nuclear material or activities in Iran.

Question. Did your Iranian regime counterparts disclose to you the existence of its nuclear weapons archive, the Turqzabad site, or any other undeclared Iranian regime nuclear-related site during the negotiations for the JCPOA?

Answer. Iran has never acknowledged its past nuclear weapons program. The JCPOA was concluded to ensure Iran never again pursues nuclear weapons and provides the most intrusive verification procedures ever negotiated, including to investigate any indications of undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran. President Biden has made clear he is committed to ensuring Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

Question. President Biden says he will rejoin the JCPOA if the Iran regime first returns to "full compliance" with the JCPOA. Can the Iranian regime be in full compliance with the JCPOA if it is concealing undeclared nuclear material, sites, and/or activities?

Answer. Iran is obligated under its NPT-required safeguards agreement to declare to the IAEA nuclear material and nuclear activities in Iran. Under the JCPOA, Iran committed to strict limits on its nuclear program as well as enhanced verification and monitoring measures that go beyond its obligations under its safeguards agreement. The JCPOA provides the most intrusive verification procedures ever negotiated, including to investigate any indications of undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran. It is critical that Iran comply with both its safeguards obligations and its JCPOA commitments. President Biden has made clear he is committed to ensuring that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

Question. Is it your view that Iran must fully and verifiably account for all of its undeclared activities, sites, and materials before the United States would rejoin the JCPOA and lift any sanctions? I request you to begin your answer with a yes or no.

Answer. Iran is obligated under its NPT-required safeguards agreement to declare to the IAEA nuclear material and nuclear activities in Iran. The JCPOA provides the most intrusive verification procedures ever negotiated, including to investigate any indications of undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran. The Biden-Harris administration strongly supports the IAEA's ongoing investigation in Iran into indications of possible undeclared nuclear material and, along with the rest of the international community, awaits the IAEA's conclusions in its ongoing safeguards investigations while expecting full Iranian cooperation with inspectors. President Biden has made clear he is committed to ensuring that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

Question. During your nominations hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 4, 2021, you acknowledged that you had met with senior officials of the Iranian regime—a regime that is a U.S.-designated State Sponsor of Terrorism—during your time out of government. Besides in-person meetings, have you otherwise been in contact with any Iranian regime officials, including via phone, e-mail, text exchange, or secure messaging platforms, between January 20, 2017, and today? I request that you begin your response with a yes or no. If yes, please identify dates of contact and the text of the exchanges.

Answer. To the best of my recollection, since January 2017 I have not had additional contact with Iranian officials beyond the meetings discussed, other than to arrange logistical details for those in-person meetings. I do not have records of those exchanges.

Question. Besides in-person meetings, have you otherwise been in contact with any Iranian regime officials, including via e-mail, text exchange, or secure messaging platforms, between January 20, 2017, and today? If yes, please identify dates of contact and the text of the exchanges.

Answer. To the best of my recollection, since January 2017 I have not had additional contact with Iranian officials beyond the meetings discussed, other than to arrange logistical details for those in-person meetings. I do not have records of those exchanges.

Question. In “The Total Destruction of U.S. Foreign Policy Under Trump” (Foreign Policy, July 31, 2020), you wrote: “As a result of Trump’s failures, the Middle East is further from peace..” But soon thereafter, in September 2020, Israel signed the Abraham Accords that normalized bilateral relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, respectively. In December 2020, Morocco signed the Abraham Accords with Israel. And in January 2021, Sudan also signed the Abraham Accords with Israel. What is your current assessment about the Trump administration’s efforts to promote peace and normalization agreements between Israel and Arab nations? And what steps will you support to further the Abraham Accords peace process in the Middle East?

Answer. The 2020 normalization agreements are an important contribution to peace and security in the Middle East. The Biden-Harris administration will seek to build on the agreements to expand the circle of peace between Israel and its neighbors. If confirmed, the administration will also closely monitor the status of the normalization efforts to date, encouraging the states that have signed such agreements with Israel to uphold their commitments to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel.

Question. If you are confirmed, do you commit that if the United States decides to participate again in the JCPOA, you will seek to prevent the Iranian regime or any other Iranian entity from being allowed to export oil to Syria either in defiance of U.S. sanctions under Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act, Executive Order 13894, Executive 13582, and other relevant authorities, or by receiving a waiver or license to do so?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is under no illusions about Iran’s destabilizing activities in the region, nor has it forgotten about the atrocities committed by the Syrian regime. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to countering the threat posed by Iran, using the various tools at its disposal, including sanctions, and working in close coordination with our allies and partners. If confirmed, I commit that I will seek to enforce fully U.S. sanctions with respect to Syria.

Question. Will the Biden administration maintain existing sanctions designations against the Assad regime and continue imposing new sanctions designations against the Assad regime? The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act has imposed significant economic pressure against the Syrian regime under Bashar al-Assad. Before January 2021, the U.S. Government imposed more than 100 sanctions designations against the Assad regime and its supporters since June 2020. Under the Biden administration, the U.S. Government has not yet imposed any new sanctions designations against the Assad regime and its allies.

Answer. The Caesar Act is an important tool, which seeks to limit the ability of Assad and others in the Syrian Government to profit from the ongoing conflict and any post-conflict reconstruction. Sanctions are also one way to press for accountability from the Assad regime for its atrocities, some of which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. If confirmed, I will continue to work to ensure U.S. sanctions do not unnecessarily impede humanitarian access in Syria and that they remain targeted in a way that contributes to progress toward our political objectives.

Question. Does the Biden administration intend to appoint a new Special Envoy for Syria? If not, why not? Since closing the U.S. Embassy in Damascus in February 2012, the U.S. Government has maintained a Special Envoy for Syria to oversee diplomatic activities concerning Syria. The Biden administration has not appointed a new Special Envoy for Syria since the previous envoy left office in January 2021, leaving the position vacant.

Answer. I understand that the State Department does not have any appointments or nominations to announce at this time, but I am assured there is a very experienced team in place working on these issues. If confirmed, I will continue to advance our policy goals in Syria, which include achieving a comprehensive political resolution that addresses the factors that drive violence and instability in Syria, under the parameters of UNSCR 2254 and in close consultation with our allies, partners, and the UN; ensuring the enduring defeat of ISIS; and promoting the provision of life-saving humanitarian aid to Syrians in need.

Question. Energy revenues account for approximately 80 percent of Russia’s exports, and the conclusion of the Nord Stream 2 (NS2) pipeline would provide a financial boon for Russia’s Putin regime. At the same time, Nord Stream 2 pipeline-if finished-would drastically increase Russia’s malign influence and coercive leverage over Europe especially by exposing Central and Eastern European allies to potential supply cutoffs and price manipulation by Russia. Does the State Department

continue to publicly maintain that Nord Stream 2 is a Russian malign influence project? This has been the position of the U.S. Government, including the Secretary of State and the State Department, for the last few years.

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has made clear that Nord Stream 2 is a geo-political project that threatens Europe's energy security. If confirmed, I support publicly addressing the ongoing threats to energy, geopolitical security, and European solidarity posed by Nord Stream2. Nord Stream 2 is a clear example of a tool that Russia uses for coercive actions in the region and provides the means to use gas, a critical natural resource, to advance its political goals and spread its malign influence within Europe.

Question. Why has the State Department not yet imposed sanctions against NS2 AG itself pursuant to mandatory sanctions against Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA) and Protecting Europe's Energy Security Clarification Act (PEESCA)? NS2 AG expressly describes itself on its website as the "project company established for planning, construction and subsequent operation of the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline. The company is based in Zug, Switzerland and owned by Public Joint Stock Company (PJSC) Gazprom."

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to use all available tools to counter Russian malign influence, to work with Allies and partners in the region, and to support Transatlantic energy security goals. I understand the Department of State is continuing to examine entities involved in potentially sanctionable activity and will designate additional persons as appropriate. The administration has made clear to Germany and other European partners that it does not view Nord Stream 2 as just a commercial deal, but as a threat to Europe's energy security to strategic stability on the continent.

Question. During the Trump administration, the United States worked closely with the Government of Japan to facilitate an expedited process for Foreign Military Sales. Based on that experience, has the State Department created a best practices template or manual to facilitate and expedite further Foreign Military Sales to allies and partners? Please begin your answer with yes or no.

Answer. While the Department has not developed a specific manual or template for expediting Foreign Military Sales (FMS) to allies and partners, the State Department adjudicates almost all FMS cases within 48 hours. The Department also continually works with interagency colleagues and our foreign partners to facilitate and streamline the FMS process. If confirmed, I will ensure the FMS process works as smoothly as possible to advance the interests of the United States and for the benefit of our allies and partners around the world.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BRIAN MCKEON BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. U.S. consulates are a key tool for engaging with local populations, and I am concerned that the closures of the Vladivostok and Yekaterinburg consulates will negatively impact our ability to engage with the Russian people in those areas. What impact will the closures of those two consulates have on our ability to engage with Russians in those regions? If confirmed, how will you ensure that the U.S. continues to engage directly with the Russian people in these regions?

Answer. At this time, there has been no permanent change to the consulates' posture. Engaging with Russians, especially those outside Moscow, is critical to diplomacy. U.S. consulates provide a valuable platform to convey the deep concerns President Biden has expressed about the Russian Government's continued efforts to suppress freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and to share our values and insights from the U.S. experience in democracy. During the pandemic, Mission Russia has adopted a wide range of new virtual tools and hybrid engagements to maintain a connection with these audiences. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing, and finding ways to expand, the Department's virtual engagement.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to advocate for the release of locally employed consulate staff who remain unjustly detained in the aftermath of the Turkish coup attempt?

Answer. The Department of State continues to press the Government of Turkey on behalf of Mission Turkey's three wrongfully accused locally employed (LE) staff, including by supporting their legal cases and by calling for their releases and exonerations. Senior Department and Mission Turkey officials have publicly and pri-

vately condemned the unjust prosecution and conviction of these employees in discussions with senior Turkish officials, and the Department continues to call for the swift release of the employee who remains in detention. Department personnel regularly consult with the LE staff and their families, who remain appreciative of USG support, and respect their concerns that public USG statements are more likely to damage than assist their cases.

Question. More than four years after U.S. personnel overseas began suffering from a set of mysterious but in many cases debilitating symptoms, we have more questions than answers about who was behind these attacks, what the ongoing threat may be to personnel, and, going forward, what we need to do to protect diplomats and others serving overseas. Do I have your commitment to engage fully on this issue, to be transparent with this committee, and to work with relevant interagency partners to provide Congress all relevant information about these attacks?

Answer. Yes.

Question. The Department of State faced deep budget cut proposals every year under the Trump administration. And, as they say, “if you show me your budget, I’ll tell you your priorities.” Congress pushed back repeatedly against these proposed cuts. But they were proposals that never should have been made to begin with. Do I have your commitment that you will seek and fight for a full and robustly-funded Function 150 International Affairs budget?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working with you to ensure a function 150 budget that will allow us to “make diplomacy the tool of first resort for U.S. statecraft to achieve the administration’s top foreign policy priorities,” as the Secretary said on March 3. If confirmed, I will advocate for the necessary investments in our people and programs to support and cooperate with our allies and partners around the world to advance our interests and build back better, including by furthering the democratic values of prosperity, freedom, and peace.

Question. The Department of State has remained perilously behind the curve when it comes to tech innovation and cyber security. The recent SolarWinds hack is a stark reminder of the high risk of vulnerabilities in government systems. What do you see as the immediate priorities for State’s cyber infrastructure? What steps will the Department take in the future to prevent such intrusions and to mitigate the damage where these intrusions do occur?

Answer. The SolarWinds supply chain compromise is a serious cybersecurity issue for the federal government and private sector companies. Cybersecurity remains of paramount importance and if confirmed I intend to support the Department’s efforts to protect and maintain its cyber infrastructure. These efforts are focused on dedicated investments in infrastructure, talent, and planning to ensure the security and resilience of the Department’s networks and digital assets, thereby protecting its global workforce and the citizens we serve. We must also ensure that the Department’s internal governance structure for cybersecurity is properly aligned to protect the Department’s networks.

Question. How is the Department cooperating and coordinating with other relevant USG agencies and offices to address the intrusion and to repair any damage?

Answer. While a full assessment of the incident is ongoing, I will, if confirmed, support the Department’s continued cooperation and coordination with the joint Cyber Unified Coordination Group in addressing the SolarWinds vulnerability. It is critical that the federal government also work with private sector partners to address the ever-expanding landscape of threats.

Question. In September 2020, State’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG) identified \$200 million spent on Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership programs as potentially wasteful spending due to mismanagement and inadequate oversight from staff in the Africa Bureau. The OIG found that, among other contributing factors, the Africa Bureau continuously experiences staffing shortages, and that the State Department has not appropriately prioritized the Africa Bureau’s needs. As Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources, what will you do to ensure that the Africa Bureau has adequate resources and staff, including a properly skilled, trained, and incentivized workforce equipped to meet the bureau’s needs and objectives?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Bureau of African Affairs to ensure it has the resources, including personnel, necessary to meet the bureau’s objectives. I recognize that the Bureau of African Affairs is chronically understaffed both in terms of positions and vacancies. If confirmed, I will review our staffing levels around the world to ensure that our embassies and bureaus are adequately staffed to meet our duties and advance our interests. Staffing must be aligned with our

most pressing interests, including oversight of critical programs like the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. If confirmed, I will explore enhancing incentives to serve at hardship posts, including those in Africa, and will look for other ways to ensure that our vacancies are filled, which would address elements of the OIG report related to field-based oversight.

Question. I understand that our embassy in Niger lacked both a political officer and an economic officer for months on end, at a time when that country was preparing for historic elections, chairing the Economic Community of West African States regional bloc, and engaging in counterterrorism operations in the increasingly insecure Sahel. Similarly, despite an armed uprising and a recent contentious election, our embassy in the Central African Republic reportedly lacks a political officer. As Deputy Secretary for Management and Resources, what will you do to ensure that hard to fill posts, especially in Africa, are appropriately staffed by qualified Foreign Service Officers?

Answer. The Department offers a number of incentives for employees to serve voluntarily in difficult locations. These include hardship differential payments of 5 percent to 35 percent, and danger pay when appropriate. Service need differential provides an additional 15 percent of salary for employees who agree to serve an extra year at posts that are particularly difficult to staff. There are also procedural incentives, such as the ability to take “stretch” assignments into higher-ranking positions that may offer more challenging work and greater opportunities for promotion. If confirmed, I will continue to review these incentives and calibrate them to America’s national interests overseas.

Question. There are long-standing concerns among career civil service employees that the Department is “designed” for the career foreign service, with few career advancement pathways for the career civil service. The lack of such pathways can mean that the Department loses talent to outside industries or to another office or bureau with higher-graded positions available. How will you address these long-standing concerns among career civil service employees, and create intentional and transparent pathways to career advancement?

Answer. I am committed to listening to the workforce and ensuring we retain high performers by investing in their professional development and strengthening programs that mentor individuals for success, provide actionable feedback on performance, chart career progression, provide more interagency and other detail opportunities, and create viable pathways for those in the Civil Service who aspire to advance their careers. I support efforts to expand existing career development and detail opportunities for Civil Service employees.

Question. Some of the most successful businesses in the world have developed extensive employee training and career-long mentoring programs. The Department has a renowned facility in the Foreign Service Institute that plays a critical role in training both foreign and civil service employees. Unfortunately, there are very few classes focused on developing the management skills necessary to maximize the morale and effectiveness of Department employees. Do you believe the Department should develop a more robust management training initiative to ensure that sound management skills are viewed as a necessary skill not just for “management-coned” foreign service officers?

Answer. Yes, I believe that management skills should be widely taught to all of our foreign affairs professionals, and that all training should reinforce the leadership skills needed to build up employees’ morale and effectiveness. If confirmed, I will continue to promote FSI’s commitment to providing world class training to employees across the Department. I will work to ensure FSI remains committed to seeking additional ways to expand its reach in these crucial areas.

Question. Do you commit to reviewing existing management trainings and reporting back to the committee with recommendations for improvement?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to a full review of current management skills training at FSI and will report back to the committee with recommendations for improvement as necessary.

Question. A recent survey of executive-level staff at the State Department conducted by Executive Women at State found concerning trends that inhibit career advancement for women. More than half of the respondents ranked 15 of the 22 barriers measured in the survey as having a huge or significant impact on the advancement of women at the Department; 75 percent of respondents described gender-related bias as having substantial impact on their careers. Do you commit to reviewing this report and its recommendations, and prioritizing a review of how the De-

partment can reduce barriers for women to increase retention and help more women serve in senior roles?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review this report, and will work to build upon the Department's ongoing initiatives and framework to increase flexibilities and support for our workforce. The Department instituted a number of policy changes designed to advance equal opportunity for women in the workforce and address barrier concerns raised by affinity groups and associations. In line with the recommendation of the January 2020 GAO report, "Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity," if confirmed, I commit to the Department's undertaking of further analysis to explore barriers to equal advancement for women and what remedies can be taken to mitigate those barriers to support the retention and career advancement of women at the State Department.

Question. It is no secret that the Department's morale has sunk to historic lows over the past several years under President Trump and Secretary Pompeo. Secretary Blinken has already made great strides in addressing distrust and improving morale at the Department, but much work remains to make sure that the Department's workforce is empowered and trusted to carry out its critical diplomatic work. What steps will you take to rebuild the morale of the people who serve at the Department and to ensure the Department has a workforce that is supported and empowered to carry out their mission to the best of their abilities?

Answer. The people who work for the Department of State are committed public servants who uphold U.S. policies to protect U.S. citizens and their interests abroad. The marginalization and loss of career talent over the last four years has coincided with declines in overall employee job satisfaction in annual workforce surveys. The report issued by your committee last July, "Diplomacy in Crisis," also chronicles the decline in morale at the Department, among other things. That said, the nearly 77,000 State Department employees worldwide remain resilient. If confirmed, I am committed to improving the State Department to advance our security and prosperity, including by investing in a diplomatic corps that fully represents the United States in all its talent and diversity. That means recruiting, retaining, and providing career development opportunities to officers with the skills to contend with 21st century challenges and who represent the diversity of the country we represent. I will spare no effort, if confirmed, to ensure their safety and well-being and demand accountability for fostering a more diverse, inclusive and non-partisan workplace.

Question. Last year, I published a report, *Diplomacy in Crisis*, which laid out the challenges facing the Department's workforce. It cited employee survey data that showed some disturbing trends—for example, steep increases in the number of staff who said they feared reprisal or retribution if they were to report a violation of law. Does that concern you, and how do you plan to reverse that culture?

Answer. I reviewed the committee's report prior to the confirmation hearing. These findings do concern me. I agree that retaliation for participating in the EEO process or anti-harassment program, requesting a reasonable accommodation, or for opposing discriminatory practices is unlawful, grounds for discipline, and counter to good management; employees do best when they have the ability to speak up and help the Department improve. The release of the forthcoming Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan will help guide a collective action approach to, among other things, fostering a culture that encourages people to speak up. If confirmed, as a senior leader in the Department, this work will be a priority.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BRIAN MCKEON BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. The COVID-19 pandemic originated and accelerated in higher-income countries, where USAID does not maintain a regular presence and where diplomatic engagement proved critical to securing access for global health experts on the one hand and the evacuation of American citizens on the other. Who is responsible for the execution of U.S. foreign policy at overseas posts, including diplomatic engagement to advance U.S. global health security interests in countries of all income categories: the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)?

Answer. At every overseas mission, the chief of mission is responsible for the execution of U.S. foreign policy. Multiple agencies have personnel on the ground under

chief of mission authority, and the State Department works closely with all relevant agencies to deliver on our robust U.S. Government foreign policy objectives.

Question. If confirmed, how do you intend to organize and resource the Department to advance the global health security and diplomacy objectives of the United States overseas?

Answer. The Department of State is firmly committed to using diplomacy to advance global health security objectives. The Department has already begun to mobilize an international response to COVID-19 with an initial \$2 billion contribution to Gavi, which will support COVAX, along with a pledge to provide an additional \$2 billion through 2022. The State Department's efforts to address the full range of global health security threats are facilitated by the close coordination of bureaus across the Department and the interagency. I understand the State Department is reviewing options to structure its response to meet critical policy objectives and, if confirmed I look forward to being part of these efforts and working with Congress as planning progresses.

Question. The Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator was recently directed to suspend its Country Operating Plan (COP) process, which had already reached an advanced stage, in order to alleviate burdens on implementing partners during the COVID-19 outbreak. While sympathetic to the needs of implementing partners, the COP process and the data-driven approach it has institutionalized is vital to the effective planning and execution of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) programs. If confirmed, will you ensure that the State Department-led COP process is restored and that the implementing agencies—USAID and CDC—adhere to such plans without unwarranted delays or deviations?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is fully committed to and supportive of PEPFAR. On March 5, 2021, the Department announced plans for the COP/ROP 2021 planning process to resume on April 1, 2021, and conclude no later than May 21, 2021. If confirmed, I will be firmly committed to ensuring that collaborative, transparent, and data-driven COP/ROP 2021 plans are completed in every PEPFAR-supported country and region and that there is no disruption in HIV services at the start of FY 2022. Following COP/ROP 2021 approvals, I understand that PEPFAR will move expeditiously through the required processes of Congressional notifications, approvals, and transfer of funds to implementing agencies in advance of the beginning of FY 2022.

Question. During his confirmation process, this committee asked Secretary Blinken: "Under your leadership as Secretary of State, what actions will you pursue to ensure that hard-to-fill posts in Sub-Saharan Africa are sufficiently and consistently staffed?" On January 19, he replied in writing: "If confirmed, I will work with the White House and relevant State Department bureaus and offices to ensure that all posts in Sub-Saharan Africa are sufficiently and consistently staffed with the appropriate personnel." Secretary Blinken's response was insufficient because it merely re-phrased the question into an answer and was non-specific on any action reflecting a change in priority from previous administrations. What do you view as the most pressing management and staffing challenges facing the Department's Bureau of African Affairs?

Answer. Advancing the State Department's diplomatic agenda and implementing innovative, effective foreign assistance programs depends on its personnel. The Bureau of African Affairs has been chronically understaffed both domestically and overseas, impeding the Department's ability to achieve the administration's goals, as well as to seize opportunities when they appear. Staffing must be aligned with our most pressing interests, including oversight of critical programs like the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership. If confirmed I will explore enhancing incentives to serve at hardship posts, including those in Africa, and will look for other ways to ensure that our vacancies are filled.

The Department offers a number of incentives for employees to serve voluntarily in difficult locations. These include hardship differential payments of 5 percent to 35 percent, and danger pay when appropriate. Service need differential provides an additional 15 percent of salary for employees who agree to serve an extra year at posts that are particularly difficult to staff. There are also procedural incentives, such as the ability to take "stretch" assignments into higher-ranking positions that may offer more challenging work and greater opportunities for promotion. If confirmed, I will continue to review these incentives and calibrate them to America's national interests overseas.

Question. What specific actions will you prioritize in your role to ensure that the Africa Bureau's staffing efforts focus on building regional expertise, diversity, and

preparedness so the Department can sufficiently and consistently staff hard-to-fill posts in Africa?

Answer. I recognize that the Bureau of African Affairs is chronically understaffed, both in terms of positions and vacancies. If confirmed, I will review the State Department's staffing levels around the world to ensure that staffing is aligned with its most pressing interests. I will explore enhancing incentives to serve at hardship posts, including those in Africa, and will look for other ways to ensure that our vacancies are filled. I am committed to an inclusive workplace and, if confirmed, will support the Bureau of African Affairs' efforts as they work to implement management reforms for recruitment, hiring, and retention.

Question. Recently, legal restrictions—commonly referred to as “section 889”—have gone into effect that severely limit the types of telecommunications networks that U.S. Government departments and agencies can use overseas. These restrictions were an attempt to combat the Chinese Government's sale and use of Chinese companies' technological networks and equipment in other countries to engage in espionage. However, many countries' networks are so saturated by prohibited telecommunications equipment that complying with section 889, absent a waiver, may limit the ability of our posts to operate abroad. How do you assess the burden placed on the Department by these restrictions?

Answer. Compliance with FY2019 NDAA Section 889 places an extreme burden on the Department's ability to conduct diplomacy in those nations where access to trusted networks is limited or non-existent. The current ODNI national security interest waivers mitigate the impact of Section 889, enabling the State Department to continue to supply its posts with critical services. There are parts of the world where it is unlikely that any trusted vendor will be available. Current ODNI waivers expire in 2022. Without waiver extensions, changes to the compliance regimen, or unforeseen technical solutions, the Department will be severely impacted in its ability to conduct diplomacy overseas.

Question. Do you believe that the Department should be able to implement these restrictions fully without diminishing its ability to operate abroad?

Answer. While I strongly support the intent of Section 889 of the 2019 NDAA, I understand that the current global market upon which the Department relies cannot meet the provision's requirements without waivers while continuing to accomplish the Department's mission. Absent a waiver, critical mission area activities will cease or be seriously hindered.

Question. Are there costs associated with these restrictions?

Answer. As a result of the ODNI approved waivers, I understand that the initial cost of compliance has been manageable and mainly focused on administrative workloads. As alternatives and compliant sources are identified overseas, it is anticipated the cost of compliance will increase when transitioning overseas acquisitions to compliant services.

Question. Would the Department be able to operate without the waivers currently granted by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) to the Department?

Answer. I understand that the Department of State would not be able to operate without the waivers currently granted by the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). ODNI granted nine waivers under section 889(d)(2) until September 30, 2022, to allow the Department to continue contracting activities that would otherwise be prohibited under section 889(a)(1)(B). I understand that these waivers cover not only contracting for telecommunications services, but also contracting for security services and equipment and many other programs and services vital to the Department and potentially impacted by the breadth of section 889(a)(1)(B).

The Department will make use of these waivers until an offeror attests itself eligible under section 889(a) or until alternative sources eligible under section 889 can be identified and contractual arrangements and necessary transitions implemented.

Question. Do you plan to request an extension of waivers?

Answer. Without change to the current compliance requirements, I understand that the Department must pursue extensions of all waivers granted by ODNI. I am committed to protecting U.S. telecommunications and, if confirmed, will work across government agencies and in the international community to adopt networks based on trusted supply chains

Question. Do you commit to work with Congress to find a long-term solution that ensures secure, reliable communications while encouraging foreign governments to move away from prohibited technological networks?

Answer. Yes. I strongly support the intent of the FY 2019 NDAA Section 889 and concur that steps must be taken to contract with safe, reliable, and secure services. If confirmed, I will continue to engage with the Department's interagency partners to develop a unified long-term solution.

Question. One troubling trend my staff and I have identified during our travels over the previous Congress is that many of our diplomats are not getting out from behind embassy walls and meeting with the local population or even other diplomats. Frequently, we are told that the security requirements are too great to support regular traverses to and from embassy compounds. This intolerance of reasonable, voluntary risk sacrifices advancement of U.S. interests for airtight security and keeps our diplomats from being able to do their jobs. Does the inability of State Department diplomats to leave the embassies at which they are currently stationed put the Department at a strategic disadvantage?

Answer. Consistent in-person outreach remains essential to advancing U.S. foreign policy goals. Doing this work requires a diplomatic presence in some of the most difficult and dangerous environments in the world. The Department of State continues to prioritize people-to-people engagement and relationships while taking into account a wide range of threats, including the unique local circumstances at each post. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the Department's current overseas operating posture and consulting with Congress and internal Department stakeholders such as the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to determine if current laws and our policies to mitigate operational risk should be modified.

Question. Do Chinese, Russian, and Iranian diplomats face similar restrictions to those placed on U.S. diplomats?

Answer. I am not currently in a position to answer the question of exactly what restrictions are now being placed on Chinese, Russian, and Iranian diplomats.

Question. Do you support getting our diplomats back outside posts? If yes, how so?

Answer. The Department of State strives to provide the most secure environment possible for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy while acknowledging that there is never a guarantee of complete safety. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) makes every effort to ensure that the Department's personnel and contractors are aware of potential risks and trained accordingly. State Department employees understand the risks but face them every day to advance U.S. national security and foreign policy interests on behalf of the American people. If confirmed, I will work with the DS to maximize the ability of our diplomats to work outside posts whenever possible through effective risk mitigation and management decisions.

Question. Do you intend to emphasize to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, regional security officers, and chiefs of mission your desire to do so? If yes, what specific steps will you take?

Answer. Engaging diplomatically outside posts whenever possible is paramount to the success of the Department. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to ensure our foreign affairs community can effectively achieve U.S. foreign policy goals with an acceptable level of risk.

Question. Should security concerns always take precedence over the ability of our diplomats to operate abroad?

Answer. Security conditions faced by our foreign affairs community overseas evolve, but the need to operate globally and carry out the State Department's diplomatic mission remains constant. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring the Department routinely assesses the threat environment in which its people live and work, mitigating risk with all the tools at our disposal, and making informed risk management decisions. My objective will always be to ensure personnel working in the Department's diplomatic missions overseas are able to carry out their duties in as safe and secure an environment as possible.

Question. How should diplomatic objectives be weighed in relation to security concerns, particularly with regard to embassy security?

Answer. I understand that the Department uses a variety of policies, training, and techniques to weigh diplomatic objectives in relation to security concerns. The Department sets a high baseline of security practices for all personnel and diplomatic facilities wherever they are located. If confirmed, I intend to continuously re-

view and improve the Department's global security standards without sacrificing our ability to effectively fulfill our diplomatic mission.

Question. Between late 2016 and May 2018, the State Department found that certain U.S. Embassy community members suffered a series of unexplained injuries, including hearing loss and cognitive issues. If confirmed, will you commit to continuing the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the sonic attacks?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be wholly committed to engaging in the ongoing investigation into circumstances surrounding the unexplained health incidents. The Department continues to work on determining what happened to our staff and their families and to ensure their well-being and health going forward. There is no higher priority than the safety and security of our U.S. personnel, their families, and U.S. citizens.

Question. Will you seek to ensure the safety and security of U.S. diplomatic personnel in Havana and other posts where personnel have been injured?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working to ensure the safety and security of U.S. personnel and their families under Chief of Mission security responsibility. The Department is working to determine what happened to its staff and their families and to ensure the well-being and health of our officials going forward. That investigation is ongoing and is a high priority.

Question. Dozens of these cases were reported by personnel stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Havana, Cuba. To date, Cuba has refused to cooperate with investigations into these reports. Is it in the national interest of the United States to assign an ambassador to Cuba before the Cuban Government fully and credibly cooperates with these investigations and explains the targeted attacks on U.S. diplomats in Havana?

Answer. The Department of State has no higher priority than the safety and security of U.S. personnel, their families, and U.S. citizens. The Department continues to review its staffing posture to ensure that Embassy Havana can continue its core mission effectively and safely. The Department continually reminds the Cuban Government of its obligation under the Vienna Convention to take all appropriate steps to protect our diplomats.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to support all State Department employees and their families who were injured by these sonic attacks, including those employees who have since left the Department?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting all State Department employees and their families who were injured by these unexplained health incidents, regardless of employment status. To ensure that affected personnel receive the appropriate care, the Department established the Senior Care Coordinator position to serve as an advocate for the affected personnel and provide administrative support including assistance in applying for workers' compensation. This position is an advocate for all affected personnel.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to work constructively with other government agencies to find the cause of the attacks and determine the best ways to support those U.S. Government employees who have been injured?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be wholly committed to strengthening interagency cooperation on this issue. The Department has partnered with multiple agencies to help identify the source and cause of these injuries. Recently, the Department designated a senior-level official as the Senior Advisor to the Health Incidents Response Task Force who will advise senior Department leadership and coordinate the Department's response to the health incidents with the interagency.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to regularly share new information on this issue with Congress, including updates on any live investigations?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to regularly share new information on this issue as appropriate.

Question. Do you support Congress passing a State Department authorization bill?

Answer. As you might imagine, given my years working with the President, including in his capacity as chairman of this committee, I have been very involved in and supportive of Congressional efforts to pass a State Department Authorization Act. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the committee on our shared interest in strengthening the capabilities of the Department, including through legislation as necessary.

Question. Do you believe it is important that the Department be explicitly authorized outside of the appropriations process?

Answer. I do think it is important. Given my past work on the staff of the committee, I appreciate the role of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, in considering and developing authorization legislation pertaining to Department operations. I recall, too, the challenges encountered at times in efforts to secure such authorization. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the committee on legislative proposals, particularly those providing needed authorizations.

Question. Do you believe that the role the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is important in providing congressional oversight?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Do you commit to making Department personnel under your purview available for timely briefings upon request?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department makes available personnel who are well-positioned to be responsive to your requests in a timely manner.

Question. In light of the massive cyber hack of the U.S. federal Government that was reported in December 2020, how important is cybersecurity to the State Department and U.S. diplomacy?

Answer. Cybersecurity is of paramount importance to the Department of State. The Department needs to ensure cybersecurity is an integral part of its efforts, including as it adopts new technologies to meet new global diplomacy demands. The continually evolving threat to the cyber landscape requires a dedicated investment in infrastructure, talent, and planning to ensure the security and resilience of our networks and digital assets while protecting its global workforce and the citizens we serve.

Question. What cybersecurity challenges does the Department currently face?

Answer. As with any global organization, the Department of State is an attractive target for malicious cyber activity. Therefore, the Department is always engaged in identifying cybersecurity threats and taking steps to counter any threats. Cyber threat actors will likely prioritize exploitation of the Department's maximum telework and global posture and attempt to target remote access solutions and devices to collect internal Department information. Threat actors will attempt to identify and exploit any new vulnerabilities in operations. Additionally, cyber threat actors may be more likely to target supply chain operations against the Department's software providers, inspired by the recent SolarWinds event. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the Department's cybersecurity efforts are geared toward addressing these challenges.

Question. How do you intend to improve cybersecurity at the Department?

Answer. The Department's approach to cybersecurity is rooted in a deep understanding of the operational nexus between malicious cyber activity and counterintelligence threats and the need to develop proactive solutions for managing the Department's global cyber exposure and ensuring a safe and reliable digital environment for performing the diplomatic mission. To proactively defend against current, emerging, and future cybersecurity threats, the Department should continue steps to consolidate network monitoring and infrastructure IT operations and maintenance as well as maximize network visibility, auditing, and configuration management. The Department must ensure rigorous vulnerability management and swift patch deployment, while leveraging a matrix of cybersecurity, security technology, and investigative capabilities to detect, analyze, and defend against all cyber threats.

Question. As with any workforce, high morale among the State Department's employees is vital to attracting and retaining talent. Is morale at the Department a problem?

Answer. The people who work for the Department of State are committed public servants who uphold U.S. policies to protect U.S. citizens and their interests abroad. The marginalization and loss of career talent over the last four years has coincided with declines in overall employee job satisfaction in annual workforce surveys, as well as a reduction in test takers for the Foreign Service exam. That said, the nearly 77,000 State Department employees worldwide remain resilient and work every day to advance the interests of the American people.

Question. If yes, how do you intend to improve and maintain morale at the Department?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to improving and maintaining a State Department workforce that advances our security and prosperity, including by developing a diplomatic corps that fully represents the United States in all its talent and diversity. That means recruiting, retaining, and providing career development opportunities to personnel with the skills to contend with 21st century challenges and who reflect our country's diversity. I will spare no effort, if confirmed, to ensure their safety and well-being and demand accountability for fostering a more diverse, inclusive and non-partisan workplace.

Question. Are there specific areas of morale (or bureaus) that you believe need immediate attention?

Answer. I am not currently in a position to speak to this question, but if confirmed, one of my first priorities will be to investigate the areas and bureaus that may need urgent attention. I commit to ensuring the safety and well-being of the entire workforce and demand accountability for fostering a more diverse, inclusive, and non-partisan workplace.

Question. In 2017, Congress passed a lateral entry pilot program for the Foreign Service which the Department has yet to implement. Do you commit to begin implementation of the program in 2021 and to design it as Congress intended?

Answer. I understand the Department developed and planned to roll out a new Lateral Entry Pilot Program for Foreign Service generalists in FY 2021. Implementation was delayed for Congressional consultation and notification requirements in the Department's annual appropriations act and by the Department's focus on responding to the global COVID-19 pandemic. If confirmed, I commit to resume implementation of the program when appropriate.

Question. Currently, Foreign Service oral assessments are only held in Washington, D.C., throughout the year and once a year in San Francisco, California. On February 24, 2021, Secretary Blinken issued a press statement saying that, in order to effectively represent the American people to the world, "we must recruit and retain a workforce that truly reflects America." Is geographic diversity important in building a Department that "truly reflects America"?

Answer. The Department administers the Foreign Service Oral Assessment outside of Washington, D.C. twice each year, in San Francisco in February and in Chicago in May. In addition, the Department maintains a national recruitment platform that includes geographic diversity in its strategic recruiting objectives. In 2020, the recruitment team conducted 1,500 events nationwide. Secretary Blinken is committed to increasing diversity, including geographic diversity, at all levels through recruitment and retention as a major priority. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary to build a diverse workforce that is fully representative of our Nation.

Question. Do you think making it easier and more cost effective for Americans outside of Washington, D.C., and northern California to take the Foreign Service oral assessments would encourage a more geographically diverse Foreign Service?

Answer. Secretary Blinken and I are committed to building a diverse workforce representative of the American people—including geographically—and the Department will continue to expand the accessibility of the Foreign Service assessment process. If confirmed, I will dedicate resources to continue modernizing talent acquisition and support additional innovations to attract exceptional talent. The Department typically offers the Foreign Service Oral Assessment outside of Washington, D.C., twice each year in San Francisco (February) and Chicago (May). In response to COVID-19 disruptions, the Department successfully piloted a virtual oral assessment for Specialist candidates in June 2020. If confirmed, I will direct my team to resume in-person oral assessments outside Washington, D.C., as soon as conditions allow.

Question. Do you commit to expanding the number of locations where the Foreign Service oral assessments can be administered?

Answer. COVID-19 caused disruptions to the assessment process. To overcome this, in June 2020 the Department successfully piloted a virtual oral assessment for Foreign Service Specialist candidates. Although the Generalist Foreign Service Oral Assessment could not be adapted to a virtual format, the Department's prioritization of public health measures at the assessment facility will permit in-person oral assessments to resume in Washington, D.C., in late March. When health and safety conditions permit, the Department will again offer the Foreign Service Oral Assessment outside of Washington, D.C., twice each year, in San Francisco and in Chicago. If confirmed, I will dedicate resources to continue modernizing talent acquisition and support additional innovations to attract exceptional talent.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to briefing this committee on the administration's use of special envoys, including with respect to the constitutional and legal authority to appoint such officials?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to briefing this committee on the administration's use of special envoys, including with respect to the relevant appointment authorities.

Question. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 establishes an Office of Sanctions Coordination within the Department of State. If confirmed, do you commit to work with my office and this committee to ensure that this office succeeds and fulfills its statutory mandate?

Answer. Yes, I am aware that this office has been re-established in statute, and that the law requires the administration to appoint a head of such office to have the rank of ambassador and with the advice and consent of the Senate. I understand that the Department is actively reviewing these new requirements. If confirmed, I believe there will be the opportunity for me to engage in this process, as we will want to ensure that any such official would have the expertise and stature, including political support, to operate effectively within the U.S. Government and internationally.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BRIAN McKEON BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. While a Senate staffer working for then-Senator Biden—first in his Senate office as a foreign policy legislative assistant, and later as chief counsel on the staff of the Committee on Foreign Relations—I developed and executed on legislative and oversight efforts to protect and enhance the work of U.S. international broadcasting, which provides objective news and information to audiences around the world. In particular:

- Early in the Clinton administration, Senator Biden blocked an effort, proposed in the first budget submitted by President Clinton, to close Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). Senator Biden believed, as I did, that it was premature to close the radio services, given that democratic governments and traditions in Europe and Eurasia after the collapse of the Soviet bloc were not firmly established. In that period, we also learned from testimony by leaders such as Poland's Lech Walesa of the power of these services during the Cold War in sustaining dissident movements. With the regression of democracy in the region since then, it is clear that the decision to preserve RFE/RL was well-founded.
- Based on the success of RFE/RL, Senator Biden authored the legislation that led to the creation of a similar 'surrogate' radio service to broadcast to China and other countries in East Asia. "Radio Free Asia (RFA)" was established by legislation enacted in 1994 and initiated broadcasts in 1996. Today, the service has a well-established reputation for its coverage of news in the countries to which it broadcasts and has earned numerous journalism awards. For example, in 2019, a journalist from RFA's Uyghur service received the Magnitsky Human Rights Award for her reporting on the humanitarian and human rights situation in China's Xinjiang region.

When legislation was proposed to consolidate U.S. foreign affairs agencies in the 1990s, Senator Biden insisted that the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG)—then a part of the U.S. Information Agency—be maintained as an independent agency, and not merged into the Department of State, based on our concern that doing so would jeopardize the journalistic integrity of the broadcasting services supported by the BBG.

As chief counsel to the Committee on Foreign Relations, in coordination with a human rights organization, I initiated a standard set of questions for the record that were posed to every ambassadorial nominee about human rights issues in the country to which they had been nominated. We also later undertook to request follow-up reports from the ambassadors after they had been at post for a number of months. I believe this process helped to sensitize nominees to the importance of these issues and ensure that they were giving priority attention to human rights issues as part of their work.

Question. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups?

Answer. Diversity is the key to unlocking an organization's potential as diverse teams consistently demonstrate high performance due to their creativity and innovation. If confirmed, I commit to upholding and fully implementing the Department's leadership and management tenets, including support for diversity and inclusion, to strengthen teams across the Department. I will hold senior leaders accountable for promulgating fairness and transparency in their day-to-day decisions and will seek progress reports, working with the new Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, on their continued commitment to championing diversity and inclusion.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure each of the supervisors at the Department of State is fostering an environment that is diverse and inclusive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ask those who report to me to provide updates on their initiatives and contributions to advance diversity and inclusion at the State Department. I will encourage leaders to prioritize innovation and creativity across teams, ensuring that all voices are heard and that their contributions matter. If confirmed, I will support, empower, and work with the new Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and bureau representatives to implement Department-wide diversity and inclusion policies, ensure transparency of these initiatives, and hold senior leadership accountable for progress.

Question. Do you commit to bring to the committee's attention (and the State Department Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules, and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any foreign country?

Answer. My spouse does not have any financial interests in a foreign country. My investment portfolio, as set forth in my SF-278 submitted to the committee, includes mutual funds and exchange traded funds, including a foreign stock fund, which may hold interests in companies with an international presence, but these funds are exempt from the conflict of interest laws. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations. I will divest any investments the State Department Ethics Office deems necessary to avoid a conflict of interest.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BRIAN MCKEON BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. There is the proliferation of special envoys, who are often political appointees, and who tend to duplicate work that should belong to the regional bureaus and other permanent offices of the Department. This is not to say that special envoys cannot play a role in certain circumstances, but many career diplomats seem to think there have been too many in recent years. If confirmed, what will you do to streamline the Department, reduce wasteful spending, and do away with redundant positions?

Answer. I understand that the Secretary shares your concern about the proliferation of redundant positions. I also am aware that some special envoy positions are required by law. If confirmed, I will work toward accomplishing the Secretary's goals of efficient and effective management, including by examining the Department's use of special envoys.

Question. It is critically important that we have a Foreign Service that is designed to meet the needs of this century. The talent we have recruited to the Foreign Serv-

ice is impressive, but I think there are ways to further strengthen how we identify new talent and train the workforce that we have. To meet the challenges of this century, our Foreign Service must be structured to counter the malign influence of the Chinese Communist Party. The new regional China officer positions created during the last administration were a good step in this direction. If confirmed, what would you do to shift the focus of the Foreign Service toward developing regional expertise and advanced language skills, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region? If the generalist model is to be retained, are you prepared to carve out a separate track for political and economic officers who specialize in one region and/or critical language?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to examining the best ways to develop and advance the skills of Department employees so they are prepared to meet global challenges, including the challenges posed by China. In addition to operational and leadership effectiveness, officers wishing to get into the Senior Foreign Service must demonstrate language proficiency. The new Professional Development Program also gives officers the flexibility to focus on and build expertise in a specific region.

I understand in 2020 the State Department stood up a Mandarin Language Task Force to answer the continuing critical need for regional expertise and advanced Chinese language skills. The task force has already delivered an Advanced Mandarin Training Program, with students starting in-country, in-depth language training in Summer 2021.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to an evaluation of the personnel numbers in each region and adjust accordingly?

Answer. People are the most important State Department asset and properly aligning them to regions and posts is essential to achieving our mission objectives. If confirmed, I will work to make sure that the State Department has the appropriate people in the right place at the right time to achieve its objectives.

Question. Another perennial problem is that too many Foreign Service officers have traditionally regarded human rights and democracy promotion as the responsibility of civil servants in the Department of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), or USAID, but not the Foreign Service. If confirmed, what will you do to raise the importance of human rights and democracy issues in the Foreign Service?

Answer. The President and Secretary Blinken have made clear that America's cherished democratic values are at the center of this administration's foreign policy. If confirmed, I will ensure that this is reflected in human resources decisions as well as policy actions. I pledge to encourage Foreign Service Officers, most of whom passionately and skillfully carry the mantle of human rights and democracy promotion in the execution of their duties, to serve in DRL and to elevate their attention to these issues, wherever they serve. If confirmed, I look forward to working to better enable Foreign Service Officers to build a career around these important issues and to elevate the roles that human rights and labor officers play at our embassies.

Question. I hear from married couples in the Foreign Service that getting assignments in the same country is often difficult. It is important that we find creative ways to keep married couples together, both for morale reasons and to make the best use of the talent we have. If confirmed, what will you do to support Foreign Service families and tandem couples?

Answer. I strongly support efforts to help tandem couples find appropriate positions at the same post, while also ensuring that we meet service need, promote career development, and follow the law such that no advantage or disadvantage accrues to any employee on marital status grounds. If confirmed, I will look for ways to expand workplace flexibilities for tenured employees to increase opportunities for tandems to serve together, including identifying aligning tours of duty, expanding positions eligible for domestic employees teleworking overseas, and identifying more opportunities for in-country language training.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. BRIAN MCKEON BY SENATOR TIM Kaine

Question. Sluggish State Department hiring procedures—including a pre-pandemic average of six months to complete a security clearance—contribute to recruitment challenges and poor morale, and create significant staffing gaps. This is particularly true overseas, where embassies rely on spouses, known as eligible family members (EFMs), to fulfill critical professional and support roles. These positions

can be vacant as often as one-third to one-half of the time due to the lengthy hiring and security process. If confirmed, what will you do to address sluggish State Department hiring procedures, particularly for eligible family members?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to support ongoing efforts of the Department's senior leadership to re-engineer the security clearance process for all employees, including EFMs. The government-wide Federal Investigative Standards, implemented in 2017, has increased the work that goes into completing background investigations, which impacts EFM onboarding. To streamline family member employment to fill available positions overseas, I am committed to expanding membership in the Foreign Service Family Reserve Corps (FSFRC), where eligible EFMs are appointed to a position that allow them to maintain their current security clearance during gaps in employment at posts. The FSFRC is a helpful tool in reducing the time needed to hire and onboard EFMs overseas.

Question. The pandemic has necessitated a swift move to remote work, highlighting possibilities for expanding the use of telework even after the current health emergency is under control. Would you support increasing the number of foreign and civil service domestic positions approved for telework overseas (i.e. DETO, domestically employed teleworking overseas) and opening them to EFMs and tandem spouses?

Answer. During the pandemic, Foreign Service personnel and employed family members teleworked from the United States to provide remote assistance to our missions around the world. The Department implemented new workplace flexibilities allowing domestic employees to telework remotely from other U.S. locations to maintain an agile workforce. In the past five years, the Department doubled the number of both Foreign and Civil Service DETOs, which allowed qualifying employees to perform their domestic work overseas for a defined period of time. Family members who encumber Civil Service and Foreign Service positions may enter DETO arrangements to perform work from the location of their spouse's overseas assignment. If confirmed, I will strongly support the Department's focus on enhancing employee workplace flexibilities, including telework and remote work.

Question. Would you instruct offices to re-examine policies that permit remote telework only after several months of in-office work, thereby eliminating eligible overseas applicants from applying?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support the Department's focus on enhancing employee workplace flexibilities, including telework and remote work. The pandemic has reinforced the need for such flexibilities and demonstrated that virtual work can be successful.

I understand in August 2020, the Department established a remote work policy, which permits employees in domestic positions to work full-time from an alternate worksite in the United States with supervisor and bureau approvals.

Question. Would you support expanding telework to allow for appropriate overseas positions to be filled by EFMs and tandem spouses who are stationed in the U.S. or at other posts?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support expanding employment opportunities overseas for spouses to work in the country to which their employee spouse is assigned and accredited. While the Department does not have authority to employ family members domestically using its overseas hiring authorities, family members with prior U.S. Government service who are currently residing in the United States may be eligible to apply non-competitively to Civil Service positions.

Question. Being assigned to the same post is a perpetual struggle for tandem couples. While the State Department is prohibited from discriminating based on marital status, 3 FAH-1 H-2425.8-7(A) states that State "will make a reasonable effort to assign both members of a tandem to the same post in positions appropriate to their class levels and qualifications." What actions will you take to ensure that this is implemented given current challenges that tandems face in being assigned to the same post?

Answer. I strongly support efforts to help tandem couples find positions at the same post that are appropriate to their skill codes, grade levels, and qualifications, while also ensuring that no advantage or disadvantage accrues to any employee on the grounds of marital status. I will look for ways to expand existing and new workplace flexibilities for tenured FS employees to increase opportunities for tandem spouses to serve together, including identifying aligning tours of duty, expanding positions eligible for domestic employees teleworking overseas (DETO), and identifying more opportunities for in-country language training.

Question. Will you work to align bidding timelines across different components of the State Department (e.g. Diplomatic Security and generalist/specialist cycles) and different foreign affairs agencies?

Answer. The Department has worked to bring bidding cycles in line over the past two years for all employees. The main cycle takes place in the fall, for positions that will be open the following summer. There are also bidding cycles for winter vacancies, for “priority staffing posts” in 11 countries, and for chiefs of mission, deputy chiefs of mission, and principal officers. I will continue to review the bidding cycles and process to ensure they meet our staffing and mission requirements. Other foreign affairs agencies manage their own bidding cycles and process to meet their mission needs.

Question. Will you direct the Entry Level Division of the Career Development and Assignments Office to make every reasonable effort to direct assignments for incoming officers and specialists to posts where their tandem spouse is already serving?

Answer. If confirmed, I will direct the Career Development and Assignments Office (CDA) to follow the law when directing assignments for entry-level employees, so that no advantage or disadvantage accrues to any employee on the grounds of marital status. Further, if confirmed, I will direct CDA to make reasonable efforts to assign both members of a tandem to the same post or region within the bounds of the law. Entry-level employees have less flexibility due to tenure requirements and therefore are always the “lead bidder” when bidding with a mid- or senior-level spouse; more flexibilities exist for mid- and senior-level employees to align tours with an entry-level spouse. If both tandem spouses are entry-level, CDA will direct the entry-level employees according to service needs and career development.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BRIAN MCKEON BY SENATOR ROB PORTMAN

GEC/Global Disinformation

Senator Chris Murphy and I have worked very closely over the last 4 years to strengthen the Global Engagement Center and through our efforts and have made important strides in countering global disinformation. I think this is one of the gravest threats we face internationally. Disinformation operations are cheap, deniable, and when combined with economic and political subversion can be a devastating to democracies. Thanks to the work of the GEC we now have an effective organization that can help our allies fight back.

However, there is more work to be done to ensure that the effort is sustained and strengthened through the work of the GEC. In particular, I would like to see:

- *A sustained funding level of at least \$138 million annually.* At its current amount of \$60 million, the Center continues to be under resourced, and is unable to expand into areas such as Africa where countries desperately need our assistance.
- *Extension of hiring authority.* It is critical that the Center be able to retain its talent within the Department as well as recruit outside expertise.
- *A commitment to continue the work of the GEC.* Foreign disinformation is a threat to our democracy and a tool our adversaries wield against us. It is critical that we have the resources, means, and capability to combat this threat, and the GEC located within the Department of State is the right organization to do it.

Question. Can I get your commitment to work with Senator Murphy and me to continue strengthening the capabilities and funding of the GEC so that we can continue the fight against state sponsored disinformation campaigns worldwide?

Answer. You have my commitment, if confirmed, to work with you and your colleagues, as well as the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, to continue strengthening the GEC and our full range of public diplomacy programs so that we are better able to counter disinformation campaigns of authoritarian regimes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. BRIAN MCKEON BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. Will you commit that the Department will make a robust State Department and USAID budget request in Fiscal Year 2022 to address the global pandemic and its secondary impacts?

Answer. If confirmed, and to the extent that decisions have not yet been made on the FY 2022 budget request by the time I am appointed, I am committed to making sure that the Department requests the necessary resources in FY 2022 to address the global pandemic and secondary impacts on Department operations and foreign assistance. I know Congress has already generously provided the Department with funding and expanded authorities in FY 2020 and 2021, which protected the health and safety of the American people and others worldwide, allowed for the timely and efficient repatriation of Americans stationed overseas in the early stages of the pandemic, supported global health security and pandemic preparedness, and sustained consular operations worldwide into FY 2021. I also understand there are significant resources for international pandemic response efforts in the American Rescue Plan, which the Congress is currently considering.

Question. Will you commit to the goal of working in cooperation with our international allies to ensure that every person, regardless of wealth, will gain access to a life-saving vaccine?

Answer. If confirmed, I will strongly support the administration's commitment to multilateralism to surge broad and equitable global vaccine distribution. On December 22, 2020, Congress appropriated funds to contribute to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance to support the procurement and distribution of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, including through the COVAX Advance Market Commitment to facilitate vaccine distribution in 92 low- and middle-income countries. Last month, the Administration announced an initial \$2 billion contribution to Gavi, and that the additional \$2 billion provided by Congress will be released as the United States works with other donors to elevate their pledge commitments. I will encourage countries to consider vulnerable, marginalized, and at-risk populations in their national vaccination plans.

Question. What role can "vaccine diplomacy" play towards restoring the U.S. global image?

Answer. Most countries in the world are anxious to procure COVID-19 vaccines. In addition to meeting our primary responsibility and commitment to ensuring that all U.S. citizens have access to vaccines, therapeutics, and other resources, the United States will also lead in ensuring sufficient vaccines are available around the world, with a focus on protecting communities most at risk. The United States is supporting COVAX, a multilateral initiative to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines. The U.S. will work to expand global vaccination, including through encouraging others to donate to COVAX, and will work to support efforts to mitigate secondary impacts. If confirmed, I will work to leverage our technical, financial, diplomatic, and other assistance to support global vaccination efforts.

Question. What steps will you take to revitalize efforts to ensure that USG diplomatic and administrative personnel who identify as LGBTQI are able to receive visas for themselves and their families when assigned to U.S. diplomatic and consular facilities and bases abroad?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to ensuring that all of the Department's employees and their families are treated fairly and equitably. For employees assigned overseas, that commitment includes seeking accreditation, with all appropriate privileges and immunities, for our LGBTI employees and their families. The State Department has formed a dedicated senior working group to seek ways to gain full recognition for our LGBTI families in those countries that do not now extend such recognition.

Question. Will you commit to regular and personal oversight of these efforts?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be wholly committed to regular and personal oversight of these efforts.

Question. I was pleased to see the recent Presidential Memorandum on Advancing the Human Rights of LGTBQI Persons Around the World. The memorandum outlines a leadership role for the State Department to ensure the federal government's swift and meaningful response to incidents which threaten the human rights of LGBTQI persons abroad. Please articulate how you will mobilize our diplomatic corps to support LGBTQI equality worldwide.

Answer. In accordance with President Biden's Presidential Memorandum on Advancing the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons around the world, I am committed to working closely with our diplomatic corps in using the broad range of diplomatic and programmatic tools and resources to promote and protect the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons. If confirmed, I pledge to support the Department's efforts to empower civil society and local LGBTQI+ movements; combat criminalization of individuals on the basis of LGBTQI+ status or conduct; protect vulnerable LGBTQI+ refugees and asylum seekers; and allow swift U.S. responses to human rights violations of LGBTQI+ persons.

Question. How can the Department better use the insights and talents of its affinity groups to increase outreach to minority communities with a view to increasing diverse employment and better connecting U.S. foreign policy programs and goals to the needs of the American people?

Answer. The State Department encourages all employees to help recruit diverse talent by using their professional affiliations and networks to amplify Department career opportunities. The Department's 17 Employee Affinity Groups (EAGs) members can explain to future colleagues their unique roles and cooperation to create a culture of inclusion across the Department. The Department's Volunteer Recruiter Corps, launched in January 2021, will leverage employees' diverse insights and experiences to recruit for a more inclusive workforce; half of the 500 participants are EAG members. Outreach from members of underrepresented groups in the diplomatic workforce will be key to prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility as a national security imperative.

Question. Specifically, will you consider encouraging domestic travel of U.S. diplomats, increasing the number of Pickering and Rangel Fellows, and increasing the number of Diplomats in Residence at U.S. colleges and universities in underserved areas?

Answer. If confirmed, I will look forward to carefully reviewing this proposal. I will also continue the Department's efforts to build a more diverse workforce. Currently, 16 regional Diplomats in Residence are based around the country, including seven at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions. In 2020, the Department's virtual recruitment and career fairs opened new channels to reaching candidates. A new "sourcing unit" will identify highly skilled potential candidates from all backgrounds.

The Department increased the Pickering and Rangel Fellowship Programs by 50 percent in 2020 and will welcome a newly expanded cohort of 90 fellows in March. Additionally, in 2020, the Department recruited a record number of fellowship candidates. The Department is considering new fellowships to meet specialist career track hiring needs and diversity and inclusion initiatives, as we have done for Information Specialists with the Foreign Affairs IT Fellowship. If confirmed, I also look forward to continuing conversations with Congress to explore an expanded paid internship program.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BRIAN McKEON BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. Section 15(b) of the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 states that "The Department of State shall keep the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives fully and currently informed with respect to all activities and responsibilities within the jurisdiction of these committees. Any Federal department, agency, or independent establishment shall furnish any information requested by either such committee relating to any such activity or responsibility." Can you commit to complying with this provision of law by ensuring that information requested by members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is provided expeditiously and transparently? If not, why not?

Answer. I am committed to working with Congress and this committee in accordance with the law to provide all information needed to perform traditional oversight functions as promptly as possible.

Question. The Obama administration was broadly criticized, especially in the context of its Middle East policy, for co-mingling unclassified documents with classified documents. This practice requires that documents be placed in a secure location, unnecessarily limiting access to unclassified documents and stifling public debate. The Biden administration already seems to be repeating such practices: according to an

exchange during the State Department press briefing on February 11, a notification describing the lifting of terrorism sanctions on Iran-controlled terrorists in Yemen was unnecessarily transmitted to a Congressional SCIF. Can you commit to ensuring that unclassified information is not unnecessarily comingled with classified information in notifications provided by the State Department to Congress? If not, why not?

Answer. I am committed to working to ensure that information provided to Congress is, to the fullest extent possible, in a format that facilitates its access by authorized personnel, while complying with Executive Order 13526, the Department of State classification guide, and the executive branch rules on the handling and storage of classified information.

Question. Last month the State Department transmitted a mandatory and overdue report to Congress listing entities engaged in sanctionable activities because of their participation in the construction of the Nord Stream 2 (NS2) pipeline, pursuant to the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA), as amended. PEESA mandates the imposition of sanctions on entities listed in such reports. The report included only two entities, the Fortuna and KVT-RUS, both of which the Trump administration had already sanctioned. It did not include any entities which are plainly, publicly required to be listed under PEESA. Reportedly, State Department officials who spoke to Congressional staffers were unable to provide a justification why several entities—including the company responsible for the planning, construction, and operation of NS2—were left off. This abdication is inexcusable. Can you commit to immediately ensuring the Biden administration meets its mandatory obligation to provide an interim report to Congress pursuant to PEESA and sanction all of the entities that are engaged in pipe-laying, pipe-laying activities, certification, and insurance sanctionable under PEESA? If not, why not?

Answer. The State Department submits a report to Congress every 90 days on vessels engaged in pipe-laying and pipe-laying activities, and various entities providing and supporting those vessels, for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, as required by the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA), as amended, with the next report due to Congress in mid-May. If confirmed, I will use all available tools to counter Russian malign influence and to work with Allies and partners in the region to support Transatlantic energy security goals. The Department of State will continue to examine entities involved in potentially sanctionable activity and will designate additional persons as appropriate.

Question. One of the most egregious dynamics in the initial implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) involved the way that the Obama administration circumvented Congressional deliberation and approval by first attempting to lock in the agreement as international law via United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 2231). After that resolution was passed—which occurred just as the Congressional review period mandated by the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) was beginning—officials from the Government of Iran and the Obama administration suggested that Congress would be abrogating the U.S.'s formal international obligations by rejecting the agreement. Can you commit to ensuring that any future nuclear agreement negotiated between State Department officials and Iran, which involves the suspension or waiver of Congressional sanctions, will only be negotiated in full consultation with Congress? If not, why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to consulting fully with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under INARA.

Question. Can you commit to ensuring that any future nuclear agreement negotiated between State Department officials and Iran, which involves the suspension or waiver of Congressional sanctions, will not be implemented without Congressional approval? If not, why not?

Answer. I am aware that the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) contains certain limitations on sanctions relief during a congressional review period. I understand that the Biden administration is committed to complying with the requirements of INARA, and if confirmed, I am committed to doing so.

Question. It was recently announced that Iran and South Korea agreed to allow Tehran to access approximately \$1 billion of its assets that are frozen in South Korean banks due to U.S. sanctions. Reports indicate that the South Koreans received approval from Biden administration officials to do so. Please transmit to the committee any waivers, decision memos, or other documents pertaining to this case, and confirm doing so.

Answer. I do not have access to Department records nor the authority on my own to give you Department records. I commit, if confirmed, to work with the committee

to appropriately comply with an official committee request for such Department information.

Question. On January 10, 2021, the State Department designated Ansarallah, sometimes called the Houthis, and Abdul Malik al-Houthi, Abd al-Khaliq Badr al-Din al-Houthi, and Abdullah Yahya al Hakim, three leaders of Ansarallah, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) pursuant to Executive Order 13224. On February 5 the Biden administration informed Congress of its intention to revoke those sanctions. Officials at the State Department have justified the delisting of what they described as the “broad” designation of Ansarallah on humanitarian grounds, e.g. that large parts of Yemen’s population live under areas controlled by the group. They have not provided an explanation for the delisting of the three leaders, and in fact they have publicly, repeatedly, and falsely denied or downplayed the relief provided to these Iran-backed terrorists. For example, on February 11 State Department spokesman Ned Price falsely told journalists “there is no change” to the sanctions on these individuals. He was asked about the issue again the next day, and said “the Secretary had an intent to remove this broad designation of the movement.” The public statement issued by the State Department did not mention the revocation of the SDGT designation on the Houthi leaders, but noted that they “remain sanctioned under E.O. 13611.” Can you commit to ensuring that State Department officials stop publicly misleading journalists and the American public about sanctions relief provided by the Department and the Biden administration to Iran-backed terrorists? If not, why not?

Answer. I understand that the three Ansarallah leaders in question were designated under the U.N. Security Council’s Yemen sanctions regime in 2015 and domestically under E.O. 13611, related to acts that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Yemen. Therefore, they remain on the Treasury Department’s Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List and are subject to asset freezing and any attendant travel restrictions. As a consequence of the revocation of Ansarallah’s Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) group designation under E.O. 13224, there was no longer a basis to retain the SDGT designations of these individuals as leaders of Ansarallah, which were derivative of the broader SDGT designation of the group. If confirmed, I intend to continue our support of U.N.-led efforts, including a robust implementation of the U.N. and E.O. 13611 sanctions, to call attention to and condemn Ansarallah’s destabilizing activities. The State Department’s emphasis will continue to be on using diplomacy to build international pressure on Ansarallah to change its behavior and ultimately end the war.

Question. Please describe why the State Department lifted the SDGT designations on Abdul Malik al-Houthi, Abd al-Khaliq Badr al-Din al-Houthi, and Abdullah Yahya al Hakim.

Answer. I understand that simultaneous with the designation of Ansarallah, sometimes called the Houthis, as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, these individuals were designated as SDGTs on the basis that they were leaders of an SDGT, namely Ansarallah. As a consequence of the revocation of Ansarallah’s SDGT designation, there was no longer a basis to retain the designations of these individuals as leaders of an SDGT. However, they remain designated under the U.N. Security Council’s Yemen sanctions regime and domestically under E.O. 13611 related to acts that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Yemen and, therefore, remain on Treasury’s Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List and are subject to asset freezing and any attendant travel restrictions.

Question. The Central Bank of Iran (CBI), has been designated as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SGT) pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 13224 for providing material support to terrorist organizations. Can you commit to not lift, rescind or significantly modify—or to agree within the interagency process to lift, rescind or significantly modify—this terrorism designation of the CBI, in the absence of a determination that the CBI has ceased providing material support to terrorist organizations? If not, why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the administration’s efforts to counter Iran’s support for terrorism, including through the appropriate use of sanctions and regular coordination with our partners and allies. Iran is the world’s foremost state sponsor of terrorism, which poses a threat to security and stability in the Middle East, and the administration will continue to use all tools available to counter Iran’s support for terrorism.

Question. Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is designated as a terrorist organization both as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and as an SDGT pursu-

ant to EO 13224. Can you commit to not lift, rescind or significantly modify—or to agree within the interagency process to lift, rescind or significantly modify—these terrorism designations on the IRGC, in the absence of a determination that the Government of Iran has ceased providing material support to terrorist organizations.

Answer. Iran's support for terrorism threatens our forces and partners in the region and elsewhere. If confirmed, I intend to continue working with our allies and partners to counter Iran's destabilizing activities in the region, including its support for terrorist groups and violent militias and its ballistic missile program, and maintain international, collective pressure on Iran. The administration is committed to countering Iran's destabilizing activities using the array of tools at our disposal, including sanctions to deal with Iran's support for terrorism.

Question. You and other officials responsible for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) have repeatedly described it as the most rigorous inspection regime ever negotiated. Despite this inspection regime, the IAEA was unable to locate the illicit Nuclear Archive subsequently seized by Israel, which included designs and materials relevant to the creation of nuclear weapons. They were also unable to find locations which, having been revealed by Israeli officials, subsequently proved to have evidence of nuclear work that the IAEA says Iran has not accounted for. Please describe what you perceive to have been the flaws in the JCPOA inspection regime do you believe were responsible for these failures by the IAEA?

Answer. I did not work on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action while serving in the Obama-Biden administration, but I did support the policy decision by President Obama to conclude it. The IAEA has a decades-long successful track record of monitoring the non-diversion of declared nuclear material globally. While the IAEA thoroughly investigates all available information, including based on its own verification and monitoring activities, it is not an intelligence organization. It can only act on information that is either acquired by it in the performance of its verification mandates or presented to it. The administration has full confidence in the IAEA to pursue any indications of undeclared or diverted nuclear material that could contribute to any renewed Iranian pursuit of a nuclear weapon.

Question. Please describe what new measures you would insist are included in any future nuclear agreement with Iran to ensure that the IAEA has the ability to identify such materials and activities?

Answer. The IAEA has said it has the tools it needs to perform its verification mandates in Iran so long as Iran fully implements its JCPOA commitments. This includes implementation of the Additional Protocol to Iran's NPT-required safeguards agreement that provides enhanced information and access regarding Iran's nuclear program, including with respect to undeclared locations about which the IAEA has questions. The JCPOA provides the IAEA with the most intrusive verification procedures ever negotiated, including to investigate any indications of undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran. The administration has full confidence in the IAEA to pursue any such indication.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BRIAN MCKEON BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. In partnership with the State Department's New Chief Diversity Officer, what tangible steps will your office take to improve diversity across the State Department, including at the most senior levels of the Foreign Service?

Answer. If confirmed, I will partner with the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer to track the progress of the Department on performance metrics on diversity and inclusion as outlined in the soon-to-be released Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. I will hold officers who report to me accountable to promote a culture of inclusion—where every individual voice is heard, respected, and valued. The Department is taking a critical look at the current selection processes employed by the deputy chief of mission and principal officer selection panels. If confirmed, I will encourage hiring managers to identify opportunities that will allow the Department to reach a wider candidate pool to include more candidates from underrepresented backgrounds. Additionally, the Department is finalizing an Enterprise Data Strategy which will include an initial emphasis on supporting Department diversity and inclusion efforts.

Question. Why have women and minorities historically left the Foreign Service at significantly higher rates than white males, and what can you do to address that troubling trend?

Answer. Understanding why women and minorities leave the Department is a crucial step in increasing retention. If confirmed, I intend to ask Department experts to examine whether there is a significantly higher rate of attrition for certain populations. Consistent with the recommendation of the January 2020 GAO report, “Additional Steps Are Needed to Identify Potential Barriers to Diversity,” I commit to the Department’s undertaking of further analysis, including as part of its forthcoming Enterprise Data Strategy, to explore what interventions the Department can introduce to mitigate attrition, including of underrepresented minorities and women, ensuring the Department remains an employer of choice. If confirmed, I will focus on bringing accountability and transparency to this issue.

Question. Significant delays in the hiring process have impacted the State Department’s ability to bring on board talented Foreign and Civil Service Officers, as well as local staff and family members at many embassies abroad. Do these delays affect the State Department’s ability to deliver on its goals, and how will you approach implementing a more efficient hiring process?

Answer. I understand in FY 2020, the Department achieved a 20-percent reduction in Foreign Service assessment timelines, despite disruptions caused by COVID-19. A new virtual oral assessment and a remote-proctored Foreign Service Officer test allowed at-home testing. The Department’s Bureau of Global Talent Management (GTM) created an entirely virtual Foreign Service onboarding process that met FY 2020-authorized Foreign Service hiring targets, including 414 Foreign Service staff hired virtually. The Department exceeded the Foreign Service Specialists target by 14 percent. The Department has experienced high Civil Service (CS) vacancy rates due to the extended hiring freeze; however, I understand the CS hiring backlog has been significantly reduced. If confirmed, I will dedicate resources to continue modernizing hiring strategies and support additional innovations to attract exceptional talent.

Question. With last year’s closure of the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu, the United States appears to be at a disadvantage in our diplomatic reach and representation in China. How will you approach re-positioning our diplomatic footprint in China to ensure that we have the broadest reach, including access to parts of the country in which we do not currently have representation?

Answer. I understand that the suspensions of operations at U.S. Consulate General Chengdu and U.S. Consulate General Wuhan significantly increased the workload for Embassy Beijing without adding additional staff, and that the Department is currently reviewing Mission China’s request for additional personnel. It is important that the Department is adequately resourced and positioned to know what is happening inside China. If confirmed, I will review the Department’s diplomatic presence there, including whether it should resume operations at U.S. Consulate General Wuhan.

Question. For many years, the State Department has relied on consular fees to fund most of its basic functions, a model that proved untenable over this last year. How will you approach working with Congress to find a more sustainable model for funding the Department?

Answer. The consular funding structure relies on visa fees and the growth in visa demand to fund the Department’s highest priority: the protection of U.S. citizens and their interests. The Department retains only 83 percent of all consular fees it collects. Retained fees are exclusively from passport and visa applications. The Department remits the remaining consular fees, primarily for overseas citizen services, to the Treasury. For FY 2021, Congress expanded expenditure authorities of certain retained fees which otherwise could not be used to support U.S. citizen services. I understand that the Bureau of Consular Affairs may continue to need appropriations without further changes to its fiscal structure. If confirmed, I would work with Congress to find a solution.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
 SUBMITTED TO HON. BRIAN McKEON BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. In your prepared statement, you highlighted the importance of increasing diversity in the Department of State to ensure that it is “fully representative of America.” If you are confirmed, what metrics will you develop to measure that all aspects of diversity, to include race, gender, ideology, regional, and socioeconomic differences are represented in the Department of State’s efforts to increase diversity?

Answer. Diversity is the key to unlocking an organization’s potential as diverse teams consistently demonstrate high performance due to their creativity and innovation. If confirmed, I commit to upholding and fully implementing the Department’s leadership and management tenets, including support for diversity and inclusion, to strengthen teams across the Department. I will hold senior leaders accountable for promulgating fairness and transparency in their day-to-day decisions and will seek progress reports, working with the new Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, on their continued commitment to championing diversity and inclusion.

In addition, I will work to ensure that our recruiting efforts target all regions of the country. The Department is also developing a program to begin to pay some interns, which will help our recruitment efforts with those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Question. In the era of global connectivity and greater ease of movement, what is the purpose of an Embassy in the 21st century?

Answer. Maintaining a U.S. embassy presence allows the Department to cultivate personal relationships around the world to advance U.S. foreign policy, economic, and national security interests and to support U.S. citizens abroad, such as assisting and evacuating more than 100,000 U.S. citizens during the COVID–19 pandemic. While creative and effective pivots to virtual traditional and public diplomacy have allowed the Department’s missions to promote U.S. priorities during COVID–19, consistent in-person outreach remains the most effective way to achieve an understanding of host countries that strengthen our ability to assert U.S. influence. If confirmed, I am committed to working with Congress to ensure Department resources and personnel are aligned to respond to 21st century challenges.

Question. Do you support reorganizing or abolishing aspects of the Department of State to prevent redundancy and overlapping areas of responsibility?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the Department’s organization and aligning available resources and staffing with strategic priorities, as well as ensuring clear lines of accountability and responsibility. I am committed to ensuring the effective and efficient use of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

Question. In your view, how can we reform the allocation and selection of career Ambassadors to ensure American interests are adequately represented?

Answer. The Department of State endeavors to ensure that U.S. interests are strongly represented by career ambassadors who embrace the diversity of the United States. There is a rigorous selection process in place which focuses on the candidate’s suitability, talents, skills, abilities, and experience, and the candidate is vetted by senior Department officials before being submitted for consideration by the White House. These positions are highly competitive, and the Department thoroughly reviews all qualified candidates. If confirmed, I will review the Department’s ambassadorial selection process to ensure we are choosing the best candidates for these positions.

Question. In your view, should any Ambassador be seated who has not met and counseled with the President of the United States?

Answer. The ambassador is the direct representative of the President of the United States. As such, it is beneficial for the United States for the ambassador to meet and counsel with the President. However, that is not always possible, given the number of ambassadors and the President’s schedule. As you know from your experience as Ambassador to Japan, ambassadors do receive a personal letter of instruction from the President that provides them guidance directly from the President in preparation for their assignment.

Question. In order to expand the pool of qualified candidates for senior positions in Embassy Tokyo, specifically the position of Deputy Chief of Mission, the Department of State previously removed as a requirement Japanese language proficiency at the level of 4/4. Is there a requirement for Japanese language proficiency at the level of 4/4 to be eligible to apply for the position of Deputy Chief of Mission in Embassy Tokyo? Please begin your answer with yes or no.

Answer. No. A 4/4 level in Japanese is exceedingly rare and would exceed the working-level requirement of 3/3 for most language-designated positions. Although having Japanese language skills is certainly desirable, there is no specific language requirement for the selection of the Deputy Chief of Mission in Tokyo.

**Additional Material Submitted
by Senator Cory A. Booker**

**Report by Amnesty International on the November 19, 2020
Massacre at Axum (Ethiopia)**

THE MASSACRE IN AXUM



Amnesty International is a movement of 10 million people which mobilizes the humanity in everyone and campaigns for change so we can all enjoy our human rights.

Our vision is of a world where those in power keep their promises, respect international law and are held to account.

We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and individual donations.

We believe that acting in solidarity and compassion with people everywhere can change our societies for the better

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First published in 2021
by Amnesty International Ltd
Peter House, 1, Easton Street
London WC1X 0DM, UK

Index: AFR 25/3730/2021
Original language: English

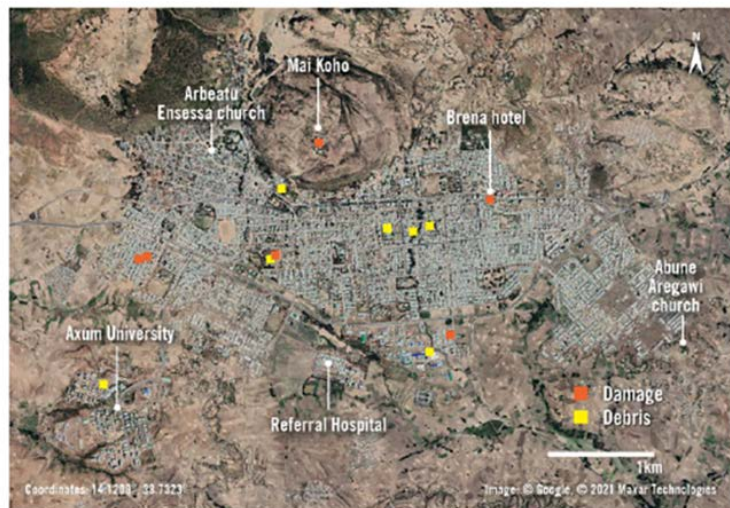
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



An overview of Axum shows key locations in the town. Structures damaged from shelling and airstrikes are shown with orange markers. Areas with significant debris – likely from looting – are shown with yellow markers.

Between 19 and 29 November 2020, Eritrean troops operating in the Ethiopian city of Axum, Tigray, committed a series of human rights and humanitarian law violations, including killing hundreds of civilians. Over an approximately 24-hour period on 28-29 November, Eritrean soldiers deliberately shot civilians on the street and carried out systematic house-to-house searches, extrajudicially executing men and boys. The massacre was carried out in retaliation for an earlier attack by a small number of local militiamen, joined by local residents armed with sticks and stones.

In the immediate aftermath of the massacre, Eritrean troops shot at those who sought to remove bodies from the streets, but later allowed residents to collect the bodies and bury them. Men from the community led the collective effort, pulling carts piled with the bodies of relatives, friends, neighbours and strangers, which they brought to churches across the city for burial, many in mass graves.

The massacre was the culmination of a wave of violations carried out since 19 November, when Eritrean and Ethiopian forces entered Axum together, after indiscriminately shelling the city and firing at those who tried to flee. Witnesses say that Eritrean forces, in taking over the town, carried out extrajudicial executions and engaged in widespread looting. Following the 28-29 November massacre, Eritrean forces detained hundreds

of residents and threatened renewed killing in the event of new resistance. Looting by Eritrean soldiers escalated, and insecurity and hunger led many residents to flee.

The events in Axum — a city located on the road linking Shire to Adwa, some 187 kms north of Mekelle, the capital of Tigray Regional State — occurred during the ongoing armed conflict between Ethiopia's federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Previously Ethiopia's ruling party, the TPLF lost its dominant political position in 2018, but continued to govern the Tigray region under Ethiopia's federal structure until the outbreak of war in November 2020.

On 4 November 2020, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed appeared on national TV and announced that he had ordered the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF) — Ethiopia's military — to fight the Tigray regional paramilitary police and militia loyal to the TPLF. He said that the Tigray security forces had attacked the ENDF's Northern Command, based in Mekelle. In waging war against the TPLF, the ENDF has relied on the support of special forces and militias from the Amhara region, which borders on Tigray, and on the Eritrean Defence Force.

The Ethiopian authorities and Eritrean authorities have made contradictory statements regarding the involvement of Eritrean troops in the Tigray conflict, with some high-ranking officials denying their presence but others acknowledging it.¹ In this briefing, Amnesty International documents how the Eritrean military is responsible for serious violations against Tigrayan civilians in Axum. It concludes that the indiscriminate shelling of Axum by Ethiopian and Eritrean troops may amount to war crimes, and that the mass execution of Axum civilians by Eritrean troops may amount to crimes against humanity.

Amnesty International calls for an international investigation into the events in Axum, and for the Ethiopian government to grant full and unimpeded access to humanitarian, human rights, and media organizations.

This briefing is based on 11 days of research by Amnesty International at the refugee reception center in Hamdayet, eastern Sudan, in January 2021, as well as on numerous phone interviews with witnesses in Axum.² In all, Amnesty International interviewed 41 witnesses and survivors of the massacre, all ethnic Tigrayans, as well as 20 others with knowledge relevant to the situation.³ Given security concerns of interviewees, all of their names have been omitted.

On 18 February, Amnesty International shared the research findings presented in this briefing with Ambassador Redwan Hussein, Ethiopia's State Minister for Foreign Affairs and Spokesperson for the Emergency Taskforce in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but had not received a response at the time of writing.

¹ See, for example, "Ethiopian general says Eritrean troops entered Tigray - video clip," Reuters, 7 January 2021; "Complete lie: Ethiopia denies Eritrean army's involvement in Tigray," *Afrinews*, 12 November 2020.

² Amnesty International is still trying to secure access to Tigray Regional State to conduct fact-finding on the ground, following a formal request made on 3 December 2020. Other international human rights investigators do not have formal access to Tigray either. In December 2020, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet called on the Ethiopian government to grant access to independent human rights monitors so that they could investigate allegations of abuses. "Provide unhindered access to whole of Tigray to protect civilians, Bachelet urges Ethiopia," *UN News*, 22 December 2020.

³ Satellite imagery from 4 October, 16 October, 23 November and 13 December 2020 was also analysed to corroborate witness accounts of events. (The imagery from October was used for comparative purposes.)

INDISCRIMINATE SHELLING AND KILLING OF SUSPECTED TPLF MEMBERS

The armed conflict between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF began on 4 November 2020. At some point during the second week of fighting, there was aerial bombing in and around Axum, and on the afternoon of 19 November, forces loyal to the Federal government started to shell the city indiscriminately.⁴

In an apparent joint operation to capture Axum, Ethiopian and Eritrean military forces began firing artillery on the city from the west, the direction from which they advanced. A witness recalled that the shelling continued for quite some time: "There was not any army or forces inside the city at that time but they shelled the people. That was very scary ... shelling and gunfire."⁵

Numerous residents described the terror that took hold of the city. A man recalled: "We were really scared because the sound was really huge. We never heard [anything] like that. And we saw the shells falling on buildings, houses."⁶ A woman recalled: "I was shocked and saw everyone shocked and scared of what happened."⁷

"Everybody ran away, leaving shops, markets and offices," said one woman.⁸ One man recalled that some people tried to flee the city while "others were hiding around bridges, buildings, drainage pipes."⁹ Another said: "I saw people scared, running away. They tried to escape but some of them ran into the zone of shelling."¹⁰ The shells were falling "continuously" that evening, one woman said.¹¹

Shells landed on streets and on civilian buildings, killing and injuring residents. One man said a neighbour and three others were killed in a house in the Idaga Hamus neighbourhood. "My neighbour's house was destroyed," he said, "and the people inside died."¹² The neighbour was a woman in her mid-60s named Telets Abraha, he recalled. Killed with her were two of her cousins — young men who had found refuge in Axum after fleeing the conflict in Humera — as well as her maid, a woman aged 18 or 19. "After our neighbour died under her home, we got scared and ran," the man said.

⁴ Amnesty International phone interviews (names withheld), Axum, Ethiopia, 3-9 February 2021.

⁵ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

⁶ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

⁷ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 22 January 2021.

⁸ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 22 January 2021.

⁹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 16 January 2021.

¹⁰ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

¹¹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 22 January 2021.

¹² Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

In another incident that day, a man said he saw a woman and her infant child killed when artillery shells fell near the woman's house, which was located close to the Atse Menelik high school. "She was outside the compound and moving, trying to find a safe place," he recalled. "Then [the] shell fell on her. She had three kids. Two of them ran but the third was a little kid [she] carried on her back. He was killed with her."¹³

Azbia (name changed) said she saw a family being killed in the Hamed Gebez neighbourhood in O2 Kebele: "The heavy weapon fell on one house and ... killed five people — mother, father, brother, sister and maid. I saw this myself."¹⁴ Another witness said he saw five of his neighbours killed in the shelling in two separate incidents—a woman in her thirties, killed near the Damo hotel, and a woman in her fifties, killed alongside her two children and niece near the Remhai hotel.

Gebremeskel (name changed) described his experience that day:

I was with my friends chilling out on the street, when the bombing started. We were scared and tried to hide underground or in buildings. We found a market and hid there. I saw three people who were friends with each other try to run on the street. Two of them got injured. The third one was killed: half of his face was removed. We also saw a building hit. Then, later, we went to check it and I saw an old woman [had been] killed by the fallen building.¹⁵

This was near the stadium. The shelling, he said, "came from the direction of Shire."

Girmal (name changed) told Amnesty International that he watched the shelling from the top of a building, and that the bombardment started between 2 and 3 pm on 19 November. He said:

There was a lot of bombardment in the town. Damo hotel, near the Axum University — I saw it with my eyes — Enda-Gaber area. I was watching from the top of the building while the artillery bombs were hitting in different parts of the city. Near the Menelik school, around 11 people were killed including a woman who came from Humera ... The school is close to the Damo Hotel. I attended the funeral for some of the dead the next day.¹⁶

Luel (name changed) said he helped bring a 45- or 50-year-old woman to the hospital; she had been injured with shrapnel in her family compound. Some who were injured died because they did not receive treatment. A 15-year-old boy told Amnesty International that he fled to a neighbouring village, where he saw a man who had been injured in the shelling: "People told him that they will not give him any treatment because they don't know how. They told him to go to the Referral hospital in Axum but he was told that the soldiers already controlled the city, so he died in the village."¹⁷

Some local people, witnesses say, organized checkpoints, seeking to find artillery observers (i.e., spotters who help direct artillery and mortar fire onto targets). None of the witnesses to whom Amnesty International spoke, however, said that there was any armed resistance to the attack. "They [the incoming forces] didn't face any TPLF fighters; that's why they took control of the city within a day," one woman explained.¹⁸

When the shelling finished, Ethiopian and Eritrean forces entered Axum together. "They were shooting ... when they entered the city," Haftom (name changed) recalled. He said:

The place where we stayed was my friend's home and they shot into the home. The window broke ... We were upstairs and could see soldiers very clearly. It was dark — it was nighttime. We saw that tanks and trucks [had] lights [on]. That's how we recognized they were Ethiopians and Eritreans ... My friend was sick [from fear] from the morning because of the shelling. He became more sick after they shot the heavy weapons.¹⁹

Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers took control of the city that day. "The city became quiet and silent," one man recalled.²⁰

Once in control of the city, soldiers generally identified as Eritrean searched for TPLF soldiers and militias. The soldiers "were looking for militias or anyone with a gun," said one woman. "There were a lot of ... house to house killings." Mimicking the soldiers, she added: "Where is your young man, woman? They killed a lot of young people that day."²¹

¹³ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

¹⁴ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

¹⁵ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 16 January 2021.

¹⁶ Amnesty International phone interview (name withheld), Axum, Ethiopia, 6 February 2021.

¹⁷ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

¹⁸ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

¹⁹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

²⁰ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 23 January 2021.

²¹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

Another man described the killing of a neighbour, a woman aged around 30: "We were running; it was at midnight; we ran through China Road ... in the direction of Shire ... We were running in front of her. She was carrying a torch. After she turned it on, they saw her and they shot her. We didn't really see who or where they were."²²

Witnesses told Amnesty International that killings of men suspected of being TPLF fighters and sympathizers were based on even the slightest possible clues. As one man explained:

They started looking for people to kill, especially those who are militias or former fighters or [who have] any relation with TPLF soldiers. They would ask for your cell phone and if they see any of your pictures or a family member who are farmers or fighters, they would kill you ... They started killing people, especially those who wore *shirit* [a sarong-like wrap commonly associated with TPLF fighters] and also those who wore camouflage shirts, even if just for style.²³

Weyni (name changed), age 18, described such an incident on 20 November, in which she saw Eritrean soldiers extrajudicially execute two men. Near Yemane Garage, a petrol station in the east of the city, she saw "two people riding a motorbike." The driver, she said, was in his mid-twenties, while the passenger was in his fifties. "The driver wore a ranger's jacket ... The passenger wore a *shirit* scarf ... They ordered them to stop and asked them to show their phones and laid them down on the asphalt face down and shot them in the back."²⁴

With her friends, she faced harassment from Eritrean soldiers:

They would check your phone and if they see any Gebretsion picture or anything political, they can rob your mobile and beat you Eritrean soldiers started by robbing the mobiles of my friends. They asked to see the photo gallery on his phone and found pictures of TPLF leaders. It was a friend I was with. There was another [friend] with us. They robbed him of his money.²⁵

A 6 pm curfew, extending until morning, was imposed immediately.²⁶

On 20 November, residents ventured out of their homes or returned from the surrounding villages and found dead neighbours on the street. One woman said she saw two bodies — a man and a woman — near her home on China Road. One man said he found the body of a neighbour, a barber in his thirties, on the street near the Bazin school.²⁷ A woman who had fled to a village during the shelling said she returned to Axum that day: "During the journey we saw a lot of dead bodies on the street killed by heavy weapons or bullets," she said.²⁸

Soldiers continued carrying out beatings and extrajudicial executions in the following days, although, it appears, on a smaller scale.

Returning to Axum on 22 November after fleeing the shelling, one man said he saw on the streets, especially on China Road, the bullet-riddled bodies of over 10 people. He recognized a neighbour who owned a butcher's shop. Another man who had fled and who came back to the city around 25–26 November said:

After I came back to the city, I ... saw the Brana Hotel ... really damaged ... It was very shocking because we saw a lot of dead bodies [on the street], so we were scared and tried to hide because it's not safe ... I saw my neighbour dead. His body had been shot by five bullets. We found him, took his body to his house ... He's an old man. Approximately [age] 50.²⁹

A man said he saw two men being killed in the Edaga Hamus neighbourhood on approximately 25 November: "we saw them riding a motorbike and [they] were shot, so we ran away." He said that the perpetrators could have been either Eritrean or Ethiopian soldiers. He explained: "They wore Ethiopian defense uniforms but could be Eritreans because many Eritrean soldiers wore that uniform."³⁰

²² Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021. The so-called China Road is a major thoroughfare cutting across the city.

²³ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021. The farmers referred to are those given weapons and training by the TPLF.

²⁴ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

²⁵ Debretsion Gebremichael, mentioned by this woman, is the head of the TPLF. He is currently in hiding.

²⁶ Local residents interviewed by Amnesty International said they were informed of the curfew by soldiers, but they did not know how it was declared or its legal basis.

²⁷ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 22 January 2021.

²⁸ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

²⁹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

³⁰ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.



Debris from shelling is visible in front of the Brama Hotel, on Asum's old main road, in this satellite imagery from 13 December 2020. A man who had fled and who came back to the city around 25-26 November said: "After I came back to the city, I ... saw the Brama Hotel ... really damaged."

THE MASSACRE

FIGHTING

On the morning of 28 November, a band of pro-TPLF fighters mounted an assault on a position that Eritrean soldiers had set up on a mountain known as Mai Koho. This mountain, located just east of the Axum Tsion St Mary Church, sits a few hundred meters from many of the town's main hotels, banks, and churches, and overlooks the town.

The fighting started in the morning, several witnesses said, when TPLF fighters and/or pro-TPLF militiamen attacked the Eritrean position at Mai Koho. The group of assailants was reportedly small — witnesses said they saw perhaps 50-80 men armed with guns — but the offensive received local support. Some local youth rallied, joining the fight with improvised weapons, such as knives, sticks, and stones. Others brought food to the fighters, while an even larger number cheered in support.³¹

The Eritrean forces responded by firing automatic weapons and precision rifles. It is unclear how long the actual fighting lasted, though some said it went on into the afternoon. Some witnesses claimed that the militiamen succeeded in killing many Eritrean soldiers. Others described a dramatic imbalance between the two sides. A 26-year-old man who participated in the attack said:

We expected that TPLF soldiers might come fight the Eritreans but it wasn't them. We heard it was some militiamen. We wanted to protect our city so we attempted to defend it especially from Eritrean soldiers ... The Eritrean soldiers were organized. They knew how to shoot and they had radios, communications. Even before we started fighting with them, they killed with snipers and Bren (machine guns) ... I didn't have a gun, just a stick.³²

A 22-year-old man who sought to bring food to the fighters described a similar scene: "The Eritrean soldiers were trained but the young residents didn't even know how to shoot. After that a lot of the fighters started running away and dropped their weapons."³³

DELIBERATE TARGETING OF CIVILIANS

From about 3 to 4 pm, lines of Eritrean trucks and tanks reportedly entered the city from the east. Their numbers bolstered by the new arrivals, Eritrean soldiers went on a rampage, shooting at civilian men and youths who were out on the streets attempting to flee in panic. The killing, which one witness said began around 4 pm, was carried out on a large scale and continued until the evening.

Kinfe (name changed), a university professor, described the beginning of the massacre. "Starting [at] 2 pm, the Eritrean soldiers started going home to home and killing men. When I heard that they [were] killing men, I ran out of the city."³⁴

Kifle (name changed), age 26, told Amnesty International about killings he witnessed on the city's main street. "I saw the Eritrean soldiers killing the youth who were on the street," he recalled. "I was on the second floor of a building and I watched, through the window, the Eritreans killing the youth on the street."³⁵

³¹ Amnesty International phone interview (name withheld), 3 February 2021; Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 6 January 2021.

³² Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

³³ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 22 January 2021.

³⁴ Amnesty International phone interview (name withheld), Axum, Ethiopia, 6 February 2021.

³⁵ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 6 January 2021.

The shooting, one witness said, "was huge."³⁶ Another resident, a 21-year-old man, said: "I saw a lot of people dead on the street. Even my uncle's family. Six of his family members were killed. So many people were killed ... This was in the middle of the city, not at the entrance or in surrounding villages."³⁷ Some residents hid in buildings and witnessed killings through the windows. One man said:

I was at home. I saw around my home what is happening when some soldiers targeted people with sniper rifles, killing people. I ... saw the people being shot on the ground when they were running. Approximately 10 people or more. All of them young men ... Everyone was scared and ran away."³⁸

Other witnesses echo this account, describing Eritrean soldiers shooting at men who posed no threat to them. The victims, residents said, carried no weapons and in many cases were running away from the soldiers when they were shot. One man who had found refuge in an unfinished building said he saw a group of six Eritrean soldiers kill a neighbour with a vehicle-mounted heavy machine-gun on the street near the Mana Hotel: "He was standing. I think he was confused. They were probably around 10 metres from him. They shot him in the head."³⁹

Another man described two killings in the Tsele neighbourhood. In the first case, Eritrean soldiers shot a homeless man known as Oud who had suffered from mental health problems: "He was walking. After he started running, they shot him: he started running and then stopped and was lying on the incline of the asphalt. I saw when they shot him — his body shook. They were about 70 metres from him."⁴⁰ In the second incident, he saw a man being shot from behind while running.

One witness who was hiding in a forest just outside the city saw his neighbour, a farmer named Abreha, shot and killed by Eritrean soldiers: "He was in his field working. I saw Eritrean soldiers come up and get out of the car and they immediately shot at him."⁴¹ When returning to see the body after the soldiers left, he saw that the bag of seeds that his neighbour had been preparing was gone: "[it] means probably that the Eritrean soldiers took them with them."⁴² The victim, a father of three, was in his mid- to late-40s. That day, the man witnessed more men being killed: "I saw another two young men being shot in the head ... I saw them as they were shot from afar and falling on the street. It was around the preparatory school."

The mass killing left the townspeople in confusion and disbelief. One resident said: "During this day, I never thought that Eritrean soldiers were killing civilians. People told me but I didn't trust them. But after I saw that they had killed my neighbour. I understood that they were killing people and then I ran away from that."⁴³ Residents had two options: running or hiding, in both cases with uncertain results. One witness said: "I think the reason they attacked the people easily is because some people ran, others hid in the city and were easily found in random places in the city." Another man described the dilemma in similar terms: "When somebody is shot on the ground, you think you should run away because they will kill you, but when you run you are easily targeted."⁴⁴

Those who hid at home were also vulnerable. A 23-year-old man said Eritrean soldiers noticed him after he opened the door of his home to observe what was happening:

Before they saw me, they were shooting at people. When they saw me, they started shooting at me and when I closed my door, they kept shooting at me. I heard them when they knocked on the door and said in Tigrinya, "open the door." I kept quiet and silent, didn't open the door, and hid under the bed. They started shooting at the walls. I could see small bullet holes in the wall. After that they left me alone ... Then I started observing through the holes. During that day, I saw people falling, soldiers passing that way."⁴⁵

Eritrean troops deployed tanks in the middle of the city.⁴⁶ One resident who lived near the Kideste Maryam hospital said he heard and saw tank shells falling in his neighbourhood, destroying a nearby building. "I heard [the tank] when it's moving — you could hear the chains on the ground and the firing," he added.⁴⁷

³⁶ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

³⁷ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

³⁸ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

³⁹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

⁴⁰ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

⁴¹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 22 January 2021.

⁴² Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 22 January 2021.

⁴³ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

⁴⁴ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

⁴⁵ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

⁴⁶ Amnesty International phone interviews (names withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 6 January 2021.

⁴⁷ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

Visibly traumatized, a young man who had joined the assault on May Koho, armed with a stick, told Amnesty International:

I saw a lot of my friends killed. One of them asked me to help but I didn't do anything. The Eritrean soldiers were lying on the ground and shooting from a distance. Five of my friends were already dead. The sixth was injured on his abdomen and the blood was percolating like a fountain so he asked me to help. So I brought him a blanket and tried to tie it. They kept shooting at us and the bullets hit around me. And he kept asking "Can you please take me to the hospital?" And I didn't take him because the hospital had already been looted and they were killing the patients at the hospital. And then I saw him when he's dead. His final sentences were "I'm tired, I want to sleep. Just save your life and run away."⁴⁸

The killings left the city strewn with bodies.⁴⁹ One man who had run out of the city returned at night after the shooting stopped. "All we could see on the streets were dead bodies and people crying," he said.⁵⁰

KILLINGS DURING HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SEARCHES

Residents say that, in addition to the shooting on the streets, Eritrean soldiers carried out house-to-house raids in the afternoon of 28 November and the morning of 29 November to find and kill teenage and adult men.

Several women Amnesty International spoke to were hiding at home when Eritrean soldiers came, asking if there were men in the house.⁵¹ A 28-year-old woman recalled: "They came up to my home and broke down the door and asked if we have young men — brothers or a father. We said 'no, we are just ladies,' and they kept going and checking our neighbours."⁵²

A 23-year-old man interviewed by Amnesty International named six of his relatives killed in the massacre. He found the body of one of the relatives — a 23-year-old cousin — on China Road. The man had been shot with three bullets, he recalled.⁵³

Habtom (name changed), a resident of Addis Ababa, said Eritrean soldiers killed four of his close relatives — Lisaneworq Laeke, Biniam Lisaneworq, Girmay Tekly and Birhane Weeday — near Axum's Abune Pentalwos Church.⁵⁴

A woman said that Eritrean soldiers killed one of her neighbours, a mother of five. "I saw her dead body. She had been shot in the chest," the woman said. The woman also said that Eritrean soldiers arrested two young men they found at another neighbour's house, while their mother and her third son, who was hiding, remained. "They took them, I don't know where," she said.⁵⁵

Bereket (name changed), a man who help bury the dead, including some of his friends, recalled:

My neighbourhood is around the Sabian Hotel near the hill (Tarik Sefer). They killed Habtom Araya, Buzu Genu, Guesh Amdom, and Ephrem. There are also other people I know who are not from my area, Yohannes and Wedi Da'ero Hfash (nickname), (who were) killed near Menaharia. The first two were killed in one home, while the other were killed in two separate homes. They were just civilians. They were killed during the evening of 28 November.⁵⁶

Another man said he watched through his window and saw six men killed, execution-style, outside of his house near the Abnet Hotel on 29 November:

They lined them up and shot them in the back from behind. Two of them I knew. They're from my neighbourhood ... They asked "Where is your gun?" and they answered "We have no guns, we are civilians" ... One soldier went to his leader who was Beni-Amir [ethnicity] — he had three scars near each eye — and asked him, "shall we kill them or free them?" and he said, "just kill them," and they did.

They only shot twice for the six people ... They shot three people with one bullet. The first and second fell dead. The third one was injured, about to fall. They shot him a second time and killed the three others with the same bullet. They were lined up perfectly. They shot them with a Bren [light machine gun].

⁴⁸ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

⁴⁹ Amnesty International phone interviews (names withheld), 10 January to 15 February 2021; Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 6 January 2021.

⁵⁰ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 16 January 2021.

⁵¹ Amnesty International interviews (names withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 and 19 January 2021.

⁵² Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

⁵³ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

⁵⁴ Amnesty International phone interview (name withheld), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 26 January 2021. This account is further corroborated by other witnesses in Axum who attended the burial of the deceased on 30 November.

⁵⁵ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

⁵⁶ Amnesty International phone interview (name withheld), Axum, Ethiopia, 6 February 2021.

One of them didn't die immediately. He pleaded for help. And one hour later he died.⁴⁷

Another witness said that he saw five bodies of young men lined up on the ground near the Abnet Hotel.

IDENTIFYING THE PERPETRATORS

Axum residents whom Amnesty International interviewed had no difficulty identifying the perpetrators as Eritrean soldiers. They described several tell-tale signs.

First, Eritrean soldiers often rode in trucks whose license plates read "Eritrea." Most wore a uniform that witnesses described as "beige" or a "mix of green and beige," easily distinguishable from that of Ethiopian soldiers. Some Eritrean soldiers, interviewees said, wore the uniform of the Ethiopian army, but could be easily identified because they wore plastic shoes known as *congo chama* or *shida*, which are popular in Eritrea. Ethiopian soldiers, on the other hand, wore standard-issue boots.

Cultural clues further helped people identify the perpetrators as Eritreans. Three scars on each temple, near the eye, marked some of the soldiers as Beni-Amir, an ethnic group that straddles Sudan and Eritrea but is absent from Ethiopia. While Ethiopian soldiers spoke Amharic, Eritrean soldiers spoke Arabic or Tigrinya, a language spoken by both Tigray people and Eritreans. Although the language is basically the same in both regions, the Tigrinya that Eritrean soldiers is a distinctive dialect, with its own words and accent. For example, as one woman explained, "They keep saying *ta'ale*, which in Tigrinya means 'move it.' But that's Eritrean Tigrinya. We use *laghak*."⁴⁸

Finally, Eritrean soldiers made no mystery of who they were. "Some of them told us they are Eritrean soldiers," the woman said.

ATTACKS ON PEOPLE COLLECTING BODIES

Those who left their houses on 29 November said they found bodies on the streets of their neighbourhood, "in every street and at every turn."⁴⁹ They learned of dead relatives, friends and neighbours. Survivors described moments of panic as they ran away at the sight of Eritrean soldiers.

For most of the day, Eritrean soldiers attacked the survivors who sought to bury the dead. A 21-year-old man said he was part of a group which sought that morning to bury friends: "We wanted to take their bodies, got the carts and then carried them on the cart — three dead bodies — and then immediately they started shelling us ... The shelling came from near the St Micheal church and fell about 10 metres from us. I think it was an RPG."⁵⁰

One woman, Tsigereda (name changed), told Amnesty International that Eritrean soldiers killed her nephews Teklay Fitsum (age 29) and Kibrom Fitsum (age 14) near their home in the area of St Micheal Church on 28 November.⁵¹ She recalled:

The next day, they did not allow us to pick the dead. The Eritrean soldiers said you cannot bury the dead before our dead soldiers are buried. The father found their dead bodies next day. They were killed by the Eritrean soldiers who have mark on their cheek like number eleven. They also speak a different version of Tigrinya, which is called Tigre, spoken in the western lowland areas of Eritrea. I was in Axum by then. I went out looking for them. The roads in the area were full of dead bodies. Almost all of the dead were male.⁵²

A 27-year-old man found the courtyard of his sister's house turned into an improvised morgue. He recalls countless bodies covered in blankets: "I didn't count [them] at that time because I was really shocked and my sister was really crying because her son had been killed. I took her outside of the compound so she wouldn't see the dead bodies and to calm her down."⁵³

That day, he and his sister sought to attend funeral rites but came under attack: "The people who had collected the bodies put them on carts and took them to the church. Me and my sister followed the cart. Immediately the soldiers started shooting on us from afar. We know that young men are targeted so I was scared and left my sister and started running away."

⁴⁷ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

⁴⁸ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

⁴⁹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 22 January 2021.

⁵⁰ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

⁵¹ Amnesty International phone interview (name withheld), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2 February 2021.

⁵² Amnesty International phone interview (name withheld), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2 February 2021.

⁵³ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

MASS DETENTIONS AND THREATS

Eritrean soldiers also rounded up hundreds, if not thousands, of male residents in different parts of the city on 29 November. The men who were detained said the soldiers beat and abused them and robbed them of their belongings — jackets, belts, shoes and money. The soldiers also warned detainees that there would be renewed killings should they encounter any resistance.

A 26-year-old man described his detention: “Eritrean soldiers gathered us ... We were maybe 500 people, only men. They put us in a big hole in the ground” — the foundations of an unfinished building, located on the eastern entrance to the city.⁶⁴

Two other men Amnesty International spoke to said they were detained in the open air near the airport. One of them said: “They started gathering people, 300-400 in a group, taking them to different locations out of the city ... They took us out of the city.” He described the ill-treatment he faced: “They beat us and inflicted military punishment: forcing you to walk with your knees, or to crawl on the floor with your abdomen ... They didn’t beat me. They would make me sit and stand constantly, like a physical exercise, and rolling while lying down, but I hated this.”⁶⁵ The Eritrean soldiers’ threats made it clear that the killings on 28 and 29 November, and in particular the targeting of men of fighting age, represented a coordinated effort to terrorize the population into submission and deter further attacks. One of the men who was detained said: “The Eritrean soldiers surrounded us. One of their officers came up to us and made a speech ‘You people — if you try fighting us and hold any weapon against us — look at this red soil — we will destroy Axum like this. So don’t do anything against us.’”⁶⁶

Another former detainee said: “They told us a lot of things: ‘Why are you trying to fight us? If you have a gun, give us, if not, we will continue this massacre.’ They also said, ‘We are destroying the TPLF ... If you keep following the TPLF and try to fight us again we will kill you and we will do the same as yesterday.’”⁶⁷

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

International humanitarian law, which applies to all parties to an armed conflict, regulates the conduct of hostilities and sets out fundamental guarantees for the protection of those who do not or no longer directly participate in hostilities. The rules relevant to the violations documented in this briefing form part of customary international humanitarian law and are binding on all parties to the armed conflict, regardless of which treaties they have ratified.

One of the cardinal rules of international humanitarian law is that parties to the conflict must “distinguish between civilians and combatants” as well as “distinguish between civilian objects and military objectives.”⁶⁸ The corollary of the rule of distinction is that “indiscriminate attacks are prohibited.”⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

⁶⁵ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

⁶⁶ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

⁶⁷ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

⁶⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross, Customary International Humanitarian Law, Vol. I: Rules (ICRC Customary IHL Study) Rules 1 and 7.

⁶⁹ ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 11.

Indiscriminate attacks are those that are of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction, either because the attack is not directed at a specific military objective, or because it employs a method or means of combat that cannot be directed at a specific military objective or has effects that cannot be limited as required by international humanitarian law.⁷⁰ Launching an indiscriminate attack resulting in death or injury to civilians is a war crime.⁷¹

Pillage (looting of personal property by soldiers) is prohibited and is a war crime.⁷²

International humanitarian law also provides fundamental guarantees for civilians as well as fighters who are captured, injured or otherwise rendered unable to fight (*hors de combat*). These rules include the requirement of humane treatment; and the prohibition of murder, of torture, cruel or inhuman treatment and outrages on personal dignity, collective punishment, and of rape and other forms of sexual violence.⁷³ Violations of these rules are war crimes.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 12.

⁷¹ ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 156.

⁷² ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rules 52 and 156.

⁷³ ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rules 87, 89, 90, and 93.

⁷⁴ ICRC Customary IHL Study, Rule 156.

BURIALS

FINDING THE DEAD

As people came out of hiding and left their homes on 29 and 30 November, the scale of the killing became obvious to all. Those who ventured out saw dozens of dead and injured people scattered around their neighbourhoods, often recognizing familiar faces. The people Amnesty International interviewed provided the names of well over 200 people they knew who were killed on 28 and 29 November.⁷⁶ They said that all the victims were unarmed and that the overwhelming majority of them were men.

Amnesty International was unable to calculate the massacre's precise death toll, but estimates that hundreds of people were killed.

A 22-year-old man said he found the bodies of two of his friends side by side and that they had been made to kneel, indicating an execution-style killing. Speaking of one of the victims, he said: "They killed him with a bullet in the mouth. We saw the wound at the back of his neck."⁷⁶

In other instances, residents described injuries which suggested that some victims died because of a lack of medical care. A man said his friend had died from a bullet injury on the ankle. Another said he found the body of a friend about three metres outside of his friend's house. He said his friend had been shot in the abdomen with a single bullet, adding: "I believe that ... if he had gotten help, maybe he would be alive."⁷⁷

Some of those who had been shot were still alive by the time residents felt safe enough to leave their houses, but interviewees said there was nowhere in town they could be treated. One man said: "Some of them had bullets in their bodies but could have survived, I think. Some people were injured and said, 'I'm losing blood, please help me.'"⁷⁸ Another man recalled:

Around the Queen Sheba palace, I saw a lot of dead bodies and 10 farmers who had been injured by weapons. One of them, part of his bowel was coming out ... They were [men] aged 40 to 45-50 ... By that time there was no hospital. Kideste Maryam hospital had not been looted but there were no doctors or nurse. The Referral Hospital had been looted. We couldn't take these people to the hospital so we took them home."⁷⁹

One man similarly found a 24-year-old neighbour named Abdallah Hassan who had been shot with three bullets; he was near China Road. The man said: "He was alive but injured. They took him to the Referral Hospital, but he died there. There were no doctors or anything. It was empty."⁸⁰

COLLECTING THE DEAD

On the request of local elders, Ethiopian soldiers gave permission for people to bury the dead in the late afternoon on 29 November. Gathering the bodies and carrying out the funerals took days. Most of the dead appear to have been buried on 30 November, but witnesses said that people found many additional bodies in the days that followed.

The surviving men took up the task of carrying the dead to the town's churches. Amnesty International spoke to nine men who took part in the process, as well as to eight who witnessed it. The bodies were brought to the Arbeatu Ensessa church (next to the Axum Tsion St Mary Church), as well as St Micheal, Abune Aregawi, Enda-Gaber, Abba Pentalewon and Enda Eyesus (Jesus) churches. The men looked for bodies,

⁷⁶ Note that this figure does not include people whom interviewees said they saw killed or dead but whose names they did not know.

⁷⁷ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 22 January 2021.

⁷⁸ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 16 January 2021.

⁷⁹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 16 January 2021.

⁸⁰ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 16 January 2021.

piled them onto carts — up to 10 bodies at a time — and pulled these makeshift hearses to a church, before returning to the streets for another run. In some cases, however, the dead were buried in makeshift graves in the immediate vicinity of where they had been killed.

Bereket (name changed), a 21-year-old Axum resident, told Amnesty International:

I have seen many dead bodies since I was involved in collecting and burial of the dead on 30 November ... We collected the dead using horse/donkey carts. They didn't allow the priests to conduct funeral requiem for the dead or to clean and prepare the bodies as per the custom. We buried them at the Arba'etu Ensissa Church. While families of the deceased buried them in separate graves, unclaimed bodies were buried in mass graves."⁸¹

Fanuel (name changed), a 23-year-old Axum resident, said:

I was involved in picking up the dead from the Abnet hotel area on China street. We were loading 8-9 dead bodies on a cart and took them to the church for burial. I made three trips to pick up the dead from the street. And there were many other people doing the same, using other carts. We buried the dead at Arba'etu Ensisa; there was no proper burial."⁸²

Another one of the volunteer pallbearers explained: "I helped [bury] my friends' dead bodies. A lot of people helped because there were a lot of dead. Everyone helped. We carried them on carts. Some of them may carry five, depending on what was on the street, some of them 10, others seven, all gathered at the church from different parts of the city." A second man concurred: "We do three or four people in the same spot, cover them with a carpet, [or a] blanket, [then] take them to the church."⁸³

Negasi (name changed), age 21, elaborated on his role in the transporting the bodies:

We started after getting the permission. Personally, during that day, with my friends and other people, we brought in a total of 18 dead bodies at different times. I brought five cartloads. First: four people. Then: three people. Then: two people. Then: eight people. Then, the last cart: only one person. That was all on the 20th [Hedar, i.e., 29 November]. The next day, I gathered 27 dead bodies ... In total I brought 45 bodies."⁸⁴

Other men Amnesty International interviewed say they carried comparable numbers of bodies. One, for instance, said he brought a total of 30 bodies to the Arba'etu Ensessa and St Micheal churches; another said he carried three or four cartloads, each bearing seven to 10 bodies, suggesting he moved between 21 and 40 bodies. Yet another said he may have carried over 50 bodies to the churches of St Micheal and Abune Aregawi; he estimated that he saw 400 bodies on 30 November alone. Finally, another told Amnesty International he saw about 200 bodies during various funerals.

The endeavor was grueling and traumatizing. One man recalled: "I had only seen foods or seeds or money being collected, not bodies. That was a huge deep sadness. It was difficult."⁸⁵ In addition to the trauma of seeing and handling so many dead people, including loved ones, the men had to contend with the effects of decomposition and the fear of new killing. The bodies, which had remained in the open for a day or two before residents were allowed to take them away, had begun to decay. "It's smelly and very painful to see dead bodies," recalled one man. And the pallbearers wondered whether killings might resume at any moment. "We got scared the soldiers might kill us. It was a tough moment," he added.⁸⁶

The pallbearers nevertheless toiled out of a sense of duty. One man said: "It feels painful when your friends and cousins are dead and you are able to take the dead bodies. It can be painful if you stay at home, so I went and took dead bodies."⁸⁷ Another man echoed this sentiment: "The feeling is complicated," he said. "I felt several things: deeply sad because a lot of people died, and I never saw dead bodies and that was a shock. I was afraid people would kill me. At the same time, I felt a strong emotion and felt strong, to be better."⁸⁸

Samson (name changed), a 23-year-old mechanic who assisted with burials at St Micheal Church on 30 November, recalled:

⁸¹ Amnesty International phone interview (name withheld), Axum, Ethiopia, 6 February 2021.

⁸² Amnesty International phone interview (name withheld), Axum, Ethiopia, 6 February 2021.

⁸³ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

⁸⁴ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

⁸⁵ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

⁸⁶ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

⁸⁷ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

⁸⁸ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 16 January 2021.

It was a horrible experience to collect the dead from the streets as the bodies were already decomposing and smelling. There was no transport service, so we moved the dead bodies with carts. We were putting many bodies on one cart.⁸⁹

Uncertainty over the prospect of renewed killings by Eritrean soldiers weighed over the population. A woman recalled these days: "It was tough and scary. Everyone was afraid soldiers would kill people who helped bury the dead. It was very difficult. When soldiers came up to us, everyone ran, and when they passed, everyone returned to the proceedings."⁹⁰ Afraid for their lives, some of the men Amnesty International spoke to stayed home on 30 November. Their fear was reasonable. One man said that on 1 December, he saw soldiers kill a man who was pulling a cart loaded with bodies near Axum's main bus station: "It was Eritrean soldiers in Eritrean uniforms. Maybe seven of them. Most of them were women soldiers."⁹¹

BURIALS

30 November marked the anniversary of St Mary, a major celebration in Axum, which on another year would have drawn the faithful from across Ethiopia and tourists from around the world. In light of the exceptional circumstances, the celebrations were canceled. "It was deeply sad," said one woman. "There were funerals around the church — separate ceremonies. It wasn't the usual celebration."⁹²

Amnesty spoke to 11 people who attended funeral services in various churches of the city. They described an atmosphere of shock and collective trauma as hundreds of people were packed into mass graves. A man who was there said: "In every corner you can find a family that lost a family member. Everyone talks about what happened. The atmosphere is a sad one."⁹³

The dead were so numerous and their bodies in such a state that they were buried immediately, many without receiving religious rites, such as funeral requiems and body washing. Many were buried in mass graves, which in itself is a not uncommon practice locally. In some churches, such as Arba'etu Ensessa, St Micheal and Abune Aregawi, the graves were dug in soil. In other churches, such as the Ende Eyasus (Jesus) church, the dead were placed in existing vaults.

"A lot of people were dead," said a witness who went to the St Mary of Zion church, adding: "They didn't even have the time to recognize them. They just gathered and buried them."⁹⁴ Another witness who was at the same church described the same conditions: "The problem was that there were so many dead bodies and they smelled because they stayed out for a while so they buried them straight away."⁹⁵

A woman who attended services at Arbeatu Ensessa recalled: "There were several small mass graves. It depended on the carts. When they took five or six dead bodies, we would take them directly inside the grave. When there are seven to 10 bodies, they bury seven to 10 at once."⁹⁶ In Arbeatu Ensessa, she added, "There were mass graves in many parts of the compound." Another witness, a 23-year-old man, said that in addition to one mass grave that was used on a regular basis in Arbeatu Ensessa, "There were small graves on the left and right of the church in the compound, on both sides."⁹⁷

Satellite imagery reviewed by Amnesty International shows disturbed soil in the compounds of Arbeatu Ensessa and Abune Aregawi in a time frame that is consistent with these witness testimonies. When asked to locate the graves on older satellite images of the Arba'etu Ensessa compound (which showed no disturbed soil), two witnesses independently pointed to the areas that Amnesty International had identified as showing disturbed soil on more recent imagery.

⁸⁹ Amnesty International phone interview (name withheld), Axum, Ethiopia, 6 February 2021.

⁹⁰ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

⁹¹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

⁹² Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

⁹³ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

⁹⁴ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

⁹⁵ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.

⁹⁶ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

⁹⁷ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 18 January 2021.



The Abune Aregawi church, located in the Semeret neighbourhood on the southeastern edge of Addis Ababa, shows new disturbed earth in satellite imagery from 13 December 2020. While in some churches the victims of the massacre were buried in vaults, witnesses say that in Abune Aregawi, the graves were dug in soil.



Satellite imagery taken on 13 December 2020 shows new disturbed earth at the Arba'etu Enessa church in downtown Addis Ababa. It was here that, in the aftermath of the massacre, the largest funerals took place.

Two witnesses who spoke to the church authorities at St Mary of Zion church (which encompasses Maryam Zion church proper as well as Arbeatu Enessa) said 450 identified people were buried in that church alone. The figure excludes people who were buried there but not identified; the dead who were buried in other churches; and those who were buried on the roadside.

LOOTING, HUNGER AND THIRST

In addition to the killings and the detentions, Eritrean soldiers looted Axum systematically and on a massive scale, leaving residents without food or drink. All of the refugees we interviewed spoke of the looting and its terrible impact on daily life. They said that the looting began as soon as Eritrean forces entered the town on 19 November, but that it escalated in the wake of the 28-29 November massacre.

LARGE-SCALE LOOTING

"After they controlled the city on Hedar 11 [20 November]," one man said, "they started looting immediately ... Those were Eritrean soldiers. The Ethiopian soldiers did nothing – [they] just controlled the city, looking for hidden weapons and controlling government buildings."⁹⁸ "The looting," witnesses recalled, "was every day" and "huge."⁹⁹ One man said: "Everywhere you go, it was looted."¹⁰⁰

According to residents, Eritrean soldiers looted the university, private houses, hotels, hospitals, grain storage facilities, petrol stations, banks, electrical and maintenance stores, supermarkets, bakeries, jewelries, vendors' shacks (known locally as "containers") and other shops, breaking through entrance doors with automatic weapons.

⁹⁸ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 16 January 2021.

⁹⁹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

¹⁰⁰ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.



Debris consistent with looting around buildings that appear to be warehouses or industrial facilities, on the southern edges of Asmara, shown on satellite imagery from 13 December 2020. Eritrean forces systematically looted the city. Residents said Eritrean soldiers stole sugar and flour from a store called Guna Trading; that they robbed May Akko, a large community store, of truckloads of sugar, cooking oil and lentils; and that they took flour and animal fodder from the Dejen Flour Factory.

Debris consistent with looting around an unidentified building in central Asmara, shown on satellite imagery from 13 December 2020. According to residents, Eritrean soldiers looted the university, private houses, hotels, hospitals, grain storage facilities, petrol stations, banks, electrical and maintenance stores, supermarkets, bakeries, jewelries, vendors' shacks (known locally as "containers"), and other shops, breaking through entrance doors with automatic weapons.

The soldiers stole luxury goods, machinery (such as generators and water pumps), vehicles (including bicycles, trucks, three-wheel vehicles, and cars, sometimes taken from their garage), as well as medication, furniture, household items, food, and drink. "They looted whatever they could get. If they got mango juice, they would drink it and then carry things on the truck," a man said.¹⁰¹

A woman recalled: "Eritrean soldiers looted everything in the streets, including all the cars. There were many in the city, including four-wheel drives, but there are none left."¹⁰² A man remembered seeing four Eritrean soldiers stealing the vehicles of a local police station: "[They] dropped from one car and started to steal four cars ... They stole three white pickups and one camouflaged pickup. They broke the ignition box and short circuited them to start the engines."¹⁰³

Residents said Eritrean soldiers stole sugar and flour from a store called Guna Trading; that they robbed May Akko, a large community store, of truckloads of sugar, cooking oil and lentils; that they took flour and animal fodder from the Dejen Flour Factory, and that they looted the budget student grocery store of the university.

The massacre of 28-29 November appears to have precipitated an escalation in the looting. One man said: "They even looted private houses ... The people were really tired of that. A lot of the people of the city moved to the villages. It was a good opportunity for the Eritrean soldiers to steal all of the property."¹⁰⁴

One man said that on 29 November, Eritrean soldiers came to his brother's house and began to loot:

We told Ethiopian soldiers and they tried to help us and asked them to stop. The Eritrean soldier said "Hey you donkey, it's none of your business" ... They took the TV, a jeep, the fridge, six mattresses, all the groceries and cooking oil, butter, teff, flour, the [furniture of the] kitchen cabinet [itself], clothes, the beers in the fridge, the water pump, and the laptop. They damaged the door ... They took all of this in a Mercedes truck."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

¹⁰² Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

¹⁰³ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

¹⁰⁴ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

¹⁰⁵ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

A baker who had fled Axum returned following the massacre, only to find that his bakery and residence had been emptied of its oven, kneading machine, televisions, bed mattresses, table, flour, and oil. "I found only my shoes and my pants," he said.¹⁰⁶

HUNGER AND THIRST

The scale of the looting made life difficult for Axum residents, for whom electricity, phone networks and public services had already been cut since the beginning of the conflict in early November. Many of Axum's residents eke out their living on a day-to-day basis, but now that their means of subsistence had been stolen there was little work that could be done. Food and water became scarce.

In the days after the massacre, a woman recalled, "we didn't have anything to eat or to make money."¹⁰⁷ On 1 December, another woman said: "The Ethiopian soldiers [using loudspeakers] kept telling us to open our stores but everything had been stolen."¹⁰⁸ Only a few cafés reopened, she said. A man described the state of the city at that time:

The Eritreans had already looted everything, including teff and sorghum. We were very hungry. We couldn't work. All the property, shops had been stolen. We didn't do anything during that time. And also there was no bank or network. There was no internet access, and no one understood what's happening in Axum. There was no electricity.¹⁰⁹

Several people told Amnesty International that, without electricity, residents were unable to mill sorghum into flour. One woman said: "For food, we boiled sorghum seeds in water and ate them. We call that *tuturo*."¹¹⁰ A 17-year-old boy who was separated from his aunt — his caretaker — during the shelling of Axum described his difficulties: "I didn't have any money and I didn't know anything about my aunt. And my parents are dead. I didn't have any money so I started stealing from the store of my aunt to get money. But still there is no food, no electricity. No one has a place to mill sorghum."¹¹¹

Some people resorted to looting in order to eat. One man explained: "Eritreans, after looting the basic things — inside a store for example — ... they [would] leave the store open. So thieves came up and [would] also loot the open store."¹¹² Another man acknowledged he tried to steal from the Degen Flour Factory with some friends, only to be forced by Eritrean soldiers at gunpoint to load bags of flour into trucks.

The electricity blackout and the theft of water pumps also affected the city's water supply. Many residents were forced to drink from wells or rivers, which they said was unsafe. One man recalled: "About the water, we were drinking mineral water that we had bought before the war. After that we started drinking from the river and from a well which wasn't safe. That's how we survived. But there was no peace, it's dangerous. You don't feel comfortable even going to drink river water."¹¹³ One woman told of the same problem: "It was kind of hard to survive because there was no water, so we drank water from the river or went around the villages far from the city so we could use river water."¹¹⁴

The lack of food and water drove many to leave the town. One man who, after fleeing, returned to Axum on 23 December, subsequently left for his parents' village to find something to eat. He explained that in Axum, "People can't mill sorghum. There is no macaroni, pasta or packed food — nothing."¹¹⁵

LOOTING OF MEDICINES

One man said his brother, who has heart disease, tried to obtain medicine at the pharmacies of the city's two hospitals, but that they had been looted. "28 December was the last time I saw him. He said he was really in suffering and pain from the disease because he didn't have his pill."¹¹⁶ Another man from a village outside of Axum said that the small clinic in his village had been thoroughly looted, "especially the pharmacy."¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁶ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

¹⁰⁷ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

¹⁰⁸ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

¹⁰⁹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

¹¹⁰ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

¹¹¹ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

¹¹² Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 20 January 2021.

¹¹³ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

¹¹⁴ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 17 January 2021.

¹¹⁵ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

¹¹⁶ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 21 January 2021.

¹¹⁷ Amnesty International interview (name withheld), Hamdayet, Sudan, 23 January 2021.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The annual feast of St Mary of Zion, celebrated annually in Axum Tsion on Hidar 21 (30 November), is now laden with painful memories. Many hundreds of dead, the large majority of them men, were buried in a climate of fear and anguish that day.

By all accounts, the Eritrean military's killing of hundreds of civilians in Axum on 28-29 November was coordinated and systematic. Its aim was to terrorize the population into submission, as evidenced by the military's mass detention of residents on 29 November and soldiers' threats to resume wanton killing in the event of resistance. These killings — as well as other extrajudicial executions that preceded them — the deadly indiscriminate shelling of Axum, and the widespread looting of property, may amount to war crimes. The systematic killing of hundreds of civilians by Eritrean forces on 28-29 November may also constitute crimes against humanity.¹¹⁸

The survivors of the Axum massacre were robbed of their relatives, their friends, and their neighbours. Without some measure of accountability for the grievous violations that they have endured, such crimes are likely to continue.

Amnesty International calls for a UN-led investigation into these events, and for the Ethiopian government to cooperate fully with it, including by facilitating unfettered access for UN investigators. Besides examining events in Axum, the investigation should look into the totality of the war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in the context of the conflict in Tigray since 4 November 2020, with a view to ensuring accountability for suspected perpetrators and reparations for the victims and survivors.

In addition, we call upon the Ethiopian authorities to:

- stop the further commission of human rights and humanitarian law violations, including indiscriminate shelling and aerial bombardment, and deliberate attacks on civilians.
- ensure unfettered humanitarian access to Tigray.

Amnesty International also urges the African Union, the European Union, the United States, and the United Nations to encourage the Ethiopian authorities to implement the above recommendations.

¹¹⁸ According to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Article 7), murders committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population constitute crimes against humanity.

THE MASSACRE IN AXUM

Over an approximately 24-hour period, on 28-29 November 2020, Eritrean troops operating in the Ethiopian city of Axum killed many hundreds of civilians. Soldiers deliberately shot civilians on the street and carried out systematic house-to-house searches, extrajudicially executing men and boys. The massacre was carried out in retaliation for an earlier attack by a small number of militiamen, joined by local residents armed with sticks and stones.

The events in Axum were the culmination of a wave of violations carried out since 19 November, when Eritrean and Ethiopian forces entered Axum together, after indiscriminately shelling the city and firing at those who tried to flee. Witnesses say that Eritrean forces, in taking over the town, carried out extrajudicial executions and engaged in widespread looting. Following the 28-29 November massacre, Eritrean forces detained hundreds of residents and threatened renewed killing in the event of new resistance.

In this briefing, Amnesty International documents how the Eritrean military is responsible for serious human rights and humanitarian law violations against Tigrayan civilians in Axum. It concludes that the indiscriminate shelling of Axum by Ethiopian and Eritrean troops may amount to war crimes, and that the mass execution of Axum civilians by Eritrean troops may amount to crimes against humanity.

INDEX: AFR 25/3730/2021
MONTH/YEAR: FEBRUARY 2021
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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Massacre in the Mountains

A CNN REPORT ON THE NOVEMBER 2020 MASSACRE IN THE TIGRAY REGION OF ETHIOPIA

[Editor's Note: The CNN report contains video material that cannot be adapted to the formats used by the Government Publishing Office to publish committee hearings. The report can be accessed with the following URL:]

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/26/africa/ethiopia-tigray-dengelat-massacre-intl/index.html>

NOMINATION

TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m. in Room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

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

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

The CHAIRMAN. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order. Today we are considering the nomination of Ambassador Samantha Power to be administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, known to all of us as USAID.

Ambassador Power, congratulations on your nomination. Thank you for your willingness to return to public service. It is a pleasure to welcome you back before the committee.

When I chaired your 2013 hearing to be U.N. Ambassador, I said you were, quote, “impeccably qualified for the position.” Your experience, drive, and dedication to the advancement of humanitarian principles also, I believe, make you impeccably qualified to be the next USAID administrator.

Before I go any further, I understand that our distinguished colleague from Massachusetts, a member of the committee, wants to introduce you this morning. So we will turn to him first.

Senator Markey?

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

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much, Ranking Member Risch. It is my absolute honor and pleasure to introduce our nominee today, Ambassador Samantha Power, nominated to be the administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, USAID, and more importantly, a cherished Massachusetts resident.

I would also like to welcome Ambassador Power’s husband, Cass, and their two young children, Declan and Rian, who are right behind us here today.

Samantha is a friend, a constituent, and, of course, a fellow Irishman—Irishwoman in her case. As noted in a New Yorker profile of her, Ambassador Power's last name, Power, comes from the Irish "de paor," meaning "of the poor." Fittingly, she has dedicated her entire life in the service of others, using her razor-sharp intelligence and fierce advocacy as a journalist, activist, and diplomat to stand with the world's voiceless masses, all while simultaneously advancing United States interests by building bonds in every corner of our world.

Ambassador Power has been known to be ferocious in the pursuit of justice, human rights, and democracy, always taking the time to hear other points of view with great humility.

While she disagrees with Henry Kissinger on everything from politics to the no-brainer debate of Red Sox versus Yankees, he has said that Samantha, quote, "has——"

The CHAIRMAN. Do not ruin the nominee's opportunity here, Mr. Markey.

[Laughter.]

Senator MARKEY. Ambassador Henry Kissinger has said that Samantha "has an excellent analytical mind, and even on matters where I might have come to different conclusions, I respected her analysis," perhaps the highest praise ever given by a Yankees fan to a member of Red Sox Nation.

As an immigrant from Ireland, Ambassador Power's personal background gives her a unique and deep respect for this country and all it stands for. Spending time between Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Dublin, and Boston, she received her bachelor's degree at Yale University and went on to obtain her law degree at Harvard University.

She served in several key positions during the Obama administration, including as the Special Assistant to the President, the National Security Council, Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights and, notably, as the youngest ever United States ambassador to the United Nations.

Prior to entering government service, she began her career as a war correspondent, reporting from the seas of Sarajevo. She became a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and served as the founding executive director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University.

As she takes on the important work of the challenges Ambassador Power will face are daunting: recovering from the global pandemic, revamping the state of global democracy, tackling the climate crisis, and extending life-saving assistance to the nearly 1 billion people around the world who go to bed hungry every night.

I know of no person more qualified to take on this task. She embodies that bold red, white, and blue USAID logo which states "From the American People."

In 2015, Ambassador Power invited me to be her guest to attend His Holiness Pope Francis' address before the United Nations General Assembly. For two Irish Catholics from Massachusetts, it was the experience of a lifetime.

On that day, Pope Francis spoke of the need for compassion, inclusivity, and action in tackling the world's shared challenges.

Ambassador Power's career personifies each of these qualities, and I know she will take her compassion, her inclusivity, and her unwavering desire for action to achieve great things for the people of the United States and the world at USAID.

So welcome, Ambassador Power. We are pleased to have you here. We cannot wait to see you get to work over at USAID and I thank you for your service to our nation.

It is my privilege, Mr. Chairman, to introduce Ambassador Power to the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Markey. We know that you both sit here and in other committees. So if you have other work to do, we certainly invite you to join us if you can. If not, we will see you back a little later.

That was a rousing introduction and with—but with one flaw. I thought it was extraordinary. So as a Yankee fan, I just—I just cannot be quiet.

So, anyhow, let me start off. Ambassador, in his inaugural address, President Biden said that, quote, "We will lead not merely by the example of our power, but by the power of our example."

The work that dedicated professionals of USAID do exemplifies that example, supporting people around the world to advance democratic and citizen-responsive governance, to help ensure fair treatment and access to opportunity for vulnerable minorities, and provide life-saving relief on behalf of the American people.

We know that these core values are the strength of our own country and that promoting them abroad contributes to more stability and stability worldwide.

As I emphasized to Secretary Blinken at his nomination hearing, the U.S. must reassert itself as a global leader capable of confronting complex challenges.

As we work to address COVID-19 inequality, migration, climate change at home, if the U.S. is not contributing leadership and resources to address these issues globally, then our security at home is tenuous at best.

There are few people as familiar with many of today's complex long-running conflicts as you are. As you well know, if confirmed, you will be responsible for responding to new and renewed conflicts from Venezuela to Ethiopia to Burma, human- and resource-driven conflicts which have victimized hundreds of thousands of civilians, forcing millions to flee their homes.

Political crises in Latin America have caused unprecedented humanitarian disasters. I am encouraged by the Biden administration's plans to renew our commitment to achieving a diplomatic solution to the Venezuela crisis where USAID has provided significant humanitarian and development assistance.

In the Northern Triangle countries, addressing rampant crime, weak governance, corruption, and displacement must also be a top U.S. priority, as stability there directly impacts the security and prosperity of the United States.

Across Africa we have seen democratic backsliding in various countries, along with persistent terrorist threats and conflicts that have cost thousands of lives and displaced hundreds of thousands more.

In particular, the conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray Province has contributed to destabilizing the whole Horn of Africa while increased terrorism has thrown the Sahel into chaos.

Meanwhile, climate change is increasing food insecurity and natural resource scarcity, and threatening the very existence of many small island nations, while COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage the world.

At the same time that you will be confronting these global challenges, you will also need to rebuild and restore USAID as an institution. Successful U.S. foreign policy rests on the appropriate utilization of the three D's: defense, diplomacy, and development.

Unfortunately, the previous administration had anywhere from skepticism to disdain for the last of those two. While I believe Ambassador Green who—for whom I have great respect, believed and invested in the mission of the agency, the years after his departure have taken a serious toll on the agency morale, strained USAID's relationships with its implementing partners, and weakened trust in America.

The agency needs internal attention, and I recommend that if confirmed you listen to USAID's civil servants, Foreign Service officers, and Foreign Service nationals to explain what USAID needs.

As you may know, USAID underwent a major reorganization spearheaded by Ambassador Green, and while I believe he approached this effort with the best of intentions, the ultimate execution was lacking.

I do believe the agency must be nimble enough to respond to changing and pressing challenges, and I trust that you will make the ongoing reorganization work better and consult with this committee on how that might be achieved.

So, in conclusion, if confirmed, you will have your work cut out for you. However, I have great confidence in your experience and abilities, not to mention your passion for making this world a better place.

But we would expect you to engage with this committee as a partner and asset in accomplishing USAID's mission. This committee has a long bipartisan history of support for USAID, and I expect you to engage in frequent and open dialogue to help sustain that support.

I look forward to hearing from you today. We welcome your family, who is always part of the sacrifices that those of us who are in public service make.

And with that, let me turn to the distinguished ranking member, Senator Risch.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Senator Menendez. I appreciate that, and Ambassador Power, thank you for agreeing to take this on and thank you to your family. As the chairman noted, there is always sacrifices that are shared, sometimes not equally by the family.

The role of the USAID administrator is an important one. We all know that. In order to accomplish the goals of our—as a nation, we need a development agency that reflects the challenges of the 21st

century and is staffed and resourced to be strategic, efficient, effective, and accountable.

USAID must be led by someone who understands that aid is most effective when it is targeted toward clearly-defined U.S. national interests and those who are committed to advancing good governance, economic growth, and self-reliance.

The challenges before us are immense. An estimated 80 million people globally have been displaced from their homes, 26 million of whom are now refugees. The conflict in Syria has entered its tenth year and has left more than 12 million people food insecure.

Ebola has reemerged in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the COVID-19 pandemic has shuttered schools, destroyed livelihoods, and pushed millions of people into poverty around the world.

USAID has a successful record of responding to emergencies, and we will count on the next administrator to put dollars provided for humanitarian assistance to good use.

The agency has also done tremendous work in combating food insecurity, expanding access to water, and empowering women to participate in their economies.

USAID needs to work on coordination with the CDC. This is why the largest U.S. global health program, PEPFAR, is coordinated by the Department of State.

As we continue to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, I look forward to working with the department, USAID, the CDC, and my colleagues here in Congress on a more comprehensive approach to global health, security, and diplomacy.

Senator Menendez and I have been discussing that issue in particular, and we have talked about a path forward to where we can get a bipartisan piece of legislation that will be one of the most important things we do as far as global health is concerned and as far as the people of the world are concerned.

We must put in the work now so we can get ahead of the next pandemic and keep Americans safe from infectious disease threats before they cross our borders again. We should also maximize the impact of U.S. contributions to COVAX and GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and through the Global Fund's COVID-19 response mechanism.

Beyond pandemics, I am interested to learn more about how you, if confirmed, will position USAID to counter China's malign development model. That model is something that many of us consider to be one of the greatest threats to U.S. national security.

I would also like to better understand your view on promoting democracy, good governance, and the rule of law, the foundations of healthy and stable societies. The United States cannot, should not, and should not even consider singlehandedly trying to solve the world's problems. Difficult choices must be made.

But while the administrator is not empowered to make those choices independently, USAID does remain under the foreign policy direction of the Secretary of State.

I am pleased to see that the next administrator will have a seat at the principal's table on critical matters of development and humanitarian response.

If confirmed, I am eager to work with you to ensure that USAID remains strategic focused and accountable.

Thank you, Senator Menendez.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

With that, Madam Ambassador, the floor is yours. Your full statement will be included in the record. We ask you to summarize it, and then we will have a conversation with you.

STATEMENT OF HON. SAMANTHA POWER, OF MASSACHUSETTS, NOMINATED TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ambassador POWER. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee. It is a tremendous honor to appear before you today. I am humbled by President Biden's trust in me and by the opportunity to join such an indispensable agency at such a critical time.

I would like to begin by thanking my mother, Veera Delaney, a doctor whom I have watched care for her patients during the darkest hours of this pandemic, my father, Eddie Bourke, whose curiosity about the world helped spark my own, my husband and best friend, Cass Sunstein, an American original, and my 11-year-old son, Declan, and eight-year-old daughter, Rian, whose shared love of animals and nature remind me daily of our responsibility to our planet.

Public service does ask a lot of families and I am indescribably grateful for the support and generosity of mine. I would also like to thank the members of this committee.

While bitter political winds blew, continued bipartisan support for the U.S. Agency for International Development has saved and improved millions of lives while enhancing U.S. security and U.S. prosperity.

I was fortunate to work with many of you when I last served. If confirmed, I will be eager to build on these relationships and forge new ones.

I first saw USAID's impact in war-torn Bosnia, where I started my career in 1993 as a reporter. I saw USAID staff and partners deliver food to the vulnerable while supporting mothers as they tried to locate their missing sons and husbands.

Since then, wherever I traveled, whether in East Timor just after became the world's newest nation, Darfur in the middle of this century's first genocide, or West Africa at the height of the Ebola epidemic, USAID was there. America was there, identifying needs and moving heaven and earth to meet them.

In my work, I have seen how the investments the United States makes in other countries are investments in our own security. I have seen the inextricable linkages between political freedom and broad-based economic growth.

I have seen that the most effective development is driven by those on the ground with local knowledge and expertise, and I have seen the overwhelming power of individual dignity as a driver of world events.

Even as China increasingly uses its financial leverage to sway other nations, citizens everywhere are insisting that they be able

to exercise agency, provide for themselves, and exercise their fundamental rights.

If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the institution of USAID and invest in the capabilities of the agency's dedicated 10,000 Foreign Service officers, civil servants, locally employed staff, contractors, and other personnel.

This means seeking out and amplifying their insights, learning about specific local needs, and adapting our programs. It means addressing the issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and advancement within USAID's workforce, and it means emphasizing what President Biden himself and both of you, I think, already have stressed.

Development is critical to America's ability to tackle the toughest problems of our time, economic, humanitarian, and geopolitical. In consultation with you and others in Congress, I will aim to ensure that USAID enhances its long-standing leadership in food security, education, women's empowerment, and global health, while also addressing four interconnected and gargantuan challenges confronting the world at this moment.

First, the COVID pandemic and the development progress that has been imperiled in everything from food security to gender equality to access to education to economic growth.

Climate change, and the surge in droughts, storms, food shortages, and climate-associated humanitarian emergencies.

Third, with more conflicts occurring today than at any point since the end of the Cold War, conflict and state collapse.

And fourth, finally, with freedom declining around the world for the fifteenth straight year in a row, democratic backsliding.

In tackling these and other challenges, I want to assure the committee that I will work every day to expand burden sharing in the international system. At the U.N., working with my administration colleagues, I was able to help secure major commitments from other countries to care for refugees, respond to the Ebola epidemic, strengthen peacekeeping, and adopt the sustainable development goals.

U.S. investments are catalysts that can be used to mobilize governments, international organizations, foundations, and businesses to help countries achieve their own development goals.

If I am confirmed to lead this great agency, I will work tirelessly with members on both sides of the aisle to ensure that taxpayer dollars are well spent. Guided by evidence, I will work with you to adapt or replace programs that are not delivering. I will be transparent and accessible as together we chart a course that meets the needs of the current moment.

In 1979, as Senator Markey alluded to, my mother brought my younger brother and me to America from Ireland, blessing me with a life full of opportunity. As one who has been given so much by the United States, I would take it as an incomparable privilege to lead the world's premier development agency in order to expand the opportunities available to others.

I thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Power follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. SAMANTHA POWER

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, it is a tremendous honor to appear before you today. Thank you, Senator Markey, for your kind introduction.

I am humbled by President Biden's trust in me, and by the opportunity to join such an indispensable Agency at this critical time.

I would like to begin by thanking my mother Vera Delaney, a doctor whom I have watched care for her patients during the darkest hours of this pandemic; my father Eddie Bourke, whose curiosity about the world helped spark my own; my husband Cass Sunstein, an American original; and my 11-year-old son Declan and 8-year-old daughter Rian, whose shared love of animals and nature remind me daily of our responsibility to our planet. Public service asks a lot of families, and I'm indescribably grateful for the support and generosity of mine.

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I first saw USAID's impact in war-torn Bosnia, where I started my career in 1993 as a reporter. I saw USAID staff and partners deliver food to the vulnerable, while supporting mothers as they tried to locate their missing sons and husbands. Since then, wherever I travelled—whether to East Timor just after it became the world's newest nation; Darfur, in the midst of this century's first genocide; or west Africa, at the height of the Ebola epidemic—USAID was there—America was there—identifying needs and moving heaven and earth to meet them.

In my work—as a writer, professor, human rights advocate, national security staffer, and diplomat—I've seen how the investments the United States makes in other countries are investments in our own security. I've seen the inextricable linkages between political freedom and broad-based economic growth. I've seen that the most effective development is driven by those on the ground with local knowledge and expertise. And I've seen the power of individual dignity as a driver of world events. Even as China increasingly uses its financial leverage to sway other nations, citizens everywhere are insisting that they be able to exercise agency, provide for themselves, and exercise their fundamental rights.

If confirmed, I will work to strengthen the institution of USAID and invest in the capabilities of the Agency's dedicated 10,000 foreign service officers, civil servants, locally-employed staff, contractors, and other personnel. This means seeking out and amplifying their insights, learning about specific local needs, and adapting our programs. It means urgently addressing the issues relating to diversity, equity, inclusion, and advancement within USAID's workforce. And it means emphasizing what President Biden himself has stressed: Development is critical to

America's ability to tackle the toughest problems of our time—economic, humanitarian and geopolitical.

In consultation with you and others in Congress, I will aim to ensure that USAID enhances its longstanding leadership in food security, education, women's empowerment, and global health, while also addressing four interconnected and gargantuan challenges confronting the world at this moment:

- *The COVID-19 pandemic.* With decades of development gains shattered by COVID, imperiling progress on everything from food security to gender equality and access to education, USAID's support to partners will be vital for recovery, including by building more robust and durable health infrastructure for the future.
- *Climate Change.* With the surge in droughts, storms, food shortages, and climate-associated humanitarian emergencies, USAID can help countries become more resilient, while supporting their efforts to reduce carbon emissions.
- *Conflict and state collapse.* With more conflicts occurring today than at any point since the end of the Cold War, USAID assistance will continue to mitigate suffering, while working with U.S. diplomats and our international partners to address the root causes of such crises.
- *Democratic backsliding.* With freedom declining around the world for the fifteenth year in a row, USAID's democracy, rights, anti-corruption, and governance programming must nimbly support democratic and civil society actors as they push back against creeping authoritarianism and seek to build lasting democratic institutions.

In tackling these and other challenges, I want to assure the committee that I will work every day to expand burden-sharing in the international system. At the United Nations, working with my administration colleagues, I was able to help secure major commitments from other countries to care for refugees, respond to the Ebola epidemic, strengthen peacekeeping, and adopt the Sustainable Development Goals. U.S. investments are catalysts that can be used to mobilize governments, international organizations, foundations, and businesses to help countries achieve their own development goals.

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Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ambassador Power.

We will start five-minute rounds of—in order of those who have appeared either in person or virtually, and I will start with the chair.

USAID plays a central role in the U.S. government's humanitarian response to conflict and forced migration. Last year, I released a comprehensive report on forced displacement, which found that the vast majority of the 80 million displaced people worldwide are not displaced for months but for years or decades at a time.

How will you lead efforts at USAID to ensure coherence between the U.S. humanitarian and development programs and to ensure that a maximum impact is achieved in assisting protracted displacement?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Well, first, let me say that those displacement numbers, as you know, are the highest since World War II. Every year, we see that number go up. When I was U.N. Ambassador, it was the highest since World War II, and it gets worse and worse.

Climate-related events, of course, are a factor, and I think you are likely to see a surge and displacement stemming from the economic fallout from the COVID pandemic.

It is important to look behind the numbers at the causes of displacement, which vary. I alluded in my testimony to the fact that more conflicts are occurring now than at any point since the end of the Cold War. As you noted just now, conflicts are lasting longer.

So it used to be that one conflict would start but another might have been brought to an end and that, therefore, again, those numbers were not just continuing to grow.

But as a new conflict starts, other conflicts are just lasting longer and longer, and so the protracted refugee population is higher than it has been since World War II.

The investment that President Biden has committed to making in diplomacy is a critical part of this. We have seen, for example, in Libya, diplomacy produce, for the first time in many years, a U.N.-brokered transition government.

We need diplomacy to pay dividends in Yemen, which is facing the worst humanitarian crisis of any place on earth. And when it comes to a place like the Northern Triangle, where you have been

so active, it is critical to look at the different drivers of migration, which range from physical personal insecurity and gang violence and corruption to the lack of economic opportunity.

And USAID, again, I think has a really important role to play in mitigating humanitarian suffering, but also looking upstream at why people are leaving their homes in the first place.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ambassador POWER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Let me ask you this. Under the last restructuring of USAID, the Democracy Rights and Governance Center was moved under the new development, Democracy and Innovation Bureau.

My question is, I think this is a very significant part of the mission of USAID. I noticed you mentioned it among your four pillars.

How will you elevate and integrate democracy and human rights in USAID's response both to the COVID pandemic, which has provided cover for autocrats to attack civil society and diminish human rights, but even more broadly?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you, Senator. Well, there is a contest in this world occurring now between two models, the democratic model and an authoritarian model. The trends were not pretty before COVID struck and, as you note, they are getting worse in terms of human rights recessions, even in established democracies around the world.

I think that there would be no question to any of the wonderful USAID staff as to the level of priority that I give democracy and human rights. My whole career has been in that field.

I was moved to go into foreign policy by the massacre in Tiananmen Square that occurred in June of 1989 when I was still a college kid.

And so on the specifics of whether the Democracy Rights and Governance Center and that programming belongs within the DDI Bureau where it is now, I would love to revert.

But on the substance, I would just like to note that, again, this is incredibly important programming, partnering with the Department of State and their Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Bureau, looking at anti-corruption work specifically, which is a real Achilles for authoritarian and illiberal countries, I think one we have not taken full advantage of.

This will be a huge priority for me, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. And finally, you mentioned in your comments, and I think it is one of the central issues that we need to face as we deal with the challenges of migration and the challenges that we have at the border, having AID address violence, corruption, and other drivers of migration in the Northern Triangle countries are incredibly important as part of—Vice President Biden was—when he was vice president he had a plan then.

Unfortunately, it was not continued. There is another provision in—that he has put forth. How do you see the key components of a joint USAID–State Department strategy as part of that the Northern Triangle effort?

Ambassador POWER. Well, just to note that I have been very heartened in the briefings that I have been able to have from out-

side by the reliance on data and evidence in tailoring those programs.

USAID actually gets data from the International Organization of Migration and CBP, the Customs Border Protection, to find out why individuals are leaving their homes, to dig into the specifics, to dig into the localities from which they are fleeing.

And USAID—prior to the funding suspension under the Trump administration, USAID actually has tailored programs around those places where people are most likely to flee and tailor programming around, again, the causes of migration.

So I think that is the right approach. It will take us some time to ramp back up, unfortunately, because some of those programs were suspended. But the infrastructure is in place and I look forward to working with you again to dig into specifics.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Thank you.

Ambassador Power, first of all, thank you for taking the time yesterday and previously for you and I to talk about this position and your confirmation, and one of the things we talked about yesterday was National Security Memorandum No. 1 that President Biden has executed in which the Secretary of State will lead and, in coordination with the USAID administrator, the development of the U.S. Government wide plan to combat COVID-19 pandemic.

Can I get your thoughts on the record for that, please, briefly?

Ambassador POWER. Specifically on COVID-19 or on the structural—

Senator RISCH. Well, generally on the structure and then as it relates to COVID-19.

Ambassador POWER. Yeah. I mean, I think that as actually COVID-19 illustrates probably better than any contemporary threat, our fates, and the fates of the American people, are connected to health infrastructure, economic prosperity, the curbing of extremism and radicalization internationally.

And so programming that USAID does in that regard, in cooperation with the State Department and other agencies, is incredibly important for our security and what President Biden has done in elevating USAID and giving it a seat on the National Security Council and in the Principles Committee, I think, has just effectively enshrined that reality, which is that our development efforts and our diplomatic efforts have to be resourced and prioritized alongside, of course, our essential defense efforts.

So I think that is the logic. You know, from having spoken with him about this decision, that is the logic of elevating USAID. The expertise is there, the know-how is there, and I think what is really important about doing this is it means that that expertise and know-how will be reflected in the interagency, not only at high levels but at every level.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. Thanks for that answer.

Moving offshore, the memorandum also refers to a diplomatic outreach plan for enhancing the United States response to the COVID-19 pandemic by engaging partner nations.

Could you give me your thoughts on that, please?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you, Senator.

When I was U.N. Ambassador, I had the privilege of being part of President Obama's effort to mobilize a large anti-Ebola coalition to prevent, in that instance, an epidemic, a horrific epidemic from becoming a global pandemic of the kind that we are now living through.

I think the United States is at its most powerful, effective, and efficient when it leverages the support that it offers international institutions or the resources that it dedicates to combating global challenges, when it leverages that to get others to do more.

And that is what President Biden, I think, has already done in the context of announcing the \$2 billion that you allocated late last year for GAVI, for the vaccine effort, that that \$2 billion is going to be contributed.

But it is also going to be leveraged to get other countries to do more before the next \$2 billion is obligated, and I think that is just one example. There has not—there has not been, I should say, optimal coordination, I think, in the international global vaccine area and that is something that I am very eager to dig into, if I am confirmed.

Senator RISCH. Thank you. I appreciate those thoughts.

The Global Health Diplomacy and Security Act, which I introduced, creates a coordinator position at the State Department that is consistent with the type of framework I believe that President Biden intends in his memorandum.

Are you familiar with that, by any chance, and go ahead. Your thoughts?

Ambassador POWER. The prior version of the bill I was familiar with. I have not seen—I think the bill that you either are on the verge of introducing or have just introduced.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate that. And as I indicated, Senator Menendez and I have been talking about the global health issue and an effort by this committee in that regard, and I intend to work with Senator Menendez on the creation of the framework because, obviously, the success is going to depend on that framework and I hope to engage you and your agency as we move forward on that.

And with that, my time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

Senator Cardin, who is with us virtually?

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and, Ambassador Power, thank you very much for your willingness to continue to serve our nation.

I want to follow up on comments that you made earlier this year, which was something I was pleased to see where you indicated that anti-corruption would be a centerpiece of President Biden's foreign policy agenda.

And you have already answered some of that with Senator Menendez in regards to how you are using the DRG Center. You specifically mentioned in those comments the use of the tools that are at your disposal, including Magnitsky sanctions.

Can I take it that you will work with us as we look at permanently authorizing the Global Magnitsky statute today? It is by executive order and by statute that expires. We take pretty much

what was in the executive order, Senator Wicker and I, and codified that as permanent authorization.

Do we have your support on that legislation?

Ambassador POWER. Unequivocally, and let me just thank you for the Magnitsky Act where your leadership was so pivotal. As you know, it has now been replicated to a large extent in Europe and in Canada.

I think one of our tasks is to ensure that other countries adopt similar measures so that we can multilateralize these corruption and human rights sanctions.

Senator CARDIN. And Senator Young and I have introduced legislation to try to build on it to give capacity for our missions to evaluate how well the countries in which they operate are dealing with corruption.

So it is a way of using a standard similar to what we do in trafficking in persons to monitor progress made in fighting corruption. You mentioned in your article anti-bribery statutes and dealing with those—the laundering, anti-laundering statutes, et cetera.

Will you work with us as we look to enact this law to give you additional tools to help fight corruption?

Ambassador POWER. Yes, Senator. Always looking for additional tools. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

So let me talk a little bit about Central America. You already talked a little bit about that with Senator Menendez, and I know that President Biden is looking at providing help to the Central American countries in order to do what is right in our hemisphere from the humanitarian point of view as well as the practical aspects of migration.

But there is systemic corruption in these countries that if we do not deal with it we are going to be giving money that will not get to its intended purpose.

So how do you intend to make sure that our assistance to the Central American countries are used for the people to deal with the problems of Central America and not just fuel corruption?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you, Senator.

You put your finger on a real inhibitor of progress—above all progress for the people of that region. Let me say that, from what I understand of USAID programming up to this point, there is, of course, a recognition of the barrier that corruption has constituted to economic progress, to progress in combating threats to physical security, and thus, much of the programming is routed, for example, through local officials who have been identified as reformers or—and/or civil society partners.

And, indeed, many of those partners, as you know, are doing work to hold the central authorities accountable for transgressions and for different forms of corruption.

It has been disappointing to see some of the strides that were made, for example, in Guatemala and Honduras through CSIG. CSIG was actually the most popular and I know you were critical in pushing for its mandates to be renewed successively in Guatemala. It was the most popular institution in Guatemala before it was shut down, and so that is disappointing because it had a really

important role to play. Then Vice President Biden was also critical in ensuring that it was preserved there.

But I think, thinking through at the central level, how—what more we can do for civil society actors that are holding government accountable to try to change the equation so that those governments that are trending in worrying directions reverse that tide.

Senator CARDIN. I know that we can help you in this regard. I strongly support our involvement in Central America. But when we put conditionality on aid, it gives the administration, I think, the additional strength in dealing with the governments to indicate there has got to be progress made in dealing with the governance issues.

So I hope you take that as friendly help when we look at conditionality to make sure that we do achieve progress in dealing with systemic problems in these countries.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Portman, who is with us virtually, I understand?

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ambassador Power, and also thank you to your husband, Cass Sunstein, for his willingness to come back into public service. We appreciate your willingness to step up again.

I enjoyed our conversation, and let me follow up a little bit on what Senator Cardin just talked to you about.

As you know, I suppose, we have spent \$3.6 billion of taxpayer money in the Northern Triangle countries—El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala—in the past five years. The results are not impressive, understanding that recently some of the natural disasters in that area, particularly the hurricanes, added to this.

But I will tell you, I just got the numbers this morning from last week. Five hundred and fifty kids per day came into the United States, mostly from the Northern Triangle countries, which is five or six times more than in January when there was less than a hundred.

In terms of families—and by the way, there were 300 in February so we are going up and up and up—in terms of families, 1,500 per day last week, as compared to a thousand in February, on average, less than a hundred in January, again, a 15 times increase.

So the push factors are not being addressed effectively. People are coming. The pull factors are that the changes were made in policies to allow people to come and they are responding and the traffickers are responding.

So I guess what I would ask you is how you would do it differently. Senator Cardin rightly asked you about corruption, and I believe insisting on transparency and rule of law and tying our aid is important.

By the way, of that \$3.6 billion, as you know, much was sent through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, MCC, which has precisely those criteria and others to ensure the money is well spent.

But I guess I would ask you also about tying it to immigration and specifically requiring those countries to work with us to have people apply for asylum from their country of origin or if they feel

it is unsafe to do it in a safe third country, which is one of the programs that was discontinued by the current administration.

In other words, someone could apply in Guatemala for asylum if they are from Honduras, which would be the first country that they would come into, a safe third country.

Do you believe that that is an appropriate condition to us spending what President Biden has now suggested, which is another \$4 billion on top of the \$3.6 billion that has been set in the last five years?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you, Senator.

Well, first, just to embrace the premise of your question that we have a responsibility to be effective vigilant stewards of taxpayer resources, this is an immensely challenging set of problems, and as you called them push factors out of the region to deal with there are no silver bullets. Needless to say, if there were someone would have found one along the way.

But I guess I would just offer a few thoughts. I mean, first of all, there is actually compelling data, and I look forward to digging into the numbers further if I am—if I am confirmed, but that shows that, for example, in the districts where USAID had programming aimed at curbing violence—for example, in El Salvador between 2015 and 2017, there was a 61 percent drop in homicide rates.

There are comparable numbers in terms of the statistics in districts that USAID programming was set up in Honduras, with a slightly smaller drop but, nonetheless, a very substantial drop in homicide rates.

I think that is encouraging. I think, you know, suspending the programs, unfortunately, gave us less influence in using our programming to work with those reformist officials who were willing, again, to crackdown on violence within their neighborhoods.

Senator PORTMAN. Ambassador, let me interrupt you just for a second—

Ambassador POWER. Of course.

Senator PORTMAN [continuing]. Because I want to cover another topic as well. But just on this topic, having just been at the border the last few days, I did talk to a lot of unaccompanied kids and also to families and single men coming over from Central America and, as you know, the constant refrain is, “I can make 10 or sometimes 20 times as much in America. I want to take care of my family.”

So I agree that dealing with the violence is important and I applaud those changes. And, in fact, not only has violence been dealt with in those countries so that the numbers are a little better, generally, but also the economic situation is a little better, although the hurricanes and the COVID-19 numbers are probably not going to be as good.

But it is—it is an economic issue, primarily. In other words, people will still be looking to come to the United States. And my question to you was, should we condition billions of dollars in taxpayer money not just on the important things that Senator Cardin talked about but also on working with us on this issue of immigration and, specifically, on asylum claims? Do you agree with that?

Ambassador POWER. Well, I think that one of your premises, if I understood it, of putting individuals in a position where they

could apply for refugee status or asylum in the region rather than entrusting, for example, their children to coyotes——

Senator PORTMAN. Right. And taking a dangerous course, which is——

Ambassador POWER. I do not think any parents, you know, relishes the entrusting of one's child, again, to a smuggler. So one of the things that we looked at in the Obama administration, as you know, was setting up these UNHCR offices in the region. I think that is something that President Biden is looking at again, and that is very important.

But you put your finger, again, on one of the major causes of migration, which is the lack of economic opportunity, and that is something that USAID has a lot of experience investing in.

You are right, we have not produced the same kinds of results, as I have pointed to, when it comes to physical security and crime. But I think, you know, now with tailored programming, not being everywhere but being specifically in those communities where we know that there is the highest concentration of migrants, we can, working with you and being held accountable, hopefully, begin to make a dent.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, Ambassador, I hope you—I hope you work with——my time is getting toward the end here. But my question is specifically dealing with the economy——

The CHAIRMAN. The senator's time has past expired so——

Senator PORTMAN [continuing]. And the violence issues, but also if you could work with us on this issue of immigration and asylum so people can apply from their home country or a safe third country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Coons, who just returned from the Tigray region in Ethiopia on a mission and we appreciate his work, and you are recognized.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and Ambassador Power.

Welcome, and thank you for your willingness to serve our nation again, and to Cass and to Declan and to Rian, thank you for supporting your wife and mother in her tremendous service to our nation.

You are taking on this role, hopefully, once confirmed at a critically important time. We all saw how, in the last year of the previous administration, the absence of a Senate-confirmed administrator.

The absence of clear and forceful leadership led to real drift and some challenges operationally and organizationally.

There are humanitarian crises all over the world, as many of us will comment today, from Venezuela to Yemen to Burma to Ethiopia to many other nations, and clear and capable leadership at USAID is critical.

I have profound respect and appreciation for the work of the USAID, the folks who are deployed around the world. I just had the opportunity to meet with a number of the humanitarian partners and leaders that USAID is relying on in Ethiopia, as I have elsewhere.

I also think it is critical we continue to explain to the average American how the work of USAID overseas helps keep us safer, healthier, and more prosperous.

And, tragically, COVID-19 is an opportunity for us to remind folks exactly how vaccinating the rest of the world is critical to preventing new variants from breaking out and from harming all of us.

So I look forward to working with you in my role as the chairman of the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee and to having a meaningful dialogue.

Let me dive in first, if I could, to what I just saw. If confirmed, can we count on USAID to work with this committee and with all of us in Congress to ensure that we are addressing the humanitarian crisis throughout Ethiopia and, in particular, in the Tigray region?

Ambassador POWER. Absolutely. Thank you for taking the trip that you took. USAID, as you know, just made an announcement of an additional \$52 million dollars in humanitarian support. I think that makes the contribution so far \$150 million plus since the crisis began.

But the humanitarian—mitigating the humanitarian suffering, of course, is not all we need to be doing. We need to get at the root causes of that suffering and secure access so that that food can be delivered.

So thank you for what you have done to try to make that happen.

Senator COONS. And I am optimistic we will make progress now on humanitarian access.

I also met with the head of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, Daniel Bekele, and discussed with him and with other international leaders about carrying out a thorough and independent investigation of human rights abuses.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, has also talked recently about doing a joint investigation.

From your career working in human rights issues, what kind of investigation do you think would be most effective and have the greatest impact in getting to the root of human rights violations that have occurred?

Ambassador POWER. Well, the biggest challenge, traditionally, for international human rights investigations, especially independent ones, is securing access, and so the key is not only getting the approval from the Center and from the prime minister for something like that, but making sure that that agreement trickles down and that there is a willingness on the part of the authorities who have granted access to ensure that, you know, the checkpoints do not go up then as soon as the investigators deploy.

There are many, many countries where atrocity allegations have occurred, have developed. Unfortunately, creative traditions of erecting roadblocks, you know, where it matters—in other words, harassing, intimidating witnesses and so forth, denying visas to particular communities, blaming so-called uncontrolled militia, you know, without, at the Center, really taking steps to make sure that those militia allow investigators to do their work.

Senator COONS. Well, I look forward to partnering with you and relying on your advice in exactly how to make sure that this commitment that has recently been announced by the prime minister to investigate and this partnership that I think is quite possible is successful.

And there is a number of things I look forward to working with you on: the implementation of the Global Fragility Act, a bill that I helped lead that has been signed into law that is a new tool to ensure that development and diplomacy take the lead in support of defense work in securing countries from the Sahel to the Northern Triangle, the Nita Lowey Middle East Partnership for Peace Act and ensuring that we are investing in both people-to-people programs and joint economic ventures to facilitate the conditions for a possible two-state solution, and then ways in which we can keep the Development Finance Corporation a development finance corporation and to best use the MCC.

My last question will be for you about the critical role that delivering safe and effective vaccines to the developing world can play in continuing our role as one of the world's leading supporters of effective public health programs.

There has been a significant increase in the appropriated funds available through COVAX. We have rejoined WHO.

What do you think we most need to do to ensure the prompt and equitable distribution of effective vaccines globally?

Ambassador POWER. Well, let me just cite, Senator, the International Chamber of Commerce report—I think we discussed it on the phone a month or two ago—but that shows that until and unless there is economic recovery by virtue of vaccinations and curbing of the pandemic in the developing world, it is going to cost the global economy \$9 trillion, including developed countries \$4.5 trillion. Between that and the issue of variants, where as long as the pandemic is raging somewhere there is a chance of some mutation and variants moving aggressively, it is so in our interest to make that happen.

COVAX, if fully funded, will vaccinate 20 percent of people, they hope, by the end of this year—20 percent of the people in developing countries.

That is not sufficient, and so looking to see how COVAX is being supplemented by bilateral donations, surplus donations, and other contributions, I think, is really important.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Madam Ambassador.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Paul?

Senator PAUL. Good morning. Welcome.

Ambassador POWER. Good morning.

Senator PAUL. Many on the left are horrified at being associated with the neocon foreign policy. But it is no small irony that the end results of responsibility to protect are, in reality, little different than the interventionist policies of John Bolton and Bill Kristol.

Like the neocons, the liberal advocates of responsibility to protect have advocated for military intervention in Libya, Syria, and Yemen.

Sure, the reasoning might be more humanitarian than geopolitical, but the advocacy for military intervention ends up looking pretty much the same.

I remember liking what candidate Obama said about military intervention, that without congressional approval it was only justified when there was an imminent threat.

After President Obama began bombing Libya, I asked him at lunch one day, what about your pledge to ask and seek congressional permission unless it was an imminent threat.

He responded that there was an imminent threat to Benghazi. I looked at him incredulously and responded, “Really? An imminent threat to a foreign city is your justification for an unauthorized war?”

The responsibility to protect ideology did not learn much from the Libyan debacle and immediately pushed the Obama administration to jump into Syria. Many on the left, like Secretary Blinken, do not admit that there was too much intervention. They actually believe in Syria that they failed because there was too little military intervention.

Several hundred thousand people have died in Syria and more than a million refugees have been displaced. If you are talking about humanitarianism, famine, the wars, really, other than natural causes war is the number-one cause of famine around the world.

An argument can be made, though, that Assad would probably massacred far fewer people had the West and the Gulf States stayed out of the civil war.

Are you willing to admit that the Libyan and Syrian military interventions that you advocated for were a mistake, and that going forward, you will be more conscious of the unintended humanitarian disasters that seem to occur again and again with our military interventions in Africa and throughout the Middle East?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you, Senator.

Well, first, if I may, just talk about USAID and its role, which I think can be very important in Libya today.

I think before you arrived I mentioned that there is—a power-sharing government has finally been set up in Libya. USAID right now, because of the security conditions, operates its programs, largely, from the—

Senator PAUL. You would acknowledge Libya is worse now than it was before we started bombing them?

Ambassador POWER [continuing]. I think it is really important with Libya having the opportunity to have elections at the end of this year for us to do what we can to support those elections. I think it is in the face of mass atrocities there are a whole set of nonmilitary tools that are—I would hope that you would support deploying.

We had some successes with them, for example, in helping bring about the South Sudanese Referendum, which was a risk of grave atrocities occurring back in the first term of the Obama administration, an attempt to steal an election in Cote d’Ivoire where diplomatic pressure averted mass atrocities, and even sending technical advisors, military advisors, to Central Africa to combat the Lord’s Resistance Army, which kidnapped children and—

Senator PAUL. Do you think we were successful in Libya, that Libya is a better place because of our military intervention, or Syria?

Ambassador POWER. The decision that President Obama made when confronted with the risk to the people of Benghazi and other civilian centers was an incredibly difficult one, and again, in sitting in the Situation Room, I think it is hard now to remember—you know, with the United Nations, NATO, the Arab League, this body, the Senate, unanimously calling for a no-fly zone, President Obama made the judgment that the risks of allowing Benghazi to fall and the slaughter that would ensue were not—

Senator PAUL [continuing]. I know it is a tough decision, but in retrospect, was Libya a good idea to militarily intervene in Libya? A good idea to militarily intervene in Syria, in retrospect?

Ambassador POWER. I think the challenge is that we do not have the counterfactual and, certainly, the fallout in the—in the wake of the intervention, the centrifugal forces have been incredibly difficult to manage and, above all, hard on the Libyan people.

Senator PAUL. But we have to learn lessons sometime. I mean, we went into Libya. We went into Iraq. We destabilized Iraq. We are still dealing with that. We went into Libya, destabilized Libya. We are still dealing with that. Syria, the same thing, and Yemen as well.

So, I mean, there should be an accumulation of knowledge and a learning curve here that our interventions make things worse, not better.

Ambassador POWER. Thank you. Thank you, Senator.

I, certainly, agree that nonmilitary tools in the toolbox are—carry with them far fewer risks. I opposed the war in Iraq. I agree with you on Yemen.

All I am trying to describe is that when these situations arise, it is a question almost of lesser evils, that the choices are very challenging.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and congratulations, Ambassador Power, for your nomination.

You have been a human rights activist. You have played a number of roles with the Obama administration, including U.N. ambassador, and now you are poised to take the helm of a critical engine of humanitarian assistance around the globe.

So I am going to ask you questions that kind of combine all the roles, both about what you might do at USAID but also how you see some of the challenges that affect the committee.

You began your prepared remarks with four gargantuan challenges, and one was democracy backsliding, and I want to talk to you about that. We are seeing it everywhere.

We are seeing it in every continent. We are seeing, as you indicate, declines in freedom and democracy indices, whether you are looking at, you know, Freedom House annual reports or the Economist Democracy Index annual reports.

President Biden has indicated that sometime either later this year or earlier next year he wants to convene a summit of democracies, which I think is a great idea.

How would you foresee USAID being part of what the U.S. might do in convening such a summit? Just share your thoughts on that. Ambassador POWER. Thank you.

If I might, just because the democracy and human rights numbers are so unfortunate and depressing, just to offer something on the other side of the ledger.

Prior to the pandemic, there were more political protests that occurred in more places than at any point in modern recorded history.

So on the one hand, you have states increasingly repressing their people and growing more sophisticated in shutting down the internet and in stifling space for civil society.

On the other hand, many, many people are not getting that memo and are insisting on taking their protests and their concerns to the streets and holding governments accountable.

So I think there is a lot to work with out there of concerns about violations of dignity and rights and a desire for the United States to play a leadership role in promoting human rights, of course, with humility.

With regard to the summit, I am not privy to the deliberations and sort of what the planning and thinking is either on timing or on the details of substance.

But I think there are a lot of opportunities to collaborate and for USAID to play an important role, for example, in combating misinformation and sharing best practices for doing so in protecting election infrastructure, not only from misinformation but from hacking and other forms of intrusion, the anti-corruption programs that have been effective in holding governments accountable and bringing civil society into conversations that are too often top down.

I think there are a lot of lessons that can be imparted in that regard. And often, Senator, I think it is—it is countries that themselves are at different stages of democratic progression that have the most valuable lessons to impart to those countries that are just becoming democratic.

For example, the country of Sudan, which is experiencing a political transition, is a long way from being a full and—a full Jeffersonian democracy, that—

Senator KAINE. Sudan is a good example of something. I agree with you.

You would agree with me that in something like a summit of democracies it would be very important not to just focus on, like, a NATO like U.S. and Europe or an OECD, just kind of the big developed nations, but we should include large and small democracies, mature and nascent from every continent on the planet.

I mean, should not that be the goal of such a summit?

Ambassador POWER. Again, I do not know how the current administration is thinking about the summit. I can tell you, Senator, from having helped design invitation lists as a U.N. ambassador that questions of who is in and who is out are actually quite challenging.

Senator KAINE. And but I am not asking about particular nations. I am just saying it would have less utility if it is just seen as kind of a U.S. and Europe thing or a big nation thing, right?

If we are going to have a summit of democracies, there are democracies on every continent. They are big and small and nascent and mature. And if we are going to try to uphold the model and share best practices, we should not have kind of a U.S. or U.S. and Europe-centric view. We should try to include democracies from everywhere.

Ambassador POWER. I think the more demographically and culturally and regionally representative we can be in general in talking about democracy and human rights the better.

The progress I was able to make as U.N. ambassador on LGBTQ rights would not have happened without the leadership of Latin American countries, who were at the forefront there.

So I agree with the premise of your question. I am just not familiar with what the plans are for the summit.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. I do not have any other questions, Mr. Chair. Thanks.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Young?

Senator YOUNG. Welcome, Ambassador, and congratulations on your nomination.

Ambassador POWER. Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. As you know, the People's Republic of China is using development dollars to advance its foreign policy goals through programs like the Belt and Road Initiative.

Some have proposed expanding DFC's work to enable it to more effectively combat China's investments by targeting middle-income countries or perhaps utilizing DSC to support the export of U.S.-made emerging technologies.

Whether through USAID or DFC, it is absolutely essential that our development dollars, I think, be used to advance our geostrategic priorities.

So, Ambassador, how would you like to see our development agencies improved so that we are able to more effectively compete with China?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you.

The way in which, and I alluded to this in my opening statement, but that China is using its economic leverage and heft not only to, in often a predatory way, but not only to change governing practices within countries but in my old place of work the United Nations to actually leverage those financial commitments to change the rules of the road altogether and to water down international human rights commitments and so forth, for fear that those laws and norms will be used against China. It warrants urgent, immediate, and well-resourced attention.

I think you asked about improvement and I am, again, incredibly impressed with what USAID staff have done and was very impressed with the leadership of Mark Green in this area.

I think you and Senator Coons and others have worked on making the DFC a much more powerful tool in the American toolbox. I think increasing coordination between the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the DFC, USAID, and the range of other development actors is one answer.

I think recognizing our comparative advantages—you know, we actually believe in local self-reliance. That is what we are working

toward. We want countries not to be dependent on international assistance.

So the investments we make are in their ability to have agency and to dictate their own affairs. This is very——

Senator YOUNG. Sure.

Ambassador POWER [continuing]. Different, I think, than the China model. Go ahead, sir.

Senator YOUNG. No. So you mentioned local self-reliance. I am going to get into that momentarily since you brought that up.

Might you support expanding DFC's mission to target areas in the developed world where China is attempting to make inroads?

Ambassador POWER. I would want to look into that and hear from you and others, just, again, having not worked yet within the administration or dug into DFC-related questions, if I could.

But I think, certainly, the question for American foreign policy, broadly, is not only, you know, how do we deal with China in sub-Saharan Africa and the inroads they are making there, but across the developed world as well.

Senator YOUNG. You mentioned self-reliance, that emphasis on making countries self-reliant, I think, is itself an advantage, right, because all people—so I think not just most people but all people want to be more self-reliant, less reliant upon foreign nations and others. It is sort of wired into our DNA.

How would you say America's national security interests are helped by making countries more self-reliant? Is that consistent with your thinking?

Ambassador POWER. Absolutely consistent with my thinking, and I think you put your finger on it. It is you cannot travel the world and talk to individuals, whether they are those who are receiving U.N. food assistance or those receiving technical assistance in a government ministry, without being struck by how eager they are to not be dependent on international assistance, and I think that is something USAID staff have taken to heart. So——

Senator YOUNG. Is there—is there a way that we might, or how should we measure self-reliance?

Ambassador POWER. Well, I think domestic resource mobilization is something that USAID has invested a lot in, so making sure that countries are able to collect their own tax, infrastructure, strengthening the rule of law, so that there is an ability, you know, not only for NGOs to hold governmental actors accountable for potential corruption or malfeasance but also the courts, and making sure there is an independent judiciary. So work in those domains, I think, is one——

Senator YOUNG. Then, lastly, in summary fashion, I will just ask you, how would you use your seat on the Development Finance Corporation's executive board to ensure that DFC and USAID's complementary missions are furthering achieving self-reliance in our targeted countries?

Ambassador POWER. I really look forward to that individual being named, nominated, confirmed, and sitting down with them. I think a critical answer to your question about China but also our larger question about just enhancing development for the sake of U.S. security and prosperity lies in that partnership.

And the resources that DFC bring to bear but also, specifically, they bring to bear what countries most want, which is private sector investment and, really, to move away from assistance to a more equal relationship of that nature.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Ambassador. I will be submitting some questions for the record about Burma.

Ambassador POWER. Okay. Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I understand that Senator Schatz is with us virtually.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ambassador, for being willing to serve. Again, thank you to your family.

USAID is already leading in climate in our foreign assistance. We see that in the work of the bureaus, the various offices, and the regional missions.

But I do think there is more that we can do to make sure that there is leadership at the top to help to steer the agencies' climate work so there is an advocate for consistent and reliable funding, and someone to establish a clear set of priorities for USAID's mission.

Can you talk about where we might make some permanent structural changes at USAID so that our emphasis on climate is embedded into our budget, our priorities, and our objectives, going forward, and so that it does not swing back and forth depending on who is the president of the United States?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you, Senator, and thank you for your leadership on climate.

I am struck by how much work is already being done, and you are alluding to this at USAID as it relates to disaster risk reduction, helping those countries that want to transition to clean energy or to lower their carbon emissions, above all, dealing with something that I know you have worked on in the Pacific Island context, which is mitigation and adaptation for—especially with Pacific Island countries, those countries that are only a few feet above sea level and really suffering devastating effects of climate events and just the rising sea levels.

But you asked a question more about the sort of bureaucratic instantiation of these efforts. I think, for starters, I will want to get smarter at a granular level about what USAID is already doing and was doing under the prior administration.

I think, as well, thinking through what it means to acknowledge that climate touches just about every aspect of USAID programming, from food security to displacement and humanitarian emergency to we had an exchange earlier about conflict and the causes of conflict and how we can address root causes.

So given that, what is the appropriate bureaucratic sort of structure for that disaster risk reduction, adaptation, mitigation, emissions reduction expertise? You know, what is the best way to channel all the expertise that exists within the building so that it is reflective of the fact that this expertise needs to permeate so many domains?

And so I do not have an answer for you today, Senator. If you have ideas, I would love to hear them. But I think it is incredibly

important to make sure that the structure is fit for purpose at this moment.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

I want to stay in Oceania and talk a little bit about not disaster response but disaster preparation. You know, the United States government is very effective in disaster response.

I think of the Fukushima Daiichi earthquake and tsunami. I think of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that impacted coastal Thailand, among other places, and, of course, we were there for the rescue.

But for such a small amount of money, we were able to prevent some of these disasters. Obviously, the natural disasters are unpreventable, but for the simple price of about \$500,000, we were able to deploy some sea level gauges so that people would get early warning about tsunamis and save life.

And I just wonder how you are looking at not just disaster response and mitigation in terms of hard infrastructure, but especially early warning systems and those relatively easy to deploy and inexpensive to purchase the kinds of assistance that really help island nations, and whether USAID would be amenable to really taking a look throughout Oceania about that.

Ambassador POWER. I cannot wait to dig into that set of questions, if I am confirmed. I do—I did read a little bit about it, just as I was been preparing these last weeks for this hearing.

And, as you said, just with such modest financial investments, I read about these beetles that were working with NOAA to provide countries that, in low connectivity areas, allow people to communicate warnings of extreme weather events to come.

I think that is just a great example of the kinds of uses of technology, the uses of satellites, the uses of surveillance that we can bring to bear to mitigate harms.

So eager, all ears, and look forward to hearing more about what USAID staff, which have been so creative in this domain, have already done.

Senator SCHATZ. Sea level gauges, DART buoys, drones for reconnaissance and disaster response—all of these are really inexpensive, even in the context of USAID but, certainly, in the context of our overall foreign aid and defense budget.

So I look forward to working with you on all these things. Thank you, Ambassador.

Ambassador POWER. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I understand Senator Hagerty is with us virtually.

Senator HAGERTY. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador, I would like to commend your two children for attending today. I know that it takes a lot for a family to be as supportive as they have been of their parents, and I hope they obtain a great civics lesson today and I commend them for joining you and for being so supportive of your service.

To the extent that the United States spends development funds overseas, I know we all want to make certain that those funds are spent in a manner that is efficient and as effective as possible at serving our interest.

So I would like to turn our attention to women's empowerment. As you know, to the extent that women flourish in a nation their economies flourish, their democracies flourish, and we tend to see more stability.

The previous administration put together a tremendous program, the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative, and Congress has allocated some \$200 million this fiscal year.

It enjoys great bipartisan support from this committee. And I think it has tremendous potential.

Ambassador, I would like to ask you, first, if you are aware of this program, and then further, how would you go about the implementation and making sure that we see this program through as it is intended?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you, Senator, just to wholeheartedly agree with your various premises about the link between women's empowerment and education and increased GDPs. Peace processes last longer if women are included in at the table.

As to the program that you are referencing, I have, certainly, read about it. I would like, if I could, to dig into it, again, if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, and look at also how it fits alongside other USAID investments, for example, in girls' education, in other efforts to catalyze entrepreneurship for women and girls.

But, again, I share your premises and happy to consult with you on that, going forward.

Senator HAGERTY. Well, I appreciate that, and I would underscore that this is a terrific program and I think it has tremendous potential. So I hope that it will take a premier role as you evaluate what you may do, if confirmed, in the implementation of programs that will help advance our interest overseas.

Along those same lines, I would like to shift gears and talk a bit about nations that are vulnerable to Chinese influence and, specifically, the implementation of Chinese technology into their networks and their infrastructure.

Are there things that you might be able to accomplish, that USAID could accomplish, that would help make these nations less vulnerable to Chinese penetration, to help them stand up against the—this sort of incentivization that the Chinese often will give to get other types of benefits? Can you address that concern, please?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you.

Well, I think some of the answer is diplomatic. You know, the last administration, I think, exerted a lot of diplomatic pressure on countries and some of it was proved, I think, ultimately effective. For example, the United Kingdom reversing its prior decision on Huawei and 5G.

So I look forward to working with Secretary Blinken in that regard. But also, I had a couple exchanges earlier, sir, about the comparative advantages of USAID assistance and U.S. development assistance, more broadly, and I do think the fact that we stand for digital and secure—secure and open digital infrastructure is a comparative advantage.

It is something that aligns with the aspirations of hundreds of millions of people around the world, and so part of the investments that USAID makes in civil society and in nongovernmental actors,

part of our work with the DFC, knowing how much countries value private sector investment from the United States.

I think linking these conversations and recognizing that for American companies, for example, the investment climate is more hospitable in the event of an open and secure digital infrastructure. I think that can be part of our leverage alongside questions of how USAID spends—expends its resources.

Senator HAGERTY. Well, I appreciate your time and effort looking at how we might better leverage our position to ensure that the networks around the globe remain free and clear.

Thank you very much for your time.

Ambassador POWER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I understand Senator Van Hollen is with us virtually.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for this hearing. And, Madam Ambassador, it is great to see you. Thank you for your past service to our country and for your willingness to serve again in this capacity, if confirmed, and it is great to see your family.

Senator Murphy and I have proposed a new foreign policy budget to really meet the needs of this century in the year 2021, recognizing that many of the threats that we face are transnational, global, from climate change to pandemics to cybersecurity, and we look forward to working with you to explore that budget.

It includes a significant increase in the budget for AID, among other things, and part of the idea is also to combat what Senator Hagerty was just discussing, which is China's very active and aggressive effort to export its model of authoritarianism to the developing world through a number of instruments, including debt trap diplomacy, the Belt and Road Initiative.

Their focus has been on sort of major infrastructure projects and, you know, decades ago, AID was also very focused on building larger infrastructure projects.

If you could just comment on how you see the role of AID in the developing world in the context of China's ongoing efforts, but with the toolbox that you have. I mean, should we consider changing the mix in our toolbox as we go forward and how do you see that challenge?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you, Senator.

Understandably, this has come up a good bit today, just as it comes up every day in the world, and I should say thank you to you and Senator Murphy for looking into this question of how development diplomacy, our foreign affairs budget, should be tailored for this moment.

So I look forward to seeing what comes of that exercise. I have seen the preliminary numbers, but look forward to more.

You know, I think that the phrase I keep coming back to is comparative advantage, and you alluded to debt trap diplomacy.

I think, you know, on the one hand, this has been a year of tremendous Chinese expansionism and aggressiveness when it comes to developing countries and when it comes to its near abroad as well. We have seen that in Hong Kong. We have seen it in the South China Sea. We have seen it on the Indian border.

But it has not gone that well for China. Their—you actually see, you know, very poor polling when it comes to China's standing in the world. Even with the donations of protective gear in light of the COVID pandemic, you do not see increases in soft power.

Quite the contrary, in light of COVID and the status of the global economy and how much different countries have suffered from that, and I think it is in part because people recognize that this coercive and predatory approach, which is so transactional and, seemingly, not really rooted in encouraging countries to achieve their own destinies, their own development objectives.

I think it is not going over that well, and that creates an opening for the United States. I think our comparative advantages are our support for accountable governance, which aligns with what citizens want worldwide, our ability to not only bring in the DFC but, in parallel, private sector investments, which countries hunger for, the fact that we are carrying out programming that is supportive of various countries' environmental objectives, so many of these countries cherish the natural resources that they have been given.

And so I think our approach, which is helping them sustain those resources rather than pillaging them, is something that also gives us a comparative advantage.

So I can go on and, again, I think it is country specific in terms of how the programming should be tailored. But, fundamentally, it is about supporting those countries achieve their objectives and their goals of becoming self-reliant and not being dependent on assistance.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that. I also want to follow up briefly on the line of questioning from Senator Coons regarding our role in working with others in the world to defeat the coronavirus.

As you indicated, the COVAX facility, we hope, will vaccinate about 20 percent of the developing world. But it is in their interest and in our interest, obviously, to stop the spread of variants as quickly as possible, variants that could, potentially, you know, become more immune to vaccines. And then there is the economic fallout, both in those countries and the global economy.

What do you see as AID's role specifically in trying to expand the vaccination effort and the use of excess U.S. vaccine supplies?

Ambassador POWER. Well, because it will be some time before everyone is vaccinated in the world and in the developing world, it is really important not to lose sight of the diagnostic and the treatment support that we can offer, the support as well as we go in rebuilding health infrastructure that has been completely overwhelmed by the human costs of this pandemic.

I also think, you know, there is no question that the humanitarian toll when it comes to severe malnutrition is going to be substantial, and USAID, of course, brings great assets when it comes to meeting humanitarian emergencies and supporting organizations like the World Food Programme and others in meeting food needs and humanitarian needs.

So I think there is—to look at the pandemic both as the vaccination challenge, which we have talked about earlier, as a treatment challenge, but then not to lose sight of the fact that measles and TB and polio treatments and vaccines, all of those have lagged behind, and nor to lose sight of the need to ensure that this is the

last pandemic that does this kind of damage and to be building again in the infrastructure that these countries need to be able to fend for themselves in the future.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Madam Ambassador.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good to see you, Ambassador. Thank you for your willingness to serve again.

Let me just quickly associate myself with a few comments and lines of questioning from other members on the committee.

First, let me join with Senator Young in recommending that you play a forceful role at the DFC with respect to increasing their capability to be able to finance projects abroad. We have, obviously, targeted DFC's financing towards the developing world for good reason.

But China plays a different game. We carved out a billion dollars through legislation written by myself and Senator Johnson about a year ago to allow for energy projects to be financed in nondeveloping countries.

I think we are going to have to continue to expand the aperture when it comes to the type of countries and type of economies the DFC is able to do business in in order to compete with China.

Let me just associate myself with Senator van Hollen's comments. You and I have talked ad nauseam about the need to dramatically increase our nonmilitary toolkit, and now you will be in a perfect position to advocate for those resources.

My hope is that the administration, when it submits its budget, you know, will make a substantial down payment on those smart power tools. Just no way to compete with China or prevent the next pandemic or fight climate change if you are still funding, you know, more employees at military grocery stores than diplomats representing America abroad.

My lines of questioning are on the ability of USAID to be able to be nimble enough to meet the changing nature of very complex challenges.

The first is on the topic of how we get our USAID team outside the wire. We have significantly downsized—as an example, we have significantly downsized our embassy in Baghdad. I think right now we have four USAID officers overseeing a billion dollars of funding there.

But it is not unfamiliar what is happening there. All over the world we are having a harder time getting our diplomats and our economic development officers outside of embassies.

Second, we also have a lack of flexibility in the way that USAID can deploy funds. Congress tends to compartmentalize and earmark dollars so that when a challenge pops up it is difficult for the USAID administrator to put the dollars into the place that really needs it.

So I wondered if you would talk for a second about the need to be able to move USAID personnel around to places that need to see American presence but also the need for Congress to work with you

to try to give some more flexibility to the accounts that you are going to oversee.

Ambassador POWER. Thank you, Senator. Both such important questions.

So when it comes to the circumstance for USAID personnel and U.S. diplomatic personnel, as you know, it is very challenging, with more conflicts happening than any point since the end of the Cold War.

With extremists, you know, who do harbor depending on, again, where we are talking about can harbor ill intent towards U.S. personnel, you know, we need to take security precautions and keep our personnel safe.

At the same time, you will never meet people more eager to be out in the communities where the beneficiaries of U.S. programming are than USAID's personnel. I mean, that is what drew these extraordinary men and women to this agency in the first place.

You know, many of them are former Peace Corps volunteers or people who have taught English when they were, you know, practically in high school, you know, living in these communities.

So I think—I look forward to working with Secretary Blinken and our security professionals to being sure that we have the balance right there.

And then when it comes to flexibility in deploying funds, I do think this relates to the conversation that we have been having about China. You know, we—and actually, the Ranking Member Risch and I spoke about this a little bit in his office yesterday—we want our assistance to be fit for purpose.

We want our rules and regulations to be fit for purpose. We need to be accountable to the American people, given the generosity and the spirit behind the investments that are being made through USAID.

I, certainly, if confirmed, want to be responsive to the objectives that people have up here, and that is why you see a lot of those earmarks is that people have strong commitments and want to see particular programming.

And from what I can tell, you know, that is the kind of programming that I would wish to see as well. But we really do need to make sure that we are able to move quickly.

I know Administrator Green made some inroads on this issue. But I do think there is more to be done to make sure that we are—we are able to be a 21st century agency meeting the challenges of the moment.

Senator MURPHY. Agree. Circumstances change, and these days they change very quickly, and so I think there is probably a way for us to maintain accountability for funds, maintain programmatic earmarking but, perhaps, allow for a little bit more flexibility with regard to country and geography.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cruz?

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador, welcome.

Ambassador POWER. Thank you.

Senator CRUZ. So, Ambassador, you and I have had a good working relationship. We had a very good conversation in my office. We have worked together, in particular, concerning humanitarian crises and dissidents.

I appreciated your willingness when serving as U.N. ambassador to speak out for Meriam Ibrahim, who was wrongfully imprisoned in Sudan and sentenced to torture and death for the crime of being a Christian, and you showed courage speaking out for her.

As you know, I was very frustrated President Obama would not speak out for her, but I was grateful that you did. But I also had very significant disagreements with you during your time as U.N. ambassador and nowhere were those disagreements stronger than concerning Israel and concerning Iran.

Concerning Israel, I think, perhaps, the most shameful moment of the Obama administration was after the election in November of 2016 and was the Security Council's passage of Resolution 2334, which I do not think it is coincidental that the Security Council passed it after the presidential election and not before.

And that resolution was passed with, at best, the acquiescence of the United States and of you as U.N. Ambassador and, at worst, the active encouragement of the Obama administration and you, as U.N. Ambassador.

I believe Resolution 2334 is a pile of lies, that it is a resolution that is motivated by anti-Semitism, by hatred for Israel. Resolution 2334 declares much of modern-day Israel is illegitimate and illegally occupied territory.

It declares the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem as illegitimate and illegally-occupied territory. It declares the Wailing Wall as illegitimate and illegally-occupied territory.

The much-circulated picture of President Obama in a yarmulke paying respects at the Wailing Wall, to see the Obama administration put through a resolution designed to attack Israel, was quite dismaying.

So I guess my first question is, do you agree with Resolution 2334?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you, Senator.

I had—there were two sort of guiding principles that I relied upon as U.N. ambassador as it relates to Israel. The first was to combat bias and anti-Semitism and the unfair way that Israel has been treated at the U.N. and is treated at the U.N., and the second, following President Obama's direction, of course, was to preserve space for a two-state solution.

I want to make sure I have the chance to just describe a little bit what I did, and I am disappointed we did not get to talk about this in your office, what I did in the first category because I think your question does not reflect the reality of my four years at U.N.—

Senator CRUZ. With respect, Ambassador Power, the time is limited—

Ambassador POWER. Right.

Senator CRUZ [continuing]. And so if you could just answer the question I asked. Do you agree with Resolution 2334?

I recognize you may well have done other things that were positive concerning Israel. I am focused on this action at the United Nations.

Ambassador POWER. I just would like to get on the record that under my leadership we secured Yom Kippur as a U.N. holiday. We convened the first ever General Assembly condemning anti-Semitism in the same chamber as the Zionism is racism resolution was passed decades before.

And we integrated Israel in a way that had never been done before: chairing committees, being able to actually be part of groups from which they had been traditionally excluded.

I do not think there is a record that looks as substantial when it comes to integrating Israel.

On the resolution itself, it is a resolution in keeping with President Obama's desire to encourage the parties to avoid unilateral steps, including terrorism, incitement to violence, and the building of settlements.

Those dimensions of the resolution—I think, if you read my explanation of vote at the time, the problem with the resolution and the reason President Obama decided to abstain was, by and large, the venue because the U.N. has been so biased, because they are 18 General Assembly—

Senator CRUZ. So let us get to a little bit more granularity.

Ambassador POWER. Yeah.

Senator CRUZ. Do you believe the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem is illegitimate and illegally-occupied territory?

Ambassador POWER. I do not.

Senator CRUZ. So do you disagree with the substance of Resolution 2334? Because that is what it says?

Ambassador POWER. Senator, President Obama's desire was to encourage the parties to avoid unilateral steps. That is the essence of that resolution and I think the reason that he made the judgment to instruct me to abstain.

Senator CRUZ. So encouraging the party to—parties to avoid unilateral steps. Resolution 2334 was a unilateral step. Israel had no say in it. It was a step taken by the enemies of Israel to condemn Israel.

Ambassador POWER. Again, the desire that animated me in my time at the U.N. was to fight bias and to preserve space for a two-state solution.

Senator CRUZ. Okay. A final question. Can you please describe the role played by Iran and by the Houthis, in particular, in deepening the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and assess whether the Biden administration's moves to relieve terrorism sanctions on the Houthis has played a role in that humanitarian crisis?

Ambassador POWER. The Houthis, when I was at the United Nations, the Houthi overran a sovereign government, used military force for territorial acquisition, have used food as a weapon of war.

I mean, again, I am on record condemning Houthi actions and specifically, again, the use of humanitarian aid. I think the challenge is the vast majority of Yemenis live under Houthi control at the moment unless and until there is a political settlement.

And so it is really important, given that that is the world's largest humanitarian catastrophe right now, that we find a way to get food to those vulnerable people.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator CRUZ. But the Biden administration's lifting the terrorism sanction—

The CHAIRMAN. The senator's time has expired, and—

Senator CRUZ. I was just asking her to answer the question.

The CHAIRMAN. I know. I have let more time than other colleagues.

Senator CRUZ. Okay. I would still like her to ask the question.

The CHAIRMAN. I am sure you can submit it for the record and you will get a response.

Senator CRUZ. Okay. So you do not—

The CHAIRMAN. No, I want to observe the time I have for everybody else.

Senator CRUZ. She could still—

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Booker?

Senator BOOKER. I am really grateful. We are all juggling hearings today and I appreciate the yielding of my friend from Texas and the considerations of our chairperson on a tight day.

I am very happy to see Ambassador Power. I have known her for years. She is a woman of extraordinary integrity, commitment, and has lived a life of service to our nation on many fronts that no matter what your political bias is it is laudatory the kind of dedication she has had to the best interest of America and issues of human rights and human decency.

I want to ask Ambassador Power, really quickly, about the—around the issue of preventing future pandemics. Last week, it was reported that wildlife farms that were encouraged by the communist Chinese government to breed exotic animals were most likely the source of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The senior senator from Texas and I—Senator Cornyn—introduced a bill called the Preventing Future Pandemics Act, which authorizes funding to USAID to work on reducing demand for consumption of wildlife from wildlife markets.

Will you work with us to reduce the global demand for wildlife that could lead to another zoonotic disease outbreak and will you work with us to invest in food systems and alternative sources of food protein to move food-insecure communities away from the consumption of wildlife?

Ambassador POWER. Yes, Senator, and I appreciate the integrated approach that that you bring to this issue, the idea that environmental, agricultural, health—that these sectors can be separated, I think, is—has been proven anachronistic and, if confirmed, part of my challenge at USAID is to bring about that integration and make sure that our experts are working together across what have been silos in the not so recent past.

Senator BOOKER. Thank you.

Ambassador, I know, from a friendship with you spanning from years, that you are—you have an incredible and courageous empathy for humanitarian crises around this planet and I know how seriously you take that.

We are in the midst right now in 2021 with a record 235 million people who are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. That is an increase of 40 percent since 2020.

I am really honored to be working with Senator Young. He and I co-chair a task force at CSIS to look at the humanitarian access, which has been increasingly constrained as violent conflict has escalated.

The NGO partners we worked with identified both international—in other words, the willful obstruction by governments, as we are seeing, frankly, in Ethiopia, and bureaucratic obstruction of humanitarian access.

And the humanitarian groups really argued to Senator Young and I that in the complicated environments like Yemen and Syria, Somalia, Afghanistan, northeast Nigeria, and elsewhere, compliance with some USAID policies related to potential materiel support to terrorist groups has made it nearly impossible to operate.

And so in my final question to you and respectful of the time of other senators, I just want to know, can you outline the steps that you are going to take to work internally at USAID and with colleagues at the State Department to try to streamline and improve the regulatory process itself so that humanitarian NGOs are really on a sound legal footing when carrying out humanitarian assistance that is funded by the United States?

And will you work with us to find ways to ease some of the regulatory burdens on frontline humanitarian NGOs to make sure they are on legal—sound legal footing in carrying out humanitarian assistance funded by the U.S.?

Ambassador POWER. Thank you. Thank you so much. My gratitude to our partners working in those difficult environments and my gratitude to USAID staff who do the same at great risk.

I think part of the reason that you are seeing humanitarian access denied is a sense of impunity on the part of various actors, and it does create immense challenges for our partners on the ground.

With regard to vetting and the challenges of complying with regulations and certification, I think, Senator, that is something absolutely I would love to sit down with you and talk through.

I think we have to make sure that our—we are doing everything in our power to ensure that our assistance reaches our intended beneficiaries, given the kinds of actors that inhabit these conflict areas.

At the same time, if there are efficiencies to be achieved, of course, we would strive to achieve them. So absolutely happy to sit down with you and talk that through, consistent, again, with following the law and the requirements that this body has put forward.

Senator BOOKER. I look forward to that partnership. I yield. But I would like to just say I am so grateful to the state of New Jersey for giving me the privilege of being a United States senator.

I will count it as one of the great honors of my experience as a senator to vote for your confirmation on the Senate floor.

You are an extraordinary human being that will do not just the United States proud but the world proud with what I believe will

be extraordinary efforts to make this planet more just for humanity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for indulging me.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Barrasso?

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

Congratulations. Good to see you. The kids have grown up since you were last here. Cass is behind you, and as you say, he is—

Ambassador POWER. He has not grown up.

Senator BARRASSO. No. No.

[Laughter.]

Senator BARRASSO. I would like to—if I could—before I start on some other questions, just if you could please answer Senator Cruz's question about if, when the Biden administration lifted the terrorism sanctions on the Houthis if that made the humanitarian crisis worse.

Ambassador POWER. In lifting the designation—that is an empirical question. I do not have an answer to the question and I had not heard the full question before. So I do not know the answer to that question.

Senator BARRASSO. I want to move to energy development in Africa. You know, worldwide 840 million people are living without electricity. Five hundred and seventy-three million live in—of these live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Power Africa was launched to increase the number of people with access to power. Energy development can lift people out of poverty, improve their education, health, well-being. On my multiple trips to Africa, what I see is humanitarian problems when they do not have electricity, when they do not have power, whether it is to charge a phone or to deliver a baby and use the suction apparatus at the time of the birth of the baby with—it can make the difference between life and death.

So developing countries desperately need access to a steady supply of affordable reliable electricity to support their economic growth as well. So, you know, people back home in Wyoming know firsthand the benefits of developing abundant energy resources.

The solution to ending energy poverty does not lie in limiting options but, I believe, using all available options. I mean, you read about the most threatening environmental hazard to people it is—it is cook smoke. It is indoor smoke because they are using dung and wood to cook indoors.

I think we have to be diligent in promoting all-of-the-above energy strategy that helps alleviate energy poverty.

So will you commit to helping developing countries use all energy resources, including coal and oil and natural gas, so they can get electricity?

Ambassador POWER. Senator, I know that many of our partners, you know, are seeking to transition, in part because of pollution. I think Power Africa, and grateful from afar for the last four years for your leadership on Power Africa.

I think it has been a tremendous boon to many communities, both in poverty alleviation and in providing energy.

I gather that more than 18 million new power connections for homes and businesses have been established through Power Africa

and that means first-time energy access for more than 88 million people in sub-Saharan Africa.

You know, on the specifics of what the energy sources are, if I could—if I could get back to you I would be grateful. Again, I know that there has been a shift over time, including in the last administration, toward renewable sources. But I also know that the all-of-the-above approach has been one that has been the standard since the inception.

Senator BARRASSO. Well, there have been issues about what loans would be made to which countries, and China is rushing in with—if the United States does not want to be active in providing opportunities for affordable energy, China is happy to become a partner with many countries that, I think, are ones that we would rather those be working with us, and sometimes the purity of the climate alarmists, as I call them, is harmful to the economic needs and the health needs of people in these areas, parts of the world.

Moving ahead, due to coronavirus, countries all around the globe are struggling to support the health and safety of their citizens. We see that—you have seen it firsthand.

There are limited resources to address incredible and growing needs that we just heard about from Senator Booker. Given the increasing needs for humanitarian assistance, global health, and food insecurity, I am concerned that precious resources are going to be redirected away from that in terms of focusing on international climate change. Will climate change be your top priority as the administrator of USAID?

Ambassador POWER. Well, as you know, climate-related events and the changing climate and the warmer climate is affecting USAID returns on investments. You know, more droughts have made an impact on our agricultural and food security programming.

So I think what we would be looking to do is within current programming, for example, on food security, to think about climate resilience.

You know, when it comes to humanitarian emergency funding, you know, since there are more natural disasters happening statistically, as a general rule, each year, thinking about how to do disaster risk reduction, so there is less damage.

And so we, thus, you know, need to provide less humanitarian emergency funding because buildings were built more securely in the first instance. So I think it is less a zero sum trade off and more about integration.

Senator BARRASSO. Mr. Chairman, my time is expired. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Ambassador, I am going to just draw your attention to a few things. I am going to submit those questions for the record. I would like a substantive response to them instead of going through it here. But I want to draw your attention to just a couple things.

We have challenges in the hemisphere, like Venezuela and Colombia, and I would like to hear your assessment on how AID can provide development assistance to countries like Colombia that are hosting refugees and doing a good neighbor and a hemispheric good neighbor.

But I think we need to help countries like that that are in the midst of doing that.

Second, I would like to draw your attention to the challenges that the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh continues to face in the light of last fall's attack by Azerbaijan.

In the short term, USAID can help address food, water, health care, and COVID assistance need, particularly for displaced Armenians. But I am concerned the U.S. has not done enough to date.

So I would like to look forward to hearing from you on that. I would like to hear from you how the administration seeks to address the interconnected security governance and climate-related crises that are feeding the humanitarian emergency in the Sahel.

And then lastly, I would like to draw your attention to the U.S.-India relationship. We introduced the prioritizing clean energy and climate cooperation with India to boost U.S.-India cooperation. I would like to hear the role you envision USAID playing in boosting U.S.-India cooperation on clean energy.

And last, last year's appropriation omnibus authorized the USAID administrator to establish the United States-India Gandhi-King Development Foundation, which would attract public and private capital to fund grants to address development priorities in India. I would like to hear your views on that foundation.

So we will submit those for the record. If you give us a substantive response, I would appreciate it.

I want to salute Declan and Rian, who have done such an extraordinary job of listening to all these in-depth questions and had patience through this whole period of time.

As the hearing comes to a close today, I want to thank Ambassador Power for her time and her thoughtful testimony. It is my intention, working with the ranking member, to hold the markup for Ambassador Power as soon as possible after the recess.

The record will remain open until Thursday, March 25th. I would urge you to answer any questions that are submitted for the record so that you can be in a position to be considered at a business markup.

With thanks to the committee, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:53 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. SAMANTHA POWER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENEZES

Refugees from Venezuela

Question. I support a strong U.S. response to the Venezuela humanitarian crisis given the regional implications, particularly for neighboring Colombia, which has received the vast majority of Venezuelan migrants and refugees.

- While the State Department leads on the refugee and migrant response (with the exception of food aid), what is your assessment of how USAID can provide development assistance in countries hosting large numbers of refugees?

Answer. Thank you for your support. USAID works closely with the State Department to coordinate response efforts across Latin America and the Caribbean, as these countries have received an unprecedented number of migrants and refugees from Venezuela. Since 2018, USAID has provided more than \$298 million in humanitarian assistance supporting Venezuelan migrants, refugees, and host communities

in Colombia with food assistance, direct cash assistance, and health support. USAID is also supporting the long-term development challenges in Colombia resulting from the Venezuelan migration crisis. In Colombia, I gather that USAID has dedicated more than \$77 million in development funding to provide long-term assistance for Venezuelan migrant receptor communities with the aim of expanding health, education, and justice services. Colombia recently granted ten years of legal status to all Venezuelan refugees who have fled to the country, making it possible for Venezuelans to live and work openly. This is an important step for Colombia to harness the economic potential of the many Venezuelans it hosts and, if confirmed, I look forward to consulting with you on how USAID can support this effort.

Central America Regional Security Initiative

Question. The Trump administration sought to include funding for reintegration services for migrants returning to Central America as part of all of its programming for the region. As a result, existing programmatic initiatives such as the Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) were significantly distorted to address reintegration initiatives for deportees from the United States—something never previously conceived to be a part of the CARSI framework.

- As USAID Administrator, will you work to ensure that well-established initiatives are used for their intended goals, and that security initiatives such as CARSI are never utilized for deportee reintegration services?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed as USAID Administrator, I will work to ensure that well-established initiatives, including CARSI, are used for their intended goals.

Internal Displacement in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras

Question. Humanitarian organizations report that internal displacement in Latin America and the Caribbean has increased over the past year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the region has seen an uptick in gang and criminal violence, especially in El Salvador and Honduras. Women, children, and LGBTQI+ individuals are at heightened risk of violence, intimidation, and forced displacement.

- Given recent commitments by governments in the region to address forced displacement, including the early 2020 passage of an IDP-focused law in El Salvador, what more can USAID do on the humanitarian and development fronts to respond to internal displacement in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras?

Answer. I agree this is a crucial issue. With growing needs from COVID-19, food insecurity, and the continued impact of recent hurricanes, USAID is looking to further expand humanitarian assistance in the region, for example increasing support for child protection. Following the hurricanes, USAID has been instrumental in providing emergency assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) ensuring they have safe shelter, food, clean water, health and protection services, in addition to helping them recover their livelihoods. The Agency utilizes several sets of data to understand internal displacement flows and dynamics and inform assistance, such as its InfoSegura regional project on security information management, implemented with the United Nations Development Program, and the International Organization for Migration's displacement and shelter mapping. This data collection and analysis informs evidence-based policies on human mobility in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. To increase protection for IDPs, USAID's Regional Human Rights Project supports strengthening early warning systems that track IDP dynamics, preventing and alerting their potential human rights violations, including referral programs for possible victims. Such efforts with the Guatemalan Human Rights Ombudsman, are now being expanded at the regional level through joint work with the human rights ombudsman from Honduras and El Salvador. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID remains focused on internal displacement data to inform programming in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Gender-Based Violence

Question. Will you ensure that USAID targets gender-based violence (GBV) survivors, women at risk of GBV, and LGBTQI+ individuals for humanitarian programming in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed as USAID Administrator, I will ensure that USAID continues to support gender-based violence (GBV) survivors, women at risk of GBV, and LGBTQI+ individuals for humanitarian programming in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. I understand that in the Northern Triangle, USAID supports civil society and independent watchdog institutions to deter human rights abuses, respond to human rights violations, and support vulnerable populations. This includes forcibly displaced persons, women, children, and youth affected by violence and insecurity, indigenous and Afro-descendent communities, and LGBTQI+ individuals.

Nagorno-Karabakh

Question. The Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh continues to face serious challenges in light of last fall's attack by Azerbaijan. In the short term, USAID can help address food, water, healthcare, and COVID assistance needs, particularly for displaced Armenians.

- If confirmed, what will be your plan of action for providing needed assistance to ethnic Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh, including those displaced to Armenia, in both the short and long term?

Answer. This has been a horrific chapter in the lives of the civilians impacted by the recent conflict. President Biden has made clear his intention to look at enhancing humanitarian assistance in the region due to the displacement caused by the conflict. I believe USAID has an important role to play in supporting peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts, and supporting citizen-responsive governance and durable economic growth. If confirmed, I will continue to pursue all appropriate avenues for helping the people who are suffering in the aftermath of this war. Since September 2020, USAID has provided more than \$4.5 million in total assistance to effectively respond to the complex humanitarian crisis resulting from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and associated COVID-19 resurgence. USAID provided food, shelter, emergency health assistance, and social services to communities displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh in Armenia.

Question. What do you view as the biggest challenge to providing assistance at this time, and how will you address that challenge?

Answer. Both the Armenian government and humanitarian actors estimate that 35,000-45,000 spontaneous arrivals will permanently remain in Armenia, which is a major challenge moving forward. While the displacement situation is dynamic and continues to evolve, USAID continues to work closely with the Department of State to assess urgent post-conflict humanitarian needs and possible future U.S. Government engagement on an ongoing basis.

The Sahel

Question. The Sahel region of West Africa is facing a significant humanitarian crisis due to armed conflict, poor governance, and the impacts of climate change. Last year, the efforts of U.N. and humanitarian agencies in the region were severely underfunded.

- How will you, if confirmed, plan to address the interconnected security, governance, and climate-related crises that are feeding the humanitarian emergency in the Sahel?

Answer. I am concerned about rising violent extremism, growing humanitarian needs, and increasing governance challenges in the Sahel. If confirmed, I will ensure USAID continues to align with regional, national, and local efforts to expand economic growth, improve human capital, counter violent extremism, strengthen governance..., and build resilience to climate risks. Gains in these areas will help communities be less vulnerable to shocks and violent extremism. Complementing these efforts, USAID carries out and coordinates resilience programs with a longer term aim to reduce chronic vulnerability that underlie the crisis and the need for recurrent humanitarian assistance. These investments aim to lift people out of poverty and improve on successful interventions to facilitate increased resilience to climate change and self-reliance in the Sahel. In addition, the administration will take advantage of the authorities provided in the Global Fragility Act to move this work forward. If confirmed, I hope to build on USAID programs already in place to counter violent extremism in the Sahel. I will also continue to work with my counterparts to find effective programming to address and combat violent extremism throughout the African continent.

Support for Cuban Civil Society

Question. For more than two decades, USAID has co-lead U.S. government initiatives to promote democracy in civil society, and to provide support for courageous human rights defenders, as well as civil society leaders and journalists who work independently of the Cuban regime.

- As USAID Administrator, what steps will you take to continue this important work and ensure U.S. support for human rights defenders, independent civil society leaders, and independent journalists in Cuba?

Answer. Cuba is one of the most repressive countries in the world. The country is ruled by a dictatorship that flagrantly abuses human rights, controls information among its populace, inhibits meaningful civil society activity-including free press-

and criminalizes political dissent. The role of a vibrant civil society continues to be essential to Cuban democracy. I gather USAID has a portfolio in place to continue supporting a diverse sector of independent activists in Cuba who will push for democratic freedoms, including religious freedom. The Agency will also continue providing basic needs assistance to political prisoners and persecuted activists. USAID-supported NGOs continue to defend the human rights of those who are abused and even jailed for their political beliefs. If confirmed, I will ensure these critical programs continue. Also, as one of my first acts as U.S. Ambassador to the UN, I raised the case of Oswaldo Payu directly with the Cuban Foreign Minister, pressing him to allow an independent investigation of the circumstances in which Payu had been killed, and I continued to advocate publicly in support of Payu's family. During my time at the UN, I repeatedly called out Cuba for its abhorrent treatment of Cubans like José Daniel Ferrer, José Antonio Torres, Julio Ferrer, and Antonio Rodiles. If confirmed, I will continue to speak out against Cuba's persecution of its citizens and human rights violations.

Haiti

Question. Haiti's humanitarian situation is rapidly deteriorating, with the U.N. reporting extremely high levels of food insecurity, a 377 percent increase in gender-based violence over the past year, and lack of access to education.

- What more can USAID do to support protection-related needs, such as child protection and prevention, and respond to gender-based violence?

Answer. COVID-19 has had devastating direct and indirect impacts on women and children in Haiti. Supporting key initiatives that protect and empower vulnerable people is a priority for USAID. If confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to build on USAID investments in Haiti that support protection-related needs. For example, USAID has provided approximately \$2.3 million in fiscal year 2020 funding to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and four non-governmental organizations to provide protection services such as psychosocial support to Haitian children, families, and frontline health care workers affected by COVID-19. In addition to prioritizing protection activities, USAID also requires partners to adhere to COVID-specific gender and protection mainstreaming requirements to ensure all programming is safe and accessible to the most vulnerable. USAID has also provided \$500,000 to support activities in child-friendly spaces for vulnerable children and adolescents. USAID partners have also organized awareness campaigns that bring attention to gender-based violence services; trained journalists on how to ethically report on gender-based violence; and developed referral networks to connect survivors to safe spaces, legal aid, and other lifesaving services.

U.S.-India Cooperation

Question. I am a strong supporter of the U.S.-India relationship, and I was proud to introduce the Prioritizing Clean Energy and Climate Cooperation with India Act to boost U.S.-India cooperation on clean energy.

- What role do you envision USAID playing in boosting U.S.-India cooperation on clean energy?

Answer. The U.S.-India development relationship spans more than 70 years. India is a partner in advancing our shared objectives to support inclusive economic growth, reduced carbon emissions, open and inclusive digital ecosystems, and the global health security agenda across South and Central Asia and the Indo-Pacific. India is a priority country for our climate diplomacy strategy, both because of its current emissions trajectory, which is concerning, but also because we see India as an important partner on future clean energy research, development, and deployment. If confirmed, I envision that USAID will work with its clean energy transition as part of our shared objective of meeting the climate challenge.

U.S.-India Cooperation and Congress

Question. How can Congress and USAID work together to strengthen that cooperation?

Answer. While India is the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases globally, the Government of India has demonstrated in recent years a commitment to reducing emissions and combating climate change, including by setting ambitious targets for power sector-led emissions reductions. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress in support of India's climate priorities through programs and partnerships that prioritize climate change mitigation, clean energy development, sustainable landscapes, and disaster risk reduction.

United States-India Gandhi-King Development Foundation

Question. Last year's appropriations omnibus authorized the USAID Administrator to establish the United States-India Gandhi-King Development Foundation, which would attract public and private capital to fund grants to address development priorities in India. What are your views on this Foundation? If confirmed, what will be your first actions regarding the Foundation?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the Gandhi-King Scholarly Exchange Initiative Act, which calls for professional exchanges and the establishment of the U.S.-India Gandhi-King Development Foundation in coordination with the Government of India. The Foundation presents a unique partnership opportunity for the United States to work with the Government of India in leveraging India's domestic public and private resources to combat its most pressing development challenges. I look forward to advancing this partnership and honoring the legacies of both Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr and Mahatma Gandhi. If confirmed, I will support the establishment of the Foundation which will include coordinating with the relevant Government of India ministries and stakeholders and creating a roadmap for next steps in establishing the Foundation.

Labor Rights in Bangladesh

Question. In March 2020, I released a SFRC report highlighting the growing threats to labor rights and trade unions in Bangladesh. The U.S. must respond to this threat by increasing our support for unions, not abandoning them. Under the previous Administration, USAID moved away from using its Bangladesh labor rights appropriation to support the development of unions, even though unions have been clear that they want, and can use, such support.

- If confirmed, will you commit to directly and robustly supporting the development of trade unions in Bangladesh, including with the funding from the annual appropriation for labor rights in Bangladesh?

Answer. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. Labor rights are actively threatened and diminished in Bangladesh, as was made clear in your 2020 Report commemorating the seventh anniversary of the Tazreen Fashions and Rana Plaza tragedies. I understand that USAID has a robust labor program in Bangladesh, and if confirmed, I commit to continuing this important work. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to help ensure the findings of your report are central not just to USAID's labor programming in Bangladesh, but also the Agency's entire global labor program.

Tigray

Question. The ongoing conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region has triggered a large-scale displacement crisis, regional instability, and a humanitarian emergency with constrained outside access.

- Under what conditions should the U.S. restore full foreign assistance funding to Ethiopia? Should the U.S. increase assistance for critical development programs that address the drivers of the conflict and strengthen political reforms?

Answer. The loss of life and mass displacement resulting from the conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region is profoundly disturbing. The violence against civilians must end, and unimpeded humanitarian access to the region must be granted without further delay. Ultimately, what is required is a constructive political dialogue between the parties and accountability for the atrocities committed by all sides. Ethiopia's successful transition to a more democratic, inclusive, and prosperous society is critical to U.S. interests. I understand that the Administration is reviewing our diplomatic, security, and other assistance to the region. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging in this conversation and commit to keeping you informed.

Question. Do you believe that, under current circumstances, Ethiopia can hold credible elections in June? What steps will you take, if confirmed, to address closing political and media space, and intercommunal violence in Ethiopia?

Answer. For the June elections to constitute a step forward in Ethiopia's political development, they will need to be seen as credible by a majority of Ethiopians, result in more inclusive political representation, and lay the foundation for broader political dialogue across Ethiopia. If confirmed, I look forward to working with inter-agency partners to determine how USAID can best strengthen democratic processes in Ethiopia, especially at a time of such grave crisis.

COVID-19

Question. Diseases do not recognize borders, so challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic necessitate a global response that the U.S. must help lead.

- How will USAID ensure its COVID-19 aid response is conflict sensitive and takes a peacebuilding and trauma-informed approach to reduce the risks of further violence and advance effective recovery?

Answer. Around two-thirds of the countries where USAID works are beset by or at risk of violent conflict, and COVID-19 is putting further stress on fragile systems in these nations. Dozens of countries have curtailed free expression, assembly, and media; more than 70 countries postponed elections; and a number have experienced civil unrest. Disinformation is rampant. Loss of jobs and lack of adequate education and basic services create contexts ripe for conflict. I understand that USAID applies principles of conflict-sensitivity throughout all programs, including its COVID-19 response. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID continues to support conflict-sensitive approaches across all USAID programming.

Question. What steps will you take to address secondary impacts on health, education, poverty, and human rights in countries where USAID has programs and activities?

Answer. No matter where in the world we live, we all share the goal of ending this terrible pandemic, restoring normalcy in our daily lives, and beginning to rebuild from the devastation caused by COVID-19. We will not be safe here at home from COVID-19 and its variants unless the rest of the world makes significant progress on getting the pandemic under control. If confirmed, I will prioritize preventing COVID-19 transmission through public health and vaccine interventions; alleviating worsening humanitarian crises and food insecurity; and addressing the long term second order impacts on the global economy, democracy and human rights, education, and livelihoods. USAID will work with partner country governments, civil society organizations, and other partners to address the second order impacts through a conflict-sensitive, rights-based approach to health, education, poverty reduction, and governance.

Question. Will you revise the USAID-State COVID-19 strategy to ensure a peacebuilding and conflict prevention perspective is integrated?

Answer. As directed by President Biden's first National Security Memorandum, USAID is working with interagency counterparts to develop a whole-of-government response plan for combating the global pandemic. That document will provide a framework for State and USAID's forthcoming work on COVID-19 and will prioritize addressing second-order effects of the pandemic. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID's programs incorporate and address the evolving context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including issues related to peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

Question. In what ways can USAID respond to governments using COVID-19 to justify closing civic space, curbing fundamental freedoms, committing human rights abuses and expanding authoritarianism?

Answer. COVID-19 is not just a public health crisis but also a crisis for democratic governance, fundamental freedoms, and civic space. According to Freedom House, the condition of democracy and human rights worsened in 80 countries during the pandemic, with a range of countries using the crisis to tighten their grip on power, crackdown on political targets, and restrict the rights of vulnerable populations. The Administration will restore democracy and human rights to the center of U.S. foreign policy, strengthening the protection of human rights worldwide and re-establishing government-wide attention to atrocity prevention and the protection of civilians in war. USAID will ensure that programming to address COVID-19 is implemented in a conflict-sensitive, rights-based approach. If confirmed, my seat at the NSC will allow me to ensure that these issues are engaged at the highest levels of decision-making within the USG.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure adequate environmental and social safeguards are in place for all of USAID's programming?

- How will you support USAID's development of this mechanism to ensure that it effectively addresses impacts that could undermine U.S. foreign policy objectives?

Answer. USAID has guiding regulations for examining the environmental impact of all projects, as well as a commitment to protect and advance vulnerable populations; to seek to do no harm; and to promote human rights. I understand USAID is designing an Agency-wide accountability mechanism that will further enable beneficiaries and the project affected community to express environmental, social and economic concerns and grievances. If confirmed, I commit that the project design and implementation for all USAID programs, projects, and activities will in-

clude strong safeguarding for beneficiaries, especially the project affected community, including Indigenous Peoples and vulnerable populations.

USAID Resources

Question. Many USAID officials have argued they need greater flexibility in managing appropriated funds in order to adjust to rapidly changing global circumstances and achieve the greatest impact, while respecting Congressional priorities and maintaining high levels of accountability.

- How would you approach the question of increasing flexibility for USAID?
- Are there resource management tools you need immediately as you address the challenges presented by the pandemic, and adjustments needed in the near term as we move to post-Covid-19 requirements?

Answer. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss ways to improve USAID's ability to align its resources with its strategic objectives and priorities, including increasing our ability to adapt and pivot to emergent needs and opportunities as they arise, while of course making sure to provide Congress with complete and useful information on the use of appropriated resources in a timely manner.

Accountability

Question. Accountability of resources and programs through transparency, monitoring, evaluation, and learning is an important aid reform pillar that strengthens the ultimate impact of programs, and ensures sustainability of investments.

- Is it your intention to prioritize accountability across the agency, especially the role of monitoring, evaluation, and learning to improve programs and strengthen their impact?

Answer. Yes, it is my intention to prioritize accountability across the Agency, and especially the role of monitoring, evaluation, and learning. It is important for USAID to act in the interest of the American people. Measuring and analyzing results and learning and adapting when programs fall short are essential aspects of day-to-day management of USAID's operations. USAID is recognized as a leader among federal agencies in using evidence from monitoring and evaluation for accountability and for learning. Of course, there is always room for improvement and innovation. If confirmed, I look forward to pushing USAID even further on finding innovative ways to quickly gather information to adapt programs and achieve results.

Question. What is your vision for ensuring important aid effectiveness tools will receive priority under your leadership?

Answer. The key principles of development cooperation effectiveness include transparency, accountability, a focus on results, and inclusive partnerships. If confirmed, I will look for opportunities to ensure that USAID deepens its commitments to these principles in all aspects of its programs. I will also ensure that USAID remains a leader in the international aid community in championing these principles and promoting learning and exchange among donor and partner countries. For example, if confirmed, I will ensure that USAID will continue to support international accountability through USAID's leadership on remote monitoring and real-time evaluations, among other newer mechanisms. These innovative approaches have allowed USAID to maintain oversight of programs following the onset of the pandemic despite constraints placed on travel.

American Recovery Plan Funding

Question. The American Recovery Plan provides \$41 million for COVID-related operational expenses at USAID; \$905 million for global health response activities; and an estimated \$900 million for international economic stabilization efforts. The United States has both a national security and economic interest in mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic's potentially crippling and destabilizing effects on regional and local foreign economies.

- With regards to the economic stabilization allocation: where do you see the economic risks created by the pandemic as being most acute?

Answer. The pandemic has had devastating impacts on households in the U.S. and around the world, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, especially in humanitarian settings. The reverberating socioeconomic impacts of this global crisis are, and will continue to be, widespread and have already led to major backsliding in development and governance. If confirmed, I will ensure USAID remains committed to addressing urgent humanitarian needs, providing immediate

economic relief by forging sustainable pathways out of poverty, and working with partner-country governments, civil society, and other actors to stabilize economies.

Question. Will you commit to fulsome engagement with this committee on the Agency's use of these funds?

Answer. Yes, I commit to fulsome engagement with this committee on the Agency's use of the American Rescue Plan funds.

Question. The GAO recently published a report finding that the previous administration gave USAID plenty of marching orders, but consistently neglected to involve USAID in strategy development and decision-making around USAID's CARES Act allocation.

- Will you commit to asserting USAID's appropriate role in COVID decision-making processes, and in budgeting the Agency's American Recovery Plan funds?

Answer. Yes, I commit to asserting USAID's appropriate role in COVID decision-making processes, and in budgeting the Agency's American Recovery Plan funds.

USAID Vaccine Allotment

Question. It was widely reported that the previous administration failed to acquire an allotment of the COVID vaccine for USAID employees from Health and Human Services.

- Will you commit to prioritizing the health and safety of USAID personnel, and use the Recovery Plan's operational resources to ensure a healthy and safe work environment at USAID?

Answer. The safety of USAID's workforce is my highest priority. I commit to prioritizing the health and safety of USAID personnel and to using the American Rescue Plan's (ARP) operational resources to secure a healthy and safe work environment at USAID. The Agency has recently partnered with the Department of State to vaccinate its overseas and domestic personnel with critical in-person continuity of mission functions. The Department of State is covering USAID personnel overseas while, domestically, USAID received a direct vaccine allocation from HHS. The Agency will continue to make every effort to keep USAID staff safe in its domestic facilities. The Agency will use ARP funds to augment its staff to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to improve the Agency's operational readiness.

USAID's Global Labor Program

Question. I need your commitment to restore and expand USAID's Global Labor Program. It is the agency's only multi-country program to empower marginalized workers to advocate for their rights and livelihood. Workers around the world are struggling amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, with women workers suffering disproportionately.

- Do you believe USAID currently has the staff capacity and expertise to develop the worker rights programs and approaches that marginalized workers so desperately need right now?

Answer. Empowering workers is relevant both globally and in the United States, and I appreciate your longstanding leadership on this critical issue. Work is central to people's daily lives, and labor issues and the ways in which workers express their rights affect many of USAID's development objectives. We already know, for example, that women are over-represented in a number of the industries (like retail and hospitality) most impacted by the pandemic around the world. USAID's Global Labor Program (GLP) was created to increase the capacity of worker organizations, and I look forward to working with our partners to ensure our strategy adequately promotes labor rights and access to justice in a fair and equitable manner. If confirmed, I will ensure that the high capacity and expertise of USAID staff to address these issues remains an Agency priority.

Climate

Question. President Biden is hosting a Climate Leaders' Summit on April 22, 2021. How will USAID participate in this summit? Do you anticipate building global support and financing for climate adaptation at the Summit?

Answer. I understand that USAID is actively participating in preparations for the Summit, and that the Agency welcomes the opportunity provided by the event to highlight their work with developing countries on climate change mitigation, adaptation, and finance. A key theme of the Summit will be mobilizing public and private sector finance to drive the net-zero transition and to help vulnerable countries cope with climate impacts. USAID has extensive experience improving policies, strengthening institutions, and mobilizing finance for climate adaptation and miti-

gation that also advances countries' development priorities. If confirmed, I will continue to elevate these issues within the interagency and with our developing country partners, and look forward to engaging in the Summit.

Question. Climate adaptation is currently vastly underfunded, and USAID's work in this area needs improvement in terms of execution, transparency and reporting.

- What are your initial ideas for how USAID can improve its support for the needs of those communities hardest hit by climate change to adapt in place?

Answer. I agree with your concern that adaptation programs are vastly underfunded. USAID works with vulnerable countries to implement their adaptation priorities and is committed to further mainstreaming climate considerations into its work to intensify efforts to increase climate security and resilience. USAID helps partners access and use climate and weather data and tools, and develop strategies to build resilience to climate risks, whether from sudden events such as floods and storms or from slower-moving events such as droughts and sea-level rise. If confirmed, I will be committed to ensuring that our efforts on climate are informed by on-the-ground knowledge and in consultation with stakeholders.

Question. Many developing countries have made greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments to the Paris Agreement that are contingent upon support and assistance from multilateral finance institutions and/or bilateral assistance from developing countries.

- Is it important for U.S. support and assistance to developing countries to be consistent with host country climate change mitigation commitments?

Answer. Yes, and with the U.S. having rejoined the Paris Agreement, USAID will play an important role in working with developing countries to set and achieve more ambitious targets under their Nationally Determined Contributions to the Agreement. Developing countries produce about two-thirds of annual global greenhouse gas emissions and are integral partners in limiting climate change. USAID will provide assistance to partner countries to achieve their climate mitigation commitments and low-emissions economic development goals through concrete actions like transitioning to renewable energy and improving conservation and management of carbon-rich forests and landscapes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. SAMANTHA POWER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, democratic gains are under threat as long-serving rulers manipulate constitutional and electoral processes to remain in power while stifling dissent and limiting opposition parties and candidates' activities. In 2020 alone, several African ruling parties and incumbent leaders deployed authoritarian tactics that manipulated democratic processes and constitutional frameworks, including in Cameroon, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, across multiple administrations, including the Obama administration in which you previously served, U.S. democracy and governance programs are chronically underfunded and notoriously slow to respond to emerging opportunities.

- If confirmed, how will you prioritize reinforcing democratic institutions and norms in Africa through USAID programs while balancing competing priorities in the areas of economic growth, stabilization, global health, humanitarian assistance, and human rights?

Answer. In sub-Saharan Africa, Freedom House reports that 21 nations experienced democratic declines and only seven showed positive trends in 2020—the largest gap in 15 years. If confirmed, I will seek to increase, in scale and effectiveness, USAID's investments in democracy and governance throughout the region, including through support for anti-corruption efforts and justice reforms. In many backsliding countries, concerns about corruption and accountability are central to citizens' concerns about government performance. If confirmed, I will also work to make sure that USAID is doing much more to integrate efforts to address corruption and improve democratic accountability into economic growth, stabilization, global health, humanitarian assistance, and human rights programming. By embedding strong participation, inclusion, transparency, accountability, and oversight measures in health, education, and economic programming, USAID can better safeguard its investments in sustained and resilient recovery efforts from the pandemic, and lay a foundation for shoring up democratic institutions in the long term. This is an immensely challenging area, especially given China's growing support for various gov-

ernments' undemocratic tactics and its provision of rights-infringing technologies in many of these countries. Given the critical importance of reversing democratic backsliding and supporting democratic reformers, I look forward to consulting closely on the path ahead.

Question. In the last two years, Sudan and Ethiopia have embarked upon unexpected democratic transitions. While the United States was, and continues to be, eager to support these transitions, rapidly mobilizing the necessary resources (enabling policies, funding, and staff) has been a challenge. If confirmed, how would you prepare USAID to respond to rapid democratic changes and seize unexpected opportunities?

Answer. USAID's democracy, human rights, and governance efforts are intended to promote democracy and civil society participation as well as prevent and respond to closing democratic spaces. These efforts include both rapid response mechanisms through our Office of Transition Initiatives programs as well as long-term investments designed to demonstrate solidarity with pro-democratic forces, protect nascent advances, and prevent backsliding. USAID can play an important role during unexpected opportunities by helping civil society adapt to changing circumstances and providing assistance to strengthen existing checks and balances. To further support transitions and rapidly mobilize in the context of unexpected opportunities or crises, USAID seeks to promote flexibility within activity design, award language, and implementation. This can ensure that programming, implementers, and local actors are able to best respond to windows of opportunity and/or democratic backsliding. As the current crisis in Ethiopia demonstrates, democratic progress and overall stability are fragile, and if confirmed I will be focused on ensuring that USAID programming is appropriate for, and reflective of, actual circumstances on the ground. As a long-time Sudan watcher, I am grateful to Congress for stepping up in support of Sudan's nascent democratic transition and eager to assess current programming and what more might be done to help deepen the reform process.

Question. There are long-standing concerns about the fungibility of U.S. foreign assistance for African countries ruled by authoritarian regimes (e.g., Uganda, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, etc.), particularly for health and food security programs, which account for the overwhelming majority of U.S. assistance on the continent. While this aid advances U.S. humanitarian interests, it can also offset essential budget lines, displace national investment, and enable authoritarian regimes to prioritize military spending, pilfer state resources, and support corrupt patronage networks.

- Do you think it is time for the United States to undertake a comprehensive re-evaluation of the policies, forms, and methods of delivering U.S. foreign assistance in Africa?

Answer. The tendencies that you describe are certainly ones I have observed in Africa and other regions. USAID works in very complex environments and I gather that the Agency's investments in Africa, particularly in health and food security, are structured to be sensitive to local contexts, in order to save lives and improve livelihoods for those most in need. When providing assistance in the region, USAID works with both U.N. organizations and international and local non-governmental organizations to ensure that support and services go to those most in need. USAID also utilizes a variety of tools to monitor the delivery of assistance to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. If confirmed, I look forward to delving into these issues more deeply and consulting with you further to ensure that USAID's assistance does not inadvertently benefit authoritarian governments.

Question. How will USAID effectively deliver aid such that it reaches the intended beneficiaries without enabling the preservation of repressive regimes?

Answer. This is a very important issue. USAID adheres to strict guidelines for monitoring assistance provided in restrictive environments and, depending on the extent of the restrictions, has developed remote methods for program monitoring, including contracting with third party monitors who are able to access regions where USAID staff are not able to travel. One of the cornerstones of U.S. soft power is our willingness to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance wherever it is most needed. In response to famine or natural disasters in authoritarian countries, USAID works with non-governmental partners to ensure that aid reaches those most in need without providing material support to unfriendly or authoritarian regimes. When it comes to longer-term development programs in those countries, USAID works with civil society and other non-governmental organizations to support development and democracy and governance programs. If confirmed, I look for-

ward to consulting with you further to ensure that USAID's assistance does not enable the preservation of repressive regimes.

Question. Africa is experiencing a massive demographic shift. Over the next two decades, demographers project that Africa will account for nearly half of global population growth and, by mid-century, will be home to a quarter of the world's population. Sixty percent of Africa's population is currently under 25, with an overall median age of 20, and expected to continue to get younger. USAID will remain at the forefront of United States efforts to work with young Africans.

- Programs like the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and the initiative's Mandela Washington Fellowship are important, but what can USAID do to expand its reach, more effectively engage Africa's massive youth population, and build long-term partnerships with the next generation of decision-makers, business partners, and allies?

Answer. This emphasis on youth is key. Continent-wide initiatives such as the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), Prosper Africa, Power Africa, as well as mission-based programs, contribute to USAID's global reputation as a leader in youth programming. For example, through YALI, USAID has equipped more than 20,000 young leaders from 49 sub-Saharan African countries with the skills to catalyze economic, political and social change in their home countries based on American values of transparency, civic engagement, and accountability. I gather that USAID missions also integrate youth across all key sectors and support strategic partnerships with other donors and private sector partners, a practice I will ensure continues if confirmed. If confirmed, I look forward to further consultations with you on ways to expand USAID's engagement with young people on the continent, helping support the next generation of political leaders, engaged citizens, and business owners.

Question. Launched by the Trump administration, Prosper Africa is a U.S. Government initiative supported by 17 agencies and departments, including USAID, to increase two-way trade and investment between the United States and Africa. In 2019, Africa accounted for just 1.4 percent of U.S. global trade and received 0.7 percent of U.S. foreign direct investment. Such shares have declined relative to their historical highs a decade or so ago. One area of Prosper Africa that requires greater emphasis, and where USAID can play a critical role, is in improving the enabling environment for economic growth. Strengthening the rule of law, combating corruption, and promoting inclusive economic growth and human rights under a rules-based system would create better conditions for U.S. investment while also counterbalancing efforts by the Chinese Communist Party to undermine free-market competition in African markets to their advantage.

- How can the U.S. Government, and USAID in particular, most effectively incentivize reforms that will improve the enabling environment for investment and trade in Africa? Does the existing Prosper Africa provide an effective framework, or does it need to be modified? If so, how?

Answer. Improving the enabling environment for private sector investment is essential, and I agree with you that USAID staff and programs can play an important role in engaging local actors to take steps to improve the regulatory and investment climate. USAID has developed innovative new programs in support of Prosper Africa, including a new continent-wide program to be launched this year to boost trade, increase investment, and support business-friendly policy reforms. If confirmed, I look forward to working with other Departments and Agencies to advance this important goal, including through any necessary adjustments to Prosper Africa. I will support efforts that build the capacity of African businesses and catalyze U.S. private sector investment in Africa's growth, and engaging young entrepreneurs, especially women, as partners. Programs that strengthen the rule of law, protect individual rights, and tackle corruption are vital for creating the conditions for economic growth and for attracting U.S. investment and trade in Africa.

Question. How should U.S.-African trade and investment initiatives factor into the U.S. global strategy to counter China, particularly in Africa?

Answer. Competition with China is one of the defining challenges of the 21st century for the United States, and engaging with our African partners to pursue shared strategic interests in advancing security, protecting global health, fighting climate change, strengthening democracy, and spurring equitable economic growth must be a cornerstone of our global strategy to counter China. In this regard, U.S.-African trade and investment initiatives have a critical role to play in meeting this challenge head-on. In Africa, the United States is providing a meaningful alternative to China's state-led approach by advancing a model of sustainable economic growth

based on transparency, responsible lending practices, strong environmental standards, and investment in relationships with local communities. Through Prosper Africa, the United States aims to mobilize billions of dollars of U.S. private sector capital and to ensure that American companies can compete on an even playing field by sharing timely information on new opportunities, providing comprehensive packages of financing and other assistance, and supporting trade and investment policies that promote transparency and competition. We must also strengthen American soft power by effectively communicating this support, engaging with youth, and promoting entrepreneurship and American business practices. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting further with you and to working with other Departments and Agencies as well as the business community to help ensure that the U.S. is pursuing trade and investment initiatives strategically and from a position of strength.

Belarus

Question. Since the August 9, 2020, presidential election, Belarusians have peacefully protested in unprecedented numbers to contest the official results, which fraudulently awarded Alexander Lukashenka another term. The Government has responded to these peaceful protests with violence, initiating a campaign of disappearances, arrests, torture, and violence against the protestors and journalists.

- Since the protests began, the United States, through USAID and the State Department, has increased its support for civil society in Belarus. Do you believe that the U.S. response to events in Belarus has been adequate? What more could, or should, the United States and its European allies do to assist those Belarusians working for democracy, free media, and a free society?

Answer. I have used my platform as a private citizen to be an outspoken supporter of the courageous Belarusians who have been peacefully protesting for over seven months. If confirmed, I will build on the U.S. Government's support for their democratic aspirations. President Biden strongly condemned the Lukashenka regime for its violent repression of the protesters and called for a peaceful transfer of power, the release of all political prisoners, and new elections. As the administration consults with allies and partners to determine appropriate next steps to support the Belarusian people and their right to choose their own leaders via free and fair elections, if confirmed, I look forward to working with my interagency counterparts—guided by the Belarus Democracy Act of 2020—in developing a whole of U.S. Government approach to end this egregious assault on Belarusian citizens and initiate a constructive dialogue with those calling for change. As U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., I made it a priority to call attention to the work of activists, dissidents, and reformers around the world, and to mobilize multilateral pressure on their behalf. In addition to demonstrating solidarity and raising international awareness, support from government officials can sometimes provide those on the front-lines in places like Belarus with a greater degree of protection from potential retribution. As such, if confirmed, I will continue to find ways to lift up the voices of those Belarusians working for democracy while encouraging my counterparts around the world to do the same.

Georgia

Question. Since its independence, Georgia has made generally good progress in instilling democracy and implementing market-based economic reforms, and has been a strong U.S. partner with ambitions to join the EU and NATO. USAID has been a major funder of reform and development programs in Georgia. However, over the past few years, the country has suffered democratic backsliding and oligarchic capture of the judiciary, media, and the ruling political party.

- Do you believe that the political and governance situation in Georgia has reached the point at which we should reevaluate our relationship with the country, including by conditioning certain aid to Georgia? What levers can the United States, through USAID, use to push Georgians, including and especially the ruling party Georgian Dream, to reform Georgia's judiciary and complete its electoral reforms?

Answer. I agree that for Georgia to unlock further progress in its economic and democratic development, the people of Georgia must have confidence that their elected leaders are committed to a citizen-centered democracy based on the rule of law. USAID's work with Georgia's political parties, local nonpartisan monitoring groups, and the Central Electoral Commission support this goal. USAID's current programs are also actively working to strengthen Georgia's justice system and electoral process. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to assess the shape and scope of these programs in light of the democratic downturn, so as to en-

sure that they are targeted appropriately, considering as well whether resources should be channeled in different ways.

Ukraine

Question. Ukraine continues to fight two wars: first with the Kremlin and its various attempts to undermine Ukraine's freedom and independence; and second with its own demons, particularly the entrenched corruption that has so often undermined Ukraine's democratic transition and Euro-Atlantic ambitions.

- Should the United States continue to condition certain types of assistance on continued economic and anti-corruption reforms? Should existing conditions for aid be expanded? What further incentives does the United States, along with our European partners, have to encourage Ukraine to complete its land reform, decentralization, privatization of State-owned-enterprises, and creation of an independent and responsive judiciary?

Answer. When I travelled to Ukraine in 2015 as U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., I spoke out against the very issue you identify: deep, systemic corruption that permeated virtually every facet of Ukrainian life. I continue to share your concerns about the daunting obstacle that corruption poses for the Ukrainian people. Troubling recent rulings by Ukraine's own Constitutional Court that weaken important anti-corruption institutions, such as the National Anti-Corruption Bureau and the High Anti Corruption Court, demonstrate clearly how much work remains to be done. At the same time, some inroads have been made. When the protests against President Yanukovich began in November 2013, Ukraine ranked 144th out of 175 countries on Transparency International's corruption index. Today, it ranks 117. While there is obviously significant additional work yet to be done, these small but important advances show how critical USAID and USG assistance is to anti-corruption efforts, from work aimed at strengthening oversight and accountability mechanisms to partnerships with civil society organizations. The Biden administration has been clear about its intent to support Ukraine's self-chosen European path, including by pushing for more progress on fighting corruption and implementing reforms that will strengthen Ukraine's institutions. USAID implements numerous anti-corruption programs in Ukraine that directly address land reform, judicial reform, decentralization, and privatization. Combating corruption is a central tenet and cross-cutting pillar of USAID's development strategy in Ukraine, and if confirmed, I will seek to ensure that measurable progress continues to be achieved on this pressing concern.

Central Asia

Question. The five post-Soviet Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, or C5, have often been an afterthought in U.S. foreign policy. However, the region sits between Russia and China and has often proven eager for U.S. involvement and activity in those countries. USAID has recently expanded its presence in the region in response.

- Over the past few years, the coordination between the United States and EU on development programs in Central Asia has markedly strengthened and both partners have published Central Asia engagement strategies. Will you commit to continuing to coordinate USAID's Central Asia engagement with the EU and to ensuring that Central Asia remains a priority for engagement by USAID?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure that Central Asia remains a priority for USAID. The Biden administration fully supports the C5+1 initiative and seeks to help this region be more independent and resilient. We will continue our close coordination with the EU on development programs. A crucial strategic interest for the United States is the stability of the region, which borders China, Russia and Afghanistan and is increasingly marked by conflict and authoritarianism. USAID has cultivated relationships in Central Asia, establishing two new Missions in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in June 2020. If confirmed, I will build upon this momentum in collaboration with Congress and the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships, which has established technical expert working groups focused on coordinating trade, energy, water and environmental efforts in Central Asia.

Question. The Indo-Pacific is a critical region for U.S. security and economic growth. It represents nearly half of the global population and is home to some of the most dynamic economies in the world, but is also home to security challenges that threaten to undermine U.S. national security interests, regional peace, and global stability. The Trump administration articulated a strategy to advance a "free and open Indo-Pacific," and has expanded partnerships with regional countries and

implemented multiple initiatives in the region to support this goal. USAID played a significant role in this strategy.

- Do you agree with the core tenants of a vision for the “free and open Indo-Pacific” strategy advanced over the last several years? If so, what should USAID’s role be in this strategy? If not, why not?

Answer. Yes, I agree. The Biden administration has made it clear that a Free and Open Indo-Pacific will be a foreign policy and national security priority, consistent with the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018. If confirmed, I will ensure USAID continues to fulfill its important role supporting democracy, human rights, inclusive economic growth, open and inclusive digital ecosystems, and the global health security agenda in the Indo-Pacific. Additionally, I believe that USAID should continue its vital leadership in efforts to support countries’ COVID-19 responses and their natural resource management.

Question. If confirmed, what are the key principles, initiatives, and other elements of the Trump administration’s Indo-Pacific strategy do you believe should be retained and continued? How would you build on these initiatives? What other policies, initiatives, and priorities would you pursue to advance U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific region? What specific policy and funding priorities would USAID require to advance a successful Indo-Pacific strategy?

Answer. The Biden administration will continue to advance the principles of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize strengthening democratic systems, fostering economic growth, and improving the management of natural resources as part of USAID’s approach to the Indo-Pacific region. I look forward to building upon USAID’s successful investments in democratic governance, transparency and anti-corruption measures, the digital economy, infrastructure, and energy across the Indo-Pacific. At the same time, USAID will need to review and adapt these initiatives to address the significant impacts of COVID-19 on the region, take advantage of new opportunities to increase climate security and resilience, and build upon renewed multilateral partnerships. I appreciate the continued support and advice of Congress on how to best advance U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific region, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to identify policy and funding priorities.

Question. Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands are both critically important regions to the United States.

- If confirmed, what will be your top priorities with respect to USAID’s work in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue deepening USAID’s collaboration with like-minded partners in this critical region. I also support USAID’s increased activities and staff presence in the Pacific Islands region to support our allies and counter Chinese influence.

We are committed to working with our Pacific Islands partners to help them address the effects of climate change, which poses an existential threat, and to mitigate the impacts of frequent natural disasters.

If confirmed, I am committed to advancing shared objectives toward strengthening democratic systems, fostering economic growth, and improving the management of natural resources throughout the region.

Question. In the area of human capital development, the Trump administration emphasized preserving and expanding assistance programs that provide concrete technical assistance and capacity-building for emerging and established leaders in partner governments, the private sector, and civil society. How would you work to bolster human capital development programs in the Indo-Pacific through USAID, if confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to support USAID’s investments in technical assistance and capacity-building to bolster emerging leaders from partner governments, the private sector and civil society in the Indo-Pacific region. USAID will continue to prioritize investments to increase workforce participation opportunities (with a focus on women and girls), develop skills for a digital economy among youth, and improve education outcomes by modernizing curricula in partnership with host country governments, educational institutions, and the private sector. I will also direct USAID to work toward rebuilding human capacity in critical government institutions and health systems badly strained by their efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

China

Question. My view is that China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative (OBOR) is a means by which to increase the economic influence of state-owned Chinese firms in global markets, engender undue PRC political leverage with governments around the world, create a China-centric technology regime, secure dependence on supply chains centered on Chinese companies, export corrupt business practices, and provide greater access to strategic nodes for the People's Liberation Army.

- Do you agree that these are the goals of OBOR? If confirmed, what actions would you take and what partnerships would you seek to execute concrete USAID projects to compete with or reduce the influence of OBOR?

Answer. China's approach to "development" through One Belt, One Road (OBOR) raises deep concerns for me and many people in USAID's partner countries. Projects connected to OBOR have come under significant scrutiny on issues such as corruption; unsustainable debt; environmental degradation; construction contracts and jobs being awarded to Chinese firms over local enterprises; lack of transparency and local consultations; and even worries about the potential erosion of sovereignty due to the unfavorable terms attached to certain projects. I share your conviction that USAID needs a far-reaching strategy that addresses the challenges of OBOR, and I believe that frustrations around the world with China's development practices provide an opportunity for the U.S.

The administration's approach is to provide an alternative vision to Beijing's—a vision that promotes democratic governance, transparency, and local ownership in our global development work. If confirmed, I will work aggressively to draw on America's comparative advantages in distinguishing the U.S. approach from the PRC's, by engaging directly with our partner countries and ensuring that good governance, sustainability, and social and economic safeguards are built into projects we support. USAID can strengthen local capacity to ensure that development investments are both beneficial and sustainable. If confirmed, I will work with allies and partners, including at the DFC and in the private sector, to better leverage our collective resources and influence, and I will be an advocate for the highest human rights, governance, environmental, social, and labor standards in order to promote investments that are sustainable for the long term.

Question. In a speech you gave on China last year at Harvard, you highlighted that the Chinese Government and Chinese companies are supplying other countries with digital technologies, such as facial recognition and artificial intelligence, and those countries are in many cases using those technologies for repressive purposes. China is also supplying next generation telecommunications equipment and other technologies through its Digital Silk Road.

- In your view, what is the role of USAID in helping developing countries harness emerging technologies to advance economic prosperity and freedom?

Answer. Emerging technologies can play a significant role in advancing economic prosperity and freedom, and USAID has an important role to play in this area. I understand that USAID launched its Digital Strategy in 2020 to ensure the Agency effectively integrates digital technologies across all its work and strengthens the openness, inclusiveness, and security of country-level digital ecosystems in partner countries. The Agency is supporting the digital security of civil society and media organizations, including cyber risk assessments and providing AI tools to track disinformation flows. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to further strengthen USAID's work in this area.

Question. What tools does USAID possess in this regard, and how would you prioritize putting them to good use, if confirmed?

Answer. I understand that the Agency is supporting e-commerce and the opportunities that digital platforms offer traditional businesses in developing countries to access new markets and to better integrate into the global trading system. Additionally, it is working with CBP to apply emerging technologies such as non-invasive inspection systems to assure the safety, security and traceability of goods moving across borders. If confirmed, I will work with the interagency to promote the adoption of policies and technologies in our partner countries to advance U.S. national security objectives while creating innovation and investment opportunities for American businesses.

Question. Last year, I published a report on how the United States and Europe can cooperate on shared challenges related to China, which included chapters encouraging U.S.-Europe cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and Africa.

- What areas relevant to USAID's mission are ripe for greater U.S.-Europe cooperation in these two regions? What are some factors that could enable such

cooperation, and what are the limiting factors? What is your perspective on the analysis and recommendations in the report I published?

Answer. I agree that U.S.-EU cooperation is critical to combatting China's influence in the Indo-Pacific and Africa and appreciated your report's analysis and recommendations to focus on areas such as democracy promotion, private sector growth, and the environment. USAID engages frequently with EU officials to seek to align policy and to increase burden sharing on key issues such as the COVID-19 global response, democracy and governance, economic growth, energy, food security and resilience, global health, and humanitarian assistance. The EU's new seven-year budget articulates commitments to climate change, human development, gender and digital development. These areas, along with immediate and second-order impacts of the pandemic, are opportunities for greater cooperation. In Brussels, Secretary Blinken and EU leaders recently discussed challenges that China presents to the rules-based order and agreed to resume U.S.-EU dialogue to coordinate approaches.

Burma

Question. Please describe your planned approach to USAID engagement in Burma, in light of the military coup and the Biden administration's executive order that will retain support for humanitarian assistance and civil society.

- What areas of engagement and assistance will you prioritize, if confirmed?

Answer. I condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the military coup in Burma and the junta's violent actions against peaceful demonstrators. I support USAID's immediate action following the coup to redirect \$42.4 million away from work that would have benefited the Government of Burma and toward strengthening civil society and other non-governmental actors.

If confirmed, I will work with the administration and Congress to continue to put pressure on the military regime, call out human rights abuses and ensure that USAID programs do not benefit the military regime and are focused on improving health outcomes and combating COVID-19, strengthening the ability of civil society to guard democratic space, fostering food security, supporting independent media, and promoting peace and reconciliation in Burma's conflict-affected regions. I would also prioritize continuing to provide critical humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya and other vulnerable populations including in Chin, Kachin, Rakhine, and Shan states.

Supporting Middle East and North Africa Policy

Question. When looking broadly across the Middle East and North Africa, one is struck with the enormity of the humanitarian need.

- However, given the relative size of budgets, how do you recommend the United States best align USAID programs with larger diplomatic objectives that further U.S. national interests?

Answer. I agree with your assessment regarding the importance of aligning USAID's humanitarian and development work with diplomatic objectives, and ensuring that all advance U.S. national interests. USAID and State align department, regional, and country-specific strategies and in MENA, in particular, there is close collaboration to ensure mutually-reinforcing efforts. USAID's primary role in particularly volatile countries in the region is to meet the basic needs of suffering populations and support stabilization efforts that are necessary preconditions for enduring diplomatic solutions. If confirmed, I commit to working further with the Congress and closely with Secretary Blinken to ensure that USAID programs are as closely aligned as possible with our national interests across the region.

Question. Looking across the region, what do you see as the most significant drivers of instability that run counter to U.S. interests and are most deserving of USAID's limited resources?

Answer. Destabilizing factors—including Iranian aggression, malign Russian influence, terrorist networks, and authoritarian resurgence and repressive governments that don't provide outlets for dissent and pervasive corruption—run counter to U.S. interests in the region. Nations in the Middle East and North Africa are also struggling to address the impacts of the COVID pandemic. Fragile economies, medical facilities, schools and essential services that were already struggling to meet the needs of their local populations as well as people displaced by active conflicts in Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Iraq, have been further strained by the pandemic. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that USAID's resources are addressing life-saving and stabilization needs and addressing the root causes of conflicts, such as polarization,

state fragility, corruption, social and economic exclusion, gender inequality, and anemic economic growth.

Iran

Question. In 2008, you advocated for a new Iran policy based on “broadening cultural contacts with the Iranian people, bypassing the regime through Voice of America and the Internet.”

- What role should USAID play in efforts to foster greater U.S. engagement with the Iranian people? What form do you envision this would take?

Answer. The Iranian Government denies Iranians their human rights, including through severe restrictions on the rights to peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of expression. Iranian authorities have responded to a series of popular and widespread demonstrations with brutal repression, the arrests of thousands of protesters, and the use of lethal force. According to Amnesty International, over 300 people were killed during the most recent spate of major protests in late 2019.

If confirmed, I will work within the administration to draw attention to the Iranian regime’s human rights abuses and express support for the people of Iran. I look forward to engaging with Congress to further consider this issue.

Question. Can you commit to limiting any USAID program to Iran to the development and humanitarian assistance space?

Answer. Yes.

Iraq

Question. In the past, you’ve suggested the United States should seek to mitigate, rather than eliminate, Iranian influence in Iraq. In 2008, you wrote “no aspect of the Iraq quagmire can be resolved without Iranian involvement.”

- Do you still believe this to be the case? If so, how do you plan to balance concerns about Iranian’s malign influence, including its support for militia groups, with U.S. efforts to support a stable, sovereign Iraq? What is your vision for the role U.S. assistance can play in supporting an independent Iraqi governance model?

Answer. Iran’s support for terrorism and human rights abuses threatens U.S. forces and civilians as well as U.S. partners in Iraq and the region, and can hinder our ability to implement foreign assistance programming. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID’s programs in Iraq further the goal of a stable and sovereign Iraq, while also considering the safety and security of our staff balanced with proper oversight of USAID programs. I also will review USAID’s approach to ensure that development and humanitarian assistance needs of all Iraqis continue to be met in a principled and equitable manner as USAID continues to support the recovery and rehabilitation needs of victims of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), including Yazidis.

Lebanon

Question. Despite the August 4, 2020, explosions in Beirut and unrest that followed, Lebanon’s political elites have continued to cling to power. Past policy has been to withhold broader financial assistance absent reforms targeting corruption and transparency.

- How does USAID plan to advance crucial economic reforms in Lebanon, and what conditions would Lebanon need to meet in order to qualify for U.S. financial support?

Answer. I share your concerns—the Lebanese people deserve accountability and a government that prioritizes their safety and prosperity. However, the crisis in Lebanon goes beyond the explosion at the port and other immediate concerns like COVID-19. Lebanon’s crisis is the result of decades of bad governance, economic mismanagement, and corruption. Unfortunately, the Lebanese people have paid the highest price for their leaders’ negligence. USAID’s development programs are intended to provide support directly to the Lebanese people with essential services and humanitarian assistance and to counter potential Hezbollah influence in local communities. USAID can support the Lebanese people through programs that help businesses retain staff and assets to build a foundation for economic recovery; empower municipal governments and civil society to deliver vital services; and keep students in school. These programs lessen the likelihood that Lebanese citizens will suffer the worst effects of the economic crisis.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the committee to ensure USAID's assistance is appropriately targeted to support the people in Lebanon in the face of these challenges.

Question. Can you commit to working to ensure the \$11 billion in CEDRE, IMF, and World Bank funding earmarked for Lebanon remains contingent on key reforms, including reforms to the electricity/natural gas sector, increased transparency, and an audit of the central bank?

Answer. If confirmed, I will expect my team to continue to engage with the Department of State, the World Bank, other IFIs, and our allies in support of meaningful economic and political reforms necessary to halt further deterioration and put the country back on a path toward prosperity. Lebanon's elected officials must respond to the demands of their people and move forward on reform.

Yemen

Question. The previous administration suspended U.S. humanitarian aid to Houthi controlled areas of Yemen in response to restrictions imposed on the delivery of aid.

- What is your position on the suspension? Can you commit to maintaining broad restrictions on aid flows into Houthi controlled areas until all 12 conditions are meaningfully and comprehensively addressed?

Answer. I understand that on March 11, 2021, USAID determined that international non-governmental organization (INGO) partners could resume humanitarian operations in northern Yemen, subject to special award conditions. I further understand that USAID is carefully monitoring this issue, which includes participation in the Yemen Technical Monitoring Group (TMG), consisting of USAID, U.N. agencies, NGOs, and like-minded donors, which meets monthly to review Houthi progress towards the Benchmarks for Monitoring and Decision-Making on Donor Criteria/Conditions for Funding. If confirmed, I will support these efforts and monitor conditions on the ground closely.

Question. How do you plan on working with U.S. funded NGOs to ensure the appropriate carve-outs are in place to ensure certain, life-saving operations can continue despite the broader suspension in U.S. assistance?

Answer. I understand that on March 11, 2021, USAID determined that international non-governmental organization (INGO) partners could resume humanitarian operations in northern Yemen, subject to special award conditions. During the suspension of humanitarian operations, USAID continued to support NGOs implementing some critical life-saving assistance, such as treatment for severe malnutrition. USAID partners remained operational in southern Yemen.

Syria

Question. More than 11 million people are in need of humanitarian aid in Syria. Traditionally, the U.S. and its partners have relied heavily on four humanitarian access points along the Syrian border to transport this life-saving assistance. Of these four cross-border access points, only the Bab al-Hawa crossing remains open, thanks to Russian and Chinese vetoes at the U.N. Security Council.

- How do you plan on continuing to maintain U.S. aid flows regardless of any future action taken at the U.N. Security council related to Bab al-Hawa?

Answer. In 2014, I helped lead the U.N. Security Council in authorizing the delivery of vital assistance across the four humanitarian access points that you reference. I share your anger at Russia and China's vetoes at the U.N. Security Council to reduce the number of available access points, which even in 2014 were not even close to sufficient in terms of meeting the actual needs of Syrian civilians. Overall, since the beginning of the conflict, Russia and China have together vetoed 16 Security Council resolutions related to Syria. In the face of these unconscionable decisions, the U.S. must continue to aid vulnerable Syrians within Syria and across the region. The United States remains the largest humanitarian donor in Syria, providing over \$12.2 billion in humanitarian assistance since the conflict began. Despite enormous challenges, humanitarian organizations are reaching vulnerable Syrians in both government- and opposition-controlled areas, utilizing both cross-border and cross-line access. That said, there are no viable alternatives that would yield the same range and magnitude of capability, or efficiency, as the U.N.'s cross-border assistance to northern Syria. I understand that the Biden administration strongly supports renewal of the Bab al-Hawa border crossing and reinstatement of other crossings into northern Syria in the U.N. Security Council, and if confirmed, I will work tirelessly in support of these efforts.

Question. What are your thoughts on cross-border humanitarian assistance in the absence of a U.N. resolution?

Answer. There is no solution at the scale needed if U.N. cross-border access is not reauthorized. Humanitarian assistance must be able to be as flexible as possible, including both cross-line and cross-border. The humanitarian needs inside Syria will only increase in the face of closing borders and shrinking operating spaces. As referenced earlier, I understand that the Biden administration strongly supports renewal of the Bab al-Hawa border crossing and reinstatement of other crossings into northern Syria in the U.N. Security Council, and if confirmed, I commit to tirelessly supporting these efforts. I also believe that we must partner with a range of countries, NGOs, and influential figures to raise awareness about the catastrophic impact on Syrian civilians that will result from losing the final crossing, highlighting the reputational costs for Russia if it uses its veto to completely cut off civilians in northern Syria from this life-saving assistance. Additionally, if confirmed, I will support the Department of State's efforts to advance a negotiated political settlement so that Syria can move beyond its continual cycle of violence and suffering towards reconciliation and rebuilding.

Central America

Question. In September 2019, then-(Acting) Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Michael Kozak described to this committee how, despite years of programmatic successes, the U.S.-Central America Strategy had failed to muster the political will necessary for aid-recipient countries to effectively combat the endemic corruption, economic protectionism, and rampant criminality that have generated wave after wave of illegal migration from the region.

- If confirmed, what actions would you take to build and maintain political will among the political leadership in the countries of Northern Central America to tackle the push factors of illegal migration?

Answer. The President has articulated a comprehensive \$4 billion, four-year plan that will provide financial and other forms of assistance and incentives to confront corruption, enhance security, and foster prosperity across the region. As Vice President, he also exerted consistent diplomatic pressure in support of anti-corruption efforts in the region. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress on the most effective ways to implement President Biden's plan, and increasing the diplomatic pressure on elected officials not doing enough to confront corruption and lawlessness. I understand that USAID is working in partnership with other U. S. Government Agencies to address the root causes of irregular migration from the Northern Triangle and foster an environment where families can envision their futures in their home countries and communities. USAID focuses on combating crime and violence by reaching at-risk youth, addressing corruption and impunity, disrupting the activities of transnational criminal organizations, and providing vulnerable citizens with greater economic opportunity, social services, and protection. With the appropriate time, sustained commitment, and appropriate partners, I believe USAID programs can help address the push factors that lead Central Americans to reluctantly leave their homes. To give just one example: in neighborhoods where USAID worked in El Salvador to implement security programs, homicides declined by an average of 45 percent from 2015 to 2017. If we want to duplicate, improve upon, and eventually scale initiatives of this kind, strengthening our partnerships with civil society leaders—including advocates for transparent and accountable government and human rights—will be important. Similarly, USAID will work with those private sector leaders committed to transparency and the rule of law.

Question. The 2014 Strategy for Engagement in Central America aimed to deter illegal migration from the region by promoting economic prosperity, security, and good governance in recipient countries. Pursuant to that strategy, Congress has placed multiple conditions on aid to these countries.

- To what extent have legislative conditions contributed to policy changes in the recipient nations? How do you plan to incentivize needed reforms if the recipient countries fail to meet conditions set by Congress, and those failures prompt restrictions on assistance?

Answer. Congress is a key partner in setting America's foreign policy agenda and with regard to the implementation of foreign assistance. I cannot state definitively how the aforementioned conditions specifically impacted decision-making in recipient countries, but based on my own experiences as a diplomat, I agree that it is important that the administration work with Congress to utilize all available congressional tools with flexibility to implement our policies and respond to changing contexts.

Question. President Biden has proposed a four-year \$4 billion strategy for Central America.

- Can you describe the types of investments and specific reforms you would seek from individual governments under this strategy to reduce illegal migration from the region, including the concrete and verifiable benchmarks by which you will measure success? How will this strategy help the governments of Central America become more self-sufficient so that U.S. foreign assistance is no longer needed to achieve these objectives?

Answer. I believe that the ultimate solution for sustainably reducing irregular migration from Central America is to work not only with governments to encourage critical reforms, but also broadly with civil society, the private sector, and international partners to catalyze structural changes that address corruption, security, and prosperity in the region. Creating economic opportunity, rebuilding the social fabric in communities that have been torn apart by violence, establishing inclusive, fair, and just rule of law, and ensuring there is the capacity to deliver citizen-responsive governance and services will position Central America's Northern Triangle countries to address the drivers of irregular migration for the long term.

Nicaragua

Question. Nicaragua is scheduled to hold general elections in November. In October 2020, the Organization of American States adopted a resolution [AG/RES.2962 (L-O/20)] calling for the restoration of democratic institutions and respect for human rights in Nicaragua through free and fair elections. The Ortega regime responded by approving three statutes with the apparent aim of quashing dissent in Nicaragua ahead of the November 2021 elections.

- If confirmed, do you commit to prioritizing actions and programs designed to improve the capacity of the democratic forces in Nicaragua to be a credible challenge to Ortega ahead of the November 2021 general elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring USAID supports viable, democratic processes and institutions in Nicaragua. USAID is focused on the November 2021 national elections in Nicaragua and on restoring democratic processes and respect for human rights through expanding opportunities for coalition building and supporting electoral integrity and an active civil society.

Cuba

Question. According to the State Department, in 2019, the Government of Cuba maintained an estimated 50,000 medical personnel in more than 60 countries under conditions that represent forced labor. The United States, the United Nations, independent media outlets, and non-governmental organizations have all documented and called out the Cuban regime's exploitative and coercive practices toward its doctors participating in its overseas medical programs.

- Do you consider the Cuban regime's overseas medical missions to be exploitative human trafficking efforts? How can USAID Missions in countries that accept Cuban medical missions help communicate the realities of the forced labor practices employed by the Cuban regime?

Answer. Support for democracy and human rights is at the core of this administration's Cuba policy. We must be vocal in our support for the journalists, human rights defenders, and democracy activists seeking to challenge the repressiveness of Cuban authorities, who maintain an extraordinarily tight grip on all aspects of life on the island and are ruthless in seeking to stifle dissent. I understand that USAID has programs in place currently to support the human rights of Cuban workers, including medical personnel. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues at the Department of State to review the Cuban Government's practices with regard to its overseas medical programs and look forward to consulting with you on this issue.

Question. The State Department's 2019 Human Rights Report for Cuba painted a dismal picture of human rights abuses by the Cuban regime, to include accounts of disappearances; torture and other cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment; harsh prison and detention center conditions; arbitrary arrests and detentions; denial of fair public trial; and political prisoners and detainees. The regime also has cracked down on freedom of expression, limited internet freedom, and restricted freedoms of peaceful assembly and association.

- Will you commit to calling out human rights violations by the Cuban Government?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure that support for human rights remains at the core of USAID's efforts in Cuba. Cuba is one of the most repressive countries

in the world, and is ruled by a dictatorship that flagrantly abuses human rights, seeks to prevent its populace from accessing even basic independent information, inhibits meaningful civil society activity—including free press—and criminalizes political dissent. As one of my first acts as U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., I raised the case of Oswaldo Payá directly with the Cuban Foreign Minister, pressing him to allow an independent investigation of the circumstances in which Payá had been killed, and I continued to advocate publicly in support of Payá's family. During my time at the U.N., I repeatedly called out Cuba for its abhorrent treatment of Cubans like José Daniel Ferrer, José Antonio Torres, Julio Ferrer, and Antonio Rodiles. If confirmed, I will continue to speak out against Cuba's persecution of its citizens and human rights violations.

Question. How will you work to support democratic activists and human rights defenders in Cuba?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue USAID's work to support democratic activists and human rights defenders in Cuba. The role of a vibrant civil society continues to be essential to Cuban democracy. I gather that USAID has a portfolio in place to continue supporting a diverse sector of independent activists in Cuba who will push for democratic freedoms, including religious freedom. The Agency will also continue providing basic needs assistance to political prisoners and persecuted activists. NGOs are poised to continue defending the human rights of those who are abused and even jailed for their political beliefs.

Question. Do you commit to maintain a robust USAID democracy program focused on advancing respect for basic human rights in Cuba?

Answer. Yes, I am committed to supporting robust USAID democracy programming in Cuba.

Haiti

Question. Haiti is facing a complex and worsening constitutional crisis.

- What role can USAID play in promoting effective dialogue among the different political forces? If confirmed, what efforts would you make to support strengthening Haiti's technical capacity to hold elections?

Answer. The Haitian people deserve democracy and prosperity. Haiti has been without a functioning government for too long, and in the meantime, conditions continue to deteriorate. The political parties need to come together to end the misery, corruption and insecurity wreaking havoc for the Haitian people. While Haiti is facing a complex emergency that USAID assistance alone cannot resolve, USAID does have an important role to play in helping to promote democracy, human rights, and governance. With respect to the upcoming legislative elections, I understand that USAID's current activities aim to promote credible elections, increase political party competition, and expand civic participation in electoral processes to help end the ongoing political crisis of rule by decree. If confirmed, I will advocate for a strong whole-of-government and multi-donor approach for targeted democracy, human rights, and governance work to promote democratic political reform, peace and stability.

South America

Question. Over the last three decades, Colombia has emerged as a source of economic prosperity and stability in the region and a key strategic ally and partner of the United States. Yet, policy decisions made during the negotiations of the 2016 deal with the FARC terrorist organization created new challenges for Colombia and in our relations. Coca production in Colombia has steadily increased since 2013, reaching 212,000 hectares in 2019. 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.

- Would you agree that achieving this goal by 2023 would deliver significant health and security benefits for Americans here at home? If confirmed, what tools and policies would you implement to ensure that our two nations meet this goal?

Answer. I share your concern about the flow of drugs from Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States. USAID plays an important role on this issue through its alternative development programs in Colombia, which are intended to offer licit alternatives—such as coffee, cacao, dairy, and others—to replace coca production. Alternative development is a necessary but insufficient tool to significantly reduce coca cultivation, which also requires robust involvement by the private sec-

tor, civil society, and international organizations, along with a commitment by Colombian leaders to equitable economic development in communities that have long been underserved by government programs. Colombia's historic 2016 peace accord with the FARC was an important first step in ending one of the longest-running armed conflicts in the world, which had led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people and displaced millions of Colombians. Implementing the various components of the accords is a complex undertaking, and a challenge that continues to this day. I gather that USAID's assistance focuses squarely on these efforts at implementation, which must move forward in order to enhance security, governance and development in former FARC-controlled and ungoverned territories where some 95 percent of coca is cultivated and cocaine is produced.

Venezuela

Question. Approximately 7.2 million people will require humanitarian assistance due to the Venezuela regional crisis in 2021, a 10 percent increase from the year before.

- How will you organize the resources of USAID to respond to the increased need of millions of Venezuelans?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize humanitarian funding for the Venezuela regional crisis. The situation within Venezuela is grave and deteriorating: a recent U.N. fact-finding mission has uncovered “widespread and systematic” abuses by the Maduro Government against the Venezuelan people, including extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, and torture. Concurrently, more than five million Venezuelans are now refugees, putting immense pressure on neighboring countries. USAID has provided more than \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance since 2017 for Venezuelan migrants and refugees, and host communities in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, as well as more than \$104 million since 2018 to reach people inside Venezuela with life-saving humanitarian assistance, making the U.S. the largest donor to the crisis regionally. USAID also supports long-term development and integration activities in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru for Venezuelan migrants and refugees. Still, there is more that can be done, particularly in terms of stronger coordination and cooperation with like-minded countries.

If confirmed, I will ensure USAID's critical humanitarian and development assistance continues. Furthermore, despite the Maduro regime's efforts to stifle any activities that threaten its hold on power or accountability for its numerous crimes, if I am confirmed, USAID will continue to provide support for civil society organizations and democratically-minded actors working under incredibly dangerous conditions to bring about a democratic transition.

Self-Reliance

Question. Former USAID Administrator Mark Green spearheaded the agency's “Journey to Self-Reliance” initiative in an effort to provide strategic focus to U.S. foreign assistance, including by taking a data-based approach toward building partner country capacity to achieve and sustain development results. In contrast with China's development model, which creates dependence, Administrator Green argued that America should seek to foster self-reliance and responsibility among its friends.

- While distinct from diplomatic and humanitarian assistance, do you agree that the purpose of development assistance is to end the need for its existence? If so, how will you ensure that USAID and the implementing partners it supports effectively work themselves out of a job?

Answer. Yes, I agree with the principle of self-reliance and that USAID's programs should encourage self-reliance and sustainability. I also believe it is what the vast majority of beneficiaries of USAID programs want most for themselves and their communities. My vision for USAID's role includes traditional development priorities. It also applies a broader lens that recognizes U.S. foreign assistance within core U.S. national security priorities, including advancing democracy, human rights, increasing climate security and resilience, and global health in a collaborative manner with civil society partners and governments. If confirmed, I commit to advancing sound, evidence-based development and humanitarian programming that continues to improve aid effectiveness, self-reliance and sustainability.

Question. Do you intend to work with USAID to continue the “Journey to Self-Reliance” initiative, whether in name or in spirit? If not, why not?

Answer. I deeply respect and appreciate former Administrator Mark Green's leadership on this issue and intend to build on this initiative. I understand that the Journey to Self-Reliance emphasizes developing critical local capacities and sup-

porting meaningful country commitments, fit to the diverse contexts in which USAID works. I agree the concept is sound and builds on the work of the Agency to support sustainable development that has spanned multiple administrations.

Global Health Security

Question. The COVID-19 pandemic originated and accelerated in higher-income countries, where USAID does not maintain a regular presence and where intense, high-level diplomatic engagement proved critical to securing global health data, navigating supply chain disruptions, and facilitating the safe evacuation of American citizens.

- Do you agree with the framework outlined by President Biden in NSM-1, in which the Secretary of State, in coordination with the USAID Administrator, leads (1) the development of the U.S. Government-wide plan to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and (2) a diplomatic outreach plan for enhancing the United States' response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on engaging partner nations?
- Do you agree that this framework outlined by President Biden could be used in other contexts to support global health efforts of the U.S. Government, to include efforts to advance the Global Health Security Agenda and enhance pandemic preparedness and response overseas?

Answer. Yes, I support the framework outlined by the President in NSM-1. I gather that there has been effective collaboration in the interagency on the Global Health Security Agenda and if confirmed, I look forward to reviewing it further and seeking ways to enhance our impact.

Question. My bill, the *Global Health Diplomacy and Security Act*, creates a coordinator position at the State Department that is consistent with this type of framework outlined by President Biden. If confirmed, do you commit to work with me on this effort?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with you and the committee on all efforts to advance global health security so as to ensure that, after such devastation, the world is far better prepared to confront global health threats.

COVID-19

Question. The *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021* (P.L. 117-2), included \$10 billion in international affairs funding for the COVID-19 pandemic response, to include: (1) \$3.75 billion to prevent backsliding in HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis programs, of which \$3.5 billion was directed toward the multilateral Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria's COVID-19 Response Mechanism; and (2) nearly \$5 billion in bilateral funds, of which an unspecified portion would be directed toward the United Nations and other multilateral entities. This is on top of the \$4 billion that already had been appropriated to support U.S. contributions to COVAX/Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

- What are the comparative advantages of bilateral funding versus multilateral funding in the U.S. response to COVID-19 overseas? Are there benefits to bilateral funding that you, if confirmed, will advocate for and prioritize?

Answer. I believe that the U.S. Government (USG) is most effective when both bilateral and multilateral funding is available and flows to responsible and accountable partners. Multilateral funding allows the USG to leverage the financial commitments, technical expertise, and diplomatic engagement of many partners, often achieving economies of scale and burden-sharing with other donors. Bilateral funding enables USAID to align that work and those commitments to action on the ground through the expertise and coordination of USAID field teams and ongoing local assistance efforts, and address priorities that may not be effectively or efficiently covered through multilateral channels.

If confirmed, will you continue the policy of providing funding for multilateral entities, to include COVAX/Gavi and the Global Fund, in tranches, such that U.S. contributions are made available based upon need, performance, and other donor support?

I understand that USAID funding to Gavi/COVAX will be provided in tranches. This will allow USAID to ensure Gavi/COVAX has the funding it needs to scale global vaccine access, while closely monitoring COVAX's performance and also incentivizing other donors to provide additional resources. I understand that to date, USAID has obligated \$2 billion out of a total \$4 billion to Gavi/COVAX. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID, in consultation with Gavi, is carefully considering the timing of contributions to ensure COVAX is sufficiently resourced to meet critical public health needs, given evolving supply dynamics and resource constraints.

PEPFAR

Question. Lack of strategic direction, embittered competition, and poor communication between the two principal implementers of U.S. global health assistance—USAID and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—have long plagued U.S. global health programs. This is why, when authorizing the greatest commitment by any country to combat a single disease in history, Congress placed the responsibility for coordinating the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) within the Department of State. The PEPFAR program is now recognized as the most successful U.S. foreign assistance program since the Marshall Plan and has saved millions of lives, strengthened health systems and supply chains, and advanced key U.S. diplomatic, economic, and security goals.

Recognizing the success of the PEPFAR model—but also understanding that PEPFAR would eventually need to be transitioned—the Obama administration in 2009 sought to launch a 6-year, \$63 billion Global Health Initiative (GHI). Managed by the Coordinator of U.S. Government Activities to Combat HIV/AIDS and Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy at the Department of State, the GHI proposed to take an evidence-based approach toward strengthening health systems and enhancing global health security. Though the GHI never found its footing, the compelling need to close gaps in global health security while also mitigating the need for disease-specific initiatives justifies taking another look.

- Do you agree that the PEPFAR model, to include the coordinating role played by the Department of State and the implementing roles played by USAID and CDC, has been successful? As more and more countries approach epidemic control, do you believe this model could be adapted to advance broader global health security and diplomacy objectives, as the Obama administration envisioned under the GHI?

Answer. I agree that PEPFAR has been enormously successful, and should be considered one of the most significant and impactful public health initiatives ever undertaken. As U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., many of my African colleagues spoke to me in strikingly personal terms about what PEPFAR meant to their countries, offering sincere and profound thanks to the American people for continuing to support this initiative. I am also aware that there are other highly successful U.S. Government public health initiatives, including the President’s Malaria Initiative, the West Africa and Eastern Congo Ebola responses, and USAID’s Neglected Tropical Disease program that should be reviewed for lessons learned. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the administration and Congress to review all of these successful programs, draw lessons learned and determine how to best posture the U.S. Government and USAID to advance global health security, global health diplomacy, and pandemic response objectives.

Question. The Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator was recently directed to suspend its Country Operating Plan (COP) process, which had already reached an advanced stage, in order to alleviate burdens on implementing partners during the COVID-19 outbreak. While sympathetic to the needs of implementing partners, the COP process, and the data-driven approach it has institutionalized, is vital to the effective planning and execution of PEPFAR programs. If confirmed, will you ensure USAID fully and faithfully engages in the COP process and adheres to such plans without unwarranted delays or deviations?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will ensure that USAID fully and faithfully engages in the COP process and adheres to such plans without unwarranted delays or deviations.

Question. The World Health Organization (WHO): You had a front row seat to the ineptitude of the WHO during the 2014–2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa. It was so bad, in fact, that you helped lead the effort on the U.N. Security Council to declare the outbreak “a threat to international peace and security” and to establish the U.N.’s first-ever “health-keeping” mission.

Much like the Ebola outbreak that preceded it, the WHO was either unwilling or unable to mount an effective emergency response to the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, China. Not only did it fail to press the Chinese Government for access and information in the critical first days of the outbreak, but the WHO provided political cover for China’s reckless response, publicly validated disinformation, and condemned travel controls designed to mitigate the global spread.

- Do you agree that the WHO is badly in need of reform? If so, what specific reforms are necessary to restore its credibility among the American people and the world?

Answer. Yes, the WHO needs reform and strengthening. While the WHO continues to play an important role in the global response to COVID-19, the pandemic exposed weaknesses in the readiness posture of both the WHO and member states to respond to a crisis on this scale. President Biden is firmly committed to reforming and strengthening the WHO, and some of his first executive actions have focused on strengthening global preparedness against future pandemic threats. The administration believes that the best way to do this is by remaining an actively engaged member of the organization and working with all member states to support, strengthen, and build accountability at the WHO. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Departments of State and Health and Human Services to ensure USAID informs and supports efforts that strengthen the World Health Organization.

Question. If confirmed, will you ensure that by joining COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the WHO-supported Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, the United States will not subsidize the distribution of non-transparently developed, reportedly substandard Chinese and Russian COVID-19 vaccines?

Answer. USAID funding to COVAX will only support procurement and delivery of vaccines that meet rigorous quality standards, are safe and efficacious, and have been approved or authorized by a stringent regulatory authority, such as the U.S. FDA or the World Health Organization. To date, vaccines developed by China and Russia have not met these standards.

Food Aid and Food Security

Question. The United States is the single most generous provider of humanitarian assistance in the world, both financial and in-kind, thus saving hundreds of millions of lives and promoting the growth of healthier, more stable societies. Yet today, an estimated 690 million people are food insecure, of which 270 million are facing starvation. As needs outpace the ability of donors to respond, it is imperative that the Department and USAID be enabled to stretch U.S. humanitarian resources farther, including by modernizing U.S. international food aid.

Historically, the flagship U.S. food aid program—Food for Peace—required that 100 percent of the food provided under the Act be purchased in the United States, of which 50 percent must be shipped on U.S. flagged vessels. According to the GAO, the shipping requirement, in particular, has added significant time and cost to emergency food aid, even while failing to fulfil its statutory purpose. Three consecutive administrations have thus proposed changes—ranging from setting aside 20 percent of the budget for local and regional procurement to eliminating Food for Peace entirely. The Global Food Security Act (as re-authorized through FY2023) and the 2018 Farm Bill did include modest reforms, but more needs to be done.

- Do you agree that the Department of Defense is capable of managing its own sealift capacity and that U.S. agricultural cargo preference requirements have outlived their statutory purpose, add unnecessary time and expense to life-saving U.S. food aid, and should no longer be applied to international food aid?
- If confirmed, will you carry forward the food aid reform efforts of your predecessors, including under the Obama administration?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working with Congress to make USAID's programming to combat rising food insecurity and build the resilience of vulnerable communities as effectively and efficiently as possible. Each of the food assistance modalities—U.S. in-kind food, locally and regionally procured food, and cash-based programming—complements the others in addressing food insecurity efficiently and effectively. At this time of unprecedented global humanitarian need, USAID's ability to reach hungry people and improve the efficiency of our programs is of utmost importance.

Humanitarian Assistance

Question. How will USAID, in coordination with the new Office of Sanctions Coordination, work with the Treasury Department to ensure our sanctions programs are designed to shape behavior without exacerbating humanitarian crises around the world?

Answer. I understand that USAID coordinates regularly with the interagency to review sanctions programs, including how sanctions are impacting the COVID-19 response and humanitarian programs. If confirmed, I will support USAID's work with the Department of Treasury, the Department of State and the rest of the interagency to develop effective sanctions regimes with requisite flexibilities to ensure that life-saving humanitarian assistance can reach those in need.

Question. Should U.S. humanitarian assistance be branded? If not, why not? If confirmed, will you uphold President Trump's Executive Order on branding U.S. for-

foreign assistance and the USAID Branding Modernization Act (P.L. 116-334), including by branding all U.S. foreign assistance administered by USAID?

Answer. I am committed to branding and agree that branding sends a strong public diplomacy message, conveying that our assistance is due to the generosity of the American people. It is also a critical element of a counter China strategy.

Current branding regulations and policy continue to apply to USAID awards and partners must continue to follow the branding requirements outlined in their assistance agreements.

Women, Peace, and Security

Question. Under President Trump's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) initiative signed into law in 2019, the United States is working to advance three objectives by 2023, such that: 1) women are more prepared and increasingly able to participate in efforts that promote stable and lasting peace; 2) women and girls are safer, better protected, and have equal access to government and private-assistance programs, including from the United States, international partners, and host nations; and 3) the United States and partner governments have improved institutionalization and capacity to ensure WPS efforts are sustainable and long-lasting.

- What actions will you, if confirmed, take to ensure these goals are met? Will you enhance lines of effort and agency actions?

Answer. I agree that women's meaningful engagement leads to better, more durable outcomes for peace and security. Studies show that when women participate in peace processes the resulting agreement is 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years. More broadly speaking, one of the best predictors of a state's peacefulness is the way women are treated within that state. USAID assistance supports the objectives in the WPS Act to bolster women's ability to participate in peace and political processes, protect against gender-based violence, and hold accountable those that commit acts of gender-based violence. USAID's activities also help break down barriers to women's participation in conflict mitigation and peacebuilding. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues to further implement our commitments under the WPS Act and ensure that these efforts continue to be a priority for the Agency.

Human Trafficking

Question. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated cases of human trafficking and online sexual exploitation and abuse worldwide.

- What will you prioritize, if confirmed, to counter this growing problem during COVID-19 and to prevent a resurgence of these behaviors after the pandemic is over?

Answer. I share your concerns and believe that human trafficking is a grave human rights abuse. Sadly, the COVID-19 crisis has amplified a number of factors that increase the risk of human trafficking and online sexual exploitation and abuse. In particular, as out-of-school or quarantined children spend more time online, the potential for online harm of children also increases. If confirmed, I am committed to USAID's work to counter human trafficking, which includes activities to raise awareness about the risk of online sexual exploitation and abuse, and provide children, families, and communities with the knowledge and tools they need to reduce exposure to harmful online content.

Question. How will you, if confirmed, enhance USAID's role in the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking (PITF) and the Senior Policy Operating Group to Combat Trafficking in Persons (SPOG)?

Answer. If confirmed, I will bring USAID's expertise to bear in the PITF and SPOG, specifically by strengthening the interagency approach to promote evidence-based prevention practices; identify, protect, and respond to victims' needs; increase prosecutions and convictions; and build partnerships, including with the corporate sector. I will advocate for survivors and those who experienced trauma from human trafficking. A survivor-centered approach is essential to preserve the dignity, safety, and well-being of at-risk and vulnerable populations. I am committed to working within the interagency to increase collaboration with international organizations, civil society groups, and the corporate sector.

United Nations Funding

Question. USAID provides significant amounts of funding to the United Nations system, including through voluntary contributions to the World Food Program, UNICEF, the U.N. Development Program, and others.

- If confirmed, how do you plan to ensure that funding that goes through the U.N. system has proper oversight and is not lost to waste, fraud, abuse, or diversion to repressive governments, armed groups, terrorist organizations, or criminal enterprise?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration will continue to hold United Nations (UN) organizations accountable to their mission and U.N. member states. This means doing everything possible to ensure that U.N. organizations are using resources efficiently and effectively—eliminating waste, demanding zero tolerance for corruption and sexual exploitation, and strengthening whistleblower protections and transparency and accountability. Since most USAID funding to U.N. partners is project-based, the Agency also ensures that USAID's U.N. partners understand and comply with USAID requirements on monitoring and reporting. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. Department of State and Mission to the U.N., to continue to advance these priorities.

DDI

Question. With the re-organization of USAID, there is a new Bureau of Development, Democracy and Innovation.

- Can you speak in detail about USAID's democracy promotion efforts?

Answer. China and Russia are using their resources, influence, and technology to support autocrats and undermine and interfere with democratic institutions. To meet this moment, the Biden-Harris administration will restore democracy and human rights to the center of U.S. foreign policy. USAID will pursue an affirmative strategy that counters new and emerging threats to democracy and advances human rights. This has been a top priority of mine throughout my career, and if confirmed, I will elevate democracy programming and seek to deepen current investments in anti-corruption programming, democracy, human rights, and governance, including by supporting civil society and promoting independent media and protection for journalists.

Question. How do these efforts complement the work being done by the Department of State's Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Bureau?

Answer. USAID works closely with the Department of State and the National Endowment for Democracy in democracy promotion efforts. Each entity has distinct comparative advantages—in the case of USAID, that includes USAID's ability to leverage relationships and know-how through its missions to tailor its work to local conditions—which gives the United States a multi-faceted and more effective approach in increasingly complex environments. I understand the USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Development, and Innovation and the State Department's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) engage in regular information-sharing and coordination efforts to avoid duplication and make the most strategic use of assistance funds. This coordination takes place both in Washington and at our missions overseas. If confirmed, I will work closely with my counterparts to ensure that coordination continues to take place and every effort is made to maximize the impact of our assistance.

Atrocity Prevention

Question. What role does USAID play in U.S. atrocity prevention efforts?

Answer. Since the 2011 Presidential Study Directive on Mass Atrocities, USAID has played a leadership role in helping improve U.S. Government capabilities related to atrocity prevention. USAID addresses mass atrocities in four main ways: identifying and communicating risk factors and warning signs that could lead to mass atrocities; mitigating risks and bolstering resilience to shocks that could lead to mass atrocities; responding to escalating atrocity situations with humanitarian assistance and prevention programs; and supporting recovery from mass violence and gross violations of human rights through programs focused on promoting justice and accountability, rebuilding social cohesion, supporting political transition, and supporting the protection of human rights.

This work is incredibly important because preventing mass atrocities is a core national security interest of the United States. While serving on the National Security Council as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, I worked with President Obama to create the aforementioned Directive and the Atrocities Prevention Board, the first White House-led structure tasked with reacting to early warnings of atrocities.

Climate

Question. If confirmed, how will you and USAID interact with the office of Special Presidential Envoy Kerry, including with respect to implementation of U.S. foreign assistance connected to any climate arrangements or agreements negotiated by the office of Special Presidential Envoy Kerry?

Answer. If confirmed, I would commit to working closely with Special Presidential Climate Envoy Kerry, as USAID plays an essential role in working with our partner countries to translate bold climate ambition into action. Indeed, Secretary Kerry and I have a strong working relationship, forged during my time as U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. while he was serving as Secretary of State. I understand that the administration's top priorities are to: immediately raise and implement partner countries' climate commitments, meet the U.S. climate finance pledge, accelerate efforts to increase the resilience of climate vulnerable countries. USAID will work with countries and regions with globally important forests and carbon-rich landscapes to reduce deforestation and improve conservation, as unsustainable land use accounts for one-quarter of global greenhouse emissions, as well as reduce emissions from land use change in critical tropical ecosystems that serve as global carbon sinks. USAID will also work with countries and regions with globally important forests and carbon-rich landscapes to reduce deforestation and improve conservation.

Infrastructure

Question. USAID plays an important role in the Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network and the Transaction Advisory Fund, set up under the Trump administration.

- Please describe your specific views on these two programs. Will USAID under the Biden administration retain this initiative?

Answer. China's significant infrastructure investments around the world are often fiscally unsustainable, include corrupt practices and processes, do not comply with international environmental and labor standards, lack public oversight and transparency, and have limited community involvement. I believe that USAID, through initiatives like ITAN, should continue advising countries on how to ensure a fair and level playing field. Once a country commits to undertaking a competitive procurement process, USAID should continue using mechanisms such as the Transaction Advisory Fund to advise it on how to ensure projects are legally, financially, and technically viable and incorporate appropriate environmental and social safeguards.

Reproductive Health

Question. President Biden has rescinded the Mexico City policy (which conditioned U.S. assistance to foreign NGOs upon a commitment that they will not perform or promote abortion with funding from any source) and has said the United States will rejoin the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), notwithstanding concerns about its support for China's population control program. Abortion pro-choice advocates are also seeking to overturn the Helms amendment (prohibiting the use of U.S. foreign aid for the performance or promotion of abortion as a method of family planning) and the Siljander amendment (prohibiting use of U.S. foreign aid to lobby for or against the legalization of abortion).

- In your opinion, does the term "reproductive health" include abortion?

Answer. Abortion is not included in USAID's definition of reproductive health.

Question. Do you commit to uphold U.S. laws that prohibit funding for abortion overseas?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to uphold U.S. laws, including the Helms and Siljander amendments.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. SAMANTHA POWER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Human Rights

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promoting human rights and democracy has been central to my work as a writer, advocate, and diplomat. In 2002, after years of extensive reporting and research, I published "A Problem From Hell": America and the Age of Genocide, which

documented inaction in the face of genocides over the course of the 20th century. The book was integrated into high school and university curriculums, and some of its lessons were embraced by student activists, faith groups, and others seeking to promote human rights. In addition, many readers have informed me that the book's central message encouraged them to take action in the face of genocide in Darfur.

While serving on the National Security Council as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, I worked with President Obama to develop new processes aimed at ensuring that atrocity warnings rapidly reached senior policy makers, and to make creative use of the policy toolbox when signs of potential atrocities arose—efforts that helped ensure that, in the face of mass atrocities, the American response did not come down to a choice between doing nothing or using U.S. military force. This work produced significant outcomes, such as the highly-effective deployment of U.S. military advisers to support African Governments combating the Lord's Resistance Army, proactive peacekeeping in the Ivory Coast to prevent spiraling mass atrocities following a stolen election, and relentless high-level diplomacy in support of Sudan's independence referendum, which paved the way for the birth of an independent South Sudan. Also, during my time as Senior Director, I worked with my NSC colleague Gayle Smith to spearhead the creation of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a multilateral initiative that secures governmental commitments to promote transparency, fight corruption, empower citizens, and strengthen governance. Since its founding in 2011, the OGP has grown to include 78 country members and a growing number of local members—representing more than two billion people—that work alongside thousands of civil society organizations.

As U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., my top priorities included working to prevent and end conflicts, addressing the humanitarian needs of vulnerable communities, and advancing the human rights and dignity of all individuals. I spearheaded the effort to convene two successive summits that mobilized unprecedented commitments to U.N. Peacekeeping of over 50,000 new troops and police from more than 60 countries. In response to the global refugee crisis, I led efforts to convene a summit in which participating nations agreed to increase their total annual contributions to U.N. appeals and international humanitarian groups by approximately \$4.5 billion and to double the number of formal refugee resettlement slots made available to the U.N.'s refugee agency, while a range of private sector companies made \$650 million worth of pledges in support of refugees. Finally, I used intensive public and private diplomacy to secure the release of political prisoners and enhance the rights of LGBTQ individuals. Among various efforts to advocate on behalf of those unjustly imprisoned, in the #FreeThe20 campaign, I publicized the cases of 20 female political prisoners around the world—16 of whom were ultimately freed. As part of my work to advance LGBTQ rights, I helped create for the first time a mandate for an Independent Expert to monitor and report on the violence and discrimination faced by LGBTQ persons around the world, convened the first-ever U.N. Security Council meeting on threats to LGBTQ persons, and was able to push the Security Council to condemn (for the first time in its 70-year history) violence against individuals due to their sexual orientation.

Diversity and Inclusion

Question. In response to a request that I led, GAO reported in June 2020 that USAID still has much work to do in order to create and sustain a truly diverse workforce. What plans do you have for improving diversity and inclusion at USAID?

Answer. Diversity, equity, and inclusion must be a guiding principle—in our people, funding and programs, and policies. If confirmed, as I noted in my testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I will make diversity, equity, and inclusion foundational priorities for both our mission around the world and how we support our workforce. The report you requested, for example, presented data demonstrating that “promotion outcomes at USAID were generally lower for racial and ethnic minorities than for whites in early to mid career.” I will engage the staff to understand the challenges facing them, solicit advice on how we can create a workforce that is more diverse and inclusive, and treat these issues with the urgency they demand. Ensuring that USAID remains the world's leading development agency requires that diversity, equity, and inclusion be guiding principles when it comes to our people, our funding and programs, and our policies.

Question. Do you commit to regularly and transparently monitoring the Agency's progress towards its diversity goals?

Answer. Yes.

Basic Education

Question. If confirmed, how would you work to ensure that USAID's efforts to support remote learning and re-enrollment efforts in the context of COVID-19 will support marginalized learners, including girls, refugees, and children with disabilities?

Answer. COVID-19 interrupted the education of more than 1.6 billion learners. The risk of not returning to the classroom is especially high for those who experience multiple vulnerabilities based on economic status, gender, disability, refugee and displacement status. Since the beginning of the pandemic, USAID has adapted its education programming to respond to the shifting needs of students and educators in more than 50 countries. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID continues to support partner countries to sustain investments in inclusive distance learning so that education systems are more resilient and equitable. I will also ensure that USAID continues to leverage its partnerships and global leadership to ensure continued learning opportunities, especially for the most marginalized. I will also ensure that USAID continues to leverage its partnerships and global leadership with groups like the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait, the LEGO Foundation, the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies, the Partnership to End Violence, and UNICEF, among others, to ensure continued learning opportunities, especially for the most marginalized, including girls, refugees, and children with disabilities.

Question. What more can USAID be doing to help build back school systems around the world so that they are capable of serving all students, both during and after the pandemic, and are more resilient in the face of future challenges?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support efforts to continue to build more resilient and equitable education systems and societies, especially for the most marginalized and those in vulnerable situations, by building emergency preparedness and response capacity, institutionalizing remedial and accelerated education, and engaging youth and higher education institutions as leaders. USAID has opportunities to leverage its experience and expertise in accessible and safe distance learning, non-formal and accelerated education, inclusive education, youth workforce development, and private sector engagement to scale. Institutionalizing these approaches within education systems to meet the diverse needs of all children and youth while also building resilience within education systems will help minimize disruptions to learning in the event of future emergencies.

Conflicts of Interest

Question. Do you commit to bring to the attention of the committee (and the USAID Inspector General) any change in policy or U.S. actions that you suspect may be influenced by any of the President's business or financial interests, or the business or financial interests of any senior White House staff?

I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

- Do you commit to inform the committee if you have any reason to suspect that a foreign government, head of state, or foreign-controlled entity is taking any action in order to benefit any of the President's business or financial interests, or the interests of senior White House staff?

Answer. I commit to comply with all relevant federal ethics laws, regulations, and rules and to raise concerns that I may have through appropriate channels.

Question. Do you or do any members of your immediate family have any financial interests in any foreign country?

Answer. My spouse's and my investment portfolio includes mutual funds that may hold interests in companies with an international presence, or directly in U.S. companies that have an international presence, but none of these holdings represent conflicts of interest with the position for which I have been nominated. I am committed to following all applicable ethics laws and regulations and remaining vigilant with regard to my ethics obligations. I have already committed to divest investments the USAID Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO) has identified as possible conflicts of interest. Additionally, the separate U.S. literary agents that represent my spouse and me, have international offices that negotiate publication or republication of our writings in various foreign countries. The DAEO has reviewed these business arrangements and has determined that they do not represent conflicts of interest, but has advised me that we will need to monitor and report any overseas re-publications that occur during my tenure in Government.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. SAMANTHA POWER BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to supporting the Interim President of Venezuela Juan Guaidó and prioritize working with implementing partners in support of President Guaidó's humanitarian efforts in Venezuela?

Answer. The United States recognizes Juan Guaidó as the interim president and the democratically-elected National Assembly as the only legitimate democratic institutions in Venezuela. If confirmed, I commit to working with the interim government and to support the people of Venezuela.

Question. Will you commit to working with non-governmental organizations and civil society groups to restore democracy and a pathway to free, fair, and transparent elections in Venezuela and to keep my office informed of that progress?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to working with non-governmental organizations and civil society groups to restore democracy and a pathway to democratic elections in Venezuela. I look forward to consulting with you about how we might strengthen those efforts, given the devastating costs of Maduro's repression.

Question. Do you commit to supporting the Interim President of Venezuela, Juan Guaidó, and the National Assembly?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support to support Interim President Juan Guaidó, the democratically elected National Assembly, and the people of Venezuela to determine their own future through free and fair elections.

Question. If confirmed, what would your priorities be for Central America?

Answer. If confirmed, my priorities in Central America will include expeditiously strengthening programs that seek to improve conditions in the region and tackle the major drivers of migration. While the specific drivers of irregular migration cannot be generalized across countries or even communities, they are generally tied to insecurity, lack of economic opportunity, and the effects of poor governance and corruption, and I will work with other U.S. Government agencies to build the political will of partner nations to address these drivers. COVID-19 has exacerbated these conditions, as have major natural disasters (including hurricanes) recently hitting the region.

As you know, in recent years, USAID programs have been designed to combat crime and violence by reaching at-risk youth; addressed corruption and impunity; disrupted the activities of transnational criminal organizations; civil society; and provided vulnerable citizens with greater economic opportunity, social services, and protection. As USAID restarts and ramps up those programs and as USAID missions in the region seek new or expanded partnerships, the agency will draw on evidence of what works in order to help foster an environment where families can envision their futures in their home countries and communities. If confirmed, I will continue USAID's current approach of tailoring and adapting programs to the unique needs of each country and community. I will also continue the Agency's practice of using migration data to focus resources geographically in response to specific, local drivers of migration. USAID will work with a wide range of stakeholders from civil society and the private sector to increase the impact of our efforts. And I look forward to further consultations with Congress on how to further improve the effectiveness of these programs.

Question. Regional coordination is essential to the effectiveness of the U.S. Strategy for Central America. Will you commit to working closely with our partners in this region?

Answer. Yes, I will commit to working closely with our partners in the region. I understand that USAID works closely with multiple stakeholders in the region both in the public and private sectors as well as with civil society organizations and international non-governmental organizations.

Question. How will USAID, under your leadership, work to address the drivers of violence, corruption, and migration in the Northern Triangle?

Answer. The specific drivers of irregular migration cannot be generalized across communities or even countries. Accordingly, USAID tailors and adapts programs that address the root causes of irregular migration to the unique needs of each country and community; the extensive use of data is critical and is an integral part of these efforts. By tracking migration trends, the Agency is able to concentrate resources geographically in response to local drivers of migration.

I understand that USAID is addressing the security, governance, and economic drivers of irregular migration to the United States from Central America in partner-

ship with other U.S. Government agencies, including the development of a forthcoming strategy on addressing the root causes of irregular migration as mandated in Executive Order 14010. Critical to the success of our efforts is generating political will on the part of governments in the region to address the reasons people choose to migrate. USAID combats crime and violence through its programming by reaching at-risk youth, addressing corruption and impunity, disrupting the activities of transnational criminal organizations, and providing vulnerable citizens with greater economic opportunity, social services, and protection. Through this work, USAID seeks to foster an environment where families can envision their futures in their home countries and communities. If confirmed, I will work to build and expand on this foundation. I look forward to deepening consultations with Congress on how to further improve the effectiveness of these programs.

Question. Last year, in the FY 21 SFOPS conference report, \$25 million was allocated for programs in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to implement the national sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention strategies in fiscal year 2021. The bill required, within 120 days, and in consultation with the USAID Administrator, a report on the implementation of the national SGBV prevention strategies in such countries. Also included in the FY21 appropriations bill, were recommendations for the State Department to create programs in the Northern Triangle for programming and enhancing the capacity of police, judicial systems, and child protection systems to identify, investigate and prosecute cases of sexual violence. If confirmed, will you commit to briefing my staff on how USAID intends to implement this funding?

Answer. I share your desire to prevent sexual and gender-based violence in Central America, which has some of the highest rates of GBV in the world. If confirmed, I commit to briefing you on how USAID intends to implement the funding appropriated in FY 21 and how the Agency currently works across the region supporting initiatives to reduce impunity for gender-based violence (GBV) cases. GBV was prioritized by President Biden in Executive Order 14010 which mandated a new strategy on the root causes of irregular migration from the Northern Triangle.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to supporting Cuba democracy programs as well as civil society and human rights defenders in Cuba?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, support for human rights will remain at the core of USAID's efforts in Cuba. Cuba is one of the most repressive countries in the world, and is ruled by a dictatorship that flagrantly abuses human rights, seeks to prevent its people from accessing even basic independent information, inhibits meaningful civil society activity—including free press—and criminalizes political dissent. As one of my first acts as U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., I raised the case of Oswaldo Payu directly with the Cuban Foreign Minister pressing him to allow an independent investigation of the circumstances in which Payu had been killed, and I continued to advocate publicly in support of Payu's family. During my time at the U.N., I repeatedly called out Cuba for its abhorrent treatment of civil society and human rights defenders like José Daniel Ferrer, José Antonio Torres, Julio Ferrer, and Antonio Rodiles. If confirmed, I will continue to speak out against Cuba's persecution of its citizens and human rights violations.

The role of a vibrant civil society continues to be essential to Cuban democracy. I understand USAID has a portfolio in place to continue supporting a diverse sector of independent activists in Cuba who will push for democratic freedoms, including religious freedom. The Agency will also continue providing basic needs assistance to political prisoners and persecuted activists. NGOs are poised to continue defending the human rights of those who are abused and even jailed for their political beliefs.

Question. Colombia has been directly impacted by the man-made crisis created by Nicolás Maduro and his brutal regime in Venezuela. Currently, Colombia hosts about 1.7 million Venezuelans, according to the U.N. High Commission for Refugees. How should we support Colombia in responding to the impacts it faces due to the Venezuelan crisis?

Answer. USAID is addressing immediate humanitarian needs and supporting the long-term development challenges in Colombia resulting from the Venezuelan crisis. I understand that the USAID Mission in Colombia is providing more than \$77 million for Venezuelans in health, education, governance, citizen security, human rights, and economic integration. Since 2018, USAID has also provided more than \$298 million in humanitarian assistance supporting Venezuelan migrants, refugees, and host communities with food assistance, direct cash assistance, and health support. Colombia recently granted ten years of legal status to all Venezuelan refugees who have fled to the country, making it possible for Venezuelans to live and work

openly. This is an important step for Colombia to harness the economic potential of the many Venezuelans it hosts and, if confirmed, I look forward to consulting with you on how USAID can support this effort.

Question. In 2017, Colombia signed a Memorandum of Understanding with NATO and became the first NATO partner country in Latin America. Today, Colombia and the U.S. are a success story that have forged a bond through shared commitments in support of stability, the defense of human rights, respect for democracy and the rule of law, and the protection of citizens' safety and security throughout the Western Hemisphere. Do you view our partnership with Colombia as one of the strongest in the Western Hemisphere?

Answer. The United States and Colombia enjoy a decades' long strategic partnership that is among the strongest in the region. If confirmed, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and democratic freedoms will be at the center of our relationship with Colombia.

Question. Do you believe that Colombia's shared goals with the United States should be an example for younger democracies in the Western Hemisphere? How do we take that model and focus our efforts on other nations in the region?

Answer. I agree that the U.S.-Colombia partnership has proven successful, and USAID's work with Colombia over the past decades on peace and stability has achieved a number of successes. The peace accords signed with the FARC in 2016 present a tremendous opportunity for Colombia to end a conflict that had raged for more than 50 years, and to end a continuous cycle of violence by transforming the long-neglected parts of the country prioritized in the accords.

If confirmed, I will work with Colombia, and with Congress, to collectively find ways to make USAID's assistance even more supportive of Colombia's own efforts toward an enduring and inclusive peace. While taking into account the context of each country's unique set of circumstances, I agree that Colombia's advances provide important lessons that may be applicable elsewhere within the region. At the same time, as with other countries in the region, I will also speak up in support of human rights: since 2016, more than 400 Colombian human rights defenders have been killed, underscoring the importance of USAID's continued assistance in helping the country achieve the commitments and overall transformation envisioned by the peace accords.

Question. USAID foreign assistance programs must continue to strengthen democratic institutions and bolster transparency and accountability to underpin democratic resilience, but they also need to provide targeted support to local stakeholders to understand CCP influence and counter those malign efforts. Such funding should be integrated into existing democracy programs at the country level, with support from international actors who understand these issues, to incorporate them into existing programs at the country level. If confirmed, how will you ensure USAID supports these efforts?

Answer. U.S. competition with the People's Republic of China (PRC) is a defining challenge of the 21st century. The administration's approach is to provide an alternative vision to Beijing's—a vision that promotes democratic governance, transparency, and local ownership in our global development work. USAID will draw on America's comparative advantages in distinguishing the U.S. approach from the PRC's, by ensuring that good governance, sustainability and social and economic safeguards are built into projects we support. USAID will strengthen local capacity to ensure that development investments are both beneficial and sustainable. If confirmed, I will work with allies and partners to better leverage our collective resources and influence, and I will be an advocate for human rights, governance, environmental, social, and labor standards in order to promote investments that are sustainable for the long term.

Question. How can USAID support administering some of the Countering Chinese Influence Fund?

Answer. I would like to thank you and your colleagues for the Countering Chinese Influence Fund (CCIF) resources that were made available in the FY21 appropriations act. I understand that USAID is working with the Department of State on programming these funds, as well as others, to counter China's foreign policy strategy and influence in critical countries and regions. The approach is to offer alternatives to China's predatory development model and instead improve inclusive, democratic governance; advance rules-based economic competition and fair trade practices; strengthen our security partnerships to counter transnational crime and terrorism; combat digital authoritarianism and malicious cyber activities; and promote energy

security and independence. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with you on this and to further assessing how USAID can best support these efforts.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to pushing for greater humanitarian assistance and access for the Syrian people, while making sure that such aid does not fall into the hands of a corrupt and bloodthirsty Assad regime?

Answer. Yes. USAID remains committed to ensuring that all assistance reaches those in need and does not benefit the Assad regime. Across Syria, USAID takes all possible steps to minimize the risk of diversion, whether to the Assad regime or to terrorist groups, by working through experienced and trusted U.N. partners, other international organizations, and non-governmental partners in Syria, including through the use of third-party monitoring. USAID has zero tolerance for fraud, waste, or abuse of American taxpayer resources and requires partners to have robust safeguards and risk mitigation systems in place to ensure that humanitarian assistance is reaching only those for whom it is intended.

Question. Do you agree that long-term stabilization in Syria will not be achieved as long as Bashar al-Assad remains in power?

Answer. Bashar al-Assad has perpetrated the most chilling, barbaric crimes imaginable against the Syrian people for the past decade. Despite political isolation, economic pressure, and weak control over much of Syrian territory, Assad clings to power with no indication that he is willing to bring an end to the war and the suffering of the Syrian people, and indeed with Assad's increasingly ruinous economic mismanagement exacerbating the horrific costs of conflict, repression, and mass atrocities for the Syrian people. Members of Congress spoke out clearly on this issue when they voted for the Caesar Civilian Protection Act in the last Congress imposing military, political, and accountability benchmarks for the Assad regime before it can receive sanctions relief. Countless brave Syrians have risked their lives to preserve evidence of Assad's war crimes, and Assad and his collaborators must be held accountable for their atrocities.

Question. As an expert on genocide, do you agree that the Chinese Communist Party is committing genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs and other its Muslim minorities in Xinjiang?

Answer. Yes. I agree with President Biden and experts who have studied the facts that China is committing genocide in Xinjiang.

I welcome Congress's bipartisan action on this issue, including the passage of the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act that holds perpetrators accountable for human rights violations and abuses against Uyghurs and other minorities in China. If confirmed, I will use my platform to draw attention to the horrors in Xinjiang and ensure that USAID actively engages with you, the committee and the interagency to determine any further steps that can be taken.

Question. You have written extensively about the failure of past administrations to prevent and respond to genocide. You are now in a unique position to put your aspirations into action. We have seen what has happened to Iraq's Yazidi and Christian community at the hands of ISIS. We know about the atrocities and likely genocide committed against the Rohingya by Burmese military forces. Now, we are reading weekly reports about the ongoing genocide in Xinjiang against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities by the Chinese Communist Party.

- Can you assure this committee that you will not only support, but also strengthen, USAID's commitment to victims of religious persecution?

Answer. Yes. As you note, I have a longstanding commitment to human rights, and a profound awareness of the risks of atrocities, especially for religious minorities. As Ambassador to the U.N., I used my platform to elevate the voices of religious minorities. I called for the release of Meriam Ibrahim, a Sudanese woman sentenced to death for refusing to denounce her Christian faith, and for Sudan to repeal the laws that put her in jail in the first place. I was the first person to bring a young Yazidi woman named Nadia Murad to the U.N. Security Council, after her family had been almost completely wiped out by ISIS and she had been forced into sexual slavery. USAID has a history of helping the world's most vulnerable people, and it will continue to play a critical role in supporting communities persecuted or discriminated against because of their faith. If confirmed, I look forward to exploring with you, the Agency's regional bureaus and Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships office, and diverse faith communities, to mobilize resources and, as appropriate, to tailor our programs to support individuals being subjected to religious persecution.

Question. If so, how do you plan to use your position to do so?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to stand up for victims of religious persecution, and I will review USAID's approach to ensure that our programs are most effectively supporting them, making adjustments as appropriate.

Question. The past several months have been historic for Israel's relationships with regional Arab neighbors. The UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan joined Egypt and Jordan in establishing diplomatic relations with Israel—paving the path to peace through recognition and engagement rather than isolation and boycotts of Israel. What role do you see for USAID in supporting these new relationships? Do you see opportunities for increased trilateral cooperation in the region?

Answer. USAID has the opportunity to support these relationships through identifying opportunities for increased trilateral and multilateral cooperation, such as by leveraging the inherently collaborative power of science, technology and innovation in order to address common challenges. USAID supports cooperation between Israel and countries in the Middle East region through the Middle East Regional Cooperation (MERC) program, which has long supported programs between partners throughout the region. If confirmed, I look forward to building upon such efforts to further peace and normalization across the Middle East.

Question. During your tenure as U.N. Ambassador, the United States abstained at the United Nations Security Council on a one-sided resolution that sought to impose solutions to final status issues on the parties. Seventy-nine senators subsequently backed a resolution objecting to the abstention. In hindsight, do you believe that vote advanced American interests or moved the peace process forward?

Answer. During my time as Ambassador to the U.N., I worked tirelessly to combat bias against Israel and end Israel's unfair isolation at the United Nations. The U.S. Mission to the United Nations helped secure several notable firsts for Israel under my leadership, including bringing about recognition of Yom Kippur as a U.N. holiday; convening an unprecedented session on antisemitism in the U.N. General Assembly; spearheading Israel's full and equal participation across numerous U.N. bodies; and lobbying to ensure Israel's historic selection as chair of a powerful U.N. committee (the Sixth Committee, the main U.N. forum for addressing questions of international law).

This context is important in addressing the Obama administration's vote on UNSCR 2334. President Obama instructed me to abstain on UNSCR 2334 in order to try to preserve prospects for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He saw the vote as consistent with bipartisan policy, dating back almost 50 years at the time, of supporting two states and opposing unilateral measures by either side that could impede prospects for two states. The resolution included a condemnation of all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terrorism and incitement, and it expressed concern about Israeli settlement activities, reaffirming the long-standing U.S. position on settlements.

During my explanation of the U.S. vote, I denounced persistent anti-Israel bias at the U.N. and described our numerous efforts (including those mentioned above) "to fight for Israel's right simply to be treated just like any other country." I also explained President Obama's posture on the resolution: "It is because this forum too often continues to be biased against Israel; because there are important issues that are not sufficiently addressed in this resolution; and because the United States does not agree with every word in this text, that the United States did not vote in favor of the resolution. But it is because this resolution reflects the facts on the ground—and is consistent with U.S. policy across Republican and Democratic administration throughout the history of the State of Israel—that the United States did not veto it."

(The full explanation of vote, from December 23, 2016, is available here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20161231232014/https://usun.state.gov/remarks/7621>)

If confirmed, I will work to advance President Biden's strong support for the U.S.-Israel relationship, as well as to enhance prospects for two states by working to responsibly restart humanitarian and development assistance in the West Bank and Gaza in accordance with all legal requirements, including the Taylor Force Act.

Question. The Helms amendment states, "No foreign assistance funds may be used to pay for the performance of abortion as a method of family planning or to motivate or coerce any person to practice abortions." If confirmed, can you guarantee there will be a strict adherence to the Helms amendment in the administration of U.S. foreign assistance?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID fully abides by all U.S. laws, including the Helms Amendment.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. SAMANTHA POWER BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. After enduring a decade of conflict, humanitarian needs in Syria are projected to only increase. President Biden pledged to recommit the U.S. to lead on humanitarian issues including to pursue political solutions, protect vulnerable Syrians and facilitate the work of NGOs.

- What specific actions will USAID take under your direction to reassert U.S. humanitarian leadership and efforts in Syria? What tools are available to the U.S. to ensure continued humanitarian access into and within Syria?

Answer. As U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., I worked tirelessly to hold the Assad regime and its backers accountable for their war crimes, and to provide humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people. Among these efforts, in 2014 I helped lead the U.N. Security Council to authorize U.N. agencies to deliver relief into Syria without explicit approval from the Syrian Government, allowing millions of people to receive assistance that the Assad regime had been blocking. Today, USAID's humanitarian assistance is reaching an estimated 4.8 million people per month inside Syria and 1.1 million Syrian refugees in the region. The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance inside Syria and across the region, contributing close to \$13 billion since the start of the conflict. If confirmed, I will continue to be a forceful advocate for delivering critically-needed humanitarian aid to the Syrian people, and ensure that the United States continues to play a leading role in protecting vulnerable civilians by advocating for unhindered humanitarian access, coordinating with other donors, and encouraging other donors to increase their support to the response. I will also work with Secretary of State Blinken and Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield to ensure that the U.S. Government continues to advocate in the U.N. Security Council and on the international stage to improve the lives of the Syrian people, including through the reauthorization of the aforementioned U.N. cross-border assistance and to advance a long-overdue negotiated political settlement to end the Syrian conflict.

Question. How can USAID play a role in bringing about a political solution in Syria? What tools are available to the U.S. through USAID to better support our allies in Northeastern Syria?

Answer. While assistance will not solve the conflict in Syria, it is a vital component of the effort to create conditions for peace by saving lives, providing some measure of stability to vulnerable populations, and uniting partners and allies in support of the Syrian people. If confirmed, in addition to ensuring that as many Syrians as possible are able to receive critically-needed assistance, I will support administration-wide efforts to advance a negotiated political settlement, which is the only way to end this conflict. I will also explore USAID support for civil society actors who are documenting war crimes and pursuing accountability, a critical complement to pursuit of a stable peace. The Biden administration redoubled the U.S. commitment to our allies in northeast Syria by lifting the previous administration's freeze on stabilization funds. If confirmed, I will ensure not only that these critical programs continue, but that they complement the larger administration-wide efforts to advance a negotiated political settlement.

Question. It is imperative for U.S. foreign assistance to aim to break down gender-related barriers to educational attainment in countries where there is persistent gender disparity. This is particularly important in secondary school when girls are the most likely to drop out. In many contexts, poverty and entrenched social and cultural norms can limit girls' access to quality learning opportunities.

- How can USAID better provide holistic support to ensure adolescents stay enrolled in and complete secondary school?

Answer. USAID promotes a "whole-of-girl" approach, reducing gender-based violence and increasing the capability of all learners, of all gender identities, to realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, and make independent decisions. If confirmed, I commit that USAID will continue to break down gender-related barriers to education so that all learners, especially girls and the most marginalized, have access to safe, quality education from early childhood through adulthood, especially during adolescence, a crucial time in girls' lives. Part of this approach is recognizing that menstrual health and hygiene is an integral part of dignity and empowerment for adolescent girls, including their ability to attend and stay in school. USAID will also continue to prioritize the needs of the most marginalized and those in vulnerable situations, and address inequalities that have been exacerbated by COVID-19. Ensuring that we continue to make progress in this area is critically important not just for empowering young women, but for achieving lasting advances on behalf of

society as a whole and creating conditions for a more equitable response to the fall-out from the pandemic. For example, addressing gender inequality in education contributes to closing gender gaps in employment and wages, which have in turn been shown to reduce income inequality and lead to overall increases in GDP.

Question. USAID's global health programs are critical to providing sexual and reproductive health care for women and girls. However, research has shown that a 10 percent decline in the use of contraceptives—such as due to the COVID-19 pandemic—could result in more than 48 million women with an unmet need for modern contraception and more than 15 million additional unintended pregnancies. If confirmed, I hope you will not only support international family planning as a priority for USAID, but also the partners on the ground who implement these programs.

- How will you work to expand and improve USAID's family planning and reproductive health programs?

Answer. I believe that reproductive health care is essential to women's health and well-being and also positively impacts infant and child health. Now more than ever, as countries battle COVID-19 and the secondary effects from the pandemic, we must strengthen our efforts to reach those most vulnerable, including women who benefit from voluntary family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) programs. The administration is committed to ensuring that foreign assistance programs prioritize women's health needs globally, including robust support for voluntary family planning and maternal health programs, and for preventing gender-based violence.

Question. What needs to be done to increase access to sexual and reproductive health care amidst the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer. The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected all global health efforts, including routine vaccination programs for children, voluntary family planning and reproductive health programs, women and children's access to basic health care, and the distribution of treatments to control neglected tropical diseases, as well as tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV/AIDS. If confirmed, I will work with USAID global health experts to ensure funding is prioritized to activities, including voluntary family planning and reproductive health activities, that will support regaining the progress lost during the pandemic.

Question. Is there a way for the U.S. to better engage with partners and allies on the provision of family planning services? What would that look like?

Answer. USAID is the largest bilateral donor for voluntary family planning and reproductive health assistance globally. Other donors, partner governments, and civil society actors have historically looked to USAID for leadership because of its strong reputation for technical excellence. The administration is committed to restoring U.S. global health leadership, including as it relates to voluntary family planning and reproductive health, which will require effective partnerships to improve coordination and investments and strengthen linkages across diverse global health programs. If confirmed, I will look for ways that USAID can advance voluntary family planning and reproductive health programming with our partners and allies around the globe.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. SAMANTHA POWER BY SENATOR ROB PORTMAN

Extremism and the Global Fragility Act

Question. Despite the best efforts of both parties and their respective administrations, the threat from Salafi-Jihadi extremism persists to this day. The Global Fragility Act passed by Congress last year changed our approach to conflict-prone states that can be vectors of violent extremism, uncontrolled migration, and extreme poverty by dedicating \$1.5 billion toward this space and establishing a new Bureau for Development, Democracy and Innovation at USAID.

- How will you effectively use this legislation to direct our approaches toward countering fragile states?

Answer. This is a key priority. We need a comprehensive approach and more tools to prevent conflict and increase stability. If confirmed, I will consult with Congress on the implementation of the U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (the "GFA strategy"). It is my understanding that the list of priority countries is currently being considered by the interagency, with USAID participation. After country selection, we will need to bring a range of U.S. policy tools to bear in imple-

menting the GFA strategy and associated country and regional plans. If confirmed, I commit to consulting with you and Congress frequently to support the implementation of the Act with State and DOD.

Latin America

Question. I would like to talk about the importance of Latin America and the role of the United States in the economic and democratic development of this region.

Last week I led a bipartisan CODEL to El Paso to see firsthand the crisis on the border. We are seeing people fleeing extreme poverty from the Northern Triangle countries—Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. I am very supportive of building a robust border protection system to physically protect our border, but I also understand the necessity to help these fragile countries address the root causes of illegal immigration such as extreme poverty and breakdown in security.

The latest numbers are deeply concerning. 550 kids per day are coming into the United States, mostly from the Northern Triangle countries, which is five or six times more than in January, when there were less than 100 in terms of families. In terms of families, 1,500 per day last week, as compared to 1,000 in February—on average, less than 100 in January. This is a 15 times increase when compared to previous data.

- Do you believe that that is an appropriate condition to us spending what President Biden has now suggested, which is another \$4 billion on top of the \$3.6 billion that has been sent in the last five years?

Answer. As you note, President Biden proposed a multi-year, \$4 billion comprehensive regional strategy to address the root causes of irregular migration. I agree that any funding needs to be accountable and channeled to evidence-based programming. Since the specific drivers of irregular migration cannot be generalized across communities or even countries, USAID tailors and adapts programs that address the root causes of irregular migration to the unique needs of each country and community; the extensive use of data is critical and is an integral part of these efforts. By tracking migration trends, the Agency is able to focus resources geographically in response to local drivers of migration.

I gather that USAID is addressing the distinct and overlapping security, governance, and economic drivers of irregular migration to the United States from Central America in partnership with other U.S. Government agencies, including, as mandated in Executive Order 14010, by working with the State Department to develop a forthcoming strategy on addressing the root causes of irregular migration from the region. USAID seeks to combat crime and violence by reaching at-risk youth, addressing corruption and impunity, disrupting the activities of transnational criminal organizations, and providing vulnerable citizens with greater economic opportunity, social services, and protection. Through this work, USAID helps to foster an environment where families can envision their futures in their home countries and communities. If confirmed, I will work to build and expand on this foundation and look forward to consulting with you about how best to ensure these programs are tailored to optimize results.

Question. Do you commit to work with Congress on asylum seekers to have them apply from their home country or a safe third country?

Answer. Under President Obama, in my capacity as White House Coordinator for Iraqi Refugees while serving at the NSC, I saw the importance of the in-country processing efforts in Iraq that had initially been established in 2008, and as U.N. Ambassador, I supported President Obama's establishment of the Central American Minors (CAM) Refugee program, which President Biden has announced will continue under his administration. As you know, USAID is not involved in asylum policy or enforcement of border security, so if confirmed, I would defer to the Departments of Homeland Security and the State Department.

Question. Do you commit to placing an emphasis on combating corruption, especially through the Millennium Challenge Corporation through programming in the northern triangle countries?

Answer. Yes. Corruption can itself be a driver of migration and of course makes it more difficult to address a wide range of development challenges—from global health and food security, to economic development and fair trade, to maintaining strong alliances. If confirmed, I plan to renew USAID's focus on governance and anti-corruption programs in the Northern Triangle and, in my role on the Board of Directors at the MCC, I commit to placing an emphasis on combating corruption.

Question. Do you commit to emphasizing an adherence to transparency and rule of law in Latin America and beyond?

Answer. Yes, I commit to the importance of transparency and the rule of law in Latin America and beyond.

Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA)

Question. The Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA), which is a program I created during my time serving in the House, remains a top priority for me. This is a “debt-for-nature” swap program that offers eligible developing countries options to relieve or restructure concessional debt owed to the U.S. in exchange for supporting conservation activities for tropical forests and coral reefs. Through the TFCA program, approximately \$233 million in appropriated funds from the U.S. Government have generated nearly \$340 million through interest and leveraging from NGOs and private entities.

To date, 20 agreements have been carried out with 14 different countries to save more than 67 million acres of tropical forest. Tropical forests are valuable tools for carbon storage. These TFCA agreements have led to the sequestration of more than 56 million metric tons of carbon dioxide—that’s the equivalent of taking 11.8 million cars off the road—and without losing a single American job. In fact, this program has helped developing countries by improving their balance sheet through debt-for-nature swaps.

TFCA was provided \$15 million in appropriations for both fiscal years 2020 and 2021. USAID, in coordination with the Treasury Department and the State Department, is one of the key agencies responsible for carrying out TFCA agreements.

- If you are confirmed to be Administrator of USAID, will you commit to prioritizing additional TFCA deals using the funding that Congress has provided?

Answer. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue, which I was grateful to have the chance to discuss with you. I certainly agree that this is win-win programming. I gather that USAID works closely with the State Department and Treasury in an effort to program TFCA agreements, including those addressing coral reef conservation. I understand that TFCA programs have generated substantial additional resources through capital gains from fund investments, cost-sharing by grant recipients, and co-financing with other donors. If confirmed, I commit to prioritizing additional deals with TFCA funding.

Africa and Great Power Competition

Question. China has focused heavily on Africa as a part of their Belt and Road Initiative. While China has provided much needed infrastructure spending and benefits to some countries on the continent, I am concerned about shifts in Chinese investment away from development initiatives toward projects that are more aligned with military purposes. At the same time, many countries have traded infrastructure and development for natural resource rights and burdensome debt obligations.

- How will you effectively lead USAID to counter China’s influence in Africa? How can we do a better job of highlighting the benefits of working with America rather than the CCP?

Answer. Competition with China is one of the defining challenges of the 21st century for the United States, and engaging with our African partners to pursue shared strategic interests in advancing security, protecting global health, fighting climate change, strengthening democracy, and spurring equitable economic growth must be a cornerstone of our global strategy to counter China. In this regard, U.S.-African trade and investment initiatives have a critical role to play in meeting this challenge head-on. In Africa, the United States offers a meaningful alternative to China’s predatory economic approach, and we must continue to work to ensure that American companies can compete on an even playing field at the same time we promote local entrepreneurship and fair practices. Despite the massive amounts of money that Beijing has invested in Africa, people in many African nations are voicing growing concerns over China’s lack of transparency, lending practices, poor environmental record, and failure to invest in relationships with local communities. In these and other areas, the United States has multiple comparative advantages that we must work across agencies to demonstrate. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting further with you and to working with other Departments and Agencies as well as the business community to help ensure that the U.S. is pursuing trade and investment initiatives from a position of strength. I also look forward to digging into the communications dimension of this challenge, because we need to be strategic about how we amplify the tenets of the U.S. approach and how we highlight for our local partners the ways in which U.S. investments are responsive to local needs and priorities.

Question. China has also exported a number facial recognition and security software programs for law enforcement, the same systems that are being used to enable the genocide in Xingjian against the Uyghurs, to effectively “coup-proof” authoritarian regimes on the African continent.

- Do you see this as a threat for democracy promotion in Africa, and how can we help you to be successful in pushing back against this threat?

Answer. Yes. China’s use of facial recognition and security software programs for law enforcement are a threat to democracy and freedom of expression in Africa. Freedom has been declining globally for 15 consecutive years, and China and Russia are using their resources, influence, and technology to buttress autocrats and undermine and interfere with democratic institutions. In Africa, USAID supports efforts to uphold civil society efforts to advocate for fundamental rights, such as freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, and to hold credible, free, and fair elections. I appreciate your offer of support. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize this critical work and look forward to working with you and your colleagues to devise new strategies for countering this growing threat.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. SAMANTHA POWER BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

Virginia Tech Innovation Lab

Question. The Feed the Future Integrated Pest Management Innovation Lab (IPMIL), funded by USAID and managed by Virginia Tech, has been in operation since 1993. In that time, the program has generated nearly \$2 billion in economic benefits for developing countries, funded 500+ graduate students, and collaborated with more than 100 institutions. Unfortunately, in a deviation from its historic review process for innovation labs, USAID has not renewed IPMIL for a full five-year contract since 2014; rather, it is now operating on its second one-year no-cost extension that is set to expire in November 2021. USAID’s Bureau for Resilience and Food Security has also established a new Future Innovation Lab for Current and Emerging Threats to Crops (CETC), for which the agency is now soliciting proposals.

Given the potential overlap between IPMIL and the CETC, I recently led a letter with Senate and House colleagues to Acting Administrator Steele in support of IPMIL, including seeking clarity on the status of the program at Virginia Tech moving forward. Should you be confirmed, I look forward to USAID’s attention to the matter

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to looking into this matter and getting back to you.

USAID Collaboration with Research Universities

Question. USAID has a strong tradition of working with universities to utilize their expertise to help address some of the most challenging global development challenges. Feed the Future Innovation Labs are one part of that partnership and are critical in advancing the solutions needed to help reduce global hunger, poverty, and undernutrition. If confirmed, are there new programs and collaborations you envision with strong research universities like those in Virginia? Will you consider expanding innovation labs to help reach more countries?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I would explore opportunities to deepen USAID’s collaboration with research universities. USAID greatly values its partnership with the U.S. university community and the unparalleled research capacity that these institutions bring to the U.S. Government’s global hunger and food security initiative, Feed the Future. The U.S. university-led Feed the Future Innovation Labs are central to leveraging American science and innovation to solve problems facing food-insecure regions, and they are doing so in ways that build local and national capacity in partner countries. I gather that the cutting-edge portfolio of Innovation Labs evolves as new challenges emerge and new research pathways open up for making progress in food security, strengthening climate resilience and accelerating improved nutrition, and if confirmed, I look forward to engaging in that process and discussing any new opportunities with you.

New Partnership Initiative (NPI)

Question. The New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) was established to diversify USAID’s partner base by creating avenues for new and underutilized partners to

work with USAID. Through NPI, the Agency promotes local leadership, seeks bold and innovative approaches to fostering self-reliance, and identifies new sources of funding to sustain partnership and scale impact. It is one of the only tools the agency has to effectively work with new partners.

- How will you work to ensure that mechanisms like the New Partnerships Initiative are maintained as effective tools in partnering with new, innovative, and locally established organizations?

Answer. I recognize the longstanding challenge of enlisting new and non-traditional partners. It is my understanding that approximately 80 percent of USAID funding went to just 75 organizations in 2017, and by 2019 only 69 organizations were receiving the same share. The number of new partners has declined every year since 2011. Reducing the barriers to engaging with and accessing resources from USAID is important, and I strongly believe in diversifying the Agency's partnership base. Doing so will help to broaden the USAID's perspectives and approaches in order to address development and humanitarian challenges. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID continues to build on and expand efforts to be more inclusive in partnering with a broader set of organizations to achieve our objectives, while ensuring that the Agency meets relevant requirements.

Community Health Workers

Question. Community health workers, the vast majority of whom are women, have been a critical part of the response to COVID-19 and other endemic diseases around the world. According to a recent report commissioned by Malaria No More and the United Nations Foundation, investments in community-based health programs help prevent 75 million malaria cases annually, reducing the burden on the health systems of low-income countries. Unfortunately, in many countries community health workers are not well supported or compensated.

- How can USAID support community health workers so that they have the resources they need?

Answer. Community health workers (CHWs) have long been central to responding to basic health needs, confronting global health threats (including Ebola, Zika, malaria, and now of course COVID-19), and providing life-saving assistance in humanitarian emergencies. CHWs are an essential part of the global health workforce and often the only source of care for their communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the need for CHWs, placing additional demands on these critical frontline workers and requiring communities to redirect resources to support COVID-19 response, when other health threats remain. USAID recommends that host country governments include CHWs in health systems as a professional cadre that are a critical part of a sustainable health workforce. If confirmed, I commit to continuing to advance programs that support and equip CHWs with the resources they need.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. SAMANTHA POWER BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. The coronavirus worsened the existing global food crisis. An estimated 130 million more people were on the brink of starvation last year due to factors caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Many of these individuals are in countries already experiencing instability from locust infestations, military conflict, and extreme poverty.

- In what ways would you alter the previous planning and strategies for U.S. food security efforts in light of the coronavirus impacts?

Answer. The pandemic has exacerbated food insecurity and malnutrition worldwide, with the most vulnerable bearing the brunt of its impact. The World Bank estimates that in 2020 as many as 124 million people fell into poverty and hunger as a result, and expects this number to increase significantly this year to as much as 163 million people. The nutrition impacts are equally devastating, putting millions more children at risk. In the face of COVID-19, the U.S. Government's Feed the Future initiative to end global hunger, is adapting its vital programming to mitigate and deal with the impacts on food systems and nutrition. Specifically, I understand that Feed the Future is leveraging its existing global portfolio to respond to the crisis in the following ways: (1) engaging governments on trade and inclusive economic growth policies; (2) bolstering small and medium sized enterprises throughout the food system and unlocking private sector funds to accelerate eco-

conomic recovery, growth and employment; (3) transitioning households and communities off of assistance through economic inclusion models; and (4) supporting governments to create and strengthen their existing social protection systems, including shock-responsive safety nets and risk financing. It will be critical to further leverage Feed the Future as countries rebuild economically in the long wake of the pandemic, and I understand that USAID is currently looking at ways to do this.

Question. For more than 50 years, USAID's global health programs have focused on saving lives and protecting vulnerable populations from disease. The United States works extensively with countries across the globe to strengthen public health systems. There are a finite amount of resources available to address the current global pandemic. Yet, the needs continue to expand.

- What is your strategy to ensure USAID is assisting those countries most in need due to the coronavirus pandemic?

Question. What indicators or criteria will you rely upon to make decisions on how to best utilize U.S. resources to combat the coronavirus?

Answer. I am committed to ensuring that USAID's COVID-19 work is needs-based and evidence-driven. If confirmed, I will work with the team at USAID to ensure that we prioritize resources based on rigorous needs-analysis and clear performance metrics. It is my understanding that USAID is developing a COVID-19 response plan, in coordination with interagency partners, to meet critical and immediate health and humanitarian needs such as vaccine readiness and acute food insecurity, but also to address the wide range of second-order impacts of the pandemic. If confirmed, I will support the development of this response plan and ensure USAID invests new COVID-19 resources in a way that best responds to the pandemic. I will also work with experts within USAID and across the inter-agency to apply epidemiologic indicators and other criteria to guide resource allocations, recognizing the complex and dynamic nature of the first- and second-order impacts of the pandemic. And across the board, I will prioritize transparency and accountability in decision-making, and use data and analysis to guide the use of funds.

Question. In 1985, USAID created the Famine Early Warning Systems Network to provide objective, evidence based analysis to plan for and respond to acute food insecurity.

- Is this something that USAID can use as a model to work on an early warning system for global health pandemics?

Answer. Yes, I believe that the Famine Early Warning Systems Network is a useful model to inform our efforts to improve early warning systems for infectious disease epidemics and pandemics, in terms of establishing a data-driven approach to predict outbreaks. The challenge will be to establish objective, evidence-based epidemiologic criteria for tiered risk classification systems, and to link relevant data to recognize threats early and take actions to prevent new outbreaks from becoming epidemics or pandemics. If confirmed, I pledge to work with other U.S. government departments and agencies, and the international community, to improve early warning systems for infectious disease epidemics and pandemics.

Question. What role should USAID play in the U.S.'s global health security strategy to make us better prepared to combat any future global health pandemic?

Answer. Ensuring global health security for the United States will require that all countries be capable of preventing, detecting, and responding effectively to health security risks and public health emergencies. USAID will work in partnership with other international organizations and public and private stakeholders to help implement the U.S.'s global health security strategy. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID continues to work in close collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of State, and other interagency partners, to strengthen global health security across the globe to ensure we are positioned to prevent or respond to future pandemics.

Question. In July 2019, USAID's Inspector General testified before Congress on the management challenges impacting USAID. One major management challenge identified was assessing and responding to the risk in providing humanitarian and stabilization assistance.

Inspector General Ann Barr's testimony stated, "Insufficient risk assessments not only leave USAID programs and services vulnerable to exploitation, but they also put USAID in the position of attempting to mitigate threats it does not understand. The adverse effects of poor planning, monitoring and evaluation were demonstrated in the fraud schemes that our agents uncovered in Iraq and Syria and across Africa, some of which involved diversions of USAID-funded commodities to terrorists."

- How will you address the issues of insufficient risk assessments, monitoring and evaluations at USAID?

Answer. It is important for USAID to act in the interest of the American people, and to provide foreign assistance and build partnerships where there is the greatest need, which is often in difficult situations. Risks that are inherent to operating in conflict settings and challenging environments can be mitigated, but never eliminated. Monitoring risk, and measuring and analyzing results-and adapting when programs fall short-is part of the day-to-day management of USAID's operations. Of course, there is always room for improvement and innovation. If confirmed, I look forward to pushing USAID even further on finding innovative ways to quickly gather information to adapt programs and better achieve results, while also ensuring proper vetting and accountability to U.S. taxpayers.

Question. What steps will you take to strengthen current procedures aimed at preventing diversions of U.S. taxpayer resources going to terrorists?

Answer. USAID conducts extensive screening to mitigate risk and safeguard U.S. foreign assistance from diversion to organizations or individuals posing a threat to national security. USAID has a robust system for partner vetting to mitigate the risk of funds supporting terrorist groups. I understand that since it began tracking these figures in 2015, USAID estimates that it has prevented more than \$800 million from supporting or benefitting people and entities that do not meet USAID vetting requirements. Further, USAID applicants are required to sign certifications and assurances stating that they have not knowingly provided material support or resources to terrorist groups or individuals/entities affiliated with terrorist groups. This risk mitigation has allowed USAID to continue to work in the highest-risk environments, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee on this important priority.

Question. Will you commit to doing a full audit of USAID funds and programs to ensure U.S. resources are not going to support terrorist groups and entities on the Specially Designated Nationals and Block Persons list?

Answer. I am committed to ensuring that USAID funding does not fall into the wrong hands, whether it be terrorism, fraud, or waste. I understand that USAID has numerous safeguards, financial accountability mechanisms and an independent Office of Inspector General, whose work I am committed to supporting if I am confirmed.

Question. During a Senate investigation into the World Vision's interactions with the Islamic Relief Agency (ISRA), redacted emails were uncovered implying that when you were the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations you were involved in efforts to delist the ISRA from the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN) list. Specifically, your office appears to have requested OFAC review the designation without a formal request from ISRA. The U.S. Treasury sanctioned ISRA for its support of terrorism including direct financial support to Usama bin Laden, Al Qaida, the Taliban, and Hamas.

- Why were you and your office involved with seeking a review of the ISRA's placement on the SDN list?
- What efforts did you and your office take to discourage the delisting of ISRA from the SDN list?
- Please describe all the efforts you and your office took while serving as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations to advocate for or provide assistance in the delisting process for entities on the Specially Designated Nationals and Block Persons list.
- As Administrator of USAID, when would you consider it appropriate to assist entities in requesting a review of their placement on the SDN list outside the general Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) parameters?
- Will you commit to providing this committee and the rest of Congress timely and substantive responses to oversight inquiries?

Answer. As U.N. Ambassador, I was not involved in any effort to delist ISRA; nor did I do anything to "assist" this or any other entity on the SDN list. Indeed, the opposite is true. Under my leadership, as is documented in public records, the U.S. Mission to the United Nations (U.S.-U.N.) worked tirelessly to rebut ISRA's false claims that it had been wrongly designated on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons list by the U.S. Government. During my tenure, U.S.-U.N. repeatedly raised questions about ISRA's status and funding in order to force the United Nations Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to postpone the consideration of ISRA for accreditation.

In support of these efforts to prevent the accreditation of ISRA by the United Nations Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, U.S.–U.N. maintained the standard practice of regularly coordinating with the U.S. State and Treasury Departments to ensure U.S. diplomats at the U.N. had the most up-to-date information available.

Please find records of some of U.S.–U.N.’s actions at the January 2014, January 2015, and May 2015 sessions of the United Nations Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations:

- <https://www.un.org/press/en/2014/ecosoc6593.doc.htm>;
- <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/ecosoc6662.doc.htm>;
- <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/ecosoc6694.doc.htm>;

As Ambassador, in addition to repudiating ISRA’s efforts to rehabilitate itself, I often used my platform to draw attention to the crimes and dangerous activities of organizations on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons list. If confirmed, I can assure you that I share the goal of ensuring that the U.S. Agency for International Development takes all appropriate measures to prevent misuse of its funding—whether for terrorism, corruption, or any other types of abuse. I further confirm my commitment to cooperate and provide Congress with timely and substantive responses to inquiries, if confirmed.

Question. With a national debt over \$28 trillion, it is more important than ever for the government to be good steward of taxpayer funds. USAID must design and implement programs in the most effective and efficient manner. Every agency needs to be carefully evaluated and streamlined to eliminate duplicative and wasteful spending.

- What reforms will you take to improve the effectiveness of U.S. international development assistance?

Answer. I agree with the principle of aid effectiveness and that USAID’s programs should encourage self-reliance and sustainability. My vision for USAID’s role includes traditional development priorities. It also applies a broader lens that recognizes U.S. foreign assistance within core U.S. national security priorities, including advancing democracy and human rights, mitigating the effects of conflict, and promoting global health in a collaborative manner with civil society partners and governments. If confirmed, I commit to advancing sound, evidence-based development and humanitarian programming that continues to improve aid effectiveness, self-reliance, and sustainability.

Question. What actions will you take, if any, to prevent fraud, waste and abuse at USAID?

Answer. All USAID employees have a statutory duty and responsibility to promote accountability in the Agency’s programs and activities. Every USAID employee is responsible for assisting the Office of Inspector General, by promptly reporting instances of waste, fraud, or abuse. Furthermore, I understand that USAID has a number of policies and requirements in place to prevent fraud throughout the solicitation, award, and management of our grants and contracts. I understand that when instances of fraud, waste, and abuse do occur, the Agency considers a variety of award remedies, such as disallowed costs, special award conditions, and/or award suspension or termination. In addition, implementing partners and individuals who have committed fraud, waste, abuse, or other serious misconduct are subject to a number of accountability actions, including exclusion from receiving future U.S. Government funds through USAID’s suspension and debarment program.

Question. What opportunities exist for streamlining, efficiencies and savings at USAID?

Answer. I agree that streamlining, efficiencies, and savings of taxpayer dollars is a priority. If confirmed, I look forward to looking for opportunities and continuing this conversation with you.

Question. A January Wall Street Journal article reported that you requested the “unmasking” of nearly 300 people in the last year of working for the Obama Administration as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. When U.S. intelligence agencies intercept the communications of private U.S. citizens, those individuals are “masked” to ensure their privacy is protected.

- How many U.S. citizens did you unmask during the time you worked as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations?
- What criteria did you use in determining whether it was appropriate to request the unmasking of a U.S. citizen?

- Given the large number of reported requests for unmasking made in your name, do you plan to refine your criteria going forward to ensure Americans privacy is appropriately protected?
- How will you protect the privacy of U.S. citizens as USAID Administrator?

Answer. Safeguarding classified information and protecting the privacy of US persons are serious responsibilities for anyone serving in a national security role within the US government. I have protected classified information and guarded the privacy of US persons throughout my career as a public servant, and I will continue to do so if I am confirmed as USAID Administrator.

While serving as U.N. Ambassador and as a cabinet member advising the President on the full range of national security threats, I was a recipient of information prepared by intelligence professionals, which I used to do my job of protecting and defending the United States and advancing US national security interests. I did not discuss the contents of classified material with unauthorized personnel. On occasion, in order to understand the intelligence briefed to me, I asked questions about the individuals or entities referenced in intelligence. Any requests I made for identifying information were made solely for the purpose of understanding the intelligence in order to do my job. While I do not recall the specific number of such requests I made as U.N. Ambassador, the number attributed to me in press reports, including in the Wall Street Journal Editorial board opinion piece referenced here, is false. It is my understanding that the Office of the Director of National Intelligence is responsible for matters related to how intelligence professionals manage and record matters related to intelligence.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. SAMANTHA POWELL BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. In the waning days of the Trump administration, USAID unveiled its 2020 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy. Unfortunately, the policy was drafted behind closed doors and erased key LGBTQI+ rights, and denied comprehensive sexual and reproductive rights to all people. Will you commit to reviewing the 2020 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy, and updating it to make sure it is rights-affirming and inclusive of all marginalized identities, including LGBTQI+ individuals?

Answer. I understand that a review of the USAID Gender policy commenced March 2021. If confirmed, I will consult with you and other Members of the committee on the review. President Biden has been clear that he supports protections for LGBTQI+ people, as do I. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID programs and policies contribute to these efforts, by advocating for LGBTQI+ rights and programs around the world.

Question. What is your vision for elevating USAID's leadership within the executive branch to tackle the existential threat of climate change?

Answer. If confirmed, I would commit to working closely with Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry and the National Security Council's climate and energy directorate. The Biden administration's top priorities are developing an ambitious U.S. target and working with countries around the world to raise their ambition alongside the United States. President Biden is inviting leaders from major economies to a Leaders' Summit on Climate to discuss climate impacts and more importantly-what more can be done on a number of fronts moving forward climate action to keep a 1.5 degree Celsius warming trajectory in sight. Given that unsustainable land use accounts for one-quarter of global greenhouse emissions, USAID will work with countries and regions with globally important forests and carbon-rich landscapes to reduce deforestation and improve conservation, as well as reduce emissions from land use change in critical tropical ecosystems that serve as global carbon sinks.

Question. We must support the developing world in the transition towards renewable energy, while also better forecasting climate-driven disasters to minimize human impacts before they occur. Will you commit to increasing climate change mitigation and adaptation programming as a part of a proactive and robust USAID climate strategy?

Answer. Yes, I commit to increasing USAID's efforts to support reduced carbon emissions combating climate change, including climate change mitigation and adaptation programming. Addressing climate change will be a top priority for me, as it is for President Biden. If confirmed, I will expand the scale and urgency of USAID's

programming, building on USAID's strong foundation of local partnerships to address climate change. I will ensure that USAID continues to be a leader in supporting countries to reduce carbon emissions and that USAID provides further support for early warning systems which help communities prepare for and mitigate the impacts of climatic events.

Question. The coup in Burma has temporarily severed the democratic hopes for the Burmese people. The situation continues to devolve as the threat of civil war rises. As USAID Administrator, will you work to quickly increase and pivot U.S. assistance to strengthen civil society, protect the fundamental civil and political rights of the Burmese people, and lead the humanitarian community in contingency planning for increased humanitarian assistance levels?

Answer. I condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the military coup in Burma and the junta's ongoing violent crackdown against peaceful demonstrators. If confirmed, I look forward to working with and empowering the brave local and civil society actors who are advocating for civil and political rights under extraordinarily difficult and dangerous circumstances. I support the action taken by USAID immediately after the coup to redirect \$42.4 million from work that would have benefitted the Government to civil society and programs that directly benefit the people of Burma. Those programs focus on a range of objectives, such as improving health outcomes, strengthening the ability of civil society to guard democratic space, fostering food security, supporting independent media, and promoting peace and reconciliation in Burma's conflict-affected regions. If confirmed, USAID will also continue to provide critical life-saving humanitarian assistance to Rohingya and other vulnerable populations including in Rakhine, Chin, Kachin, and Shan states.

Question. Recent reports and statements from Secretary Blinken indicate an ethnic cleansing likely occurred in western Tigray. Humanitarian and media access continues to be constrained in rural areas. Concerns are mounting regarding the instability in the run up to the June elections. How will you work with the interagency to increase access and transparency, pursue accountability for victims, and provide oversight and capacity building assistance in a surge to promote a free and fair election?

Answer. The loss of life and mass displacement resulting from the conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region is profoundly disturbing. The violence against civilians must end, and unimpeded humanitarian access to the region must be granted without further delay. Ultimately, what is required is a constructive political dialogue between the parties and accountability for the atrocities committed by all sides. Ethiopia's successful transition to a more democratic, inclusive, and prosperous society is critical to U.S. interests. The administration, with support from members of Congress and U.N. representatives, has undertaken numerous diplomatic efforts to end the violence and provide humanitarian access. As a result of these efforts, Prime Minister Abiy recommitted to unhindered humanitarian access to Tigray. I understand that USAID staff in Addis and in Washington continue to push for real progress on these important issues. To your question on accountability for victims, while Prime Minister Abiy has recently acknowledged human rights abuses and violations and committed to ensuring that those responsible are held accountable, it will be essential to hold him to these commitments. If confirmed, I will both ensure that USAID continues to work with the interagency on these critical issues and work with the Secretary to ensure we can find a way to provide humanitarian assistance to the Ethiopian people and support, as appropriate, the pursuit of accountability.

Question. During the campaign, then-candidate Biden indicated that his top foreign policy priority would be "rallying the free world to push back against rising authoritarianism" and that "human rights will be at the core of U.S. foreign policy." Will you commit to re-vamping the role of human rights programming as a central pillar of USAID's development mandate?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will seek to deepen Agency investments in democracy, human rights and governance. With freedom in its fifteenth straight year of decline, there is more that the United States and USAID need to do on all fronts to counter authoritarian trends, support civil society, promote independent media, and protect human rights defenders.

Question. The U.N. has called gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls a "shadow pandemic" during the COVID-19 crisis. Will you commit to utilizing newly appropriated COVID-19 funds in working to curb GBV and other secondary impacts of the pandemic?

Answer. Yes. Preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV) is a critical component in the global response to COVID-19 and it is a priority for USAID. If confirmed, I will prioritize USAID's support for the prevention of and response to GBV that has emerged as a result of COVID-19. Various types of GBV become particularly pervasive during emergencies. As such, addressing GBV in emergencies is central to USAID's efforts, including our COVID-19 response. If confirmed, I will ensure that USAID programming continues to address GBV and that our programming prioritizes women and girls' health, psychological well-being, and safety. I understand that USAID is currently developing a COVID-19 Response Plan, a strategy that will seek to address second-order impacts of the pandemic, including increased rates of GBV, and improve protection and target the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized families and individuals.

Question. For the past 15 years USAID has promoted a "One Health" approach, bringing together disciplines such as medicine, veterinary medicine, public health, and ecosystem health to more effectively address emerging pandemic challenges. Tufts University is leading a new effort consistent with the "One Health" approach to analyze, communicate, and mitigate risks of zoonotic viral spillover in priority countries. Will you commit to strengthening this type of USAID programming that ensures lasting reduction of the risk of viral zoonotic spillover and disease so we can avoid repeating the experience of COVID-19?

Answer. COVID-19 is a grave reminder that biological threats—whether naturally emerging, accidental, or deliberate—pose a significant and potentially existential threat to humanity. USAID's partnership with countries throughout the world makes the Agency well-placed to prevent avoidable outbreaks, detect threats early, and respond rapidly when outbreaks occur. Preventing the next pandemic requires an approach that recognizes that the future well-being of humans, animals, and the environment are inextricably linked. History has shown us that we need to significantly increase resources for both risk reduction and the discovery of unknown viruses. To do this, we should focus on the discovery of new viruses and address current zoonotic diseases (e.g., Ebola viruses, coronaviruses) that pose the greatest risk of spilling from wildlife to humans. If confirmed, I commit to continuing this critical programming.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. SAMANTHA POWER BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

U.S. Foreign Assistance

Question. On December 10, 2020, President Trump issued Executive Order (EO) 13964, "Rebranding United States Foreign Assistance To Advance American Influence" which required U.S. Government Departments and Agencies to use a single logo for all U.S. foreign assistance.

- Please assess the degree to which such moves to ensure consistency and clarity in our aid contribute to the development of American soft power in general?

Answer. I am committed to branding and believe that branding sends a strong public diplomacy message, contributing to American soft power by conveying that our assistance is due to the generosity of the American people. Branding is also a critical element of a counter China strategy. Current branding regulations and policy continue to apply to USAID awards, and partners must continue to follow the branding requirements outlined in their assistance agreements.

China

Question. Please assess the degree to which such moves to ensure consistency and clarity in our aid contribute to the development of American soft power opposite Chinese development efforts?

Answer. China's approach to "development" through One Belt, One Road (OBOR) raises deep concerns for me and many people in USAID's partner countries. Projects connected to OBOR have come under significant scrutiny on issues such as corruption; unsustainable debt; environmental degradation; construction contracts and jobs being awarded to Chinese firms over local enterprises; lack of transparency and local consultations; and even worries about the potential erosion of sovereignty due to the unfavorable terms attached to certain projects. USAID needs a far-reaching strategy that addresses the challenges of OBOR, and I believe that frustrations around the world with China's development practices provide an opportunity for the U.S.

In addition to branding, the U.S. has a range of tools we can bring to bear including development aid, finance, and our innovative corporate sector. If confirmed, I will work aggressively to draw on America's comparative advantages in distinguishing the U.S. approach from the PRC's, by engaging directly with our partner countries and ensuring that good governance, sustainability, and social and economic safeguards are built into projects we support. If confirmed, I will look forward to working with my colleagues across many agencies to help ensure the U.S. is responding to Chinese development efforts from a position of strength.

Question. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is committing genocide against the Uyghurs and other minorities in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) that is ongoing. The Biden administration had sent differing signals about the degree to which administration officials assessed that genocide is indeed ongoing, but on March 22, 2021, Secretary Blinken correctly emphasized "the P.R.C. continues to commit genocide and crimes against humanity." USAID had and has a significant role to play in countering the CCP's genocide, and the agency had initiated a number of programs and outreach in that space. Those programs included efforts to preserve the cultural heritage of the Uyghurs, which is being directly targeted by the CCP.

- Do you agree with the assessment that the Chinese Government is engaged in a genocide against the Uyghurs and other minorities in the XUAR that is ongoing?

Answer. Yes. I agree with President Biden and experts who have studied the evidence that China is committing genocide in Xinjiang.

Question. What role do you see for USAID in countering that ongoing genocide, and more broadly the human rights atrocities being committed by the Chinese Communist Party?

Answer. I welcome Congress's bipartisan action on this issue, including the passage of the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act that holds perpetrators accountable for human rights violations and abuses against Uyghurs and other minorities in China. If confirmed, I will use my platform to draw attention to the horrors in Xinjiang and ensure that USAID actively engages with you, the committee, and the interagency to determine any further steps that can be taken.

Question. What is the status of programs aimed at preserving the cultural heritage of the Uyghurs within USAID?

Answer. I gather that USAID is developing programs to preserve the cultural heritage and promote the human rights of Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minorities in the Asia region. If confirmed, I will be eager to discuss these programs with you.

International Religious Freedom

Question. The Obama administration repeatedly failed to speak out on critical issues of religious liberty, including the plight of imprisoned Christians in Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Venezuela, Cuba, and Mexico. The result was a vacuum of American leadership. USAID has a critical role to play in highlighting and countering such persecution, as well as the plight of dissidents more broadly. Advancing international religious freedom (IRF) is a major foreign policy priority of the United States with bipartisan support, and I strongly believe that the agency must maintain and deepen decisions and commitments made by the Trump administration in that context.

- The Trump administration allocated resources to IRF-related projects in Iraq, Nigeria, and elsewhere. If confirmed, do you intend to maintain these projects?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support international religious freedom programs at USAID. I have a longstanding commitment to human rights, and a profound awareness of the risks of persecution faced by religious minorities. While serving at the NSC in the Obama administration, I advocated on behalf of Coptic Christians in Egypt who were experiencing violent attacks, and I met with Iraqi Christians while visiting Iraq to show support for their community. As Ambassador to the U.N., I used my platform to elevate the voices of religious minorities. I called for the release of Meriam Ibrahim, a Sudanese woman sentenced to death for refusing to denounce her Christian faith, and called on Sudan to repeal the laws that put her in jail in the first place. I gave a young Yazidi woman named Nadia Murad her first major public platform, inviting her to speak before the U.N. Security Council, after her family had been almost completely wiped out by ISIS and she had been forced into sexual slavery. In addition, I worked with the State Department's Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom and others in the administration to seek

recognition of ISIS's violence against the Yazidi people, Iraqi Christians, and Shiite Muslims as a genocide, which Secretary of State Kerry recognized in March of 2016. USAID has a history of helping the world's most vulnerable people, and it will continue to play a critical role in supporting communities persecuted or discriminated against because of their faith. If confirmed, I will review USAID's approach to ensure that our programs are most effectively supporting victims of religious persecution. Additionally, if confirmed, I look forward to exploring with you, the Agency's regional bureaus and Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships office, and diverse faith communities, how to mobilize resources and, as appropriate, tailor our programs to support individuals being subjected to religious persecution.

Question. Until recently the agency held monthly sessions for USAID's cross-Agency Sector Council on Strategic Religious Engagement and International Religious Freedom. Have such sessions of the Strategic Religious Engagement and International Religious Freedom been frozen, and if so why?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to looking into USAID's cross-Agency Sector Council on Strategic and Religious Engagement and International Religious Freedom and whether it is still holding sessions. I look forward to discussing with you.

Question. The Trump administration invested significantly in programs promoting IRF through USAID's Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) Center. What is the status of those programs?

Answer. USAID continues to implement programming, including through the DRG Center, that supports religious minorities. USAID is deeply committed to supporting the world's most vulnerable people, including members of religious minorities. USAID will continue to play a critical role in supporting communities around the world that are persecuted and/or discriminated against because of their faith.

Question. The Trump administration was considering support for a Yazidi Genocide Museum in Kocho. What is the status of that program? If it has been suspended or canceled, why?

Answer. I am not familiar with these deliberations or this program. If confirmed, I commit to learning more about it and consulting with you on this issue.

Question. The persecution of Christians in Nigeria has over the last decade emerged as a systematic problem that the U.S. and the global community have struggled to counter. Policy responses have been broadly inadequate, and have been hampered by disputes over the factors explaining the violence, including the degree to which the crisis is a function of farmer-herder clashes or religious extremism. In December 2020, the Department of State designated Nigeria as a country of particular concern (CPC) in response to pervasive and egregious violations of religious freedom, and USAID in particular engaged Nigerian bishops as part of countering the persecution of Christians by Boko Haram.

- What is your assessment of the degree to which the persecution of Christians in Nigeria is a function of farmer-herder clashes vs. explanations that the persecution is driven by religious violence?

Answer. Nigeria's deep structural problems have manifested in various violent conflicts which have escalated across the country. As I witnessed in my trip in 2016 to the Boko Haram-affected regions of Cameroon, Nigeria, and Chad, while these conflicts may have been originally rooted in resource competition, which includes farmer-herder clashes, they have evolved over time to include targeted attacks based on religion or ethnic identity. The violence is exacerbated by the proliferation of illicit weapons and a weak state security architecture.

Question. Have USAID officials, including and especially those tasked with advancing IRF, engaged Nigeria's community of bishops since February 1, 2021?

Answer. I gather that USAID works closely with the State Department at U.S. Embassy Abuja to advance religious freedom. For example, in March 2021, USAID supported the U.S. Ambassador's participation in a major gathering of Nigerian Christian leaders hosted by Cardinal John Onaiyekan. This meeting followed a July 2020 roundtable hosted by USAID with senior Christian clerics, including bishops. USAID regularly engages with religious leaders and faith-based organizations across multiple sectors of programming to respond to the impacts of Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria. In mid-March 2021, USAID met with leaders from the Christian Association of Nigeria, the Heads of Church Denominations, and the Dialogue, Reconciliation, and Peace Center.

Question. The Trump administration made a particular point of engaging churches and other faith organizations globally, and of increasing the amount of direct aid

that is disbursed through local churches rather than international aid agencies. The move was driven by several considerations, including concerns about corruption that is endemic to many such agencies, e.g. on March 19, 2021, the Department of Justice announced that the International Rescue Committee had agreed to pay \$6.9 million to settle allegations that it performed procurement fraud by engaging in collusive behavior and misconduct on programs funded by USAID. Critics of the policy have suggested that it entangles USAID in faith-based organizations in violation of USAID principles related to unbiased partnering and humanitarian principles.

- If confirmed, will you continue the Trump administration's policy of increasing the amount of direct aid disbursed through local churches? If not, why not?

Answer. Faith-based organizations are often the most trusted and deeply embedded groups in local communities. These organizations often serve remote, difficult to access communities and provide important social services, strengthen civic space, and ensure inclusive development. As I understand it, USAID has a robust history of engaging faith organizations to advance Agency goals and priorities. The Code of Federal Regulations (22 CFR 205.1) clarifies that faith organizations may compete for federal assistance funding on the same basis as other organizations, and that all funding decisions are made on the basis of merit, not religious or secular affiliation. If confirmed, I will support USAID's strong engagement with faith-based organizations, whenever and wherever appropriate, by ensuring field staff are equipped with the requisite skills and resources to advance development and humanitarian assistance goals.

Question. Do you believe that channeling aid through faith based organizations is in tension with USAID principles related to unbiased partnering or humanitarian principles? If so, please explain why.

Answer. Faith-based organizations are often the most trusted and deeply embedded groups in local communities. These organizations often serve remote, difficult to access communities and provide important social services, strengthen civic space, and ensure inclusive development and principled humanitarian assistance.

Question. Do you believe that channeling aid specifically through Nigerian Christian groups is in tension with USAID principles related to unbiased partnering and humanitarian principles? If so, please explain why.

Answer. Faith-based and community organizations are eligible to participate in USAID programs on the same basis as any other organization without regard to their religious character or affiliation. USAID humanitarian assistance is delivered solely on the basis of need regardless of political, religious, or other affiliation, in accordance with U.S. law and policy, and does not discriminate against nor favor one group over another. Delivering humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable people, including ethnic and religious minorities, is central to our work in Nigeria and a core value of USAID's humanitarian efforts worldwide. USAID takes significant steps to ensure our assistance reaches those who need it most and does not jeopardize their safety.

Israel

Question. In recent years Congress has passed a range of legislation limiting assistance to the Palestinian Authority (PA) and for activities that benefit the PA, e.g. the Taylor Force Act (TFA) (Title X of P.L. 115-141), which limits funding for activities that "directly benefit" the PA. TFA included certification language regarding a range of concerns related to PA policies and governance, including "payments for acts of terrorism against Israeli citizens and United States citizens." Part of the policy rationale for TFA's restrictions is that money is fungible: any aid that directly benefits the PA indirectly supports the PA's payments for acts of terrorism. Officials in the Biden administration have recently suggested that regardless of restrictions imposed by Congress the administration intends to pursue projects and increase assistance that "benefit[] ordinary Palestinians," implicitly in contrast to programs that would directly benefit the PA and therefore be noncompliant with TFA. Please describe your understanding of restrictions imposed by Congress on aid to the PA, especially your understanding of the distinction between aid that "directly benefits" the PA and other forms of aid.

- Can you commit that, if confirmed, you will ensure that USAID will not engage in projects or provide assistance for projects that directly benefit the PA?
- Can you commit that, if confirmed, you will ensure that USAID will not engage in projects or provide assistance for projects that are the same as, materially similar to, or successor projects to USAID projects and assistance that were suspended pursuant to TFA?

Answer. President Biden publicly supported passage of the Taylor Force Act, and he has never hesitated to condemn terrorism or incitement by Palestinian actors. He has made clear that this will continue during his administration. I appreciate Congressional concerns regarding U.S. aid that may benefit the PA and I can assure you that, if confirmed, USAID will continue to ensure that any provision of aid strictly adheres to relevant U.S. laws governing the provision of assistance in the West Bank and Gaza, including the Taylor Force Act. To comply with various legislative restrictions, including the Prisoner Payment Restriction (Section 7041(k)(3) of the FY 2020 SFOAA) and Taylor Force Act (P.L. 115-141), USAID conducts case specific analysis to ensure that USAID assistance is neither “for” nor “directly benefiting” the PA, consistent with the requirements and exceptions set forth in relevant statutes.”

Question. The Obama-Biden administration’s approach to the Israeli-Arab conflict was justified on the basis of a theory of regional relations in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict prevented broader Israeli-Arab rapprochement. Among other decisions, that administration implemented discriminatory policies that distinguished between Jewish communities in places Israel controlled before and after 1967. That approach culminated in December 2016, when the Obama administration maneuvered the United Nations Security Council into passing UNSCR 2334, which among other things denied Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights and part of its capital Jerusalem, including the Jewish Quarter.

The Trump administration systematically worked to hollow out and render UNSCR 2334 null and void. They did so, including by recognizing Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights, by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, by moving our embassy to Jerusalem, by seeking to end discriminatory approaches that distinguished legally and for the purposes of aid and trade between different Israeli communities, and by taking several other steps.

- Can you commit to ensuring that USAID’s approach to Israel, including cooperative projects, will not distinguish or discriminate between Israeli communities in places Israel controlled before and after 1967? If not, why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to advance the administration’s strong support for the U.S.-Israel relationship, as well as to enhance prospects for two states by working to responsibly restart humanitarian and development assistance in the West Bank and Gaza in compliance with all legal requirements, including the Taylor Force Act.

Question. Do you believe that a) Israel has sovereignty over the Golan Heights?; b) Israel has sovereignty over Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem? c) Israel is in illegal occupation of any part of Jerusalem?; d) Israel is in illegal occupation of the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. The administration’s position is that our embassy will remain in Jerusalem, which we recognize as Israel’s capital. The administration has made clear that the ultimate status of Jerusalem is a final status issue which will need to be resolved by the parties in the context of direct negotiations. I agree that the current Syrian regime and its Iranian allies poses a significant security risk to Israel and that the Golan Heights is critically important to Israel’s security.

Yemen

Question. On January 10, 2021, the State Department designated Ansarallah, sometimes called the Houthis, and Abdul Malik al-Houthi, Abd al-Khaliq Badr al-Din al-Houthi, and Abdullah Yahya al Hakim, three leaders of Ansarallah, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) pursuant to Executive Order 13224. On February 5 the Biden administration informed Congress of its intention to revoke those sanctions. The issue of aid was central to the public explanation of the decision: officials at the State Department have justified the delisting of what they described as the “broad” designation of Ansarallah on humanitarian grounds, e.g. that large parts of Yemen’s population live under areas controlled by the group. Since then the Houthis have escalated their violence across the region, bombarding civilians in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Yemen was already one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes in the world, in large part because the Houthis and their Iranian backers block aid, steal aid, and attack civilians.

- Please describe the role played by Iran and the Houthis in deepening the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen.

Answer. Iran’s support for the Houthis and the Houthis use of food as a weapon of war during the long-running conflict in Yemen has contributed to the gravest humanitarian crisis in the world. Moreover, I agree that Iran’s malign influence in the region, including in Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, has clear destabilizing effects.

Iran's support for terrorism and human rights abuses threatens U.S. forces and partners in the region in places like Iraq and Lebanon and hinders our ability to provide humanitarian assistance in places like Yemen and Syria. The U.S. Government continues to call on all parties to implement a comprehensive, nationwide ceasefire in Yemen. The crisis in Yemen will only be resolved when all parties to the conflict agree to a durable and peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Question. Please assess the degree to which the Biden administration's decision to lift terrorism sanctions against the Houthis and their leaders has enhanced the ability to deliver aid to Yemeni civilians in general.

Answer. The Houthis are far from benign actors, and their actions contribute to prolonging the suffering of the Yemeni people. However, the administration takes seriously the warnings from the U.N. and international humanitarian organizations that these designations could lead to a wide-scale famine. At the same time, the administration has been clear that it will not hesitate to apply pressure to push the Houthis to curb their abuses against the Yemeni people and to negotiate an end to the war. With the lifting of the terrorist sanctions, the U.S. can continue to provide humanitarian assistance to Yemen, and critical commercial trade, such as food and fuel, can flow freely. USAID has announced \$336 million in FY 2021 humanitarian funding that implementing partners can now use to provide lifesaving assistance to more than 13 million Yemenis. As this assistance moves forward, USAID will continuously monitor the Houthis' interference and our partners' access to populations in need to determine if our assistance is able to reach those for whom it is intended.

Question. Please assess the degree to which the Biden administration's decision to lift terrorism sanctions against the Houthis and their leaders has enhanced the ability to deliver aid to Yemeni civilians in Marib.

Answer. As referenced in the prior question, Houthi operations in Yemen exacerbate the already-catastrophic humanitarian situation in Yemen, and the Houthi leadership should be held accountable for their actions. However, while seeking to counter Houthi conduct, we must also consider the highly credible voices urging the United States not to make the country's humanitarian crisis worse or make it even harder to end Yemen's civil war. The Biden administration's action has enabled the U.S. to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to Yemenis, including to those affected by the recent escalation of conflict in Marib, and critical commercial trade, such as food and fuel, can resume.

Classified Information

Question. The Obama administration was broadly criticized, especially in the context of its Middle East policy, for co-mingling unclassified documents with classified documents. This practice requires that documents be placed in a secure location, unnecessarily limiting access to unclassified documents and stifling public debate. The Biden administration already seems to be repeating such practices: according to an exchange during the State Department press briefing on February 11, a notification describing the lifting of terrorism sanctions on Iran-controlled terrorists in Yemen was unnecessarily transmitted to a Congressional SCIF.

- Can you commit to ensuring that unclassified information is not unnecessarily comingled with classified information in notifications provided by the State Department to Congress? If not, why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working to ensure that information provided to Congress by USAID is in a format that facilitates its access by authorized personnel, while complying with Executive Order 13526, USAID's classification guide, and the executive branch rules on the handling and storage of classified information.

U.S. Foreign Policy

Question. U.S. foreign policy is a responsibility which cannot be delegated to foreign powers or international institutions. On the contrary, the weight of U.S. foreign policy comes in three parts from Congress: treaty ratification or rejection, domestic law that forms the basis for enforcing foreign policy positions, and the power over the purse.

- Do you agree that U.S. foreign policy is non-delegable to foreign powers, including international institutions, and that any enforcement of commitments made by the United States bilaterally or multilaterally must be authorized by Congress in the form of treaty ratification or domestic law?

Answer. I agree that the U.S. Government is solely responsible for conducting foreign policy on behalf of the American people, and that this responsibility cannot be

delegated outside the Government. Collaboration with other nations and private actors, including using platforms like international institutions, can be used to effectively implement U.S. foreign policy.

Question. In a 2003 piece for the New Republic you wrote, “And the American approach must cease its reliance on gratuitous unilateralism. We make rules and create international institutions precisely in order to bind states when their short-term interests would otherwise lead them toward defection. The United States is willing to bind itself to the World Trade Organization, because it knows it benefits more than any other country from free trade, but not to the ICC, because there is no good selfish reason to expose American citizens to external scrutiny. But the truth is that only U.S. resources and leadership can turn such institutions into forces for the international stability that is indispensable to U.S. security. Besides, giving up a pinch of sovereignty will not deprive the United States of the tremendous military and economic leverage it has at its disposal as a last resort.”

- Is it your view that the United States federal Government, through the resources of its taxpayers spent at international institutions, is responsible morally and legally for “international stability?”

Answer. The United States is not the world’s policeman. It is a critically important global leader and catalyst, and it has often used its resources and foreign policy tools to promote stability, development, democracy, and human rights, as well as to alleviate suffering in humanitarian contexts. As the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates, the welfare of Americans is often connected to the fate of people living elsewhere. As a result, to take but one example, investments in global health security are investments in the security, prosperity, and overall well-being of the American people. In addition, when the United States works with partners and allies and succeeds in exerting its influence at the United Nations and other global forums, we can be more effective in countering malign actors such as China, Russia and Iran—who would like nothing more than to undermine the democratic values, human rights norms, and rules of the international system that benefit the American people and contribute to global stability.

Question. Additionally, is it your view that in joining multilateral institutions and international agreements outside the treaty ratification process and changes in domestic law by Congress, the United States only “gives up a pinch of sovereignty?” If yes, do you believe it is appropriate for the president to unilaterally cede sovereignty to a foreign power or international governing body?

Answer. The President should always act to advance what is best for the American people. I believe that foreign policy should be conducted in accordance with U.S. law. I also believe that Congress has an important voice and should be consulted in foreign policy deliberations including with respect to international agreements and engagement with multilateral institutions.

Question. You note in the same piece that the United States constitutes “the very runaway state international law needs to contain.” Please elaborate on this view, and please specifically address how this view reconciles with the oath you will take if confirmed to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.”

Answer. This quote from eighteen years ago does not represent my view of the United States. I should not have used that language, especially because the article itself is an extended and passionate call for America’s moral leadership in the world.

In 2009, before I became NSC Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, I took the oath to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.” It was one of the greatest honors of my life. I did so again in 2013 when I became U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. As a public servant, I have been a tireless advocate for American values around the world and a relentless defender of the United States at the U.N. and elsewhere, standing up to malign actors such as China, Russia, Venezuela, Iran, Syria, North Korea, and others who seek to undermine U.S. interests. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to determine how to be maximally effective in promoting and protecting the interests of the American people, drawing on the important tools that USAID can bring to bear to promote freedom and prosperity.

Question. Religious liberty is a foundational American value enshrined in our First Amendment. USAID policy should respect and affirm life and religious liberty at all stages of the program cycle. This includes adherence to, at minimum, the Siljander and Helms amendments.

- If confirmed, do you commit to following these provisions of law in crafting and implementing USAID policies, procedures, and programs?

Answer. If confirmed, I will follow the law and ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including the Helms and Siljander amendments.

Food for Peace

Question. Food aid delivered to people in need abroad under the Food for Peace program currently falls subject to a requirement that 50 percent of the commodities are transported on U.S. built, flagged, and crewed vessels. Unfortunately, this requirement results in higher shipping costs, limited availability of vessels or vessels not appropriately outfitted for carrying food aid, and less food arriving to people in need due to food spoilage. A 2018 GAO report estimates that “for each \$40-million increase in shipping costs, food aid reaches one-million fewer recipients each year.”

- Is it your view that cargo preference requirements prevent vital aid from reaching intended recipients in a timely manner?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working with Congress to make USAID’s programming to combat rising food insecurity as effective and efficient as possible, and to build the resilience of vulnerable communities. Each of the food assistance modalities—U.S. in-kind food, locally and regionally procured food, and cash-based programming—complements the others in addressing food insecurity efficiently and effectively. At this time of unprecedented global humanitarian need, USAID’s ability to reach hungry people and improve the efficiency of our programs is of the utmost importance.

Question. Is it your view that USAID should be spending more of their resources allotted for Food for Peace on the aid products and commodities as opposed to transportation costs?

Answer. As USAID responds to an increasing number of complex and protracted humanitarian crises, the costs of providing emergency food assistance have unfortunately grown to reflect increased security and logistical needs. In FY 2020, USAID shipped more than 1.4 million metric tons of U.S.-grown agricultural commodities using Food for Peace Title II resources. Volatility in shipping costs is just one complex element USAID faces in the management of the Food for Peace Title II account as it responds to increasing food insecurity worldwide.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. SAMANTHA POWER BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. If you are confirmed, how will USAID contribute to efforts by the United States and our partner nations to counter the People’s Republic of China’s predatory and malign Belt and Road Initiative, including by bringing together governments, the private sector, and civil society to promote global infrastructure development. China’s Belt and Road Initiative uses predatory financing, debt-trap diplomacy, bribery, corruption, and other means to promote infrastructure projects in developing nations, with the goals of creating new markets for China’s “national champion” companies, capturing the loyalty of foreign government and business elites, and drawing developing nations—especially those in strategic locations or with strategically important resources—into Beijing’s geopolitical orbit.

Answer. Competition with China is one of the defining challenges of the 21st century for the United States. By advancing security, protecting global health, fighting climate change, strengthening democracy, and spurring equitable economic growth, USAID can play an integral role in helping the U.S. meet the challenges you have identified that are posed by the Belt and Road Initiative. The administration’s approach is to provide an alternative vision to Beijing’s—a vision that promotes democratic governance, transparency, and local ownership in our global development work. If confirmed, I will work aggressively to draw on America’s comparative advantages in distinguishing the U.S. approach from the PRC’s, by engaging directly with our partner countries and ensuring that good governance, sustainability, and social and economic safeguards are built into projects we support. USAID can strengthen local capacity to ensure that development investments are both beneficial and sustainable. If confirmed, I will work with allies and partners, including at the DFC and in the private sector, to better leverage our collective resources and influence, and I will be an advocate for the highest human rights, governance, environmental, social, and labor standards in order to promote investments that are sustainable for the long term.

Question. If you are confirmed, how will USAID not only promote effective U.S. development assistance and humanitarian assistance, but also advance America’s

long-term competition with the Chinese Communist Party's broader malign influence and predatory efforts around the world?

Answer. The People's Republic of China's (PRC) approach to development through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) raises deep concerns for me and many of USAID's partners. Projects connected to BRI have come under significant scrutiny on issues such as corruption; unsustainable debt; environmental degradation; preferencing of Chinese firms over local enterprises for construction contracts and jobs; lack of transparency and local consultations; and even worries about the potential erosion of sovereignty due to the unfavorable terms attached to certain projects. I share your conviction that USAID needs a far-reaching strategy that addresses the challenges posed by the BRI. There is no question that the frustrations many around the world have voiced with China's development practices provide an opportunity for the U.S. U.S. support for transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance gives us another advantage, especially in communities that have experienced repression and corruption. If confirmed, I will continue to promote human rights, democracy and transparency and I will ensure that USAID works with partners to better leverage our collective resources and influence for sustainable and beneficial development pursued in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.

Question. If you are confirmed, how will you support and strengthen USAID's commitment to combat religious persecution, which is all the more important after the State Department's recent determination of the Chinese Communist Party's genocide and crimes against humanity with respect to Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang? You have written extensively about the failure of past U.S. presidential administration to prevent and respond to genocide.

Answer. As you note, I have a longstanding commitment to human rights, and have seen firsthand how religious minorities are at risk of being targeted with atrocities. I also agree with you, President Biden, and experts who have studied the facts that China is committing genocide in Xinjiang.

While serving in the Obama administration, I advocated on behalf of Coptic Christians in Egypt who were experiencing violent attacks and met with Iraqi Christians while visiting Iraq to show support for their community. As Ambassador to the U.N., I used my platform to elevate the voices of religious minorities, such as by pushing for the release of Meriam Ibrahim, a Sudanese woman sentenced to death for refusing to denounce her Christian faith. I also called for Sudan to repeal the laws that put her in jail in the first place. In addition, I worked with the State Department's Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom and others in the administration to seek recognition for ISIS's violence against the Yazidi people, Iraqi Christians, and Shiite Muslims as a genocide, which Secretary of State Kerry recognized in March of 2016. I gave a young Yazidi woman named Nadia Murad her first major public forum, inviting her to speak before the U.N. Security Council, after her family had been almost completely wiped out by ISIS and she had been forced into sexual slavery. USAID has a history of helping the world's most vulnerable people, and, if confirmed, I will invest in efforts to support communities persecuted or discriminated against because of their faith, and I will make it a priority to prevent and address ongoing violence and atrocities perpetrated against religious and ethnic minorities including Rohingya; Yazidis and Christians in Iraq, Syria and other parts of the Middle East; and Tigrayans.

Question. Do you believe that the People's Republic of China should be classified as a "developing country" at the World Trade Organization? China-as the world's second largest economy-is still classified as a "developing country" at the World Trade Organization.

Answer. No, I do not believe China should be classified as a "developing country." Indeed, by any number of measures, China today is a global economic powerhouse. China is already the world's largest trading nation, having surpassed the United States in 2013, and its investments in research and development are second only to those of the United States-having increased by more than 15 percent a year on average over the past two decades. And in 2020, half of the top ten largest public companies in the world were Chinese companies. If confirmed, I will work with Congress and the administration to counter China's tactics whether in global forums or at the country and regional level, including in Africa, Asia and the Western Hemisphere.

Question. What is your assessment of USAID's "Clear Choice" strategy under the last presidential administration? If you are confirmed, do you commit to continuing and improving USAID's "Clear Choice" strategy? As DevEx-a media platform that tracks the international development efforts-reported in December 2020, your predecessor, USAID Administrator Mark Green "spearheaded a broad agency strategy

called ‘Clear Choice,’ intended to denote that countries have a ‘clear choice’ between the U.S. and China when they consider investment partnerships for infrastructure and other development initiatives.” The “Clear Choice” strategy sought to better organize USAID’s regional and functional efforts on development and humanitarian assistance while also meeting the China Challenge and countering China’s malign influence, and better informing and coordinating with interagency partners in the U.S. Government.

Answer. I applaud former Administrator Mark Green’s efforts to proactively counter malign Chinese influence in international development. If confirmed, I will review and build on these efforts, and I will work with allies and partners to better leverage our collective resources and influence.

Question. If you are confirmed, do you commit to modernize the concept of foreign assistance to include also the development and adoption of next-generation telecommunications and mobile technology in partner nations that receive U.S. foreign assistance?

Answer. Digital tools hold immense potential to help people live freer and more prosperous lives. They also present significant risks to citizen privacy and data, freedom of the press, and individual expression. I gather that USAID’s work in this area builds upon the Agency’s twenty-five year legacy of bringing internet access points, strengthening national broadband strategies and universal service funds, and advancing multi-stakeholder models of internet governance to USAID partner countries around the world. Today, such efforts are more important than ever as the foundations of next-generation telecommunications technologies like 5G are developed and adopted by our partner countries to enable their citizens to participate in the digital economy and ultimately become more self-reliant. If confirmed, I will continue USAID’s commitment to open, inclusive, secure and competitive communications infrastructure and mobile technology, as outlined in USAID’s Digital Strategy.

Question. If you are confirmed, how will USAID use foreign assistance to help ensure that partner nations-especially those that receive U.S. foreign assistance-reject or move away from next-generation telecommunications and mobile technology from Huawei or other untrusted China-based vendors?

Answer. USAID is already addressing the challenges presented by untrusted vendors of mobile and next-generation telecommunications equipment. I understand that USAID provides developing countries with technical assistance to encourage reforms to related regulations and policies, including those that support secure networks, vendor diversity, and cybersecurity best practices. USAID programs also include work with civil society to bolster messaging for autonomy, security, and privacy in their telecoms sectors, and with the private sector to increase investment in and deployment of secure communications technologies. If confirmed, I will continue this commitment to next-generation telecommunications and mobile technology built upon trustworthy vendors.

Question. If you are confirmed, do you commit to supporting the Abraham Funds or similar development initiatives with other countries in the Middle East in order to advance U.S. national security interests, support the Abraham Accords, and promote further peace and regional economic cooperation between Israel and Arab nations?

Answer. President Biden rightly welcomed the Abraham Accords as an important contribution to peace in a divided region. If confirmed, I will join others in the Biden-Harris administration in efforts to build on these agreements to further strengthen cooperation between Israel and its neighbors and to encourage other Arab and Muslim countries to normalize relations with Israel. If confirmed, I will seek to take steps that advance the cause of peace, as well as Israel’s integration in the region and the world-something that I was able to make great headway on at the United Nations, securing Israel’s integration into important U.N. bodies from which it had been excluded, recognition of Yom Kippur as an official U.N. holiday, and the convening of the first-ever U.N. General Assembly session on antisemitism.

NOMINATIONS

THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:12 a.m., in Room SD-106, Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

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

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

The CHAIRMAN. Let me turn to—again to the second part of our business meeting or hearing. Before I do, I want to say that I understand the administration will be coming up next week to brief senators on the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan. This committee will also receive a classified briefing next Monday.

The administration, in my view, was dealt a terrible hand by the last administration on Afghanistan, manifested in a withdrawal agreement, then negotiated away all of our leverage with the Taliban. President Biden was left only with bad options. Most Senators would agree that the war in Afghanistan has gone on too long and that we want to see our troops home. But as I have said before, how we draw down matters, as does the political arrangement left in our wake. I have many questions. How can the U.S. maintain the capability to conduct counterterrorism operations in the region without a military presence in Afghanistan? What will this decision portend for the women of Afghanistan? Without a U.S. military presence, how long does our intelligence community think the Afghan Government can survive in the face of punishing Taliban attacks? So I look forward to these conversations next week.

Let me turn to our——

Senator RISCH. May I respond?

The CHAIRMAN. Absolutely. The ranking member.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I concur in the questions that you have. I do not concur in the initial statement about the prior administration. There is no good answer to this. There are just questions. I think that at this point we should look forward rather than backwards, and I think we

should get answers to those questions and decide what—how we can assist in the path forward because that is the most important role we will play here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Let me turn to our two nominees, Ambassador Nuland and Ms. Zeya. Congratulations on your nominations, and our thanks to both of you for your willingness to return to the State Department and distinguished careers in the Foreign Service. At this pivotal moment for our foreign policy for democracy and for the State Department, I am heartened that President Biden nominated both of you. You are experienced and accomplished diplomats, and you have both demonstrated the strength and commitment necessary to defend our values.

The positions you have been nominated for—Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, Undersecretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights—are among the most important in the Department. Ms. Zeya, I understand that the distinguished Senator from Virginia is going to introduce you this morning, so I will turn to him at this time. Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to members of the committee, it is a real honor for me to introduce a wonderful public servant, Uzra Zeya, the nominee for the post described by the chair. Virginia is one of the most connected States in the country to our military mission, but I am also proud that it is one of the most connected States to our diplomatic and development missions, with many diplomats and State Department staffers calling Virginia home.

Ms. Zeya is a 20-year Virginia resident. She is a distinguished diplomat and nonprofit leader who has dedicated virtually her entire adult life to public service, the advancement of human rights, and U.S. national security. The duty to serve runs in her family. She is here with her husband, Tom, a United States Marine. Together, they have more than 60 years of public service to the American public, which is just wonderful, and I love that we have got a diplomat and a military union in the household. That is a wonderful balance.

Ms. Zeya served five presidents, three Republicans and two Democrats, with distinction for 28 years as a Foreign Service officer on four continents. She is fluent in Arabic, French, and Spanish. She was Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, Democracy, and Labor. In that post, she led U.S. human rights dialogue with China, Egypt, and Bahrain, among others. She vigorously defended religious freedom around the globe and expanded public/private partnerships to advance LGBT equality and counter gender-based violence.

She was chargé d'affaires in Paris, and she led the U.S. response to, sadly, three major terror attacks in that city, took U.S.-French cooperation on counterterrorism and Russia to unprecedented levels, and elevated U.S. engagement against antisemitism and online hate. In India, she crafted a strategic partnership framework over a decade ago that still enjoys broad bipartisan support and today serves as the cornerstone of the U.S. Indo-Pacific engagement. She helped overcome India's longstanding aversion to external democracy promotion, and launched new bilateral initiatives to support gender equality in Afghanistan, and to support free and fair elec-

tions abroad. As a young human rights officer in Syria, she documented the brutality of the Assad regime and led U.S. outreach to Syria's minority, religious, and ethnic communities under siege. Since leaving the State Department, Ms. Zeya served for 2 years as CEO and president of the leading nonpartisan Peacebuilders Network where she worked to strengthen the evidence base for successful political transitions and support greater accountability for taxpayer-funded foreign assistance. She also drafted the Council on Foreign Relations report on revitalizing the State Department.

Ms. Zeya is a trailblazer. She is the proud daughter of Indian-American immigrants. She would be the first Asian-American woman to serve as an undersecretary of state, and I believe she is very, very well prepared to take on this post, and we are proud to support this exemplary Virginian. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Kaine, for the robust endorsement of Ms. Zeya. Let me conclude. The State Department faces unprecedented challenges from restoring America's place in the world to managing the health and economic crisis created by COVID-19, and China and Russia is at the top of the list of foreign policy crises confronting America today. As you know well, Ambassador Nuland, the United States needs to act now to stop a resurgent Russia with Putin once again threatening Ukraine, continuing his attacks on our democracy, and threatening his grip on the Russian people and those who dare to oppose him. I want to applaud the administration for the actions that were announced today. They are robust. It is a type of action I would have wanted to see, and I look forward to their continuing engagement.

On China, we must both confront Chinese attempts to undermine democracy and human rights and compete with them economically. That is why I am pleased that Senator Risch and I have authored a bipartisan bill which will make the United States competitive with China, and provide us with a clear and coherent national security strategy on China. And while I look forward to a more in-depth discussion on Russia and China during our time for questions, I want to quickly highlight three additional policy areas: Iran, Turkey, and the Western Hemisphere.

Although I did not support the JCPOA, I felt strongly that the Trump administration's decision to withdraw without a coordinated diplomatic strategy would embolden Iran and leave us less safe, and Iran's behaviors only validated my predictions. I recently led a bipartisan letter supporting a diplomatic path forward, but let me be clear. That path must go beyond the scope of the JCPOA. I expect that this administration will pursue what the President and Secretary themselves have endorsed, a stronger and longer agreement, and I will expect you to provide the committee with details of any agreement and on exactly what "longer and stronger" means. Iran, not surprisingly, is seeking to control the timetable for these discussions by taking provocative actions against vessels in the Arabian Gulf and U.S. military facilities in Iraq.

In Turkey, President Erdogan got a free pass from the previous administration, and we are seeing the effects: the purchase of a Russian missile, systematic military aggression in Nagorno-Karabakh and Syria, bellicose actions against Greece and Cyprus. Long considered a NATO ally, Turkey seems to want to break with

us instead of being our partner now. Now, I do not agree with Erdogan's choice, but we have to begin to reorient ourselves in the Eastern Mediterranean towards democracies that share our values and our security interests. The administration has an important opportunity here, and I hope they seize it.

Finally, in our own hemisphere, we must strengthen our alliances and address forced migration. I am particularly concerned about the challenges Columbia, our top strategic partner in Latin America, currently faces, including the monumental task of implementing the 2016 Peace Accord, the violence related to drug trafficking, and the destabilizing influence of the Madura regime's crimes against humanity in Venezuela.

And, Ms. Zeya, I cannot close the day without raising a crisis that goes to the core of American values and American leadership: the state of democracy around the world. We are in the midst of a 15-year democratic recession. From Nicaragua to Hungary, democracy is marching backwards. Even worse, authoritarians are using the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to steamroll free and fair elections, independent media, and other hallmarks of democracy, and they have assumed that their violations will be met with little resistance. It is time for the United States to step up and speak out on democracy, and I expect that both of you will help lead the charge to restore democracy throughout the world.

At a time of unprecedented challenges around the world, America needs outstanding leadership at the State Department. I have no doubt that you are both up to that task, but I expect to hear from both of you today about how you plan to restore America's place in the world, repair democracy, and confront the immense challenges facing us.

With that, I turn to the ranking member for his opening comments.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. We all know that undersecretaries of state serve an important role at the Department. They are responsible for day-to-day management of and policy coordination for their respective bureaus, and we want to thank both of you for your willingness to serve in those capacities.

In the case of Ambassador Nuland's nomination to be undersecretary for political affairs, this role oversees all regional, bilateral, and multilateral policy issues for the Department. This is no small task obviously. While this position has a broad scope, there are a few specific areas of concern I would like to address today, the first of which, of course, is China. Next week, this committee will mark up the Strategic Competition Act. This legislation, introduced by Senator Menendez and myself, counters the Chinese Communist Party's malign influence globally, including by expanding the scope of the Committee on Foreign Investment and the United States' review of foreign money flowing into U.S. higher education institutions; advances concrete cooperation with allies and partners in technology, infrastructure, development, and defense; shines a light on China's predatory economic practices; pushes back on the Chinese Communist Party's influence at the U.N.; highlights China's growing nuclear missile capacities; and calls on President Biden to

assure our extended deterrence to allies and engage China in arms control talks.

These are just a few of the issues we face when it comes to strategic competition with China. The Biden administration's highest priority and ours here in Congress must be to prioritize resources and respond to the challenges posed by the Chinese Communist Party, as well as opportunities presented by expanded and concrete cooperation with allies and partners, especially in the Indo-Pacific region and in Europe.

I want to take this opportunity once again to thank the chairman and the majority party for the negotiations we have had on the China bill. I think this has been a very positive step forward, and it is certainly bipartisan. And obviously, as with all these kinds of things, there are parts of it that I am not in love with, but, on the other hand, it is always a give and take proposition to get where we want to go. I specifically want to thank the staffs of both of the majority and the minority for the give and take that they have entered into and the many hours they have spent negotiating the details of the many pages. I hope we can move this forward. I am a little bit concerned about the overall idea of taking this and wrapping it with six other committees who have ideas along this line. I think these are always difficult enough, but the more of those you wrap together, the more difficult it will be. So whatever happens, I hope we are able to move this bill forward in a bipartisan fashion.

Next, I would like to address the administration's ongoing desire to re-enter the failed JCPOA. Many of us on both sides in the Senate are closely following negotiations with the P5+1 in Vienna. I concur with the chairman that this is difficult. This is not an easy proposition. And at the outset, many of us are deeply concerned with the administration's promises to lengthen and strengthen. Unfortunately, it sounds like a bumper sticker, and, like the chairman, I am interested in hearing what the details are. Unfortunately, to me, it is starting to look a lot more like a straight re-entry into the 2015 deal, which is not acceptable to me and I think not acceptable to most members of this committee on both sides of the aisle. Discussions with the parties have led me to conclude that, and I hope I am wrong on this.

Negotiators have established working groups to address nuclear compliance and sanctions relief, but they have not established a working group on Iran's regional terrorism, something that a lot of us have repeatedly said must be addressed in any deal with Iran. Our national security interests on Iran must last longer than a single administration. If the administration chooses to continue on a path of straight re-entry into the nuclear deal, it will be short-lived. Either the next Republican administration will tear down the deal, or the nation most directly affected, who is remarkably always excluded from the deal, will take unilateral action, which will not end well. To avoid this outcome, the administration must seek bipartisan congressional support for any agreement with Iran. I am feeling that the administration is walking down a well-worn, partisan path that will repeat the mistakes of the original administration that entered into the deal. I hope I am wrong on all of this and all of us here who have a lot of experience in this will be listened to as we move forward.

In Europe, Russia remains a pressing concern. Although Russia is amassing tens of thousands of troops on Ukraine's border as we speak, they have still been allowed to continue construction of the malign Nord Stream 2 pipeline. And, Ambassador Nuland, I appreciate your candid discussion with me in that regard. Actually, in front of this committee, Secretary Blinken testified that he sees the pipeline as a bad deal and has told us that he would like to see it stopped. Yet despite having the power to stop it, we have not seen real action, and I am very disappointed in this. He was personally handed, by myself and other members of this committee, a vetted list of people who need to be sanctioned.

I am not happy with what has happened. They keep telling us that, well, they need to vet this and prepare a case so that when they put the sanctions on, they can be prepared to do it at Court. I have told them, no, you do not. You have probable cause on every one of those people that we have put in front of you, and you need to sanction them. Now, when you go to Court, you need lawyers that have a case well prepared, but there is probable cause on every one of these to be sanctioned that will shut down the pipeline.

The committee drafted and pushed through legislation on a bipartisan basis to prevent the completion. We continue to be concerned by the administration's refusal to fully implement the law and sanction all parties—all parties—involved in the construction of the pipeline. It is past time that the administration take meaningful action on this issue.

I would remind everyone, on day one of this administration, they stopped the XL pipeline, on day one. They have in hand direction from this Congress on a bipartisan basis to do the same thing on a Russian pipeline. If we are going to put American workers out of work, we ought to put the Russian workers out of work on the Nord Stream pipeline. Many on this committee bemoan the previous administration's posture on Russia. What is clear is that the Trump administration was tougher on them than the present Biden administration has been so far.

Next, we have Ms. Zeya's nomination to be undersecretary of state for civilian security, democracy, and human rights. This position is tasked with a broad functional portfolio, which encompasses human rights, counterterrorism, refugees, migration, and trafficking in persons. We must continue to lead on the promotion of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights around the world, not just because those democratic values form the core of our values as a Nation, but also because they lead to stronger partnerships with other nations. I know virtually every member of this committee agrees with me on that proposition.

With regard to the rule of law, I share the administration's concern about the International Criminal Court's decision to investigate U.S. personnel in Afghanistan and Israeli actions in the Palestinian territories. It is completely unacceptable that the ICC has decided to pursue cases clearly outside of their jurisdiction. The Department must continue its efforts to protect our personnel from these politically-motivated efforts.

Again, I thank you both for being here today and your willingness to serve, and your family's willingness to undertake the sacrifices necessary to do so. With that, thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch. We will now turn to our two nominees. We ask you to summarize your statements in about 5 minutes or so, so we can have a conversation with you. Your full statements will be included in the record. We welcome your family members who may be with you either virtually or presently. We understand that it is a family affair. There are sacrifices that are made by all in this process, and we appreciate the willingness of your family members as well as yourselves to make the sacrifice. With that, let me turn to Ambassador Nuland.

STATEMENT OF HON. VICTORIA NULAND, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (POLITICAL AFFAIRS)

Ambassador NULAND. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and the members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. I also want to thank my husband, Bob Kagan, and my kids, Lanie and David, for their love and their wise counsel. Bob and David are with me today. Lanie is studying for her law exams.

It is a huge honor to be nominated by President Biden and Secretary Blinken to serve as undersecretary of state for political affairs. If confirmed, I will rejoin the profession and the Department that I love, determined every day to strengthen America's capacity to protect our freedom, our security, and our prosperity. And I will support Secretary Blinken in his vision to re-energize American diplomacy, to strengthen our alliances and partnerships, and to build the closest possible collaboration with this committee and with both houses of Congress.

Over 32 years in the Foreign Service, I have served five presidents and nine secretaries of state from both Republican and Democratic administrations. That experience taught me that America is at its strongest when our foreign policy enjoys broad bipartisan support both in Washington and at kitchen tables across America, and the move that you have made together on a bipartisan China bill is really important in that regard.

The CHAIRMAN. Could I just ask you to turn—move your microphone closer to you? It is a little difficult.

Ambassador NULAND. Is that better?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, thank you.

Ambassador NULAND. Okay. My foreign service career was full of adventures, and challenges, and historic moments, from my first tour in Guangzhou, China in 1985, to watching the Soviet flag come down and the Russian flag go up over Red Square in 1991, to being at NATO when it invoked Article 5, an attack on one is an attack on all, 20 years ago in solidarity after the Twin Towers fell. And, of course, I had the opportunity to work closely with many of you in this room, both when I was ambassador in NATO in the Bush administration, and as assistant secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs in the Obama administration. I take pride that, together, we built strong bipartisan approaches to pol-

icy, and many members of this committee and the Senate contributed with their own travel and diplomacy.

Today, our Nation faces a confluence of challenges as daunting as at any time in my professional life. China, under Xi Jinping, does not simply want to compete with us, it wants to dominate the international system and change its rules to benefit autocrats and undercut freedom around the world. Putin's Russia has deployed its fighters and weapons on almost every continent and accelerated its disinformation, election interference, and snuff campaigns against its opponents. Iran is again enriching uranium at 20 percent, while continuing to destabilize its neighborhood from Syria, to Yemen, to Lebanon, to Iraq. ISIS and Al-Qaeda are weakened, but they are not defeated, and too many of the world's citizens are suffering under corrupt and/or illegitimate leaders with blood on their hands. Add to this the urgent global challenges we share: restoring global health and security, tackling climate change, and building our democracies and economies back better with more equity and more justice.

If confirmed as undersecretary of state for political affairs, my job will be threefold; first, to take on any negotiations or diplomatic assignments and management issues that the Secretary deems necessary; second, to oversee the work of the regional bureaus and the Bureau of International Organizations, ensuring that this orchestra of talent plays in harmony; and third, to maintain the closest coordination with fellow political directors around the world, especially in allied and partner capitals, to build communities of common action.

If confirmed, I will also be the senior lifer in the State Department. The President and Secretary Blinken have pledged to respect and empower our great workforce and to have their backs. That was also a powerful motivator for me to return to service to help revitalize and modernize American diplomacy. We must give our foreign, and civil service, and local employees more professional opportunities, support, training, career flexibility, and better technology, while strengthening diversity at all levels of the Department.

I am also animated every day by a firm belief that America is safer and stronger when we lead. As Secretary Blinken has said, the alternatives are far worse, a chaotic vacuum or a global takeover by the enemies of freedom. I also share President Biden's conviction that we are at a global inflection point. Democracy will and must prevail, but democracy does not happen by accident. We have to defend it, we have to fight for it, strengthen it, and renew it. If confirmed, it will be the honor of a lifetime to play my part in that effort.

I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Nuland follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. VICTORIA NULAND

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch and members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I also want to thank my husband, Bob Kagan and my kids, Leni and David, for their love, their wise counsel and the sacrifices they made as a foreign service family.

It is a huge honor to be nominated by President Biden and Secretary Blinken to serve as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. If confirmed, I will rejoin the profession and the Department that I love, determined every day to strengthen America's capacity to protect our freedom, our security and our prosperity. And I will support Secretary Blinken in his vision to reenergize American diplomacy; strengthen our alliances and partnerships; and build the closest possible collaboration with this committee and both houses of Congress.

Over thirty-two years in the Foreign Service, I served five Presidents and nine Secretaries of State from both Republican and Democratic administrations. That experience taught me that America is at its strongest when our foreign policy enjoys broad bipartisan support both in Washington and at kitchen tables across America. President Biden and his team have pledged to lead a foreign policy that represents and benefits the American people. This will require more listening, more consultation with each of you, and with American business, workers, and committed citizens across our country. If confirmed, I look forward to doing as much hard work at home as abroad.

My foreign service career was full of adventures, challenges and historic moments:

- From my first tour in Guangzhou, China in 1985 when our relationship seemed to have so much promise;
- To watching the Soviet flag come down and the Russian flag go up over Red Square in 1991;
- To working on tough arms control problems and conflicts from Rwanda to Haiti to Bosnia and Kosovo;
- Too serving as Deputy Chief of Mission at NATO when our great Alliance invoked Article 5—an attack on one is an attack on all—in solidarity with the United States the day after the twin towers fell.

And, of course, I had the opportunity to work closely with many of you when I was Ambassador to NATO in the Bush administration and Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs in the Obama administration. Together, we built strong bipartisan approaches to policy, and many members of the Senate contributed with their own travel and diplomacy.

Today, our nation faces a confluence of challenges as daunting as at any time in my professional life. China, under Xi Jinping, does not simply want to compete with us; it wants to dominate the international system and change its rules to benefit autocrats and undercut democracy and freedom around the world. Putin's Russia has deployed its fighters and weapons on almost every continent and accelerated its disinformation, election interference, and snuff campaigns against opponents. Iran is enriching uranium at 20 percent again, while continuing to destabilize its neighborhood from Syria to Yemen to Lebanon and Iraq. ISIS and AQ are weakened but not defeated. And too many of the world's citizens are suffering under corrupt and/or illegitimate leaders with blood on their hands. Add to this the urgent global challenges we share: restoring global health security, tackling climate change, and building our democracies and economies back better, with more equity and justice.

If confirmed as Under Secretary of State, my job will be three-fold:

- First, to take on any negotiations, diplomatic assignments or management issues that the Secretary deems necessary;
- Second, to oversee the work of the regional bureaus and Bureau of International Organization Affairs, ensuring this orchestra of talent plays in harmony, not at cross purposes;
- And third, to maintain close coordination with fellow Political Directors around the world, especially in allied and partner capitals, to build communities of common action to meet today's challenges.

If confirmed, I will also be the senior "lifer" in the State Department. The President and Secretary Blinken have pledged to respect and empower our great workforce, and to have their backs. That is a powerful motivator for me to return to service—to help revitalize and modernize American diplomacy. We must give our Foreign and Civil Service personnel and local employees more professional opportunities, support, training, career flexibility, and better technology while strengthening diversity at all levels of the Department. For years, the State Department scored the highest among government agencies for workforce satisfaction. I believe it can and will again.

I am also animated every day by a firm belief that America is safer and stronger when we lead. As Secretary Blinken has said, the alternatives are far worse: a chaotic vacuum or a global take-over by the enemies of freedom. I share President Biden's conviction that we are at a global "inflection point"—"democracy will and

must prevail . but democracy doesn't happen by accident. We have to defend it, fight for it, strengthen it, renew it."

If confirmed, it will be the honor of a lifetime to play my part in that effort. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Ms. Zeya?

**STATEMENT OF UZRA ZEYA, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE
AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (CIVILIAN SECURITY, DE-
MOCRACY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS)**

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, Senator Kaine for your kind words, and distinguished committee members. It is also the honor of my lifetime to be President Biden's nominee as undersecretary of state for civilian security, democracy, and human rights. I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me.

I also want to thank those who made my journey here possible: my husband, Tom, for always having my back and his decades of service to our Nation as a U.S. Marine and civilian. I also want to thank our two children, Kiera and Lexi, who could not be here today, but whose idealism never ceases to inspire me. Ours is a family rooted in public service and the advancement of freedom. For my father-in-law, a World War II veteran who fought tyranny on the shores of Okinawa; to my grandfather, a freedom fighter in India's quest for independence; to my mother, whose own education was cut short by marriage at the age of 16, and invested all her brilliance in raising four independent-minded, opinionated daughters to seize opportunities never afforded to her. I thank my parents, brother, and sisters for their solidarity in joining virtually today.

In today's disrupted world, the work of the State Department's "J" family of bureaus and offices has never been more important. Authoritarianism, violent antisemitism, islamophobia, and xenophobia are on the rise as the world enters the 15th year of a democratic recession. The Chinese Government is perpetrating genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, strangling autonomy in Hong Kong, and repressing Tibetans, Christians, and other religious and ethnic minorities. Global human displacement is at record levels while the scourge of human trafficking is ever present and while terrorists expand their lethal reach from Africa to South Asia.

Recognizing the enormity and complexity of the task ahead, I would like to emphasize three core areas where, if confirmed, I would gladly partner with all of you to address. First, the United States needs to take on the China challenge from a position of strength, rooted in human rights and our democratic values. Having led U.S.-China human rights dialogues, I know the severe repression that has only grown more acute under the CCP. I have met with courageous Chinese human rights activists and their families, gave voice to their concerns at the United Nations, and demanded the release of Chinese prisoners of conscience who put their quest for liberty above their personal welfare. I am proud to have been banned on Weibo for denouncing systematic Chinese human rights abuses in Beijing in 2013. We also must continue to

press China on synthetic opioids, which have killed far too many Americans.

Second, we must defend and renew democracy at home in tandem with allies and partners. We are stronger when we work together to address not only China's human rights abuses and Russia's efforts to undermine Western democracies, but also rising corruption, disinformation, hate crimes, cyberthreats, and violent extremist movements. If confirmed, I will leverage decades of experience from Europe to South Asia, shoring up alliances in service of shared democratic values, and champion administration initiatives, such as the Quad Summit and the planned Democracy Summit. I am strongly committed to using tools developed by Congress, such as the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act and the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act to target human rights violators, human traffickers, and kleptocrats, and to encourage parallel action by allies and partners.

Third, we need more integrated, inclusive, and effective foreign policies and programs that deliver for the American people. If confirmed, I would build on my experiences inside and outside government to ensure that our assistance and policies have measurable impact and help support reliable rights respecting burden-sharing partners for the United States. To this end, I will support meaningful implementation of key bipartisan legislation, such as the Global Fragility Act, the Child Soldiers Protection Act, and the Women, Peace, and Security Act. And with the devastating impact of COVID-19, we need to ensure that humanitarian assistance and diplomacy work in tandem towards promoting prevention, self-reliance, and durable solutions.

And finally, with research showing that diverse organizations produce greater impact and innovation, I will gladly champion Secretary Blinken's effort to build a more diverse and inclusive State Department, especially with respect to the "J" family workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here and potentially return to public service. If confirmed, I will work intensively with all of the members of this committee on policies that seek to deliver greater peace, security, and prosperity for the American people. I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Zeya follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF UZRA ZEYA

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished Committee Members. It is the honor of my lifetime to be President Biden's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me.

I also want to thank those who made my journey here possible: my husband, Tom, for being here today and his decades of service to our Nation as a U.S. Marine and civilian. I also want to thank our two children, Kira and Lexi, who could not be here today but whose idealism never ceases to inspire me.

Ours is a family rooted in public service and the advancement of freedom—from my father-in-law, a World War II veteran who battled tyranny at Okinawa; to my grandfather, a freedom fighter in India's quest for independence; to my mother, whose education was cut short by marriage at the age of 16, so she invested her brilliance in raising four independent-minded and opinionated daughters to seize opportunities never afforded her. I thank my parents, brother, and sisters for their solidarity in joining virtually today.

In today's disrupted world, the work of the State Department's "J family" of bureaus and offices to advance civilian security, democracy, and human rights has never been more important. Authoritarianism, violent anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia are on the rise worldwide, with a global democratic recession entering its fifteenth year. The Chinese Government is perpetrating genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang while strangling autonomy in Hong Kong and continuing to suppress Tibetans, Christians, and other religious and ethnic minorities. Global human displacement is at the highest levels ever recorded and the scourge of human slavery is ever present, while terrorists expand their lethal reach from Africa to South Asia.

Recognizing the enormity and complexity of the task ahead, I'd like to emphasize three core areas where—if confirmed—I would partner with members of this committee to address:

First, the United States needs to take on the China challenge—what Secretary Blinken has called our greatest geostrategic test—from a position of strength, anchored in America's support for human rights and democratic values. Having led U.S.-China human rights dialogues, I know the severe repression of human rights in China that has grown even more acute. I met with courageous Chinese human rights activists and their family members, gave voice to their concerns at the United Nations, and demanded the release of Chinese prisoners of conscience who put their quest for liberty above their personal welfare. I am proud to have been banned on Weibo—a state-controlled social media platform—for denouncing systematic Chinese human rights abuses in 2013. We also must continue to press China on synthetic opioids, which have killed too many Americans.

Second, we must defend and renew democracy at home and abroad, in tandem with allies, the "force multipliers" for our national security. We are stronger when we work together with democratic allies and partners to address not only China's human rights abuses and Russia's malign efforts to undermine Western democracies, but also rising corruption, disinformation, hate crimes, cyber threats, and violent extremist movements. If confirmed, I will leverage decades of experience, from Europe to South Asia, shoring up alliances and partnerships in service of shared, democratic values, and champion Biden-Harris administration efforts to empower democratic partnerships, such as the Quad Summit and the planned Democracy Summit. I am strongly committed to using tools developed by Congress, such as the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act and the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, to target human rights violators, human traffickers, and kleptocrats—and to encourage parallel actions by allies and partners.

Third, we need more integrated, inclusive, and effective foreign policies and programs that deliver for the American people. If confirmed, I would build upon my experiences inside and outside government, most recently as CEO of a non-partisan global peacebuilders' network. We must be careful stewards of taxpayer dollars while ensuring our policies and assistance have a measurable impact and help support reliable, rights-respecting, burden-sharing partners for the United States. In consultation with Congress, we must also exercise greater leadership to implement bipartisan legislation such as the Global Fragility Act, the Child Soldiers Prevention Act, and the Women, Peace, and Security Act. And with the impact of COVID-19, we need to ensure that humanitarian assistance and diplomacy work in tandem towards promoting prevention, self-reliance, and durable solutions.

Finally, research shows diverse organizations produce more impactful and innovative results. If confirmed, I will champion a more diverse and inclusive State Department, especially with respect to the talented, 1,000-plus J family workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. If confirmed, I will work with members of this committee on policies that seek to deliver greater peace, security, and prosperity for the American people. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much to both of you, and we will start a round of 5 minutes questioning.

Ambassador Nuland, I appreciate your leadership over the years in countering Kremlin malign influence. I do not think they were very happy to hear of your nomination, which is a good thing, but a lot has changed since you were in government. Thanks to Congress, we have the CAATSA law, which forced the last administration to take some sanctions measures. However, the last administration also ignored key mandatory provisions in CAATSA and did

little to galvanize our friends in Europe to counter Russian aggression in all of its forms. So what specific new measures would you recommend the Biden administration take to build cohesion among our European allies to show a united front against Kremlin aggression?

Ambassador NULAND. Thank you, Chairman, and thank you for your leadership on this issue. I am going to guess you are right about Kremlin's attitude to today's proceedings. I think we made a very important step today with the strong package of sanctions and measures that the President announced, including, very importantly, constraining Russia's access to our financial markets, to hold them to account for the SolarWinds attack, and other things. I think you have also seen that the administration has already been working hard to align with allies and partners when it moves on Russia. For example, the sanctions that were imposed after Navalny's arrest in February were matched in Europe and in other parts of the world.

I agree with you completely that the U.S. can confront Russia alone, but that is not the smart policy, and we are far stronger when we do it together. I was very pleased to see Chancellor Merkel, for example, issue a parallel, very strong warning to President Putin with regard to his aggression in and around Ukraine and the buildup of forces. That is the kind of thing we need to do, and we need to continue to build sanctions packages together so that the costs are borne born equally, and we highlight what Russia is doing collectively.

The CHAIRMAN. Can we count on you to robustly implement the CAATSA law?

Ambassador NULAND. Absolutely, as well as Global Magnitsky, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Let me turn to China, which we collectively agree is probably biggest strategic challenge whether it is the broader Indo-Pacific region, getting that right, which I think is the way in which we ultimately face the China challenge correctly, or the previous administration, which I welcomed the Trump administration's clarification of our legal position on China's unlawful claims in the South China Sea. How do you intend to be part of implementing a new approach that we know that such claims are not self-enforcing? It is critical that we make a legal position of reality, not just rhetoric in the South China Sea, among other things. How do you see your role in that regard?

Ambassador NULAND. Well, Mr. Chairman, I agree with you, and, as I said in the opening, China is not just competing with us. It wants to change the rules of the global system. This is the challenge of our time, and having strong bipartisan consensus, not just in this committee, but across the Congress and across the country, makes us stronger. So does investing in our strength at home. But as you have said, and as we talked about with regard to Russia, doing this in tandem and addressing all of China's issues in tandem with our allies and partners is absolutely essential.

So we have to build a coalition of allies and partners to combat unfair trade practices, to the aggressive security policies of China in the South China Sea and in the Taiwan Straits, the cybersecurity, disinformation, all of these things, and protect against a PRC

takeover of international organizations. I am particularly gratified to see more countries joining us, as you said, in the South China Sea with freedom of navigation patrols, et cetera, and we need to take this new quad and build on it, and get Europe and other parts of the world more involved.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ambassador NULAND. If confirmed, obviously every bureau that I will oversee will have to play a very strong role in our China policy, and I would be responsible for weaving that into everything that we do.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Ms. Zeya, let me ask you one last question. The previous administration, in my view, deprioritized human rights and weakened U.S. credibility on this important value. From abdicating our role in the Human Rights Council to failing to call out dictators' human rights abuses, the previous administration disregarded one of the most critical pillars, in my view, of U.S. foreign policy. Can you speak to the importance of U.S. leadership on human rights in terms of our values and interests, and will you make it a priority to ensure that we are working to hold both our allies and our adversaries to the same standards on human rights?

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you, Senator, for your leadership on bipartisan human rights issues as seen in the Strategic Competition Act, and I think it is a very pertinent question. I would commend the administration's approach to reasserting U.S. leadership on human rights by reclaiming an American seat at the table. I think the U.S. decision to rejoin the recent Human Rights Council session and to seek reelection to the Human Rights Council reflects its commitment to make the aspiration of centering human rights and democratic values in our foreign policy a reality.

I would say that they are doing this eyes wide open, recognizing many of the endemic flaws within the Human Rights Council itself, starting with the fact that you have almost a who is who of the world's worst human rights violators as members of that grouping. But I think even within the session that just took place where the U.S. was an observer, we are seeing the positive impact of American engagement and leadership.

And, you know, one of the very important issues that I would continue to focus on is working to eliminate pervasive anti-Israel bias in the U.N. At the just concluded Human Rights Council session, they were able to reduce the number of agenda items for Article 7. You know, the only country in the world is Israel in having a specific agenda inclusion in that fashion. And also work with like-minded partners on issues like Sri Lanka, Belarus, Iran, on so many of the core concerns of this committee, and I would work to expand and sustain that leadership.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. First of all, Ms. Nuland, I want to talk about the JCPOA for a moment. Look, all of us have been through this exasperating exercise now for many, many, many years. Can you give me your thoughts on how we can get together on this, the administration and Congress? I mean, words alone cannot explain to you how frustrated we were in dealing with the negotiators the last time as they dealt with

Iran. Totally ignored everything we asked them to do, and then came back and wanted us to agree to what they had agreed to. How are we going to work through this? Help me out here.

Ambassador NULAND. Senator Risch, I agree with you 100 percent that whatever agreements we reach with Iran need to be supported in a bipartisan fashion, not only on this committee, but across the Congress and across America, and, you know, that will ensure that they are binding across administrations and for the long term. So we have to do our job and consult at every phase, and hear your ideas and incorporate them, and use your expertise and the expertise that we have on this committee and throughout the Congress.

We also have to get on with the job because as we sit here, Iran is now enriching again at 20 percent. It is deploying IR2 centrifuges again. Its breakout time has shortened. So, you know, first job, get them back in the box, and then together define what "longer and stronger" means, and work together as we go through these negotiations.

You know, I think you know from our time together working on Ukraine, we built that policy together, and it was enduring because of that. And if confirmed, I would pledge to be here as often as we need to be to ensure that we all support what is going—what is happening.

Senator RISCH. Well, I appreciate that. One of the things that strikes me, and I have just become so disgusted with this over the years. I have listened very carefully to the nation that is most directly affected by what happens with Iran's nuclear ambitions, and they are very clear that it does not matter what kind of an agreement you make, they are going to take care of themselves. And so, look, however we go forward in this, they have got to be brought into the fold here to come along because they do not believe they are bound by this. They believe that their existence depends on Iran not having a nuclear weapon, and they are going to see that they do not, regardless of what the agreement says. So this is an issue that really has to be addressed.

And the question I keep asking the administration is, what happens when you get the call, because that is going to be the question. What do we do when we get the call? And so I think that is something that is obviously appropriate for a closed session, but somebody has got to answer that question.

In any event, let's talk for just a minute. Well, my time is running out. Let me, again, express my frustration on the U.N. Human Rights Council. I understand all the criticism that was given to the last administration for getting up and walking out of the Council. Frankly, I was not as shocked as a lot of people were. I do not know how you sit at a table with—Ms. Zeya, as you indicated, you are sitting around a table with the who is who of human rights violators on the planet, and how do you talk to these people? How do you say to them, you guys got to behave yourself even a little bit more, and they are telling us mind your own business, you know, we will handle our things internally. How do you handle that?

Ms. ZEYA. Senator, I share your concern and even frustration over that issue, but I think it is a question of tactics where U.S.

disengagement from the multilateral system leaves a vacuum that others are very gladly there to fill, starting with China, but also Russia and other countries allied to basically entirely distort the framework of universal human rights, arguments of sovereignty, to reject any notion of international scrutiny or accountability for human rights violations.

So I think the United States needs to be there, but I think the critical element as well, as I cited, is really leveraging our alliances and partnerships, something that China and Russia do not have and does not compare, as a force multiplier to basically integrate universal human rights and our democratic values to make bodies like the Human Rights Council much more effective, and upholding the mission that they were set out to pursue.

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you. That is really good description of what they do and their malign activities, but I think the general statement that we want to make things better, as you talked about it, getting them to move forward on this, I wish you well. I really, really do. But, boy, I will tell you, watching what they have done and how they defend it, I am sure not optimistic in that regard. But I wish you well, and we will support you every way we can. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me thank both Ambassador Nuland and Ms. Zeya for your public service, your incredible record to our country, and your willingness to continue. And I also want to express my thanks to your family for putting up with public service. It is not always easy, so thank you both.

You both have mentioned that our foreign policy mission must be defined by our values, and I agree completely with that. I have listened to President Biden express that on several occasions as well as Secretary of State Blinken. Both of you mentioned Global Magnitsky, and I am pleased that you underscored the importance of that particular statute that was passed by Congress and incorporated in an executive order by the President. You might be aware that there is a limitation on that, a sunset clause, and there is legislation to remove that sunset clause. And I take it we will have your support for making clear that that statute needs to be made permanent by Congress.

Ms. ZEYA. Yes, Senator. Absolutely.

Ambassador NULAND. Absolutely.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. I got both of your answers. Thanks. Appreciate that. And, Ambassador Nuland, I want to just underscore your point about President Biden's action taken against Russia. It was not only a decisive action, as it was. It was very clear on its findings, which was refreshing to see the President of United States be very clear about Russia's accountability under Mr. Putin in regards to incursions on borders of other countries, in regards to the treatment of Mr. Navalny, in regards to interference in our cybersecurity, all those. It was a very clear finding, so that was refreshing to see. So knowing your record, it looks like the President is following in your footsteps about being very direct about issues, and we appreciate that very much.

I also want to underscore the point that both of you made, that we have to engage our allies. If we are going to be effective in our foreign policy objectives, it is not only having bipartisan support here in Congress. It is having the support of like-minded countries, and that requires effort, and we have done that in regards to the sanctions under Global Magnitsky. We have gotten more and more countries to go along with us, but I think we need to do more of those, that type of outreach.

Ms. ZEYA, I want to just mention one area that is under your portfolio, and that is trafficking in persons. We have a pretty clear statute on trafficking in persons. It is pretty objective findings as to what tier a country would find itself. But we have had problems under previous administrations where political considerations interfered with the objective findings of countries because of other bilateral considerations. Do we have your commitment that you will maintain the integrity of the TIP reports so that it is based solely on the facts and not interfered with by other politics?

Ms. ZEYA. Yes, Senator. Absolutely.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. And I use that as an example because there is legislation that I hope will move in this Congress that will use that model for dealing with anti-corruption activities in countries. All countries have problems with trafficking. All countries have problems with corruption. Many of the issues that you have talked to, the root problem is corruption. Mr. Putin does what he does because he gets a lot of money. Oligarchs support his operations, his corruption, and we need to increase the capacity in our country missions to evaluate the corruption situations as we did with trafficking, and then evaluate and use that for foreign policy considerations, and that legislation does exactly that. So can I have both of your commitments to work with us on passing legislation that would use the trafficking model to deal with corruption so that we have capacity in each of our mission countries to deal with corruption in those countries?

Ms. ZEYA. Yes, Senator. I confirm to consult with you and would certainly support the elevation of U.S. anti-corruption efforts, and view corruption as both a violation of human rights, a means to sustain autocracy, as well as an inherent danger to democracies.

Ambassador NULAND. Senator, same from me. Corruption is a country killer. It is also a tool of malign outside actors. I think we have got to do a better job of pulling together the tools of government to help countries attack corruption, so combining the efforts of the State Department, intelligence services, Treasury, Justice into a fusion, and we can do that off the embassy platforms, but we also have to train and educate and support our officers out in the field better. And if confirmed, I look forward to working with you on these issues.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. My last point—it is not a question—is that, dealing with diversity in the State Department is a very high priority, and I know both of you have mentioned that. Recognize that you have support in the Senate to advance diversity within the Department of State. We have—it is a challenge because we are looking for senior positions as well as entry positions, and I hope that you will work with us on a strategy as to how we can improve the record of diversity within the State Department.

Ms. ZEYA. Yes, I will.

Ambassador NULAND. Absolutely.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin, and I think you have spoken to the ranking member as well. We look forward in the near future to have your legislation on corruption, which I understand is bipartisan, for a markup soon.

I am going to see if we have some of our colleagues virtually. Senator Paul?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Senator Cruz?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hagerty?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Then as we wait for them to get connected, let me turn to Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations to both of you on your nominations. And thank you both for your willingness to come back into the State Department and continue your public service, which has been admirable on both counts.

Ambassador Nuland, I have expressed disappointment in the President's decision to set the September deadline in Afghanistan to remove all of our troops. Given that we have a very limited time there, is there anything that we should be looking for in terms of benchmarks that we should try and reach before that September deadline?

Ambassador NULAND. Thank you, Senator, and thank you for your long commitment to Afghanistan, and particularly to the women of Afghanistan. As you mentioned, when we prepare for the U.S. redeployment of forces, that puts an emphasis even more strongly on the diplomatic aspects of our work and on the embassy as the platform for that. So we have really got to bear down on this peace process and on bolstering civilian, and economic, and humanitarian assistance programs, and particularly those that protect the gains that have been made, and the gains of women and human rights, Afghan people. We have got to, as the President has pledged to do, expand and expedite special immigrant visas for those Afghans who helped us. We have got to ensure that, as we find a new place to stage our counterterrorism efforts, that we are successful in the diplomacy to establish that, but also in their ability to deploy as needed. I think we also have to look at our embassy platform, particularly when we do not have military security around it.

So I would expect we are going to be coming back to this committee and to the Congress as a whole for more support, and particularly also to get you involved in the diplomacy. I know that has been something you have been willing to do in the past, so watch this space. Thanks.

Senator SHAHEEN. And can you expand a little bit on post-withdrawal strategy with respect to how we can continue to support the gains that women and girls have made in Afghanistan?

Ambassador NULAND. Well, Senator, I want to be careful here because I obviously——

Senator SHAHEEN. Assuming you have been confirmed.

Ambassador NULAND. Yes. Yeah. I was not part of the deliberations, but, as you know, we have very robust support programs, assistance programs, and civilian training programs for women and girls both in Afghanistan and outside. I think we need to ensure that our allies and partners are also contributing to that effort. And we have to hold the Afghan Government and the Taliban to account for their commitments in this regard, and it needs to be a fundamental measure of whether Afghanistan is making progress or retaining the gains or sliding backwards.

Senator SHAHEEN. Ms. Zeya, I appreciate your mentioning the Women Peace and Security Act in your opening remarks. I think it is a very important tool that we have, and I was disappointed that it was not used by the previous administration in Afghanistan as they were negotiating with the Taliban. But can you talk about how you will work with the Office of Global Women's Issues, if you are confirmed, to ensure that the "J" family is aligned with the gender concerns of GWI and the GPC?

Ms. ZEYA. Absolutely, Senator, and I want to thank you for your leadership on building bipartisan consensus for, you know, greater women's empowerment and ultimately achieving women, peace, and security goals. And I think the Afghanistan example is critical, as you discussed with Ambassador Nuland. I would say, from my own perspective, I think it is very important with this decision for the U.S. to continue to strongly support increased women's participation in the peace process. As you are well aware, women's participation in peace processes, most of which fail, you know, by record of history, makes them 35 percent more likely to last 15 years or more. This is critical, I think, at the inflection point we find ourselves.

It is also critical to take an integrated approach in the State Department. I think since the GWI Office was created, and, you know, it has been a bipartisan effort with important progress made, it is really critical to recognize this is not the work of one office. So if confirmed, I would certainly seek to further integrate gender equality across the full spectrum of "J" family activity, obviously on democracy and human rights, but also on issues like counterterrorism, counter-narcotics, and, quite obviously, trafficking in persons. So this work is too important, it is too enormous for anyone office to accomplish alone, and I certainly would seek to leverage the talent and expertise in the "J" family to make WPS goals a reality. And I think we have a critical task ahead of us in Afghanistan to make that possible.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you both very much. If you are confirmed, and I assume you will be, I look forward to working with you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Thank you for your leadership on global women's issues. With that, I understand now that Senator Hagerty is with us virtually?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hagerty?

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you very much. I have a question for Ms. Zeya, please. Ms. Zeya, this is a matter of deep concern to me. It is a serious problem in my home State of Tennessee. December 1st, 2018, President Xi promised then-President Trump to halt the

export of fentanyl and all of the ingredients used to make fentanyl. Since that promise was made, we have had over 100,000 American lives lost to synthetic opioids, directly traceable to CCP-produced fentanyl. If I think about it, America has done a great job, in the current administration and the administration that preceded it, in dealing with the COVID-19 situation, but there is no vaccine for the addiction to fentanyl that we are experiencing at the hands of communist China. Can you tell me what your plan is to address this and to hold President Xi to his promise made in December of 2018?

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you, Senator, for raising a critically-important issue, and I just want to express my own concern for the welfare of your constituents, and this was one of the reasons I raised this point in my opening remarks. And as you recounted, I think there was progress made under the previous administration where China agreed to implement controls and schedule fentanyl analogs, but sadly, what happened is we saw transnational criminal organizations adapt and basically shift to using precursor chemicals from China, negating the gains from the previous effort, which was the result of considerable U.S. diplomacy and negotiation. So I absolutely believe that the Chinese Government can and must do more to hold its citizens and companies accountable that are supplying these precursors to transnational criminal organizations in Mexico and elsewhere.

I think the United States needs to take a whole-of-government approach where the State Department, our embassy in Beijing, plays a very important role, but we also need to work with the Department of Homeland Security, DEA, and DOJ, to take on the Chinese Government's willful ignorance on this issue and to really prioritize saving the lives. As you mentioned, the record numbers of American losses due to opioid-related overdoses is unacceptable, and this is something I would intend to prioritize if confirmed.

Senator HAGERTY. I appreciate your prioritization of that, and I would also underscore the fact that our border has become far more porous at Mexico, and that is where this fentanyl is coming in and being produced in mass quantities. I was just back in my home State of Tennessee talking with sheriffs, with mayors, and what they have told me is something I think is probably being experienced across America. There has been a huge uptick in the number of overdoses since the borders collapsed after the 20th of January. So this situation has become even more critical at this point, and very much appreciate your attention to it.

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you, Senator, for sharing that information, and I will certainly work to prioritize that in the work of the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau, and I know this remains a significant priority in terms of our counter-narcotics engagement with Mexico.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Ms. Zeya. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Next is Senator Kaine, and there is a vote that is ongoing. It is the intention of the chair to work through the vote, so I would urge members to possibly vote and return. The order I have in order of appearance is—and, course, we will flip back and forth to the extent that there are members on

the other side who are available. It is Senator Kaine, Senator Merkley. I do not know if they will be here, but Senator Schatz, Senator Van Hollen, Senator Coons, Senator Booker, and Senator Murphy. That is the order I have. With that, Senator Kaine?

Senator KAINE. Great to see both of you, and congratulations on your nominations. Ambassador Nuland, briefly, I am about to reintroduce a bill that this committee acted on last year but that never saw action on the floor that would clarify that no President can withdraw unilaterally from NATO without congressional action. NATO is a Senate-affirmed treaty. I view this as a statement of congressional prerogative, but also just simply an effort to demonstrate to our NATO allies that congressional support for the alliance's near 75 years is still very, very strong. You have a lot of experience with our NATO allies. Would they see that statement of strong intent from Congress in a positive light?

Ambassador NULAND. Thanks, Senator Kaine. When you introduced it last year, you could hear the huzzahs on the other side of the Atlantic. I think there was quite a lot of concern. And, you know, I also think that it is really interesting that over the last 3 years, public opinion polling on the United States with regard to NATO has gone up to record levels over the last 20 years. You know, Americans want to work with allies and partners, so I think you are reflecting the bipartisan commitment to our great alliance as well across the country. So I commend you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you. And when that bill was acted on by the committee last year, just to specify, it was a very bipartisan vote. It was bipartisan in introduction. The version that we will introduce, again, is very bipartisan. Ms. Zeya, thank you for the conversation that we had the other day. One of the issues I would like to ask you about is the issue of the refugee cap. The past administration dramatically scaled back U.S. acceptance of refugees, and the Biden administration sort of in its campaign and earlier today said we wanted to kind of return more to the norm where the U.S. was accepting refugees who go through a careful vetting process because our Nation has been such a haven for those seeking refuge from circumstances that are just nearly unspeakable. Tell me, is it your understanding that it is still the administration's intent to revert back to a norm on refugee admission? Some of us are a little bit discouraged at the timing and pacing of that, but please let us know what the administration's plans are, to your knowledge.

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you, Senator. I can assure you that I strongly support President Biden's public commitment to raise the ceiling for refugee admissions to 125,000 for fiscal year 2022. Now, as a nominee I am not privy to policy discussions that are under way, but I know that the President is committed to regrowing this program and doing it in the most effective, orderly, and humane way possible. So if confirmed, I will do everything in my power to make this a reality.

Senator KAINE. My surmise is that when the past administration cut the program down so dramatically in terms of the admissions, they may have also reassigned staff who were working on vetting and other issues. And so I do not think we want to just go back to the number without having the staff to make sure the program is run well, so I think we would all understand if it takes a while

to get back to the norm. But should you be confirmed, we would really love your reporting to us about the progress toward that, recognizing it is not just a State Department issue, but multiple agencies work on this, and we would love to be in dialogue with you about that going forward.

Human rights questions, I cannot think of anybody whose background is better suited than yours to dealing with these tough human rights issues. And one of the things that, you know, I have often found on this committee in dealing with human rights issues is, it is one thing to raise them against adversaries, you know, what is happening with the Uyghurs in China, what is happening with Hong Kong pro-democracy activists, and we need to be muscular in raising this with adversaries, but it is one of the most difficult sets of human rights issues when you are dealing with allies. And, you know, whether it is a—we have had an alliance with Saudi Arabia, we have an alliance with Egypt, but we run into significant human rights challenges with them.

And when you raise human rights issues with an ally, one of the stock responses we used to hear from the past administration, but not just them, from others, is, well, if you push us too hard on human rights, of course, we will just buy our arms or do our, you know, diplomatic activities with Russia or others. Just talk about how we balance aggressive promotion of our human rights values with this sort of oft-repeated threat that, well, if you push us, we will deal with countries that are not interested in human rights.

Ms. ZEYA. Thank you, Senator, for raising, you know, what is a challenging and a critically-important issue, this issue of consistency with respect to centering human rights and democratic values in our foreign policy. And in this case, the way I see it, the administration is absolutely committed to democratic renewal at home and abroad. And what this means is it is important, as we seek to shore up our alliances and partnerships, for us to hold one another accountable. And ultimately, I think we have seen how a selective U.S. approach to human rights, one that only targets U.S. competitors or adversaries, ultimately undermines U.S. credibility and leadership. So I can pledge to you, if confirmed, I would work very closely with Ambassador Nuland, with counterparts in regional bureaus, our 270 missions in the field, to strike the right balance and to make sure that we are truly centering human rights and democratic values in our foreign policy.

I think that the initiative of the Democracy Summit, which the President is committed to, is a very important one where we can help carry a concrete agenda forward on issues like corruption, countering rising authoritarianism, and really defending human rights at home and abroad.

Senator KAINE. Thank you much. I am over my time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I just want to echo Senator Kaine's concern about the presidential declaration on refugees. There is a difference between refugee resettlement and the question of those who seek asylum at our border. They are fundamentally different, and they should not be conflated, and I do hope and I believe the President is committed to that, but the sooner he signs the declara-

tion, the greater the crystallization of that commitment will be realized. So thank you.

I am not sure if there are any members presently waiting virtually. If you are, please speak up at this time.

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. I am not hearing any. I do understand that Senator Coons is coming back and there is another member on his way. So let me take advantage of the time to ask one or two questions that I had intended to wait to the end.

Ambassador, Azerbaijan's attack on the Armenian people last fall with Turkey's full support was, in my view, an unspeakable tragedy. The absence of top-level United States diplomacy throughout the war was inexcusable, and we have to prevent it from repeating in the future. I also believe the U.S. must press Azerbaijan to release the prisoner of war numbers that it has, which it is refusing to release them, in violation of international law, and to ensure that the Armenians displaced from their homes in Nagorno-Karabakh get the assistance they need. So if you are confirmed, will you commit to advocating for robust humanitarian assistance, including de-mining funds, to help the Armenians in the South Caucasus who have been displaced from their homes or otherwise affected by Azerbaijan's attack? And secondly, what can we do to revitalize the OSCE Minsk Group and create a more sustainable peace process?

Ambassador NULAND. Absolutely. Mr. Chairman, I think you know that I have worked on Armenia, Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh issues for some 25 years, and the way things went down last year was absolutely tragic for so many in the region. So as you say, we have to get prisoners released. We have to get humanitarian support back in. We have to ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia and that it can make its own decisions, and we have to talk to our ally, Turkey.

You know, the Secretary has spoken about needing to be clear eyed regarding trends in Turkey. I think we have got a lot of work to do there in our bilateral relationship to make clear our concerns about not only what Turkey is doing outside its country, but also what it is doing inside its country. So I think we have got to get back into the business of strong support for the Caucasus countries, being active diplomatically, getting high-level leadership there, showing support, et cetera, and using all of our economic and humanitarian tools.

The CHAIRMAN. And I hope we will be a strong advocate for getting POWs back. I mean, it is just in violation of international law.

Ambassador NULAND. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. With that, let me turn to Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to both the nominees. Congratulations on your nominations. I have enjoyed conversations with both of you in my office.

Ms. Nuland, I want to turn to a topic that is not going to surprise you, and it is a topic we have discussed at great length, and that is Putin's Nord Stream 2 pipeline. I have deep concerns that the Biden administration is on the verge of squandering what was an enormous bipartisan victory won by this committee, by Congress, and the previous administration last year. Nord Stream 2

was 90 percent complete when Congress passed bipartisan sanctions that I authored, along with Senator Shaheen, that stopped the pipeline in its tracks, immediately stopped the pipeline for a year.

Russia has begun again building the pipeline. It did so in the weeks following Joe Biden's election, and it did so because Russia believes the Biden administration is not going to follow the law, that they are not going to enforce the bipartisan sanctions that have passed now both houses of Congress with the chairman's support, with the support of virtually every member of this committee, passed twice now, sanctions targeting Nord Stream 2. And yet there are voices within the Biden administration that I think are arguing not to enforce the law and enforce the sanctions.

Ms. Nuland, in your judgment, can you assess the damage to American national security and to the energy security of our European allies if the Nord Stream 2 pipeline is completed?

Ambassador NULAND. Senator Cruz, thank you for your leadership on this issue. We did have a robust conversation about this, and we also worked on the energy security together when I was in the European assistant secretary job. Look, this is not just a bad deal for Germany and Europe. It violates their own climate policy, their energy policy to go greener. It deepens their dependence on Russia just at a time when Moscow is rearming around and inside Ukraine and when they are letting Navalny wither in prison. So I want to thank you for the tools you, and this committee, and this Congress have given us. I think we need to use all the tools at our disposal to stop this pipeline before it is finished. We need to press the German Government to do the same.

As I said earlier, I was very pleased to see a strong statement from Chancellor Merkel warning President Putin about his arming in Ukraine. Nothing would send a stronger signal to him than the cancellation of this pipeline, and I think we have got to make that point. And if confirmed, it will be a top early priority of mine.

Senator CRUZ. So if you are confirmed, what steps would you anticipate taking to stop the completion of Nord Stream 2?

Ambassador NULAND. I understand there are sanctions packages in development, some of them based on information that has been provided and circulated from the Congress. I think we have to accelerate the sanctions packages. I also think we have to be much clearer and stronger with our German allies that this is a matter of bipartisan concern across the United States, and it is taking Germany in the wrong direction in terms of its relationship with Russia. And all of us together now need to stand up to an increasingly aggressive Putin. So lots to do.

Senator CRUZ. So I very much agree with you. I also think time is of the essence. The Russians are trying to jam through and finish this pipeline before the administration takes action. As you know, I have tried to work with the administration, using both carrot and stick, to prompt the administration to comply with the law and use the tools that are available. I appreciated Secretary of State Blinken putting out a strong statement on Nord Stream 2. And, as you know, because you were in the room when we negotiated that agreement in my office, that in exchange for that statement, I lifted two holds that I had placed on nominees from this

administration. I very much hope to lift other holds as well, but the agreement that we worked out was designed to be incremental and staged, and in order for the next set of holds to be lifted, we need to see sanctions on the entities responsible for Nord Stream 2.

And the Biden State Department has indicated that those would be forthcoming, but they have not been, and I will say there are reports of ongoing resistance within the administration to doing so. If that resistance manifests in delays that will turn into an unequivocal win for Putin, a loss for Europe, and a loss for America. And so let me urge the administration to honor the commitments that it has made, follow the law, and issue the sanctions that are mandatory under law. We can stop this pipeline. We have stopped this pipeline, and it is only the signals of weakness and a willingness to disregard the law that have enticed Russia into returning once again to building the pipeline. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I understand Senator Van Hollen is online with us virtually.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, and let me thank both of our witnesses here today. Ambassador Nuland, let me start with you. I was pleased to see President Biden impose sanctions yesterday and today on Russia given Putin's continuing aggression, given their cyberattacks on the United States, including on our democracy and in working to interfere in our elections. And, of course, we see increased aggressive activity in eastern Ukraine from Putin.

Meanwhile, the chairman mentioned in his opening statement a number of actions being taken by one of our allies, Turkey. Under President Erdogan, Turkey has purchased the advanced air defense system, the S400, from Russia. Turkey has violated the airspace of another NATO ally, Greece, and invaded the territorial waters of Cyprus. Under Erdogan, they have attacked our Syrian Kurdish allies who were critical to our fight against ISIS, additional measures taken in Armenia, so this does not sound like a faithful NATO ally to me. Can you talk about how you and the administration propose to deal with the challenges we are facing now under President Erdogan's Turkey?

Ambassador NULAND. Thank you, Senator Van Hollen. I agree with you that this is a very challenging allied relationship that is going to require a whole lot more work. As I said to the chairman, I agree with the Secretary. We have got to be clear eyed and firm about it. It makes zero sense to me that a NATO ally is buying new Russian weapons systems. It is also a matter of bipartisan concern across the United States. We need to continue to press Turkey on this issue, as well as all of the other issues that we have together, and we have got to—you know, including democracy and human rights inside the country, freedom of the press. We have got to get on the same page together with regard to Syria and Libya, and, as we talked about earlier, Nagorno-Karabakh.

And, more broadly, I think we have got to start a conversation in NATO about backsliding on our values among allies. The United State is far from perfect itself as we all know, but it is very important that we all recommit at that table to the things that make us strongest, and, particularly, in the context of a rise of autocracy and illiberalism across the world. NATO allies have to stand for

freedom, democracy, and governments that serve their people. So if confirmed, I look forward to rolling up sleeves, getting back to Ankara, and having these conversations.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you. I was also pleased to see the Biden administration, first of all, reaffirm our ironclad commitment to the security of Israel and, you know, deepen those ties even further. And also I was pleased to see them reaffirm what had been longtime bipartisan support for a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians. There are a lot of people who think it is too late for a two-state solution given the changes on the ground in the territories and other factors. Do you believe it is too late, and, if not, what needs to be done to ensure that we preserve the option of a viable two-state solution?

Ambassador NULAND. Thanks, Senator. It remains profoundly in U.S. national interests to support a two-state solution. As you know, Senator, it is going to require willing and ready partners on both sides in the Israeli context where, again, in a government formation period in the Palestinian Authority, there needs to be will as well. And in the meantime, we need to ensure that both Israel and the PA refrain from any unilateral steps that could exacerbate tensions and make it harder to get to a two-state solution.

I think the United States has got to remain a steady partner and continue to say to both Israel and the Palestinian Authority that this is the best path for peace, so. I think that is where we have got to go. And I think it is important that the National Security Council is running almost weekly sessions with Israeli counterparts, particularly in this period of transition in Israel, to keep us connected not only on these issues, but on Iran and other vital issues in the region.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that. Mr. Chairman, I know I have run out of time. I will submit my questions for our other witness, and congratulations to both of you on your nominations.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Senator Van Hollen. Chairman Menendez has gone to the floor to vote. As you both, as seasoned public servants, know, the schedule of the Senate is not entirely predictable, so for those watching and may be surprised that I just popped in—Senator Coons—I am sitting in for a few moments for the chairman as he goes to vote.

Thank you so much, Ambassador Nuland, Ms. Zeya, for your willingness to serve our Nation again and for the support and love that your family and your circle of supporters have offered throughout your decades of service. I look forward to working with both of you to address the many foreign policy challenges facing our country, how to build a bipartisan China strategy, something I am really encouraged about progress being made here by Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch and their staff. There is bipartisan legislation being introduced that will be marked up next week. I am very excited about that and look forward to joining as a sponsor and supporting their work on that; the work to address Iran's nuclear program and other threats regionally from the Islamic Republic, efforts to support stability in the Middle East while avoiding additional long-term entanglements, efforts to push back on and contain the malign influence of the Russian Government. There are so many challenges, I could take all of 5 minutes in sum-

marizing them, and I hope we will get to work closely together on prioritizing human rights, defending democracy, revitalizing the State Department, confronting shortcomings in workforce diversity, and others.

Let me just ask both of you, if I could, about the Global Fragility Act. Ms. Zeya you were kind enough to reference it in your opening remarks. This is a tool provided by Congress on a bipartisan basis, I helped co-author, to address the root causes of extremism and violence in fragile countries. Will you commit to reviewing it, and to promptly selecting the priority countries for the Global Fragility Act, and submitting a revised strategy that takes into account the post-COVID context?

Ms. ZEYA. Yes, absolutely, Senator.

Ambassador NULAND. I think one of the fun things here, if we are both confirmed, is that we would work on these issues together because it will obviously cross the remits of both of our jobs, so looking forward to it.

Senator COONS. It is my hope and expectation we will use this tool to balance assistance around security, democracy, human rights, and to make sure that between diplomacy development and defense, we have got the order right.

The Moscow Bureau of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty is under intense pressure, really under siege by the Kremlin, just one of many recent examples of an authoritarian crackdown on press freedoms around the world. How would you support, if confirmed our RFE/RL's efforts to ensure that Russian citizens have access to unbiased news about their own country, and what actions would you take to support free press around the world? If I might, Ms. Zeya.

Ms. ZEYA. Senator, I think it is critical for, you know, for the United States to take a whole-of-government approach on these issues. So certainly, if confirmed, I would work closely with the undersecretary for public diplomacy as well as USAGM on this critical closing space for civil society and free expression in Russia that is critical to holding the Putin Government accountable for their widespread violations of human rights. So I would look to work with partners in government as well as the mission in the field to elevate this issue and act accordingly.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Ambassador Nuland on press freedom broadly?

Ambassador NULAND. Yeah, just to pile on, Senator, and thank you for raising RFE/RL. I agree with you that they are at a critical moment here. Really interestingly, I think one of the reasons the Kremlin is cracking down is because listenership and viewership at RFE/RL has gone up exponentially over the last recent years, and not just in Russia, but also in Belarus and other parts of the world where press is constrained. So one of the things that Moscow understands is reciprocity. If confirmed, I would be interested in looking at whether we are being reciprocally constraining with regard to RT Sputnik and other Russian Government organs. Press freedom is an absolutely essential human right and part of good governance around the world.

I would just lay down a marker here that I am also concerned about press freedom in the NATO space. We have a number of allies backsliding here, and it is very important that we keep that

front of agenda. And we also have a number of American companies that, you know, broadcast freely in these countries, and their ability to do that is being constrained by government. So a lot of work to do.

Senator COONS. I introduced a bipartisan Libya Stabilization Act in the last Congress and recently reintroduced it. This would support a diplomatic resolution to the ongoing grinding conflict in Libya, a country where there are 280,000 IDPs and 570,000 refugees. What additional action should we be taking to ensure that elections actually take place in December of this year and to enable the Government to be successful, and would movement by this committee on a bill like the Libya Stabilization Act be constructive? Ambassador Nuland, if you might.

Ambassador NULAND. Absolutely. We have a sliver of light now in Libya with these elections, agreed, and we have got to ensure that they are free, fair, that they are internationally observed. This is a place where, again, working with allies and partners, Europeans obviously, but countries in the—in the region to support Libya as it goes forward with all of this, we may need more resources to do that. I, you know, if confirmed, look forward to opening up the hood and seeing what we are already doing and working with allies and partners to ensure that the Libyan people feel that support and get this chance that they have suffered so much for.

Senator COONS. Any additional comments before I turn to my colleague, Senator Murphy?

Ms. ZEYA. Senator, I would just add on Libya, endorsing Ambassador Nuland's comments, I think we should also leverage all tools available, including U.N. and U.S. Government sanctions, to bring an end to foreign military intervention, hold violators of human rights accountable, and ultimately support the goal of a sovereign, stable unified Libya.

Senator COONS. Wonderful. Thank you both. Let me now turn to my colleague, Senator Murphy of Connecticut.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Senator Coons. Welcome to you both. Thank you for your willingness to serve once again. Ms. Zeya, I look forward to building a working relationship with you. To Ambassador Nuland, I am glad to have you back as a partner. I will tell you, your candor and your reputation for candor, we appreciate it here on the Foreign Relations Committee. We often get a lot of spin from administration officials on both sides of the aisle, but I think you are well respected here on both sides of the aisle because of your ability and willingness to talk to us about facts on the ground as they are, not as we wish. So great to see you again.

Speaking of facts on the ground, I wanted to bring us back to the negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, and just note a statement from the Saudi foreign ministry dated yesterday or today in which an official there said we can begin with a nuclear deal and move on to another format that we will discuss all these other issues in a positive manner. Some folks took note of that statement, but it, frankly, likely acknowledges two realities: one, that our partners in the Gulf would like to be at the table when we discuss broader regional security concerns, in particular, Iran's support for terrorist organizations or their ballistic missile program, but also, that it is

much more likely to have that conversation constructively if we get back into the JCPOA and get back on the same page with the P5+1.

And so I wanted to ask you whether you think that the likelihood of getting a comprehensive agreement, where we litigate all of our disputes with Iran, is more likely today than it was in 2013, 2014, and 2015, when we were negotiating the JCPOA.

Ambassador NULAND. Senator Murphy, it is great to see you. Although I am a citizen in Senator Kaine's region at the moment, I grew up in Connecticut, so Connecticut strong. Look, on Iran, I think we have got to pursue all of these problems in tandem. Whether that is a question of a comprehensive agreement, I think there are many players in many different pieces of this. What is most urgent today is that Iran is breaking out again of its nuclear box. It is enriching at 20 percent. It is using these advanced centrifuges. We have got to get them back in the box on the nuclear front. But at the same time, we can and should be countering their malign regional influence by being stronger diplomatically in Syria.

I have concerns that the diplomatic table, the future of Syria's political structure, et cetera, is being run by Russia and Iran, and the United States needs to be more active there. We need to support Lebanon more strongly against malign Iranian influence, and I was glad to see the undersecretary for political affairs, David Hale, make a trip to Lebanon. You have worked a lot on the Yemen issue.

So I believe we can be working on Iran's malign influence at the same time that we are having these conversations about the nuclear problem, and, frankly, the players are different in some of those things. And we have also got to build the basis for people to understand better than they do now what Iran is doing on the missile front. So walk and chew gum would be my answer to your question.

Senator MURPHY. Yeah, so I agree that our goal should be to walk and chew gum at the same time. Do you think we have to be driven by realities on the ground? And I, for instance, do not believe that we are going to be able to make progress in Yemen while we are still outside of the JCPOA. I think while we are still engaged in maximum pressure, the Iranians are likely to use every opportunity they can find to provoke. And so I do think that there is some argument to sequence here, and I will continue to make that argument on this committee.

In the remaining time I have left, I just wanted to turn to the subject that you and I have spent a lot of time working on together, and that is Ukraine. Obviously, you know, we have taken strong steps today to send a strong message to the Russians about the message we need to send regarding the array of Russian forces on the border. But it has always been, I think, our belief that while Russia wants to use that front in order to put pressure on the Ukrainian Government, their longer-term plan is not likely a full military takeover of Ukraine, but to try to politically and economically weaken that country to the point where they ultimately just make the decision to install pro-Russian or a Russia-friendly government again.

And so I would just ask this question. It is still incredibly important for us to view this as a multi-systemic effort that, while we have to have a military answer and support Ukraine in a military way, we also have to be equally focused on supporting their economy, supporting their political reform agenda, because that is maybe the most likely mechanism for Russia to eventually get a state of affairs that aligns with their interests.

Ambassador NULAND. I absolutely agree completely, and, you know, your leadership on Ukraine was essential the last time I was in government, and the fact that you continue to support Ukraine is important. The number one thing Ukraine needs to be a strong, stable, sovereign state is to tackle endemic corruption. The United States has put a huge amount of effort into that, but corruption is also a tool that the Kremlin uses to corrode Ukraine from the inside and by governments, et cetera. So it is in all of our interests to continue to work on those issues.

And the Zelensky Government has taken some important steps in recent weeks, but there is a lot more to be done. And we also need to get—support them and getting back into alignment with the IMF and all of those things that you have worked on. And the strong support from the Congress for Ukraine has been important, but they need to take the steps to walk the walk.

Senator MURPHY. Thank you. Thank you to you both. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. My understanding is there are no members seeking recognition on either side of the aisle, and with that, thanks to both nominees for their time today.

The record will remain open until the close of business on Friday, April the 16th. I would urge the nominees to answer questions expeditiously in order for their nominations to be able to move forward to a business meeting.

The CHAIRMAN. And with that, the committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:47 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. VICTORIA NULAND BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Too often, regional bureaus have sidelined DRL and other essential functional bureaus. If confirmed, how will you ensure better consultation and coordination between DRL, other functional bureaus, and the regional bureaus you will lead as P?

Answer. If confirmed, I will emphasize to the regional bureaus under my supervision, as well as to the functional bureaus, that the President's vision of placing human rights and democracy at the heart of the foreign policy of the United States necessitates full inclusion of DRL in the Department's policy-making processes. I intend, if confirmed, to work with the Under Secretary for Civilian Security and Human Rights, and with DRL's leadership, to ensure full policy coordination among regional bureaus and across the Department.

Question. What actions will you take, including with our partners, to address the global forced migration crisis? How specifically will you work to address the root causes of displacement such as new and unresolved conflicts; support populations on the move and those enduring lengthy displacement; and seek innovative solutions to assist low-income countries who host the majority of refugees and displaced people around the world?

Answer. If confirmed, I will pursue comprehensive strategies for addressing the root causes of migration, including climate change, help rebuild the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, and stand up for democratic values and human rights. I will also encourage stronger partnerships between humanitarian and development actors, including multilateral development banks, in situations of protracted displacement and fragility, conflict, and violence.

Question. Do you think we are doing enough to counter threats to democracy right now? What more should the United States be doing, and how will you elevate the importance of democracy promotion efforts and a democracy-centered foreign policy within the State Department and abroad given the President and Secretary of State's public commitment to these goals?

Answer. As President Biden said, "The United States will stand up for democracy wherever it is under attack." We know well from our own experience that sustaining democracy requires hard work, careful stewardship, and constant vigilance. If confirmed, I intend to support the Biden Harris administration's commitment to putting the promotion and protection of democracy at the center of U.S. foreign policy. This means working to bolster democratic resilience at home and abroad, and holding ourselves, our allies, and our partners accountable to promote, respect, and defend human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. What shifts must be made in our foreign policy to ensure we are working to hold our allies and adversaries to the same standard on human rights? How will you prioritize this parity in expectations on upholding human rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the tradition of seeking to report the facts on human rights fully and objectively on every country in the Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, using the standards found in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. I also intend to raise human rights issues with allies and adversaries alike, regardless of the other interests we may have in our relationships with other countries.

Question. How will you engage with international counterparts to pursue effective accountability measures to address violations and abuses of human rights around the world? What role do you believe multilateral bodies like the United Nations have in this endeavor?

Answer. The United States is committed to ensuring that the United Nations promotes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and holds those countries with the worst human rights records to account. The United States supports U.N. investigatory mechanisms designed to enhance accountability for human rights violations and to end impunity. If confirmed, I will consider all possible tools and actions to promote accountability for those responsible for human rights violations and abuses.

Question. We must be clear-eyed about the nature of President Erdogan's Turkey. Turkey is among the top jailers of journalists and lawyers in the world, which is unbelievable for a member of an alliance founded on democratic values. In addition to its many domestic abuses, Turkey's aggression throughout the region and its refusal to give up the S-400 underscore the fact that Turkey is not a reliable NATO ally. How the U.S. decides to define its relationship with Turkey is critically important to security in the region and our ability to support democratic values abroad. Is there any circumstance under which the U.S. should reconstitute the F35 program with Turkey if it does not get rid of its S-400 system?

Answer. President Biden has promised to call out Turkish behavior that is inconsistent with its commitments as a NATO Ally. Turkey's acquisition of the Russian-made S-400 was incompatible with NATO principles, Turkey's commitments to NATO, and its participation in the F-35 program, and thus resulted in Turkey's suspension and pending removal from the global F-35 Joint Strike Fighter partnership. If confirmed, I will continue to press Turkey to abandon the S-400 system, and I would not support reconstitution of the F-35 program so long as Turkey retains the Russian system.

Question. What is your position on the Cyprus question, in advance of 5+1 talks next month?

Answer. I continue to support a Cypriot-led comprehensive settlement to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation, something which would benefit all Cypriots as well as the wider region. The United States has welcomed and should stand ready to assist the U.N. Secretary-General's initiative to convene an informal 5+UN meeting in Geneva. Consistent with the October 2020 U.N. Security Council Presidential Statement, I am deeply concerned by the Turkish Cypriots' unilateral

decision, with the support of Turkey, to reopen Varosha. If confirmed, I will urge a reversal of this decision.

Question. Do you commit to the full implementation the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and colleagues in the interagency to support robust ties between the United States and Greece, Israel, and Cyprus, as envisioned in the legislation. The U.S.-Greece security relationship remains vital to our interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and has grown significantly as bilateral ties have improved, beginning in the Obama-Biden administration. If confirmed, I will work to continue to deepen ties between the United States and Greece and the United States and Cyprus.

Question. Do you commit to consult with, not simply notify, this committee as it relates to U.S. policy on Turkey?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing close consultations with the Senate Foreign Relations committee regarding U.S. policy toward Turkey.

Question. Last year's NDAA included provisions which would require the Department to be more forthcoming with Congress on the peace process. The Department was required to provide a certification in January to confirm that the Senate has been provided with all relevant documents associated with the February 29th agreement. We have yet to receive this certification. Will you commit to providing this information to Congress upon your confirmation?

Answer. Yes, I understand that the Department is preparing to provide a response regarding section 1217(b) of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (P.L. 116-283) to Congress. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that the Department provides this response and other required notifications, reports, and certifications promptly.

Question. The law also requires regular consultation with Congress on the peace process. Do you commit to consult with, not simply notify, this committee as it relates to U.S. policy on Afghanistan?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to consult fully with the U.S. policy toward Afghanistan.

Question. The continued spread of COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean is deeply concerning. Despite initial vaccination campaigns in the region, cases are on the rise and many health systems are overwhelmed. The current situation in Brazil is alarming and unrestrained spread only raises risks for new variants. What steps will you take to ensure vaccine access for nations in the Western Hemisphere, as well as other developing nations? What other vaccine-related initiatives will you prioritize?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the U.S. commitment to leading the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including through supporting global vaccine distribution via COVAX. Latin America and the Caribbean are suffering a disproportionate share of global COVID-19 cases and deaths, posing a threat to the United States given our strong economic ties. However, the President's first priority must be to take care of the American people, and given the unpredictability of this virus, we must be prepared for a variety of scenarios. As the United States moves toward having enough vaccine here at home, I will support efforts to pursue options for sharing doses abroad, if confirmed. I will also support efforts to work with partners to expand the global manufacturing of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, and their needed supplies, to increase worldwide capacity and availability.

Question. As Colombia works to implement its 2016 peace accord, it is facing an uptick in violence against civil society leaders by irregular armed actors and drug traffickers, including criminal groups that receive safe haven inside Venezuela. Additionally, there are concerns about the role of Russia in the region, including its presence in Venezuela and its disinformation efforts targeting Colombia. What steps will you take to strengthen U.S.-Colombia relations and ensure that the United States helps our Colombian partners consolidate the gains of peace?

Answer. Colombia is a vital strategic partner that shares our democratic values. If confirmed, I will support the efforts the Colombian Government and people as they continue to work towards a just and lasting peace and a prosperous future. Through diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance, the United States must work with Colombia to promote sustainable peace and reconciliation by expanding security, state presence, access to justice, and licit economic opportunities throughout the country. If confirmed, I will support efforts to work together with the Colom-

bia Government to combat narcotics trafficking and transnational crime, coordinate a regional response to the political and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, and promote and protect human rights.

Question. President Biden has outlined his strategy for a COVID-19 response, and has committed to making vaccines more widely available here in the United States. Part of what we need to do to safeguard American lives is ensure that other countries—especially poor countries—can do the same. As I’ve said before, COVID-19 didn’t start here, but it came here. Americans are not safe until the world is safe. What do you see as the most important actions the United States can take to lead international efforts to end the COVID-19 pandemic for once and for all?

Answer. To keep U.S. citizens safe, build back the economy, and curb the emergence of variants, the United States is committed to leading the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and strengthening global health security and pandemic preparedness to prevent future biological threats. I will support those efforts if confirmed. Under President Biden’s direction, the United States has already taken significant steps, including: re-engaging with the WHO; committing to provide the most funding—\$4 billion to COVAX—of any country to accelerate the pace and ambition of global vaccination efforts; and collaborating with our Quad partners (Japan, India, and Australia) to expand the manufacture and supply of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines.

Question. If confirmed, what will be your role in achieving that goal?

Answer. President Biden and Secretary Blinken have committed to a whole-of-government response to COVID-19 and building longer term global health security. If confirmed, I will work with all the regional bureaus under my supervision, our functional bureaus, the U.S. interagency and the international community—including the private sector, civil society, and other partners—to help bring the COVID-19 pandemic to an end and build back better preparedness to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats both at home and abroad, including through initiatives such as the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA).

Question. The situation in Ethiopia is alarming. Not only is there conflict in Tigray, ongoing tensions in other parts of the country have the potential to cause sustained violent conflict and political space continues to close. The administration has taken a robust multilateral approach to resolving the Tigray crisis, working through the U.N. and with our African partners to achieve results, which I applaud. It also sent a strong, positive signal of its engagement by dispatching Senator Chris Coons to Addis Ababa. However there is much more to be done to put Ethiopia’s democratic transition back on track. 3. Can Ethiopia hold credible elections in June under the current circumstances?

Answer. I share Secretary Blinken’s concern that a number of factors could undermine inclusive, free, fair, and credible national and regional elections, including: continued violence, harassment and detention of opposition figures, human rights abuses and violations, growing insecurity, more than 2 million internally displaced, interference with media freedom, and regional and local government interference in political processes. If confirmed, I will pursue sustained engagement to press the Government of Ethiopia to move towards inclusive political dialogue, to ensure a free political environment, and to address ongoing inter-ethnic tensions across the country to help mitigate these risks.

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to encourage the Abiy administration to take meaningful action to open political space, and engage with all political stakeholders?

Answer. The United States strongly supports democratization in Ethiopia. Political space for all Ethiopians is critical for advancing this process and building strong, inclusive institutions. If confirmed, I will work with the newly appointed Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa and the Bureau of African Affairs to press the Ethiopian Government to ensure freedoms of assembly and expression, political participation, access to information, including through the internet, and political resolution of inter-ethnic conflict across the country. If confirmed, I will continue to underscore to the Government of Ethiopia the need for broad and inclusive dialogue and for opposition parties and civil society to be able to participate freely in the political process and organize and work without the fear of harassment or intimidation.

Question. What will you do to help resolve the Tigray crisis should Russia and China continue to block U.N. Security Council efforts to address this urgent matter, or the African Union fail to take a more prominent leadership role?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to work closely with U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Linda Thomas Greenfield and the newly appointed Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa to use every opportunity to address the crisis across U.N. agencies. The U.N. plays a vital role in delivering humanitarian assistance and in protecting refugees in Ethiopia. As conflict in Ethiopia poses a threat to the broader region, if confirmed, I will work with the African members of the Security Council in New York and the African Union to push for an end to fighting and press for a political settlement, protection of civilians, withdrawal of Eritrean forces, immediate unhindered humanitarian access, restoration of all communications to the region, independent investigations into reported human rights violations, abuses, and atrocities, and accountability for those responsible. I will also work closely with the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa to build a broad coalition of likeminded countries willing to work together to achieve these objectives and to take the necessary steps to hold all parties accountable to their commitments and their international obligations.

Question. The administration's recent suspension of drone strikes outside select war zones has significant implications for the situation in Somalia, where AMISOM and Somali operations against Al Shabaab have long depended on the support of US drones. The current election crisis in the country, which has been made significantly worse by parliament's ill-conceived attempt to extend the term of President Farmajo, and an earlier withdrawal of US troops under the Trump administration, are additional complicating factors. What is your view on how best to achieve a breakthrough both in the struggle against Al Shabaab, and on the broader democratization and stabilization of Somalia?

Answer. A holistic approach is needed to ensure sustainable gains in countering terrorist violence, achieving stability, and building adequate governance. Such an approach will require not only continued international support to counter al-Shabaab but also robust support to build the capacity of Somali security institutions, promote sustainable development, and improve governance. Engagement with all Somali stakeholders and international partners, including the U.N. and AU, on a pathway forward for Somalia is required. With respect to the current political crisis, it is vital for the peace, stability, prosperity, and governance of Somalia that the Federal Government and Federal Member States reach a consensus on a way forward for the electoral process without delay.

Question. Recent flawed elections in Uganda require a robust USG response that advances of democracy, governance, and human rights in this important African country. I was pleased to see the administration's recent announcement of visa restrictions on Ugandan persons engaged in undermining democracy. But Uganda's status as a security partner in East Africa has complicated the willingness of past administration's to apply meaningful pressure on Kampala for its shortcomings in this area. How can the USG better prioritize democracy and governance in its relationship with Uganda, and ensure that our regional security interests do not crowd out or trump these essential priorities?

Answer. Uganda's positive contributions to regional stability, particularly as the largest troop contributing country to AMISOM and as Africa's largest host of refugees do not give the Government of Uganda a free pass regarding the importance of respecting human rights, democracy, and good governance. If confirmed, I intend to support the Department's efforts to ensure that U.S. policy appropriately reflects the centrality of strong democratic institutions and respect for human rights in our partnership with Uganda.

Question. The Central African Republic (CAR) faces ongoing violence and a humanitarian crisis in the wake of elections that suffered from low participation, and were fraught with irregularities. The U.S. supported an increase to the United Nations peacekeeping force but stability remains elusive, complicated by CAR government-aligned Russian and Rwandan military involvement and an anti-government coalition of militia groups representing roughly two-thirds of the country that are committed to the overthrow of President Touadéra. What steps should the U.S. take to reduce tensions, encourage inclusive political dialogue, build a participatory democracy, and help put the country on a path toward sustainable peace?

Answer. The United States has been a steadfast supporter of the democratic will of all Central Africans and their efforts to build resilient, responsive, and representative democracy. This is the best way to move the country towards peace and away from its repeated crises. If confirmed, I will support efforts to continue working with our partners to encourage an inclusive dialogue between all legitimate actors in the country with the support of neighbors, regional organizations, and the United Nations. If confirmed, I will work with partners and allies to ensure countries pro-

viding assistance, military or otherwise, do so in a transparent and coordinated way, and consistent with the U.N. arms embargo.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. VICTORIA NULAND BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. There are several vacant ambassadorial posts in Sub-Saharan Africa without a named nominee to be considered by the Foreign Relations Committee, including such high-priority posts as Sudan, Kenya, and South Africa. Many other posts will become vacant in the coming year with little evidence that candidates are in the pipeline for consideration. As Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, if confirmed, are you committed to working with the White House to ensure that Ambassadorial positions in Sub-Saharan Africa are filled by qualified, experienced nominees in a timely manner?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the White House to ensure that ambassadorial positions in Sub-Saharan Africa are filled by qualified, experienced nominees in a timely manner.

Question. Under your leadership as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, if confirmed, what actions will you pursue to ensure that hard to fill posts in Sub-Saharan Africa are sufficiently and consistently staffed?

Answer. I recognize that State's Bureau of African Affairs (AF) is chronically understaffed, both in terms of positions and vacancies. If confirmed, I will review our staffing levels around the world to ensure that staffing is aligned with our most pressing interests. I will explore enhancing incentives to serve at hardship posts, including those in Africa, and will look for other ways to ensure that our vacancies are filled. I am committed to an inclusive workplace and will support AF's efforts as they work to implement management reforms for recruitment, hiring, and retention.

Question. With 49 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are myriad opportunities and challenges to the security, economic, health and humanitarian interests of the United States. The U.S. Government is presently engaged on a variety of fronts. The White House and Secretary Blinken have repeatedly stated that "Africa is a priority for the Biden administration". In the early days of your tenure as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, if confirmed, how will you make clear inside the Department, across the administration and externally, that Africa is a priority for the Biden administration?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to support the Secretary's efforts to engage African countries early and often as partners in pursuing our shared interests and values—from security, global health, climate change, freedom and democracy, and mutual prosperity. If confirmed, I intend to participate in the interagency policy process as the Biden-Harris administration develops a whole-of-government Africa strategy and consider additional banner initiatives to signal the critical importance of this region. I believe active, consistent engagement of senior officials in Africa will be critical to advance U.S. interests on the continent and a signal of our commitment.

Question. How will you ensure the United States respects and values our African partners, while also representing our values and interests, particularly as it relates to respect for the rule of law, protecting human rights, and advancing democracy?

Answer. I believe we must continue to build partnerships in Africa, investing in civil society and strengthening democratic institutions. If confirmed, I look forward to implementing the Secretary's plan to engage African countries early and often as partners in pursuing our shared interests and values—from security, global health, climate change, freedom and democracy, and mutual prosperity. Senior-level engagement on a consistent basis will be a signal of our commitment.

Question. Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing a massive "youth bulge." While programs like the Young African Leaders Initiative and its Mandela Washington Fellowship are vital, what can the United States do to expand its reach and effectively engage with Africa's enormous youth population?

Answer. Empowering youth is at the heart of the longstanding U.S.-Africa partnership. If confirmed, I will direct Department of State resources to expand youth engagement initiatives. In addition to the Mandela Washington Fellowship, I intend to leverage YALI's USAID-run Regional Leadership Centers, the online YALI Network, and other public diplomacy and Department programs, including U.S. youth exchange programs like the Pan-Africa Youth Leadership Program, to help identify

and dedicate resources for youth and alumni engagement to empower youth leaders in their communities, particularly around issues of entrepreneurship, civic engagement, democracy, governance, and respect for human rights.

Question. What are your views on the role trade and investment could and should play in building stronger ties between the United States and the African continent? How should U.S.-African trade and investment initiatives factor into the U.S. global strategy to counter China, particularly in Africa?

Answer. Strengthening and expanding U.S.-Africa trade and investment is critical to our primary objective of building stronger ties between the United States and the African continent. Stronger trade and investment ties with the United States also offers Africa an alternative to the PRC. If confirmed, I will engage in our commercial and economic diplomacy and use the tools of the DFC, USAID, MCC and Treasury. I will also work with the U.S. private sector, African governments, and international financial institutions to increase trade and investment in Africa and promote U.S. business.

Question. One vital area of Prosper Africa that requires greater emphasis is improving the enabling environment within African partner countries to better attract U.S. business investment. Improvements in anti-corruption initiatives, human rights, the rule of law, and overall good governance would create better conditions for U.S. investment conditions. Such enhancements would also counterbalance efforts by Chinese firms and the Chinese Communist Party to undermine free-market competition in African markets to their advantage. How can the U.S. Government most effectively support efforts to improve the enabling environment for competitive foreign investment by U.S. firms in Africa? What types of partnerships work best, and how can the United States best incentivize reforms and other actions necessary to foster economic opportunity and expand two-way trade and investment with the African continent?

Answer. A conducive business climate is essential to building sustainable economies. If confirmed, I will deploy the full set of diplomatic and development tools to promote enabling environments in our African partners that foster robust economic growth and respect for human rights and democracy. For example, the Prosper Africa Initiative will help clear impediments to economic growth in Africa, create new export and investment opportunities for U.S. companies, and increase prosperity at home. If confirmed, I will work to provide a meaningful alternative to the People's Republic of China's (PRC) economic approach, and I will help build countries' resilience in order to respond to PRC economic coercion.

Question. What should be guiding principles for increasing two-way trade and investment between the United States and Africa in light of the presence of China, Russia and other malign actors that often operate within several of these countries by their own rules?

Answer. The President is particularly focused on rebuilding the middle class at home by creating new and better jobs, raising wages, and strengthening communities. Increasing two-way trade and investment is critical to building stronger ties between the United States and Africa, and it will benefit the American middle class. The competition with China, Russia, and other malign actors is one of the central challenges that will define the 21st century. If confirmed, I will advance the Department's efforts to ensure that American companies can compete on an even playing field in Africa, which will allow them to provide an attractive alternative based on entrepreneurship and free-market principles, and which will be of benefit to African economies.

Question. How can the Department better leverage the Bureau of African Affairs and encourage better coordination with the Bureau of Near East Affairs on Red Sea Corridor issues?

Answer. A comprehensive and coordinated interagency approach to the Greater Horn of Africa and the Red Sea corridor better serves U.S. national security interests. To this end, Secretary Blinken has appointed a special envoy for the Horn of Africa. If confirmed, I will ensure close coordination between the Bureau of African Affairs and the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, the new special envoy for the Horn of Africa, and the special envoy for South Sudan and Sudan on Red Sea Corridor issues, and ask senior leadership to identify and implement mechanisms for further coordination.

Question. President Biden has proposed a \$4 billion plan for Central America. Please describe specifically how this plan will build off of the successes and failures

of the U.S. Strategy for Engagement for Central America, and the importance of garnering sustained political will from the individual governments.

Answer. As I understand it, the Root Causes Strategy seeks to build on the lessons learned from the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America. Place-based strategies, including targeted security and economic programs, helped Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador reduce violence and increase job growth prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Root Causes Strategy seeks to use similar tools and reforms to increase transparency, combat corruption, and create conditions conducive to economic growth a top priority, and to use data to support decisions and technology to increase efficacy. If confirmed, I would work to support a strategy to engage the governments, civil society, and private sectors of countries throughout the region as partners in this endeavor to address the factors that cause people to leave their homes. If confirmed, I will work with these countries, including by bolstering civil society, to build the necessary political will to undertake tough reforms. I am under no illusions that will be easy. It will require a consistent, committed effort from the United States and our partners.

Question. There have been more than a dozen failed attempts at negotiating with Maduro in Venezuela. They have occurred in an environment of engagement favored by the Obama administration, and under the pressure of punitive measures implemented by the Trump administration. Describe the conditions that would need to be met for the administration to engage in negotiations with the Maduro regime in Venezuela.

Answer. Only good faith negotiations among Venezuelans can establish the conditions required for free and fair elections. That is the best framework for a political resolution to the political, economic, migratory, and health crises afflicting Venezuela. This was the clearly stated sense of Congress when it passed the bipartisan VERDAD Act in 2019, co-sponsored by nearly twenty Democrats and Republicans, and it remains true today. As the Act states, “direct, credible negotiations led by the Interim President of Venezuela and members of Venezuela’s democratically elected National Assembly represent the best opportunity to reach a solution to the Venezuelan crisis.” The Venezuelan democratic opposition to Nicolás Maduro has assembled a broad alliance for free and fair elections and has made clear its willingness to establish the conditions for such elections through negotiations, while also relying on coordinated domestic and international pressure to bring Maduro to the negotiating table. If confirmed, I will work with Venezuelan and international partners to press Maduro to commit to participate in credible negotiations with the Venezuelan opposition. If confirmed, I will also work with international partners to press for respect for human rights, restoration of democratic norms, and the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Venezuela.

Question. What is your assessment of what it would take to achieve those conditions?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support diplomatic engagement in order to advance a negotiated, peaceful solution to Venezuela’s political, economic, and humanitarian crises, an approach consistent with the VERDAD Act of 2019. Venezuelans themselves must meet this challenge. Past negotiations have fallen short because Nicolás Maduro and his supporter used negotiations as a tactic to distract the international community and to centralize power. Negotiations can promote a peaceful transition toward free and fair elections if the international community is united in pressuring Maduro to engage in good faith and Venezuela’s democratic forces remain united. Credible negotiations must incorporate the views and reflect the interests of Venezuelan civil society. They need to produce elections that comply with international standards of freedom, fairness, and transparency and allow Venezuelans to restore their democracy and the rule of law. To create the conditions for such a process, Maduro must free political prisoners and allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid. At the same time, the President has made clear that the United States will continue to pursue regime supporters involved in criminal activity and violations of human rights.

If confirmed, I would work with partners inside Venezuela and internationally to pressure Maduro and those who support him to commit to a serious process.

Question. Nicaragua is scheduled to hold general elections in November. In October 2020, the Organization of American States adopted a resolution [AG/RES.2962 (L-O/20)] calling for the restoration of democratic institutions and respect for human rights in Nicaragua through free and fair elections. The Ortega regime responded by approving three statutes with the apparent aim of quashing dissent in Nicaragua ahead of the November 2021 elections. If confirmed, do you commit to prioritizing

and maintaining policies and programs to create acceptable conditions for free and fair elections in Nicaragua?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to prioritizing and maintaining policies and programs to create acceptable conditions for free and fair elections in Nicaragua. I will support the continued use of the economic and diplomatic tools at our disposal, including targeted sanctions, bilateral and multilateral engagement, and support for democratic processes, to advance free and fair elections. It is not too late for the Ortega regime to make the meaningful reforms by the May OAS deadline, and the United States continues to urge them to do so.

Question. Please describe the long-term implications for Nicaragua and the region if Ortega fraudulently extends his time in office.

Answer. If confirmed, I will press for meaningful electoral reforms by the May OAS deadline toward free and fair elections in November. I understand that the Department is working multilaterally, in coordination with the European Union, Canada, and the UK, as well as our partners in the OAS, to use the tools at our disposal to create the conditions for free and fair elections in November. If Ortega chooses a non-democratic path, and if confirmed, I will join the Department's efforts to work with those partners to hold accountable those responsible and encourage a return to democracy.

Question. Despite reassurances from Secretary Blinken acknowledging the importance of the Abraham Accords, there are concerns that encouraging additional normalization agreements between Muslim majority countries and Israel isn't a priority for the Biden administration. Specifically, Senator Risch is concerned with the staffing, resourcing, and messaging the Biden administration has dedicated to this issue thus far. On the staffing front, the previous administration had an empowered agent in the White House to pursue normalization agreements. This has been pushed back down to the State Department, where it currently falls under the purview of the Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Israel Palestinian Affairs (IPA). On messaging, we've seen more out of the Department on restarting assistance to the Palestinians than on additional normalization agreements. The Biden admin's interim strategic guidance makes no mention of normalization in its section on the Middle East. Can you share your thoughts on the Abraham Accords and where it, as well as other prospective normalization agreements, rank among your policy priorities?

Answer. President Biden and Secretary Blinken have welcomed the recent normalization agreements between Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world. The Department is leading the U.S. Government's efforts, working with the National Security Council and the U.S. Government interagency to deepen existing agreements and urge other countries to normalize relations with Israel. If confirmed, fostering peace in the Middle East will remain a top priority and I will look for opportunities to build on the Abraham Accords and expand cooperation among countries in the region.

Question. Apart from the Abraham Accords, Senator Risch's top priority in the Middle East is Iran policy. He led a letter to President Biden, along with other national security Ranking Members that outlined his position. We've engaged in extensive Iran discussions with Sec Blinken, Wendy Sherman, and have just started consultations with Rob Malley. How would you define this administration's strategic aims with Iran? Where does regional activity fall in our strategic aims? How does engagement with allies and partners fit in to this wider strategy with respect to Iran?

Answer. The President is committed to ensuring Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon and believes diplomacy, in coordination with our allies and regional partners, is the best path to achieve that goal. The administration has fundamental problems with Iran's actions across a series of issues, including its support for terrorism, its ballistic missile program, its destabilizing actions throughout the region, and its abhorrent practice of using wrongfully detained U.S. citizens and foreign nationals as political tools. If confirmed, I will support the Biden-Harris administration's continuing commitment to addressing these challenges using the various tools at its disposal, including sanctions, and working in close coordination with our allies and partners.

Question. The administration has said that regional terrorism and ballistic missiles will be addressed in follow-on agreements. Do you think this is possible? Assuming we grant financial relief as a part of a nuclear negotiation, what leverage would the US have in terms of securing follow-on agreements?

Answer. President Biden has committed to try to achieve a mutual return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and then use that

as a platform to lengthen and strengthen the constraints on Iran's nuclear program, regional support for terrorism, and other issues of concern. If confirmed, I will work to achieve this vision. If confirmed, I would ensure the framework of U.S. sanctions on Iran remains robust. Many layers of that sanctions architecture would remain in place, even in the event of a U.S. return to the JCPOA. This includes the primary U.S. embargo on Iran and many other U.S. sanctions on Iran. If confirmed, I would work with allies and partners, and use other avenues to place pressure on Iran to address these critical issues.

Question. President Obama argued in favor of granting sanctions relief, stressing “our best analysts expect the bulk of this revenue to go into spending that improves the economy and benefits the lives of the Iranian people” and that “Even a repressive regime like Iran’s cannot completely ignore those expectations.” Yet, we now know that a majority of the sanctions relief went to Iran’s defense industry and proxies. We actually saw an increase in Iran’s malign regional activities since the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed in 2015. Do you still believe Iran prioritized the needs of its people over its defense industry and proxies?

Answer. I do not believe that Iran has prioritized the needs of its people, as evidenced by its abysmal human rights record. The U.S. Government maintains a range of tools to counter Iran’s destabilizing activities in the region and support for proxy organizations. If confirmed, I will support continuing U.S. efforts to maintain and, where available, impose sanctions on Iranian entities and individuals providing support to designated terrorist groups in the region. I will also support action by the Biden-Harris administration, in coordination with our allies and partners, to both deter and counter Iran’s destabilizing activities and to vigorously pursue talks on these critical issues. If confirmed, I am committed to consulting closely with Congress on the path forward.

Question. Russia and China are increasingly encroaching in the Middle East in ways that are contrary to US interests—we see joint R&D, basing, and a growing cooperation with US partners and allies in the region. Russia’s continues to use its support for Bashar al Assad in Syria as a platform to further its influence in the region, while China is trying to make deeper inroads into the Gulf and Israel and thereby advance its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The Biden administration has advertised its commitment to de-prioritizing the Middle East North Africa region, in favor of a greater presence in the Indo-Pacific and Europe. Yet Great power competition has historically taken place outside the Indo-Pacific and Europe regions, favoring combat in weak and failed states. The moves made by the Biden administration is occurring against backdrop of recalibrating relationship with Saudi Arabia, de-emphasis on Abraham Accords, and renewed focus on Palestinian issues. How do we compete with Russia and China in the Middle East? How do we remain the partner of choice and strike right balance between human rights and the national interest?

Answer. There is no question that the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) and Russia’s coercive behavior threatens our collective security, and that these countries are actively working to undercut the rules of the international system and the values we and our allies share. If confirmed, I will press our Middle East partners to be clear-eyed about the risk of doing business with Russia and the PRC, highlighting that partnerships with the United States bring tangible benefits to the people of the region, while protecting human rights. The U.S. also should support investment and economic growth in the region in a transparent manner that respects workers, strengthens labor rights, and serves as a counter to authoritarian business models.

Question. Lebanon is moving quickly towards financial collapse. Despite the August 4 port explosion, political elites lack the will to execute necessary reforms and unlock IMF, World Bank funds that will save the country from collapse. According to many, Lebanese political players are interpreting US outreach to Iran as a precursor to sanctions relief and an excuse not to implement reforms. Can you outline your thoughts on appropriate Lebanon policy? What role do sanctions play in that policy?

Answer. Lebanon needs to execute significant reforms in cooperation with the IMF to address its economic challenges. Lebanon can never be truly stable and will never prosper if corruption remains rampant, and Hezbollah continues to operate with impunity. If confirmed, I would seek to use all available tools to push Lebanese officials to implement the reforms necessary to root out corruption and terrorism and unlock critical support from international financial institutions.

Question. Secretary Blinken has been vocal on the importance of renewing and maintains cross-border humanitarian assistance, which we agree with, but when discussing Syria policy or strategy, we return to the same mantra of UNSCR 2254, progress on which remains stalled. What changes would you propose for Syria policy? How can the administration accelerate progress under UNSCR 2254?

Answer. If confirmed, I will join the Biden-Harris administration in continuing to engage diplomatically to press for an end to the Syrian people's suffering and to encourage all possible efforts to advance the legitimate political track in keeping with UNSCR 2254, and will advocate for accountability for the most serious crimes committed against the Syrian people, including war crimes and crimes against humanity. The United States seeks a nationwide ceasefire, unhindered aid access through all possible routes, the release of those arbitrarily detained, and free and fair elections under U.N. auspices. If confirmed, I will support the use of a variety of tools to ensure the Assad regime and its supporters do not profit from the conflict or any post-conflict reconstruction, and will consult closely with our partners and allies on the best way forward in Syria.

Question. What role does the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act play in US policy? Do you feel it can be used as an effective tool to containing Russian influence in Syria, and preventing US partners and allies from normalizing relations with Bashar al Assad?

Answer. The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act is an important tool to limit the ability of Assad and his enablers to profit from the ongoing conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. If confirmed, I will use it and all available tools to stop those responsible for grave human rights abuses against the Syrian people, and will coordinate with our allies and partners on policies toward Syria, including in preventing normalizing relations with Assad, in order to push for meaningful progress on our shared political objectives.

Question. In light of the rocket attack on Erbil by an Iranian proxy group in February, and the continuing presence of ISIS forces in remote areas of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, what steps is the Biden administration prepared to take to reaffirm America's commitment to the territorial integrity and safety of the Kurdistan Regional Government?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the United States' top priorities of ensuring the enduring defeat of ISIS and increasing the capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), including Peshmerga forces. I understand that the administration is in constant contact with Kurdistan Regional Government leaders to address security concerns, and the United States provides assistance to support the continued development and professionalization of the ISF, increasing their ability to respond to threats and conduct counter-terrorism operations, as well as defend Iraq—its people and borders—while upholding the rule of law. If confirmed, I will support U.S. continued efforts with Iraq on our shared vision of a secure, stable, democratic, and prosperous Iraq that can stand on its own and defend its autonomy against malign regional influence.

Question. In light of the threats posed to the Kurdish people of Syria by ISIS, the Assad Government, Assad's backers in Moscow and Tehran, and the Government of Turkey, what are the Biden administration's policies on the U.S.-Syrian Kurd security and diplomatic relationship, and the appropriate Kurdish role in Syria's political roadmap under UNSCR 2254?

Answer. Stability in Syria and the greater region can only be achieved through a political process that represents the will of all Syrians. The Syrian Democratic Forces remain a capable and committed military partner in the fight against ISIS. The United States also supports the ongoing Intra Kurdish Dialogue and looks forward to its continued progress. The dialogue complements renewed U.S. efforts to stabilize areas of northeast Syria liberated from ISIS and to promote greater transparency and inclusivity in local governance, and if confirmed I will work to support it.

Question. In your opinion, does the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons threaten the integrity of U.S. alliances, especially regarding extended deterrence commitments?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration does not believe that progress toward nuclear disarmament can be decoupled from the prevailing security threats in today's world. If confirmed, I will support the administration's view that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is incompatible with U.S. extended deterrence relationships that are still necessary for international peace and security, and may reinforce divisions that hinder the international community's ability to

work together to address pressing proliferation and security challenges. U.S. allies covered by extended nuclear deterrence—which includes all NATO Allies, plus Australia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea—share the administration’s view that the TPNW is incompatible with our extended nuclear deterrence arrangements.

Question. In December 2020, NATO re-affirmed the Allie’s longstanding position that, “as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance.” In your view, do you believe that this principle requires the United States to deploy nuclear weapons in NATO countries?

Answer. The United States is fully committed to its Article 5 obligations. If confirmed, I will strongly support U.S. continued coordination with Allies in support of NATO’s deterrence and defense posture, including U.S. nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe.

Question. How can we get NATO allies to invest more in their own defense?

Answer. This is an issue I have spared no effort on since my days as NATO Ambassador, and if confirmed, one I will continue to pursue vigorously. At the 2014 Wales Summit, Allies agreed to increase their defense spending for the mutual benefit of the Alliance. If confirmed, I will work to ensure Allies continue to share the responsibility of our collective security against new and existing threats and appeal to them to do more. If confirmed, I will also ensure that the burden-sharing conversation at NATO also focuses on capabilities, readiness, and force generation. I look forward to consulting with NATO Allies, as well as with Congress, on the best strategy to ensure NATO has the capabilities, readiness, and forces it requires to maintain a credible defense and deterrence posture, as well as fulfill NATO missions and operations.

Question. Why does Japan spend only about 1 percent of its GDP on defense? Given increasing threats from China, is this acceptable and sustainable? If confirmed, how would you approach discussions regarding defense spending with the Japanese Government?

Answer. Japan has become one of our strongest allies in maintaining peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world. The Government of Japan has increased its defense budget every year since 2012. The U.S. Japan Alliance advances our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific and beyond. If confirmed, I will work with Japan to bolster its national defense capabilities to further strengthen the alliance and regional security.

Question. Taiwan is set to increase its defense spending to about 2.4 percent of GDP for this year. However, some senior U.S. defense officials have indicated that is still an insufficient amount for Taiwan to be able to ensure resilient defense in the face of an increasing Chinese threat. Do you agree with those concerns? If confirmed, how would you approach discussions regarding defense spending with the Taiwanese Government?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to maintaining the U.S. rock-solid commitment to Taiwan. The United States will continue to make available to Taiwan the defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and our “one China” policy. At the same time, Taiwan needs to maintain robust defense budgets. The United States sold nearly \$30 billion worth of arms to Taiwan since 2009, but arms sales alone cannot ensure Taiwan’s ability to defend itself. Our expanding security cooperation seeks to encourage Taiwan to prioritize cost-effective, mobile, resilient, and asymmetric capabilities, including an effective civil defense force for defense in depth.

Question. How can we resolve the current impasse with Turkey over the S-400?

Answer. One of President Biden’s top priorities with respect to Turkey is urging it not to retain the S-400 and to refrain from additional Russian arms purchases. If confirmed, I will support efforts to persuade Turkey to forego the S-400. The CAATSA sanctions announced in December 2020 impose real costs on Turkey for acquiring the S-400 and advance our global efforts to deter and disrupt purchases of Russian weaponry, which bring Russia revenue, access, and influence. Turkey’s suspension and pending removal from the F-35 partnership represents an additional significant cost. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to review the impact of the sanctions imposed in response to the S-400 acquisition and to determine whether additional measures are required or warranted.

Question. What is your understanding of how China has expanded and modernized its nuclear forces?

Answer. I understand that during this decade, the People's Republic of China (PRC) is likely to more than double the size of its nuclear stockpile. This rapid expansion includes new delivery systems as Beijing works to establish a nuclear triad, which will include a long-range stealth bomber, new road-mobile ICBMs, multiple-warhead silo-based ICBMs, and a growing fleet of ballistic missile submarines. The PRC also appears to be working on hypersonic-glide vehicles, air-launched ballistic missiles, and low-yield nuclear weapons that will fit into this nuclear triad. The PRC is also making additional advances towards developing a launch-on-warning posture.

Question. In your view, do these capabilities pose an increasing threat to the United States and its allies?

Answer. Yes. The People's Republic of China's (PRC) ongoing rapid expansion of its nuclear arsenal presages a more dangerous future, with a considerably larger number of sophisticated nuclear delivery systems able to reach the United States and our allies and partners than in the past. This larger nuclear arsenal will buttress a broader PRC military build-up and its increasingly assertive and threatening behavior to U.S. allies and partners.

Question. How can we bring China to the negotiating table for arms control?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support U.S. efforts to pursue arms control to reduce the dangers from the People's Republic of China's (PRC) growing nuclear arsenal. To date, the PRC has failed to meaningfully engage on these issues. If confirmed, I will support efforts to work with U.S. allies and partners to press Beijing to engage meaningfully with the United States on arms control to reduce global nuclear risks.

Question. Do you believe that China's professed no first use policy is credible?

Answer. There is ambiguity over the conditions under which Beijing would act outside of its professed no first use policy. Some People's Liberation Army (PLA) officers have written publicly of the need to spell out conditions under which China might need to use nuclear weapons first. There has been no indication that national leaders are willing to attach such nuances and caveats publicly. However, ongoing PRC advances in their nuclear arsenal, from an exploration of low-yield warheads to the development of a launch on warning posture, raise questions regarding PRC intent and undermine their claims to seek a minimum nuclear deterrent backed by a no-first use policy.

Question. Until now, analysts have estimated that the growth of the Chinese arsenal would be constrained by the lack of fissile material. However, recent reports indicate that Chinese plans to reprocess plutonium will greatly increase its stocks of weapons-grade material. Do you see this as threatening to the U.S. and its allies? Why do you believe China is pursuing these activities?

Answer. Yes, this would be threatening to the United States and its allies. China's ongoing rapid expansion of its nuclear arsenal presages a more dangerous future, with a considerably larger number of sophisticated nuclear delivery systems able to reach the United States and our allies and partners than in the past. Precisely because Beijing is the least transparent member of the P5 nuclear weapon states, accurate assessments of its nuclear trajectory and intentions are difficult. I would defer to the intelligence community for specific assessments. In general, the United States has a longstanding position that seeks to limit the further development of sensitive fuel cycle technologies, including enrichment and reprocessing, beyond those facilities already in existence.

Question. What is your understanding of how Russia has expanded and modernized its nuclear forces?

Answer. Russia's strategic forces are undergoing a comprehensive modernization in their force structure, operations, and planning. If confirmed, I will support the Biden-Harris administration's intention to engage Russia in comprehensive negotiations that address the full range of systems that threaten international security, including Russian novel strategic systems and non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Question. In your view, do these capabilities pose an increasing threat to the United States and its allies?

Answer. The United States monitors Russian nuclear policy, strategy, doctrine, and current and projected nuclear forces. If confirmed, I would work to sustain a safe, secure, and effective strategic deterrent and ensure that our extended deterrence commitment to our allies remains strong and credible. If confirmed I would also support efforts to use the time provided by the five-year extension of the New

START Treaty to pursue with Russia, in consultation with Congress and U.S. allies and partners, arms control measures that address all Russian nuclear weapons, including novel strategic systems and nonstrategic nuclear weapons.

Question. After the United States ratified the New START Treaty, Russia refused to engage in follow-on negotiations regarding its non-strategic nuclear weapons, and other arms control issues. The United States recently agreed to a five-year extension to the New START Treaty. Given Russia's refusal to negotiate in the latter years of the Obama administration, do you expect Russia to behave differently this time, and to be willing to engage in arms control negotiations in the next few years? Why or why not?

Answer. President Biden and President Putin have agreed to explore strategic stability discussions on a range of arms control and emerging security issues. The administration is in the process of establishing the terms of these discussions and, if confirmed, I commit to consulting with Congress and allies on the path forward. While Russian intentions regarding possible negotiations remain unclear, the United States must enter any talks on future arms control from a position of strength.

Question. How should we account for Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons and exotic delivery systems in future arms control agreements?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support an approach in which the United States uses the time provided by a five-year extension of the New START Treaty to pursue with Russia, in consultation with Congress and U.S. allies and partners, arms control that addresses all Russian nuclear weapons, including novel strategic systems and nonstrategic nuclear weapons.

Question. Would Russia view a U.S. no first use or sole purpose policy as credible? Would such a policy affect the confidence of U.S. allies in extended deterrence?

Answer. President Biden is committed to maintaining a strong, credible deterrent to defend the United States and our allies, while also taking steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons. The Biden-Harris administration is undertaking a review of nuclear policy that will certainly include declaratory policy and, if confirmed, I will ensure we consult with Congress and our allies on any policies or actions in this area.

Question. The Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) and other U.S. legislation and policy tools have failed to deter Russia from attacking our democratic systems, especially through means of cyberattacks. How can we deter Russia from conducting cyberattacks?

Answer. Russia is a full-scope cyber actor that will remain a major threat to U.S. Government, military, diplomatic, commercial, and critical infrastructure networks. If confirmed, I will support efforts to combat Russian cyber threats through a whole-of-government approach that leverages the full range of U.S. Government capabilities—diplomatic, economic, law enforcement, intelligence, and military. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to communicate to the Russian Government when its behavior is unacceptable, coordinate with interagency partners to impose costs in response to destabilizing activity, and build international coalitions to actively deter malign Russian activities—including those carried out through cyberspace.

Question. If confirmed, how will you balance the International Organizations bureau within the Political Affairs family regarding decision-making?

Answer. The Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO) is the State Department's gateway to advancing U.S. foreign policy priorities across the multilateral system. The IO Bureau was an invaluable partner when I served as Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, and if confirmed, I will rely heavily on the IO Bureau's U.N. system and international organizations expertise to advance U.S. interests and address global challenges. IO is also central to our efforts to protect international organizations from Chinese domination and efforts to flood the staff with their nationals.

Question. There is growing concern about the aggressive efforts of the Chinese Communist Party to stack U.N. agencies with Chinese nationals and secure leadership positions in order to exert undue influence in International Organizations. Do you share this concern?

Answer. I do. The PRC engages in conduct to reshape the international system to accommodate and more closely align with its ideology. Its actions undermine the foundations of the international system that has provided peace and stability since the end of World War II. At the U.N., the PRC drives an authoritarian agenda that

stands in opposition to the values of the United States and the U.N. itself, including on human rights, labor rights, transparency, and poor economic practices. If confirmed, I will work to stop the PRC's efforts to harm international organizations and their transparency, efficiency, and influence.

Question. Do you believe the United States should craft a comprehensive strategy to ensure the open and transparent processes for the selection and promotion of Directors, Secretary Generals, and Director Generals of all international organizations, including the U.N. and its specialized bodies?

Answer. I believe in the independence and integrity of the U.N. and other international organizations, including specialized agencies, and agree with the importance of having qualified, independent candidates in key positions. If confirmed, I will prioritize robust strategies that include working with our allies and partners to select or elect qualified, independent candidates that support democratic values through a transparent and fair process.

Question. What do you believe is the most appropriate level of funding to the United Nations? Should the U.S. leverage our contributions to promote necessary reform within U.N. specialized bodies and committees?

Answer. The most appropriate funding level for the U.N. is the one that enables the U.N. to fulfill its mission effectively and efficiently, as determined by the U.N. General Assembly in accordance with its established procedures. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and the other IO missions to U.N. organizations to promote reforms that ensure that the U.N. and U.N. specialized agencies are transparent, accountable, and well-managed.

Question. The United States has accrued peacekeeping arrears due to incongruence between U.S. law and U.N. assessment levels. How will you advocate for the lowering of U.S. peacekeeping assessments to 25 percent during the scales of assessment negotiations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. Mission to the United Nations and the Bureau of International Organization Affairs on a strategy to advance U.S. interests in reaching agreement in the U.N. General Assembly to lower the U.S. peacekeeping assessment rate, thereby reducing or eliminating future peacekeeping arrears.

Question. Do you support paying the backlog of U.S. arrears, including the pre-Helms-Biden agreement arrears, or will you honor the bipartisan agreement negotiated in the current President's name?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consult closely with Congress on the issue of whether to pay the "contested" arrears that are subject to the Helms-Biden agreement. As indicated in the President's FY 2022 budget request, the Department is seeking funds and authority from Congress to enable payment of peacekeeping arrears that accrued over the past four years. These arrears are not subject to the Helms-Biden agreement.

Question. Given the potential conflict with U.S. policy that U.N. membership would cause, what actions would the Biden administration take if the Palestinian Authority submitted a new application for membership to the U.N. or attempt to accede to any new U.N. body?

Answer. I believe that efforts by the Palestinians to join international entities are premature and counterproductive. There are no shortcuts to Palestinian statehood outside direct negotiations between the parties, a process I would support, if confirmed.

Question. Do you support establishing an office of U.N. Integrity within the Political Affairs family to counter malign influence within the U.N. system and to promote free and fair elections within the U.N. system?

Answer. The IO bureau has taken steps in recent years to strengthen its capacities to counter malign influence and I would support building on those efforts, if confirmed. I look forward to working with Congress to ensure the State Department is organized and resourced effectively to strengthen the U.N. system and ensure the transparency, effectiveness, and integrity of multilateral institutions. If confirmed, I will work with partners and allies to elect qualified and independent candidates to lead the U.N. and other international organizations bodies, including highly specialized agencies.

Question. In 2014, your phone call with then-Ambassador to Ukraine Geoff Pyatt was leaked, and, among other things, it revealed less than flattering opinions about

the European Union. At the time, how did you address this comment with your European Union colleagues?

Answer. I made immediate contact with senior partners in the EU and key Allied capitals to make clear that this phone call was leaked by the Russians to try to drive wedges between us, and that my comments in no way reflected my larger view of the EU, but reflected only a short term, tactical frustration that the EU had chosen not to send an envoy to help negotiate a transitional Ukrainian Government. In fact, I was seeking more EU collaboration on Ukraine. I also apologized for the crude language I used. I went on from that incident to have very productive and collaborative relations with EU diplomats and Allied partners for the next three years on Ukraine, energy security, Russia relations, the Balkans, Cyprus settlement talks and a host of other issues.

Question. Do you believe this statement will present issues in your job as Under Secretary and impede your ability to work well with the political directors of European Foreign Ministries? How will you fulfill President Biden's intent to strengthen our relationship with our allies, including the European Union as a bloc?

Answer. As noted, I went on from that incident to have very productive and collaborative relations with the EU and Allied partners on a wide variety of issues. If confirmed, I look forward to building on that experience to support the President and Secretary's efforts to repair, revitalize, and raise the level of ambition in the U.S. relationship with the European Union. U.S.-EU cooperation will be critical to our ability to control the pandemic, fight climate change, address the challenge posed by China, secure a digital future that favors free societies, and manage other global issues. If confirmed, I will work closely with my EU and other European counterparts to deepen cooperation on these issues on the basis of our shared values.

Question. Which nations do you believe the U.S. should work most closely with to counter China's growing malign influence and actions around the world? Which countries do you see as most aligned with U.S. goals and values vis-a-vis China?

Answer. If confirmed, I will put alliances and partnerships at the center of our foreign policy to advance shared norms and values that underpin peace and security and compete with the People's Republic of China (PRC) from a position of strength. This includes working closely with our Indo-Pacific and NATO and EU Allies, within groupings like the Quad and the G7, and with other likeminded partners to preserve our democracies, protect the integrity of the U.N. system, strengthen our vital security partnerships, and secure the technologies of the future.

Question. What are your views on the recently agreed EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment? Should the U.S. be engaging with the European Parliament to stop its ratification?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to early consultations with our EU and European partners on shared concerns about China, including those related to trade and investment. Ultimately, the onus will be on China to show that its pledges on forced labor, state-owned enterprises, and subsidies in its new agreement with the EU are not just cheap talk, and the Chinese Government will need to follow through. If confirmed, I will seek to engage with European counterparts, including members of the European Parliament, on how to advance our shared economic interests and counter China's aggressive and coercive actions, as well as on China's failures to uphold its past international commitments.

Question. Many European countries have pledged to keep unsafe telecoms companies out of their networks. What do you view as the next priority areas for cooperation between the U.S. and EU?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support continued collaboration with European Allies and partners to build a vibrant and diverse supply chain of trustworthy telecommunications equipment and services. This includes support for open, interoperable approaches like Open RAN (radio access network) technologies that promise to increase vendor diversity and market competition and have the potential to lower costs and improve security. The United States encourages others to join us in our support of trustworthy vendor diversity, open networks, and transparent standards. National measures must be crafted to fully exclude untrustworthy and high-risk suppliers, regardless of national origin, from providing equipment and software in 5G networks.

Question. To what extent do you believe that there is an emerging Russia-China axis? Some suggest that the U.S. should try to drive wedges between the two nations to destroy any emerging axis. Do you agree with that analysis?

Answer. I believe the alignment between Russia and China on many issues amplifies the challenges that both countries pose to the United States. China and Russia cooperate in certain areas, touting their relationship as a “comprehensive strategic partnership,” but remain competitors in others. Beijing and Moscow share the same goal of undermining U.S. leadership and reshaping the international rules-based order, particularly in the defense, democracy, and human rights realms. They complement these efforts with their military capabilities, technological innovation, and disinformation campaigns. If confirmed, I will ensure the United States is vigilant in imposing costs on coercive and reckless behavior that undermines the rules-based order.

Question. In an article last year in *Foreign Affairs*, you said the U.S. should “resist Putin’s attempts to cut off his population from the outside world and speak directly to the Russian people.” As Putin’s tightens the screws on his people, not least through the “foreign agents” law, independent media is being suppressed, and RFE/RL is on the brink of withdrawing from the country altogether. How do you propose we resist Putin’s attempts to cut off his population from the outside world? What actions do you believe the U.S. should take?

Answer. The United States is committed to maintaining ties with the Russian people despite the Russian Government’s efforts to increase government control over its population using new and existing legislation and regulations adopted under the guise of regulating “foreign influence.” If confirmed, I will ensure the United States continues to promote the courageous work of Russia’s independent media, civil society organizations, and democratic elements of the society and call out the Russian Government for abusing the fundamental freedoms of the Russian people and will join with partners and allies to amplify that message. If confirmed, I will work to enhance people-to-people ties, seek ways to ensure continued communication with the Russian people, and draw attention to Russia’s increasing repression.

Question. In the same article, you wrote “U.S. and allied sanctions, although initially painful, have grown leaky or impotent with overuse and no longer impress the Kremlin” and the “U.S. and European leaders should be clearer about their conditions for rolling back or removing sanctions.” What do you believe the role of sanctions should be in the creation and execution of U.S. foreign policy?

Answer. Sanctions remain an important tool in our broader arsenal of instruments for countering Russian malign behavior and signaling to Russian leaders that their actions will have costs, as most recently demonstrated by the President’s April 15 executive order. If confirmed, I will work with allies and partners to enhance coordination and amplify the effect of U.S. sanctions actions, as well as the imposition of new sanctions if warranted.

Question. With respect to Russia, how do you believe the sanctions imposed on that country since 2014 have affected the Russia’s economy and foreign policy decision making?

Answer. U.S. and allied sanctions impose costs on Russia for its destabilizing activities. Russia might well have sought to take even more territory in Ukraine and elsewhere had tough sectoral sanctions not been imposed. Economically, sanctions have sharply curtailed new foreign investment in Russia. Moscow now has few opportunities to achieve sustained growth absent significant structural reforms to improve competitiveness and the business environment, which the Kremlin shows little willingness to undertake. The economic role of the state has steadily expanded, growing from roughly 35 percent of GDP in 2000 to 60-70 percent today. This is detrimental to Russia’s long-term interests and growth.

Question. Given the wide range of Russian malign behavior, how can the U.S. (including Congress) and Europe do a better job of being clearer about the policy aims of sanctions and any conditions needed for rolling back or removing sanctions with respect to Russia?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to consulting with Allies and Partners, as well as with Congress, to examine all options for how to calibrate sanctions actions to best meet U.S. and allied policy aims.

Question. Do you believe that the imposition of more sanctions on Russia would accomplish U.S. policy goals? What are other measures besides economic sanctions that could be effective tools with respect to U.S. foreign policy vis-a-vis Russia?

Answer. I do, if they are properly targeted and maintained. I see value to using other tools as well including multilateral visa bans and international pressure campaigns. If confirmed, I will support the Biden-Harris administration’s commitment

to using all available tools, including but not limited to sanctions, to stop Russian malign influence, and will also continue to seek ways to engage the Russian people.

Question. What outreach to every day Russians do you intend to do as Under Secretary for Political Affairs?

Answer. As the Russian Government increases its suppression of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in Russia, it is even more critical for us to engage with everyday Russians through public statements, broadcast and digital media, and the remaining educational and people-to-people programs that the Kremlin still allows. And even as we focus on responding to the Russian Government's aggression, as the President has stated, "the Russian people, like the American people, are invested in a peaceful and secure future for our world." We need to nurture these inclinations, and Mission Russia has been able to adopt a wide range of new virtual tools and hybrid engagements for this purpose. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing and finding new ways to expand our outreach to the Russian people.

Question. As Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasian Affairs between 2013 and 2017, you were responsible for U.S. policy on Turkey during the 2016 coup attempt and as Turkey descended into the authoritarianism under President Erdogan we see today. What did you and the State Department do in those years to try to prevent Turkey from purchasing the S-400 missile defense system from Russia?

Answer. As Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, I oversaw the successful effort in coordination with our NATO Allies to convince the Government of Turkey to overturn its 2013 decision to move forward with a Chinese air defense system. I consistently and repeatedly pushed for Turkey to choose a NATO-interoperable air defense system, emphasizing that PATRIOT would be the best choice for Turkey. I also worked within the U.S. interagency to address Turkey's concerns about the PATRIOT. More broadly, I successfully pushed other NATO Allies to reduce their dependence on legacy Russian military equipment and procure NATO interoperable military equipment.

Question. Is there anything you think the U.S. should have done differently in the aftermath of the 2016 coup attempt?

Answer. Following the devastating July 2016 coup attempt in Turkey in which more than 250 people lost their lives, the United States promptly condemned the coup and extended its heartfelt sympathy to the Turkish people. Since then, we have supported Turkey's efforts to bring perpetrators of the attempted coup to justice in evidence-based prosecutions. However, I am concerned by the significant expansion of scope of the prosecution for attempted coup-related activities to include opposition politicians, the media, and others whose views differ from the Government's.

Question. How should the U.S., the European Union, and NATO deal with an increasingly authoritarian Turkey whose decisions are problematic for its people, its allies, and its larger neighborhood?

Answer. I share the concerns about the Turkish Government's curbs on freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly that erode the foundations of a democratic society. It is in our shared interest to keep Turkey anchored to the Transatlantic community. If confirmed, I commit to press Turkey to do more to bolster the rule of law, protect human rights, support fundamental freedoms, uphold the rules-based international order, and stand united with the Transatlantic community in addressing global challenges from Iran, Russia, and China.

Question. Do you believe that the U.S. should try to drive a wedge between Russia and Turkey?

Answer. Russia attempts to interfere in domestic processes and drive wedges between the United States and its Allies, including Turkey, using manipulative energy tactics, weapons sales, corrupt business deals, and disinformation. Turkish-Russian relations are transactional and frequently divided by strategic rivalries. For example, Russia and Turkey are often on the opposite side of regional conflicts (e.g., Syria and Libya). At the same time, Turkey is heavily dependent upon Russian energy supplies and Russian tourists, construction sector projects, and Russian agricultural purchases are important for the Turkish economy. If confirmed, I will work to prevent Russian influence from weakening a key NATO Ally.

Question. Recently, Senator Menendez and I re-introduced the Ukraine Security Partnership Act, which aims to support Ukraine in its fight against Russian-backed separatists in the east and push the country to continue necessary reforms of its military and defense sectors. In the bill, we propose placing of conditions on Foreign

Military Financing and International Military Education and Training (IMET). With your experience working on Ukraine policy, what is your view on Ukraine's historical response to conditionality? Do you believe that increasing conditionality on a portion of military support for the country would provide incentive for further reforms?

Answer. Reform conditionality on security assistance to Ukraine has been an important driver of positive change in the armed forces, including in ensuring U.S. support is properly used. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to provide robust security assistance to Ukraine, including lethal defensive weapons, and to support continued reforms in Ukraine. The Department will oversee the execution of \$115 million in FMF, \$3 million in IMET, and \$6 million in Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related Programs (NADR) funds that Congress appropriated for FY 2021. If confirmed, I will also coordinate with the Department of Defense in the execution of \$275 million that Congress appropriated for the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) in FY 2021, including certifying that Ukraine has taken substantial actions to make defense reforms before the final tranche of \$150 million in USAI funding is released. I will continue to urge the implementation of defense reforms, for which Ukraine has made moderate strides. If confirmed, I also look forward to consulting with Congress as we engage the Ukrainian Government on these issues to ensure we have the right mix of incentives for Ukraine to continue its reforms.

Question. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was overwhelmingly elected in 2019 on an anti-corruption platform. After a few promising reforms, Zelenskyy and his government have stalled and even backslidden on democratic and market-based economic reforms. The U.S. gives a huge amount of money to support Ukraine's transition, yet much of the country remains under the influence of oligarchs. What do you see as the current priorities for reform in Ukraine, and what pressure or leverage can the U.S. use to ensure Ukraine continues down its previously positive path?

Answer. Ukraine needs to make more progress in combatting corruption, institutionalizing rule of law, deepening economic reforms, and strengthening democratic institutions. If confirmed, I will work with Ukraine to hold accountable corrupt actors who stand in the way of reforms or try to undermine the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Question. As Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, you had responsibility for Europe during years of upheaval in the region: the 2014 Ukraine Revolution of Dignity, the 2014 the 2015 European migration crisis, the Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election, and the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, to name a few. Looking back from today, what would you do differently? What should the U.S. have done differently?

Answer. I am proud that the U.S. provided crucial political, economic, and security support to Ukraine during my tenure as Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, in close collaboration with the EU, NATO, and our democratic allies around the world. I regret that the U.S. was not a direct participant in the Normandy negotiations to implement the Minsk agreements because we might have been able to push the process faster and more effectively. As I testified before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in 2017 and 2018, I also believe we should have done more in 2016 to expose and deter Russian election interference in the U.S.

Question. What do you believe you and the U.S. got it right?

Answer. The U.S. provided crucial political, security, and economic support to Ukraine, coordinated closely with Allies and conditioned our assistance on meaningful reform. We assembled a global coalition to censure and sanction Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. We also strengthened deterrence along NATO's Eastern border with Russia, reversed the flow of gas in Europe to help Ukraine when Russia tried to cut it off, collaborated with the EU to bring new non-Russian energy sources to Europe, and provided intensive support to the U.N.-facilitated Cyprus peace talks. We also worked intensively in the Balkans to support good governance and reform, and called out those NATO Allies that were backsliding on their democratic commitments.

Question. There were reports that you supported arming Ukraine with lethal weaponry during your time as Assistant Secretary, a position at odds with key officials in the Obama administration. Do you remain willing to disagree, when appropriate, with the administration to ensure the best policies are put into place?

Answer. If confirmed, I will remain committed, as I always have been, to providing my best counsel in the formulation of administration policy, even if that input is at odds with others. Once the President and Secretary have decided on a policy, I will faithfully implement it to the best of my ability. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with Congress to continue providing the assistance that Ukraine requires to defend itself against Russia's aggression, including lethal weapons, based on a U.S. and Ukrainian assessment of Ukraine's defense requirements. This includes the provision of defensive lethal assistance that has already expanded beyond Javelin missiles, such as armed Mark VI patrol boats this year, for instance.

Question. In the number three spot in the State Department, how do you propose the U.S. reinvigorates the Minsk process and the Normandy Format to pressure Putin to withdraw from Eastern Ukraine? Though not a member of the Normandy Format, what can the U.S. do to support Ukraine and end the war that is in its 7th year?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to vigorously 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. I will continue to support the Minsk agreements as the framework for a diplomatic resolution to the Russia-instigated conflict in eastern Ukraine and, in coordination with our allies and partners, will seek opportunities to leverage U.S. engagement on Ukraine-Russia conflict diplomacy.

Question. Do you view the sanctions in the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA), as amended, as a mandatory or discretionary authority?

Answer. PEESA is U.S. law, and if confirmed, I will uphold the law. PEESA, as amended, is an important tool to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and ensure that Europe has a reliable, diversified energy supply that enhances rather than undermines its collective security. I understand that the Department continues to assess all potential targets involved in the construction of Nord Stream 2, to identify persons that engaged in conduct that meets the specific terms of the statute and is considering designations.

Question. Do you believe that it is possible to prevent the completion of Nord Stream 2, or is it inevitable?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working with allies and partners to prevent the completion of the pipeline and to ensure that Europe has a reliable, diversified energy supply that enhances, rather than undermines, its collective security. The administration has made clear that Nord Stream 2 is a geopolitical, Russian malign influence project that is a threat to Europe's energy security. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues work to bring an end to the project.

Question. Do you believe it would be appropriate for the administration to negotiate a deal with Germany (or any foreign power) involving the waiving of mandatory sanctions absent prior consultations with Congress?

Answer. In the spirit of our Transatlantic partnership, the administration is prepared to listen to the concerns of our Allies. That said, to the best of my knowledge, there is no such deal. If confirmed, I will consult early and often with Congress on all sanctions matters. The Department looks forward to continuing to consult with Congress on this matter and others, and if confirmed I would look forward to doing the same.

Question. Do you believe that the State Department should implement the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA), as amended, consistent with congressional intent to stop the completion of the pipeline? Do you commit to ensuring that the State Department adopts an interpretation of PEESA, as amended, consistent with Congress' intent that the sanctions target a broad range of pipe-laying activities, support services, insurance and certification activities, and other conduct that supports or facilitates the construction of the pipeline?

Answer. PEESA is U.S. law, and if confirmed, I will uphold the law. The administration is thankful for the tools that Congress has provided to ensure that Europe has a reliable, diversified energy supply that enhances rather than undermines its collective security. Furthermore, the Department continues to work to bring an end to the pipeline, which it views as a threat to European energy security and as a tool of Russian coercion. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to continue to assess and evaluate evidence available to determine the applicability of PEESA, as amended.

Question. The five post-Soviet Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, or C5, have been an afterthought in much of U.S. foreign policy. However, the region sits between Russia and China and has often proven eager for U.S. involvement and investment. Former Secretary Pompeo visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in 2020, and USAID has recently expanded its presence in the region. Over the past few years, the coordination between the United States and EU on development programs in Central Asia has markedly strengthened and both partners have published Central Asia engagement strategies. Will you commit to ensuring that Central Asia is a priority region for engagement by the State Department and to continuing to coordinate the U.S.'s Central Asia engagement with the EU?

Answer. Changes in Central Asia in the last several years have created both new opportunities and new challenges. If confirmed, I will work with the SCA bureau to continue to advance the U.S. Central Asia Strategy by providing strong support for the independence and territorial integrity of the Central Asia countries, encouraging regional cooperation and connectivity, working to reduce terrorist threats, and promoting the rule of law and respect for human rights. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with Congress to sustain U.S. diplomatic support and engagement in the region, including the continued routine contact between EU and U.S. officials overseeing engagement with Central Asia.

Question. In your opinion, what are the immediate priority areas in which the U.S. should engage these nations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the U.S. Central Asia Strategy, which lays out six priority policy objectives, including support for the independence and territorial integrity of the Central Asia countries, reduction of terrorism, support for stability in Afghanistan, encouraging regional cooperation and connectivity, promoting rule of law reform and respect for human rights, and furthering regional development. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with Congress to sustain U.S. diplomatic support for these priorities and engagement in the region.

Question. 1Do you believe that the U.S. should continue to look at the Central Asian nations through an Afghanistan-centric, "War on Terror" lens?

Answer. While promoting regional security will remain critical, the U.S. Central Asia Strategy lays out several priorities beyond preventing terrorism. If confirmed, I will support these priorities, including support for the independence and territorial integrity of the Central Asia countries, regional cooperation and connectivity, promoting rule of law reform and respect for human rights, and fostering economic opportunities for U.S. businesses in the region. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with Congress to sustain U.S. diplomatic support for these priorities and engagement in the region.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. VICTORIA NULAND BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. The Saudi regime's human rights abuses are well-documented, and while Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman has tried to present himself as a "modernizer," his social reforms have been accompanied by vast crackdowns on independent voices. He has imprisoned women's rights activists, journalists, and academics, and of course most infamously, our own intelligence services have assessed him to be behind the brutal murder of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. The administration is to be applauded for taking the important steps of releasing the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) report confirming MBS's complicity in the Khashoggi murder, adopting the "Khashoggi Ban," and applying sanctions to 76 Saudis behind Khashoggi's murder. But MBS was not among those, and continues to face no direct consequences for his role. If confirmed, what steps would you take to hold Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman accountable?

Answer. I agree that the Saudi Government must be held accountable for the brutal murder of Jamal Khashoggi, and I support the steps the Biden-Harris administration has taken to elevate the role of human rights within the relationship, address past behavior, and deter future abuses. As you note, the administration followed the law and submitted an unclassified report to Congress on the murder of Jamal Khashoggi; imposed Global Magnitsky sanctions on a former senior Saudi official and the group whose members were involved in the killing, which includes members of the Presidential Guard close to the Crown Prince; and took action pur-

suant to a new visa restriction policy against 76 Saudi individuals believed to have been engaged in threatening dissidents overseas, including but not limited to the Khashoggi killing. The Department has committed to report on any such extraterritorial activities by any government in its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. If confirmed, I will push to ensure that human rights concerns remain a central element of our bilateral conversations, and that we obey all aspects of U.S. law in this regard.

Question. Since the fraudulent election last August, freedom of expression has been under attack in Belarus. The U.S. has sanctioned some entities and individuals over their roles in the election and the subsequent crackdowns on protesters; yet, the question remains what more the U.S. Government should do to signal its support for the Belarusian people. If confirmed, what measures would you support to hold the Lukashenko regime accountable and support the people of Belarus in their fight for a democratic future?

Answer. I condemn the Lukashenko regime for its violent and repressive tactics against the Belarusian people peacefully protesting for the right to choose their own leaders. If confirmed, I will call for the release of all political prisoners, new elections, and a national dialogue inclusive of the opposition and civil society. I will support coordinated actions with our allies on sanctions and visa bans against individuals and entities involved in human rights abuses and other efforts to undermine democracy. I am committed to finding ways to bolster assistance to support brave Belarusians advocating for democratic change and standing up for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. I applaud the Biden administration's new sanctions designations against the Russian Federation for its malign activities on American soil that undermine U.S. national security. I urge the administration to now follow through with congressionally mandated sanctions against Putin's Nord Stream 2 pipeline. This pipeline, if completed, would further undermine U.S. national security by increasing the Kremlin's influence in Europe, exacerbating divisions within Europe, and stripping Ukraine of its only source of leverage over greater Russian military activity at a time when Putin is substantially increasing his military capabilities along Ukraine's Eastern border. The Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA) and the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Clarification Act (PEESCA) impose mandatory sanctions on all entities involved in pipe-laying activities for Nord Stream 2. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring the imposition of sanctions as required under PEESA and PEESCA?

Answer. If confirmed, I will advocate using to all available tools to stop the completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. I understand that the Department is actively examining entities involved in potentially sanctionable activity and will designate additional persons as appropriate. If confirmed, I will use all tools, to include these authorities as appropriate, to counter Russian malign influence and to work with allies and partners to support Transatlantic energy security goals.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. VICTORIA NULAND BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. How would you characterize the nature of the Chinese Communist Party? Do you believe their worldview and value system are compatible with our own?

Answer. The Chinese Communist Party is illiberal, authoritarian, and increasingly aggressive. I believe the Chinese leadership seeks not just to compete with the U.S. but to change the global rules of road to favor autocracy. As such, we are in a fundamental struggle with China, and it will be the challenge of our generation to defend and advance democracy, liberalism, universal human rights, and freedom in the face of Chinese ambitions.

Question. Is there any doubt in your mind that the goal of the Chinese Communist Party is to become the world's predominant political, military, and economic power, and for the United States to decline in relation to it?

Answer. I have no doubt that is China and the CCP's goal.

Question. Do you believe that the U.S. Government's past approach towards the PRC was effective at meeting this challenge?

Answer. The strategic environment has changed significantly in recent years, as has China itself. While there was once a broad consensus that economic liberaliza-

tion in China would lead to political liberalization, the opposite has happened. China has grown more authoritarian at home and more aggressive abroad. The Chinese Communist Party is illiberal, authoritarian, and intends for China to become a dominant world power. Beijing is working across the spectrum to compete with and challenge the United States. This necessitates a new, tougher U.S. approach, working with allies and partners.

Question. Do you believe that the CCP can be trusted to uphold its commitments? How do you think the United States' approach to diplomacy with China should change because of its long record of broken promises to the international community?

Answer. Beijing has a long track record of failing to honor its international obligations, including in Hong Kong and around the world. As such, the United States must judge Beijing by its actions, not its words, and work with allies and partners to impose costs on China when it violates international norms and agreements.

Question. In 2018, during a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing, you said that Beijing is adapting and improving on Russia's methodology and is now running disinformation campaigns and influence operations in Taiwan, Australia and other neighboring countries. Do you believe China is doing the same in the U.S.?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Given this broad consensus around Confucius Institutes and their role in supporting CCP propaganda, how do you believe the United States should counter Chinese influence operations through programs such as their Confucius Institutes?

Answer. A clear understanding of the organizations and entities that China uses to attempt to influence U.S. policy is important. If confirmed, I commit to review these policies to ensure organizations are properly designated and inform relevant stakeholders within the United States, including state and local governments, universities, and business associations, as appropriate.

Question. If confirmed, how will the State Department under your leadership push for transparency and accountability to ensure we learn what caused the COVID-19 pandemic and how to prevent the next pandemic? Do you commit to follow up on the Department's January 2021 disclosure of new information on activities at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, and share with Congress and with the public as appropriate further details on those disclosures, including the names of the researchers who fell sick in the fall of 2019 and the nature of the research they were conducting at the time?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to pursuing transparency and accountability as we seek to determine the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, assess the shortcomings of the global response, and support necessary reforms to prevent future pandemics. I will continue to urge the WHO to ensure the second phase of the study in China is timely, transparent, expert-led, and free from interference. We do not know and cannot know the full origins of the virus and its spread until we have full transparency from the PRC.

Question. Do you concur with Secretary Pompeo's and Secretary Blinken's determination that genocide and crimes against humanity are currently being committed by the CCP against Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim communities in Xinjiang? If so, what are the appropriate tools for holding the CCP and its officials accountable for its atrocities?

Answer. I agree with the Secretary of State's determination that the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is committing genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang. These atrocities shock the conscience and must be met with serious consequences. If confirmed, I will support using all appropriate tools, including those provided for in the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, to pressure the PRC to end these atrocities and to promote justice and accountability for the victims.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that human rights concerns are integrated into every senior bilateral engagement with the PRC, and that specific prisoner cases are raised at the highest levels, both publicly and privately?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that human rights concerns are at the forefront of our China policy, and I will commit to integrate our human rights concerns into senior bilateral engagements with PRC counterparts. I recognize that advocacy on behalf of individuals who have been abused by PRC authorities should be a crit-

ical component of the U.S. Government's approach, and I will engage both publicly and privately to urge the PRC authorities to release unjustly detained individuals unconditionally, consistent with their international human rights commitments.

Question. Do you see the link between China's pervasive, egregious human rights abuses and its failure on so many other fronts to be a responsible global actor?

Answer. Yes. I am clear-eyed about China's failure to uphold key past commitments, including on human rights, and ongoing abuses. I will keep these failures in mind as I deal with my PRC counterparts. If confirmed, I will work closely with our allies and partners to address these challenges from a position of strength, re-engage in international institutions, and push back against attempts to rewrite the rules and procedures of the international system.

Question. If confirmed, will you ensure that the State Department maintains a high degree of pressure on Beijing for its violations of Hong Kong's long-cherished autonomy, and prioritizes this key issue above all other competing interests in Hong Kong?

Answer. Yes. The United States must clearly address Beijing's assault on freedom, democracy, and autonomy in Hong Kong, in violation of its international obligations and commitments. If confirmed, I will work with partners and allies to strengthen a coordinated approach to the crackdown.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to strengthening the U.S.-Taiwan relationship, including support for the Taiwan Travel Act and supporting and encouraging senior U.S. officials to travel to Taiwan, and senior Taiwanese officials to travel to D.C. to meet their respective counterparts?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to maintaining and strengthening our rock-solid commitment to Taiwan. We must deepen our ties with Taiwan—a leading democracy and a critical economic and security partner, as guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, the three Joint Communiques, and the Six Assurances provided to Taipei. Consistent with the “one China” policy, I understand that the Biden-Harris administration is looking for opportunities for visits between Washington and Taipei that advance our unofficial relationship and enable substantive exchanges on issues of mutual concern.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to a regular and robust arms sales process with Taiwan that does not fluctuate in accordance with U.S.-China relations?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will ensure that the United States continues to maintain its commitment under the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act to maintain Taiwan's defensive capabilities.

Question. Japan's Deputy Foreign Minister recently called Taiwan the “red line” of the Indo-Pacific region and expressed Japan's hope that President Biden would come to Taiwan's defense if the PRC attacks it. How would you work together with your counterpart in Tokyo to enhance Taiwan's defense and prevent PRC aggression against it?

Answer. The United States and Japan share concerns over Chinese activities that are inconsistent with the international rules-based order, including the use of economic and other forms of coercion, and we oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea. Given Taiwan's strategic location in the East China Sea, its security is closely linked to Japan's. If confirmed, I will work with Japan to promote peace and stability in the region, including in the Taiwan Strait, and help create an environment in which Taiwan and the PRC can reach a peaceful resolution of their differences, consistent with the wishes of the people of Taiwan.

Question. Do you believe we should have a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Taiwan? If confirmed, will you work with Secretary Blinken to urge USTR to prioritize the launch of trade talks with Taiwan?

Answer. I support strengthening the U.S.-Taiwan economic and trade relationship as part of a broader effort to strengthen the U.S. geostrategic position, diversify global supply chains, and benefit U.S. industry.

Question. Mongolia sits between two authoritarian states, the PRC and Russia, both of which have taken aggressive action against neighboring countries. Mongolia also plays an important role in Tibetan Buddhism. If confirmed, will you commit to strengthen U.S. relations with Mongolia and shore up its sovereignty if it comes under pressure from its revisionist neighbors? If President Biden follows through with his campaign promise to assemble a summit of democracies, will you ensure that Mongolia is invited to participate?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with my counterparts in Ulaanbaatar and will also push back against the attacks of the Chinese Government on Mongolian language and culture, as well as Tibetan Buddhism. I understand planning for the Summit for Democracy remains in the early stages, and the invitation list is yet to be determined. I understand participating countries will be expected to deliver on both domestic and international commitments that advance democracy, fight corruption, and protect human rights.

Question. If confirmed, what actions will you take to ensure the U.S. promotes free speech in Russia, including by protecting the remaining outlets that count as free and independent press in Russia?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by Russia's intensifying crackdown on freedom of expression, including for members of the media. A prime example of the Russian Government's campaign against independent media is the use of its "foreign agent" law to harass and inhibit the work of USAGM-funded entities in Russia. Another example is the Russian Government's targeting for repression of those who are seeking transparency and accountability from their government. Russia's recent legislative changes further restrict the freedom of expression for members of the media, the political opposition, and civil society. If confirmed, I will press the Russian Government to end its repression of independent media, raise the plight of embattled journalists and outlets in multilateral fora, call out the climate of impunity for violent attacks against journalists, and defend freedom of expression in Russia.

Question. The Biden administration's new Russia sanctions, announced on April 15, did not include any sanctions against the Kremlin's most malign geopolitical project, Nord Stream 2. These sanctions are statutorily required under the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA) and the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Clarification Act (PEESCA). Will you commit, if confirmed, to using your position to ensure full implementation of the law including sanctions to prevent the completion of Nord Stream 2? Do you believe this is in the interest of the security of the United States and our allies and partners?

Answer. If confirmed, I will use all available tools to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline from being completed. I understand that the Department continues to examine entities involved in potentially sanctionable activity, is considering designations, and has made it clear that companies risk sanctions if they are involved in the project.

Question. Do you agree that Iran is the world's leading exporter and supporter of terrorism?

Answer. Iran remains the foremost state sponsor of terrorism. Its support for terrorism threatens international security, our forces, diplomatic personnel, and partners in the region and elsewhere. If confirmed, I will support the Biden-Harris administration's continuing commitment to counter any Iranian threat to U.S. personnel and interests, and will respond to any such threat using all appropriate means.

Question. The Biden administration is making clear its intention to return to the fundamentally flawed JCPOA. Do you support the lifting of sanctions, including terrorism-related sanctions, against Iran in an effort to return to the JCPOA?

Answer. The framework of U.S. sanctions remains robust, and there are many aspects of our sanctions architecture that would remain in place even in the event of a U.S. return to the JCPOA. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration intends to continue to use its considerable leverage—including sanctions that would remain in place, the threat of sanctions re-imposition, and other joint action with our allies and partners—to protect U.S. interests. In the meantime, I understand the administration's intention is to maintain and potentially impose new sanctions on Iranian entities providing financial and material support to designated terrorist groups in the region. If confirmed, I am committed to consulting closely with Congress on the path forward.

Question. Secretary Blinken in his confirmation hearing was asked if it was in America's national security interests to lift terrorism sanctions against Iran, including sanctions on the IRGC, Central Bank of Iran and the National Iranian Oil Company. He answered that it was not in America's interest to lift these sanctions and that he backed "the toughest possible sanctions to deal with Iranian support for terrorism." Do you agree with Secretary Blinken?

Answer. Yes, I agree with Secretary Blinken. The U.S. Government maintains a range of tools to combat Iran's support for terrorism, and if confirmed, I support continuing to use these tools to counter Iran's destabilizing activities.

Question. Do you acknowledge that there are gaps in the JCPOA that must be addressed to truly stop Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will support the Biden-Harris administration's unshakable commitment to preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The administration's intention is to build on the JCPOA with respect to its constraints on and transparency into Iran's nuclear program and to address other issues of concern.

Question. Do you believe that for any Iran policy to be sustainable, it needs to have bipartisan support?

Answer. Yes. A bipartisan approach to Iran is the strongest way to safeguard U.S. interests for the long term.

Question. Do you believe that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is a terrorist organization?

Answer. Yes. Iran is the foremost state sponsor of terrorism and facilitates a wide range of terrorist activity. Iran's support for terrorism threatens U.S. forces, diplomatic personnel, and our partners in the region and elsewhere. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order 13224.

Question. Do you believe that a credible option to use military force is an important component of U.S. policy to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and to deter Iran's regional ambitions?

Answer. Yes.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. VICTORIA NULAND BY SENATOR ROB PORTMAN

Question. As you know, I am the Co-Chair of the Ukraine Caucus along with Senator Dick Durbin. I am very concerned with the recent buildup of Russian forces on the eastern border of Ukraine and on the Crimean Peninsula as well as the recent rise in attacks on the Line of Contact that has resulted in the death of over 20 brave Ukrainian soldiers. Russia's diplomatic, information, military, and economic aggression throughout Eastern Europe is a stark reminder of the danger revisionist powers pose to the free world. Recent escalations and displays of military strength in the Arctic, the basing of Russian troops in Belarus, and the constant drumbeat of misinformation threaten America's national security. Russia's actions constitute a very different vision, where international relations are singularly focused on Russian interests, where its neighbors play a subservient role to Putin's wishes and desires. These actions by Russia are regressive and incompatible with the aspirations of freedom loving people everywhere. Senator Durbin and I recently led a letter with our fellow members of the Caucus to President Biden expressing our appreciation for his support to Ukraine and encouraging him to provide critical material support in the near and long term to help Ukraine protect from this unwarranted, unprovoked aggression. Over the past 7 years, we have made great strides in our support of Ukraine. I personally feel this is important because not only does this serve as a direct check against the Russians, but also sends a strong signal to our European allies that we will stand and support those nations that seek freedom and democracy. We have done a great deal in Congress, to include:

- Over \$1.6 billion in military aid through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative Fund and over \$3 billion in aid overall.
- Provided Island Class patrol boats and anti-ship missiles to defend their coast
- Lethal and non-lethal assistance to include medical support for wounded Ukrainian soldiers.
- In this recent NDAA, one of my initiatives was included to have a Department of State and Defense report to identify capability gaps in the Ukrainian military and develop a strategy to address the shortfalls.

Can I get your commitment to work with me and my Senate Colleagues to find ways to continue our support for Ukraine and other eastern European countries as they work to become democratic countries aligned with our Western ideals?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will support Ukraine's chosen Euro-Atlantic path, including by pushing for progress on rule of law and economic reforms that strengthen Ukraine's democratic institutions and lead to a brighter future for all Ukrainians.

I will bring the same commitment to reform to relations with other eastern European countries, such as Moldova.

Question. Last year, Ukraine received Enhanced Opportunity Partner status from NATO. Ukraine has also been working hard to make much needed military organization and security sector reforms to meet NATO standards. From your perspective, do you see pathway to NATO membership for Ukraine, and how would that impact the security environment in Eastern Europe?

Answer. NATO's Open Door Policy has long served to promote democratic values and common security across Europe, and that door should remain open to Ukraine. In the 2008 Bucharest Summit Declaration, Allies agreed that Georgia and Ukraine would become NATO members, and in 2019 Ukraine was granted Enhanced Opportunities Partner status. Ukraine is now working to implement its Annual National Program (ANP), which is NATO's primary tool for guiding aspirants' reforms towards Euro-Atlantic standards. If confirmed, I will support Ukraine's chosen Euro-Atlantic path, including by pushing for progress on rule of law, economic, and security sector reforms.

Question. Since 2014 Congress has made very strong statements in regards to sanctioning Russia for their invasion of Crimea and backing separatists in the Donbas. While I am supportive of diplomatic efforts to solve the Donbas issue through the Minsk Process, I do not want to do so at the cost of Ukrainian sovereignty or acknowledging the Russian annexation of Crimea as legitimate-which of course, it is not. What are your thoughts on how to best support the peace process and what do you see as a viable way ahead to solve this very complex issue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to vigorously oppose Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea and support diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Sanctions on Russia should remain in place until Russia ends its occupation of Crimea and aggression in eastern Ukraine. I will continue to support the Minsk agreements as the framework for a diplomatic resolution to the Russia-instigated conflict in eastern Ukraine and, in coordination with our Allies and partners, seek opportunities to use U.S. leverage to see Minsk implemented.

Question. Regarding Crimea, do you share my views on the illegitimacy of the Russian claims on what is Ukrainian land? Do you anticipate keeping the sanctions in place?

Answer. Let me be perfectly clear: Crimea is Ukraine. If confirmed, I will continue to oppose vigorously Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea and support diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Sanctions on Russia must remain in place until Russia ends its occupation of Crimea and aggression in eastern Ukraine. Successive administrations have been clear that the United States will never recognize Russia's attempted annexation. Russia must end its occupation of Crimea and return the Crimean peninsula to Ukraine.

Question. Combatting corruption has been a central tenant of the Ukrainian Government after the Revolution of Dignity. In opinion polls of the Ukrainian public, respondents consistently rank corruption as top concern along with Russia. However, after the March 2020 government reshuffling, the future of anti-corruption measures have been uncertain. How can the United States utilize the tools of the State Department and interagency to assist Ukraine in tackling corruption?

Answer. I am committed to strengthening our bilateral relationship with Ukraine. If confirmed, I will pursue tight interagency coordination to support Ukraine's chosen Euro-Atlantic path, including by pushing for progress on rule of law, corruption and economic reforms that strengthen Ukraine's institutions and lead to a brighter future for all Ukrainians. If confirmed, I will continue working with Ukraine to hold accountable those who stand in the way of reforms or try to undermine the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Advancing reforms, particularly anticorruption efforts, is just as important for Ukraine's future as opposing Russia's aggression.

Question. Senator Chris Murphy and I have worked very closely over the last 4 years to strengthen the Global Engagement Center and through our efforts have gotten increased funding and personnel for the Center. Senator Murphy and I recently sent a letter to Secretary Blinken asking that he increase the funding for the GEC to at least \$138 million. The GEC budget was flatlined last year at \$60 million and I am concerned that the Department will not request robust funding this year. I hope that when you are confirmed you will see the value of the GEC and fund it properly to accomplish its critical mission of pushing back against Russian and Chinese disinformation. We have done too much work on a bipartisan basis to allow the GEC to not reach its full potential. Secretary Blinken kept the former director

Lea Gabrielle on for a month, and I really appreciated that. Now there has been a gap in leadership at the GEC and I hope that when confirmed you will work the Secretary to bring on a new director quickly. I feel that the disinformation efforts led by China, Russia, and Iran are a very dangerous threat to the freedom and democracy of our allies and we should do all we can to support and help them.

- Can I get your commitment to work with Senator Murphy and me to continue strengthening the capabilities of the GEC as well as increased funding?

Answer. Yes, you have my commitment, if confirmed, to work with you and your colleagues, as well as the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, to continue strengthening the Global Engagement Center (GEC) and our full range of public diplomacy programs. The GEC's efforts are an important part of the work we must undertake with allies and partners to counter disinformation, define an affirmative and democratic global information space, and ultimately sustain an information environment in which audiences around the world can freely access, contribute to, make informed judgments about, and trust transparent and truthful communication.

Question. Recently, the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber ruled that the Office of the Prosecutor could proceed with an illegitimate investigation into alleged crimes occurring in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. As you are aware, both the United States nor Israel are signatories to the Rome Statute, and the ICC is ignoring its mandate that stipulates it only initiate a case where there is the absence of a robust legal and justice system. Neither the United States nor Israel fit this criteria, yet the ICC has decided to proceed with this politically motivated investigation anyway. Senator Cardin and I wrote a letter to Secretary Blinken signed by over 30 Senators commending him on coming out against this statement by the ICC and encouraging him to do everything he can to push back against this effort. We have also authored language together that was included in the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) law of 2015, which leverages ongoing trade negotiations to discourage prospective U.S. trade partners from engaging in economic discrimination against Israel. Governments that call upon their own companies to participate in a political boycott of Israel run afoul of clear guidelines in the law.

- On the ICC issue and BDS in general—will you work with me and Congress to push back against efforts to marginalize and discriminate against Israel?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to push back against efforts to marginalize and discriminate against Israel, including the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction (BDS) campaign, which unfairly singles out Israel. While the Biden-Harris administration will respect First Amendment rights, I understand that it will not hesitate to voice disapproval of the BDS campaign or to fight efforts to delegitimize Israel on the world stage. If confirmed, I will also support the administration's continued objection to the International Criminal Court's efforts to assert jurisdiction over Israeli personnel.

Question. For the last six years, I was the Chairman of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. During that time, I worked in a bipartisan way to uncover the ways China exerts its influence here in the United States. We held several hearings issued bipartisan reports that documented how China stifles speech and academic freedom on college campus through its Confucius Institutes, and how it uses talent recruitment programs (like the Thousand Talents Plan) to steal our taxpayer funded research and Intellectual Property. Based on those findings, we proposed legislative fixes to these issues and I look forward to working with you on them. Last Congress, I introduced the Safeguarding American Innovation Act alongside Senator Carper and group of 19 bipartisan senators (including Chairman Risch) to combat the theft of American taxpayer funded research and intellectual property. Recently, both FBI Director Wray and Attorney General Barr have spoken about this threat, with the FBI opening a new China-related investigation every 10 hours with around 2,500 open counterintelligence investigations across the country. This legislation is designed to get the federal government's house in order to respond to the threat of China's talent recruitment programs. It also ensures that individuals are held accountable for failing to disclose their foreign ties on federal grant applications. Reforms the State Department's vetting process for issuing visas to foreign researchers, and requires more safeguards on sensitive research from our research institutions. One particular section of the legislation would grant the State Department a new authority to deny visas to individuals we know are coming to the United States to steal our research and IP through loopholes in our export control laws. This authority that career attorneys at the Department have requested across multiple administrations. And we worked closely with those same career at-

torneys at the State Department to craft the language in our legislation, including with safeguards to ensure that the new authority is not abused.

- Do you agree that government sponsored theft of US intellectual property and technology by the CCP is a serious problem that needs to be addressed?

Answer. Yes. Theft of U.S. intellectual property (IP) from sources within China, including state sponsored entities, spans the entire spectrum of IP, and costs U.S. companies hundreds of millions of dollars a year. If confirmed, I will work with our interagency partners and allies to ensure we are taking the most effective steps to combat all forms of IP theft from the PRC.

Question. I understand that as of last week the administration has entered indirect negotiations with Iran to discuss a return to the 2015 JCPOA. Last month I signed a letter with the other GOP ranking members of national security committees outlining our shared vision for a return to new negotiations. While I understand the need to prioritize the nuclear aspect of the Iranian threat to the region, Iran's support for terror proxies must be addressed in these negotiations. Their support for Hezbollah, Shia-backed militias in Iraq, and the Houthi rebels in Yemen are destabilizing the region with innocent civilians paying the highest price. As we witnessed with the previous JCPOA, the money earned through sanctions relief went not to the Iranian people but directly to support terrorism beyond Iran's borders.

- What is your assessment of the threat posed by Iranian backed proxy networks, and how will you balance that assessment with the need to contain Iran's nuclear program and their conventional ballistic missile program?

Answer. Iran's development and proliferation of ballistic missiles, as well as its support for violent proxies and groups across the region, pose a threat to international security, and remain significant challenges. If confirmed, I commit to work on all aspects of the Iran threat, including its nuclear program, its missile program, and its support for extremist groups across the region.

Question. The Abraham Accords were an historic achievement that will lead to a new era of peace and prosperity between Israel and its neighbors. Last month, I introduced legislation with Senator's Booker, Cardin, Young, Risch, and Kaine that would strengthen and expand these normalization agreements. This legislation requires the Department of State to develop a comprehensive strategy to expand these agreements, as well as require the State to report on Arab countries anti-normalization laws which punish community and people to people engagement with Israelis

- Do I have your commitment to expand and strengthen the Abraham Accords while using all tools at your disposal to push back on the barriers that still prevent the normalization of Israel in the region?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work to urge other countries to normalize relations with Israel and support other opportunities to expand cooperation among countries in the region.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. VICTORIA NULAND BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. If confirmed, what steps would you take or oversee to enhance the level of our diplomacy in Afghanistan and to help ensure that basic human rights—such as the ability of girls to go to school—are preserved?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the U.S. stays actively engaged in supporting the peace process, economic development, and promoting human rights, women's rights, and girls' education in Afghanistan, consistent with U.S. policy and values. The results of U.S. investment in the social and economic development of Afghanistan over the past 20 years have been significant, particularly with regards to access to education. In 2001, fewer than 900,000 children—almost all boys—were in school. Today, more than 9.2 million children—40 percent of them girls—are in school. Through robust diplomacy and coordinated assistance, I will work to see these gains further advanced and strengthened.

Question. Pakistan, India, and Iran have different views on what the future of Afghanistan should look like. How should the U.S. engage with those in the region on the path forward for Afghanistan?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to put the full weight of our government behind diplomatic efforts to reach a peace agreement between the Afghan Government and

the Taliban. All of Afghanistan's neighbors share an interest in a peaceful and stable Afghanistan that can serve as an effective partner in combating terrorism, criminal networks, and narcotics trafficking. I would welcome diplomatic efforts by all countries to encourage the negotiating parties to accelerate the peace process through meaningful negotiations. I would also welcome the U.N. playing a constructive role as a convener and facilitator of discussions. Additionally, I recognize that peace, regional connectivity, and economic growth and development are mutually supportive and indispensable to each other. If confirmed, I will encourage regional and international partners to commit to greater cooperation with Afghanistan in support of regional security and economic growth.

Question. India has moved closer to the United States and the Quad in recent years and away from their traditional "non-alignment posture." They have adopted something they've termed "strategic autonomy." This is clearly a nuanced shift but a shift nonetheless. As the only Quad member that shares a land border with China, and as a place where fighting between China and India has occurred, they are undoubtedly an important partner. How will you help the U.S. to pursue closer relations with India?

Answer. The United States and India share a comprehensive global strategic partnership. The recent Quad leaders' summit marked a new milestone for our collaboration to address a range of security, economic and governance challenges across the Indo-Pacific. Our two nations also enjoy a robust defense and security partnership as evidenced by Defense Secretary Austin's recent visit. If confirmed, I will strive to work with my Indian counterparts to further strengthen our partnership, including our defense and economic cooperation, COVID-19 response, and climate change.

Question. On February 11th Secretary Blinken revoked the Foreign Terrorist Organization and Specially Designated Global Terrorist designations of the Houthis, while retaining the designations of five Houthi individuals as Specially Designated Nationals. I supported this call because of what that designation would have meant for the humanitarian situation on the ground as it would have likely led to a famine and further devastated those on the ground. However, despite these steps, fighting in Yemen has intensified, and Houthi forces have been emboldened and have advanced on the city of Marib, the last northern city controlled by the internationally-recognized Republic of Yemen Government. I am glad to have a trusted hand with Tim Lenderking serving as Special Envoy but the situation seems increasingly grim. Should the United States do more to counter Iranian weapons smuggling to the Houthis and protect Saudi territory from Houthi missile strikes? If so, how?

Answer. I understand that the Department has been working closely with inter-agency partners to disrupt the Iranian threat network and the smuggling that occurs over land and via sea routes. It is also essential that the U.S. continues to support the Republic of Yemen Government (ROYG) Coast Guard and Border Guard with non-lethal training so they can police their own borders. The Export Control and Related Border Security program builds the capacity of the ROYG to interdict the illicit transfers of arms and mitigate Iran's malign influence. If confirmed, I would support continued work with Saudi Arabia to bolster its defenses against various Houthi capabilities. These efforts will prevent the Houthis from gaining access to further advanced capabilities, and also encourage all parties to reach a ceasefire agreement and subsequently end the war.

Question. What potential incentives can the international community provide the warring parties to reach an immediate cease-fire?

Answer. A ceasefire is just one step in an overall peace process. For a ceasefire to be durable, the warring parties must believe it is in their interest. Toward that end, internationally facilitated incentives should include: a roadmap to an inclusive resolution of the conflict that addresses political grievances, accountability for human rights violations, future reconstruction assistance, and the removal of economic restrictions in support of engagement in negotiations. I understand that Special Envoy Lenderking continues to work in support of U.N. Special Envoy Griffiths' efforts and with the Republic of Yemen Government and Saudi Arabia, with the support of the Sultanate of Oman, and with our European partners, to align these incentives and bring about an end to the conflict. However, I also understand that the Houthis appear intent on continuing their offensive on the city Marib and have been resistant to negotiating the terms of a durable ceasefire. We need more pressure from the international community, to include the U.N., our European partners, and Oman, to encourage the Houthis to engage constructively with the U.N. and other parties if we hope to end the conflict. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting those efforts.

Question. How can the United States influence local actors to create an agreed-upon political framework that maintains national unity while addressing regional concerns?

Answer. The United States must remain committed to a unified, stable Yemen that contributes to wider regional security and economic cooperation. As the conflict continues, the country becomes increasingly fragmented, and local stakeholders will expect to maintain their new-found autonomy in a post-conflict setting. The buy-in of these local stakeholders will be critical for any future political settlement, and ultimately the long-term stability of Yemen. The future of the Yemeni state is for Yemenis to determine. I understand that Special Envoy Lenderking is working in lockstep with U.N. Special Envoy Griffiths to achieve a ceasefire so we can transition to an intra-Yemeni political process that is representative and can be sustained over the long-term.

Question. There have been reports regarding the appointment of a special envoy for Nord Stream 2. Presumably, such a position would coordinate with U.S. partners and allies the imposition of additional, mandatory sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, as required under the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA) and the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Clarification Act (PEESCA). It would not be, in my view, to negotiate a deal that allows the Russian pipeline to be completed. If confirmed, would you support the appointment of a special envoy to ensure full implementation of U.S. sanctions laws and make sure Nord Stream 2 is never finished?

Answer. Should the U.S. decide to appoint a Special Envoy for Nord Stream 2, I believe that person's task should be to coordinate and advance increased U.S. pressure consistent with U.S. law to stop the pipeline before it is finished, and to work with European allies toward the same goal.

Question. The Biden administration's new Russia sanctions, announced on April 15, did not include any sanctions against the Kremlin's malign geopolitical project, Nord Stream 2. These sanctions are statutorily required under the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act (PEESA) and the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Clarification Act (PEESCA). In your view, why did the Biden administration fail to sanction Nord Stream 2?

Answer. Without being inside the Biden-Harris administration, I can't speak to why certain decisions were or were not made. I understand that the Department continues to actively examine entities involved in potentially sanctionable activity and will designate additional persons as appropriate. If confirmed, I commit to use all available tools to try to stop the pipeline before it is completed.

Question. If confirmed, how would you work with the administration to implement U.S. sanctions laws on the Kremlin's Nord Stream 2 pipeline?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to use all available tools, including bipartisan legislation passed in the NDAA, to try to stop the pipeline before it is completed, and to engage with key European partners and allies to seek their support in that goal.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. VICTORIA NULAND BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is committing a genocide against the Uyghurs and other minorities in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) that is ongoing. The Biden administration had sent differing signals about the degree to which administration officials assessed that genocide is indeed ongoing, but on March 22, Secretary Blinken correctly emphasized "the P.R.C. continues to commit genocide and crimes against humanity." Do you agree with the assessment that the Chinese Government is engaged in a genocide against the Uyghurs and other minorities in the XUAR that is ongoing?

Answer. I agree with the Secretary of State's determination that the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is committing genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang. These crimes include imprisonment, torture, enforced sterilization, and persecution, including through forced labor and draconian restrictions on the freedoms of religion or belief, expression, and movement. These atrocities shock the conscience and must be met with serious consequences.

Question. What role do you see for the State Department in countering that ongoing genocide, and more broadly the human rights atrocities being committed by the Chinese Communist Party?

Answer. I share your deep concern about the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious groups in Xinjiang. I understand the Department has reinvigorated cooperation with partners and allies and has imposed a number of measures to address these atrocities. If confirmed, I will support ongoing efforts to broaden this international coalition and call for an independent and unhindered investigation. I also will support using all appropriate tools, including those provided for in the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, to pressure the PRC to end these atrocities and to promote accountability for those responsible and justice for victims.

Question. The Obama-Biden administration's approach to the Israeli-Arab conflict was justified on the basis of a theory of regional relations in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict prevented broader Israeli-Arab rapprochement. Among other decisions, that administration implemented discriminatory policies that distinguished between Jewish communities in places Israel controlled before and after 1967. That approach culminated in December 2016, when the Obama administration maneuvered the United Nations Security Council into passing UNSCR 2334, which among other things denied Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights and part of its capital Jerusalem, including the Jewish Quarter. The Trump administration systematically worked to hollow out and render UNSCR 2334 null and void. They did so, including by recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, by moving our embassy to Jerusalem, by seeking to end discriminatory approaches that distinguished legally and for the purposes of aid and trade between different Israeli communities, and by taking several other steps. Do you believe that Israel has sovereignty over the Golan Heights?

Answer. In considering the U.S. position on the Golan Heights, Israel's security must remain paramount. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria, it would be irresponsible to urge Israel to part with the Golan Heights. Control of the strategic Golan Heights provides Israel an added measure of security from the turmoil next door.

Question. Do you believe that Israel has sovereignty over Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, and at the same time, it is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. I support the USG's longstanding position that Jerusalem is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. As such, all issues related to Jerusalem must be handled with care and sensitivity.

Question. Do you believe that Israel is in illegal occupation of any part of Jerusalem?

Answer. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, and at the same time, it is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. I support the USG's longstanding position that Jerusalem is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. As such, all issues related to Jerusalem must be handled with care and sensitivity.

Question. Do you believe that Israel is in illegal occupation of the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, and at the same time, it is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. I support the USG's longstanding position that Jerusalem is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. As such, all issues related to Jerusalem must be handled with care and sensitivity.

Question. On January 10, 2021, the State Department designated Ansarallah, sometimes called the Houthis, and Abdul Malik al-Houthi, Abd al-Khaliq Badr al-Din al-Houthi, and Abdullah Yahya al Hakim, three leaders of Ansarallah, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) pursuant to Executive Order 13224. On February 5, the Biden administration informed Congress of its intention to revoke those sanctions. The issue of humanitarianism was central to the public explanation of the decision: officials at the State Department have justified the delisting of what they described as the "broad" designation of Ansarallah on humanitarian grounds, e.g. that large parts of Yemen's population live under areas controlled by the group. Since then, the Houthis have escalated their violence across the region, bombarding civilians in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Yemen was already one of the worst humani-

tarian catastrophes in the world, in large part because the Houthis and their Iranian backers block aid, steal aid, and attack civilians. Please describe the role played by Iran and the Houthis in deepening the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen.

Answer. Iran continues to provide the Houthis with training, equipment, and monetary support, which assists them in promoting regional instability; threatening our partners, especially Saudi Arabia; and disrupting international shipping through the Bab Al Mandeb. Further, the Houthis use this support to threaten Yemeni civilians, especially at this time in the city of Marib. The Houthis also impede humanitarian access in the areas they control. If confirmed, I am committed to working with our interagency partners to counter Iran's destabilizing activities, and with our partners on the ground to improve humanitarian access and facilitate the provision of critical commodities and humanitarian aid to Yemeni civilians.

Question. Please assess the degree to which the Biden administration's decision to lift terrorism sanctions against the Houthis and their leaders has enhanced the ability to provide humanitarian relief to Yemeni civilians in general.

Answer. As I understand, the revocations were aimed at ensuring that U.S. policies would not impede assistance to those already suffering what has been called the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The Biden-Harris administration heeded concerns from the United Nations, humanitarian groups, and bipartisan members of Congress, among others, that the designations could have had a devastating impact on Yemenis' access to basic commodities like food and fuel, which could increase the risk of famine. The short time that passed between the designations and the revocations limited the impact the designations could have had on humanitarian assistance and commercial imports, including food and other essential supplies.

Question. Please assess the degree to which the Biden administration's decision to lift terrorism sanctions against the Houthis and their leaders has enhanced the ability to provide humanitarian relief to Yemeni civilians in Marib.

Answer. As I understand, the revocations were aimed at ensuring that U.S. policies would not impede assistance to those already suffering what has been called the world's worst humanitarian crisis. This has been especially critical in Marib, where the escalation of hostilities has caused additional needs and secondary displacement. The lifting of sanctions has allowed for the delivery of life-saving food, emergency shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, and essential non food items, such as blankets and water containers.

Question. The Obama administration was broadly criticized, especially in the context of its Middle East policy, for co-mingling unclassified documents with classified documents. This practice requires that documents be placed in a secure location, unnecessarily limiting access to unclassified documents and stifling public debate. The Biden administration already seems to be repeating such practices: according to an exchange during the State Department press briefing on February 11, a notification describing the lifting of terrorism sanctions on Iran-controlled terrorists in Yemen was unnecessarily transmitted to a Congressional SCIF. Can you commit to ensuring that unclassified information is not unnecessarily comingled with classified information in notifications provided by the State Department to Congress? If not, why not?

Answer. I am committed to working to ensure that information provided to Congress is, to the fullest extent possible, in a format that facilitates its access by authorized personnel, while complying with Executive Order 13526, the Department of State classification guide, and the executive branch rules on the handling and storage of classified information.

Question. The Obama administration was broadly criticized for inaction in response to Iranian human rights atrocities, and critics have suggested that those issues were subsumed beneath the administration's commitment to securing a nuclear deal. The Biden administration, which is rushing to secure another nuclear deal with Iran, has already come under similar criticism. Please describe your assessment of the scope and nature of Iran's human rights record.

Answer. The Iranian Government severely restricts the rights to peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of expression. If confirmed, I will be vocal about Iran's human rights violations and abuses, which include arbitrary or unlawful detention of numerous individuals, some of whom have faced torture and/or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, and execution after unfair trials. If confirmed, I intend to work with my colleagues to consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible for human rights violations and abuses.

Question. Please describe the degree to which you believe that Iranian human rights concerns should be highlighted vs. considerations related to nuclear negotiations or securing nuclear-related concessions.

Answer. I believe we can and must work to ensure Iran never obtains a nuclear weapon, at the same time we continue to pressure Iran regarding its gross human rights violations and abuses, and use all tools at our disposal to promote accountability for those responsible.

Question. Do you believe that imposing new human rights sanctions against Iran, or enforcing existing ones, would violate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or a successor agreement?

Answer. The Iranian Government denies Iranians their human rights, including through severe restrictions on the rights to peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of expression. I support continuing to maintain and impose sanctions on Iranian entities perpetrating human rights violations and abuse.

Question. Russia and Germany appear to have assessed that the Biden administration will not respond forcefully to their effort to complete the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. Can you please describe your assessment of the damage to American national security and to the energy security of our European allies, if Nord Stream 2 was completed?

Answer. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline deepens Europe's energy dependence on Russia, threatening European energy security and the security of Ukraine and Central and Eastern European NATO and EU countries, while dividing the continent. It enriches the Kremlin and President Putin's allies at a time when Russia is amassing forces in and around Ukraine and continuing its cyber and disinformation campaigns in the U.S. and globally, among other malign activities.

Question. Could you please describe what steps you would take, if you're confirmed, to ensure that Nord Stream 2 is stopped?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly with allies and partners, using all the tools at our disposal, including legislation you have authored, to prevent the completion of the pipeline and to ensure that Europe has a reliable, diversified energy supply that enhances rather than undermines its collective security.

Question. There have been public reports that the State Department is considering the appointment of an envoy to specifically oversee the State Department's efforts around Nord Stream 2. Additional reports suggest that foreign diplomats have expressed hope that the envoy will work for a deal with the Russians or Germans to allow the pipeline to be completed, or at least serve as a short-term substitute for sanctions. The State Department should absolutely spare no effort or resource in blocking Nord Stream 2, and an envoy position would help mobilize action in that regard—but the envoy must be someone who ensures and oversees the immediate application of congressionally mandated sanctions and makes sure Nord Stream 2 is never completed. Appointing an envoy who negotiated terms for completing Nord Stream 2 would be an absolutely unacceptable outcome. This envoy must not be a substitute for sanctions: it must be someone who immediately delivers them. Do you intend to seek the appointment of an envoy who would work on Nord Stream 2 specifically?

Answer. I understand the Biden-Harris administration is considering appointing an envoy to work on Nord Stream 2 and other issues. Particularly until a new Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs is confirmed, I believe an envoy could help give focus and energy to the interagency effort to stop the pipeline, and to diplomacy with key countries.

Question. What responsibilities would such an envoy have?

Answer. I have not been privy to any formal position description if it exists. If named, the envoy, I presume, would work inside the U.S. Government to accelerate and sharpen policy and sanctions options and diplomatically to stop the pipeline, using all available tools, including the legislation you authored.

Question. What role do you envision such an envoy playing?

Answer. Particularly until a new Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs is confirmed, I believe an envoy could help give focus and energy to the interagency effort to stop the pipeline, and to diplomacy with key countries.

Question. The administration regards rejoining the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or signing a successor agreement a top priority. The JCPOA was classified by the Obama administration as merely "political commitments" rather

than an executive agreement or a treaty. In your hearing you noted the importance of securing “bipartisan support [for rejoining the JCPOA or signing a successor agreement] so an agreement is binding.” Is it your understanding that any form of international agreement between the United States and foreign nations does not hold any legally binding commitment unless Congress ratifies the agreement as a treaty and passes legislation implementing those commitments?

Answer. I share President Biden’s conviction that a bipartisan approach to Iran is the strongest way to safeguard U.S. interests for the long term. The JCPOA was negotiated as a non-binding arrangement in 2015. Numerous other important international arrangements have been done in this way. With respect to international agreements, the Supreme Court has long held that not all such agreements require approval as treaties pursuant to the procedures set out in Article II of the Constitution, and the Congress has recognized this through the enactment of the Case-Zablocki Act, which establishes procedures regarding oversight of legally binding international agreements other than treaties.

Question. Can you commit that, if the administration plans to rejoin the JCPOA or signs any successor agreement, such agreement will be submitted by the administration to Congress for ratification as a treaty?

Answer. I understand that President Biden has pledged to work closely with Congress, and this includes briefing on any plans regarding his administration’s future course of action on Iran. The JCPOA was negotiated as a non-binding arrangement in 2015. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department carefully considers the facts and circumstances of any U.S. return to the JCPOA to determine the implications under INARA and would also assess the appropriate form of any future agreement. The Biden-Harris administration has committed to ensuring that the requirements of INARA are satisfied.

Question. The administration continues to emphasize working and coordinating with “allies and partners,” especially in the context of multilateral forums and in addressing major security challenges of our time such as the rise of authoritarian China and the threat of a nuclear Iran. In your view, do the alliances and partnerships of the United States with other nations always produce a net-positive benefit to U.S. foreign policy and homeland defense priorities?

Answer. I believe that alliances and partnerships serve as a force-multiplier for the United States in advancing its foreign policy and homeland defense priorities. While we must always maintain our prerogative to operate unilaterally if it is in our national interest, working with allies and partners to address shared challenges often achieves the best outcomes for the United States. Some of the most significant threats we face today—from the COVID-19 pandemic to climate change—cannot be solved by one country alone. Our ability to shape the behaviors of China, Iran, or others with whom we have serious concerns will only be strengthened with likeminded partners by our side.

Question. In situations where our allies and partners take a differing or less stringent approach to a major foreign policy or homeland defense priority, in your view is it appropriate for the United States to exercise unilateral leadership? In your response, please address the example of differing postures toward China between the United States and the European Union.

Answer. The United States should work with its Allies and partners whenever it can but should always reserve the right to act unilaterally if and when necessary. While European views on China have evolved, the U.S. remains more cautious about the challenges and threats China poses to our security, economic interests and global norms and standards. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to discuss China with Europeans both at NATO and in the U.S.-EU China Dialogue to align positions more closely.

Question. Do you believe burden sharing in both monetary costs and international commitments between the U.S. and our allies and partners must be addressed before re-engaging or forming new multilateral treaties or forums?

Answer. I believe in appropriate burden-sharing with allies and partners in all shared endeavors and international commitments. The U.S. should have full knowledge of the monetary and other consequences before entering into any international commitments, whether through a treaty or other means. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to ensure that the implications of any such commitments are well understood by both branches of the Government.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. VICTORIA NULAND BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. Do you agree with the State Department's determination that CCP-controlled China is committing genocide and crimes against humanity with respect to Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang? Secretary of State Antony Blinken has sustained former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's determination that CCP-controlled China is engaging in genocide and crimes against humanity with respect to Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. The United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada have stated the evidence—including from satellite imagery, and eyewitness testimony, as well as the Chinese Government's own documents—is overwhelming. China's extensive program of repression includes severe restrictions on religious freedoms, the use of forced labor, mass detention in internment camps, forced sterilization, and the destruction of Uyghur heritage.

Answer. I agree with the Secretary of State's determination that the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is committing genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang. These crimes include imprisonment, torture, enforced sterilization, and persecution, including through forced labor and draconian restrictions on the freedoms of religion or belief, expression, and movement. These atrocities shock the conscience and must be met with serious consequences.

Question. In your view, should U.S.-based corporations remain silent on the issue of genocide and crimes against humanity in CCP-controlled China?

Answer. No. Uyghurs have suffered unspeakable oppression at the hands of China's authoritarian government. The People's Republic of China is engaged in gross human rights violations that shock the conscience and must be met with serious consequences. The United States must speak out consistently and jointly with allies and partners, impose costs and sanctions on those responsible, and help those persecuted find safe haven in the United States and other countries. I have been heartened by bipartisan Congressional action on Xinjiang and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress on this crucial issue.

Question. If you are confirmed, how will you support the State Department's efforts to compel U.S.-based corporations that conduct substantial business in China to pitch in to immediately stop genocide and crimes against humanity in CCP-controlled China?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support ongoing efforts by the U.S. Department of State, along with the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to caution businesses about the risks of supply chain links to entities that engage in human rights abuses, including forced labor, in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) and elsewhere in China. I will also support sanctions imposed on people and organizations complicit in genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, in Xinjiang. I am heartened by bipartisan Congressional action on Xinjiang and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress on this crucial issue.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO UZRA ZEYA BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. How will the State Department invest more resources into protecting fundamental human rights? How will the State Department help protect civic space around the world to ensure local human rights activists, peacebuilders, and humanitarians, particularly women and youth, have the space and resources to prevent violence and promote sustainable peace?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to consult closely with Department, interagency, and Congressional colleagues to ensure we have systems in place that provide flexibility to reallocate resources as needed. I will also work with bureaus and offices that administer democracy programs to capitalize on emerging opportunities, including by pivoting quickly to support programs tailored for these situations. In all cases, I will work to ensure U.S. efforts empower democratic reformers and activists on the ground. In addition, I intend to work bilaterally and multilaterally with U.S. allies and partners to increase mutually reinforcing efforts and burden-sharing in these areas.

Question. How will you increase support for members of civil society that champion the full inclusion of disabled persons and expansion of disability rights?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support timely appointment of a Senior Advisor or Special Envoy for International Disability Rights and prioritize disability-inclusive programming that recognizes persons with disabilities among the beneficiaries, supports projects to address gaps in their inclusion, and bolsters the work done by civil society to advance the rights of disabled persons. I also will support the full inclusion of persons with disabilities through Department of State training, data collection, programming, and communication about disability rights. An empowered and knowledgeable workforce can best support members of civil society championing the full inclusion of disabled persons and expansion of disability rights.

Question. How will the Biden administration right-size and rebalance what many experts believe are over-militarized interventions to address violent extremism? What steps can you take in this role to restore a more balanced approach to prevention and countering violent extremism?

Answer. Military forces and kinetic tools have played an important role in U.S. and international counterterrorism efforts, but it is clear that balanced, sustainable, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches are needed to sustainably defeat terrorism and prevent terrorist radicalization and recruitment. If confirmed, I will promote civilian-led counterterrorism approaches that address underlying grievances that fuel violent extremism and reduce the need for military interventions. I will also work to ensure that U.S. countering violent extremism (CVE) programs—especially prevention work—are prioritized and adequately resourced, and that all U.S. counterterrorism efforts advance the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Question. The J Under Secretary and the bureaus he or she oversees can find themselves disadvantaged when working with the regional bureaus during the policy-making process. Do you agree that this is a challenge and, if so, how would you empower the bureaus under you?

Answer. I agree that siloing between regional and functional bureaus is a longstanding challenge for State Department policymaking. If confirmed, I would leverage my 27-plus years of service in four regional and three functional bureaus to elevate and achieve better integration of J family issues in the full spectrum of U.S. policymaking, including through improved coordination within the State Department, the interagency, and with the 270-plus U.S. diplomatic missions worldwide. I would elevate the voice and expertise of J family bureaus and office by taking a burden-sharing approach with regional and other functional bureaus on addressing challenges that know no borders—from corruption and narcotics to rising autocracy and extremism worldwide.

Question. What steps would you take to attract more individuals - particularly from the Foreign Service - to work in the J family bureaus?

Answer. If confirmed, I will create an inclusive environment that is welcoming to all employees—both foreign and civil service—and of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds, because diverse teams make strong teams. I will work collaboratively with the new Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and the Bureau of Global Talent Management to ensure that J family bureaus and offices are appropriately staffed and attractive to all applicants. I also will focus on retention and advancing a more meaningful professional development and advancement path for all J family team members. This includes increasing training opportunities for all and advocacy for J family Foreign Service Officers in the DCM and Chief of Mission selection processes.

Question. Given President Biden and Secretary Blinken's strong emphasis on recentering human rights and democracy in U.S. foreign policy, do you believe any changes should be made to the Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor bureau to ensure that it can effectively play a much larger role in U.S. foreign policy than it has in the past?

Answer. Democracy and human rights are under increasing threat globally from democratic backsliding and growing authoritarianism. Responding effectively to these challenges requires more than any one bureau or agency acting alone; it requires a whole-of-government approach. If confirmed, I intend to empower the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor while also working with partners across the Department, other U.S. agencies, and Congress to bolster democratic resilience and promote, protect, and defend human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. How do you think the U.S. arms transfer process should change to better incorporate human rights and civilian harm concerns, and what changes would you advocate for as Under Secretary?

Answer. The President and Secretary Blinken have said human rights must be at the center of our foreign policy, including arms transfers and other security assistance. If confirmed, I will work to ensure human rights remains key to reviews of potential Foreign Military Sales and State Department-licensed Direct Commercial Sales. If confirmed, I will encourage the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor's continued participation in arms transfer deliberations. I understand the administration has been clear that the United States will insist on adherence to agreements on the use of U.S.-origin defense equipment, compliance with international law, including the law of armed conflict, and respect for human rights, and it will consider appropriate consequences when violations occur.

Question. Do you agree that the U.S. Government should refrain from exporting arms to fragile states or countries at risk of atrocities?

Answer. I understand that, consistent with the Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) Policy, all arms transfers are subject to comprehensive case-by-case considerations of U.S. interests - including any risk the transfer may contribute to human rights abuses, including acts of gender-based violence, violence against children, violations of international law, including the law of armed conflict, terrorism, mass atrocities, or transnational organized crime. If confirmed, I will work to ensure human rights remains a key focus of CAT policy documents and discussions, and I will promote measures for the mitigation of harm to civilians.

Question. What specific actions will the State Department take under your direction to reassert U.S. peacebuilding and humanitarian leadership and intervention in Syria?

Answer. I fully expect the United States will continue to be a leader in the Syria humanitarian response. On March 29, Secretary Blinken called on the UN Security Council to reauthorize all three international border crossings for humanitarian assistance. If confirmed, I will support efforts to increase multilateral diplomatic engagement at the Security Council and will be in close consultations with our allies, in addition to Russia and China, at the UN to find a formula that keeps humanitarian aid flowing. I understand the administration supports the UN-facilitated, Syrian-led process laid out within the parameters of UNSCR 2254. If confirmed, I will use a variety of tools to push for a sustainable end to the conflict to end the Syrian people's suffering and to bring stability, accountability, and security to the Syrian people.

Question. How specifically will the United States ensure continued principled humanitarian access into and within Syria?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with partners across the U.S. Government to use a range of tools, including diplomacy, advocacy, multilateral and bilateral engagement with other donors, information-sharing, and financial support, to promote the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those most in need across Syria, whether in areas controlled by the Syrian Government or elsewhere. If confirmed, I intend to do everything I can to realize Secretary Blinken's call to the UN Security Council on March 29 to reauthorize all three border crossings for humanitarian assistance and to urge the international community to allow humanitarian agencies to use the safest, quickest pathway to reach civilians in need.

Question. Since the passage of the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, all but one of the special coordinators for Tibetan issues have been an individual who served as Undersecretary for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights. If you are designated as the US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, will you commit to promoting substantive dialogue without pre-conditions between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government that leads to a negotiated agreement on Tibet, as mandated by the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed and designated as Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, I will work intensively with U.S. allies and partners to press Beijing to return to direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without pre-conditions, to achieve meaningful autonomy for Tibetans.

Question. The Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh continues to face significant challenges following last fall's attack by Azerbaijan. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) has provided some funding to address this humanitarian situation, but I believe a lot more needs to be done. If confirmed, what will be your plan of action for providing needed assistance to Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh, including those displaced to Armenia, in both the short and long term?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure continued support to address the humanitarian situation of persons displaced by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. I understand the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration closely monitors and assesses the situation on the ground with the support of relevant embassies and humanitarian organizations. I understand the administration is deeply committed to working on lasting solutions for all those displaced by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, including persons now in Armenia. If confirmed, I will support the administration's efforts to seek short-term and long-term solutions to alleviate the humanitarian consequences of the conflict.

Question. What do you view as PRM's role in responding to the situation versus the role of other U.S. Government agencies and offices, such as USAID?

Answer. Pursuant to the legislative authorities of each, I understand the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) has lead responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance, protection, and solutions for refugees, asylum seekers, migrants in situations of vulnerability, and stateless persons, while USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) leads in response to natural and man-made disasters, for internally displaced persons, and providing emergency food assistance to refugees. If confirmed, I intend to ensure complementary efforts that utilize the strengths of the humanitarian expertise of both PRM at State and USAID/BHA.

Question. The United States continues to suffer the devastating impact of our nation's opioid epidemic, with over 90,000 deaths in 2020, a large portion of which are caused by fentanyl overdoses. China continues to be the largest source of illicit fentanyl and fentanyl precursors. How will you prioritize combatting the illicit fentanyl trade and what diplomatic tools will you use to ensure that countries around the world, including China, take steps to place greater controls on fentanyl and fentanyl precursors?

Answer. Transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) manufacture the vast majority of the illicit fentanyl driving the opioid crisis using People's Republic of China (PRC)-sourced chemicals, and traffic the fentanyl into the United States via the southwest border. If confirmed, I intend to continue and strengthen the Department's diplomatic efforts to press the PRC to better regulate its chemical industry to prevent chemical diversion, including through targeted engagement on this issue in the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs. I also intend to continue efforts to work with Mexico to bring justice to TCOs that contribute to the deaths of thousands of Americans Mexicans each year.

Question. Last year, a United Nations fact-finding mission cited evidence of a systematic campaign of extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, and torture in Venezuela since 2014. According to the report, the Maduro regime's human rights abuses and torture constitute crimes against humanity. How will you use the tools available to you, including oversight for the various bureaus that have equities in this issue, to ensure accountability for and prevent further crimes against humanity in Venezuela?

Answer. Human rights conditions in Venezuela are horrendous. I understand the United States is committed to supporting justice and accountability measures and programs with our allies and partners that strengthen democratic institutions, transparency, rule of law, inclusion, economic empowerment, and access to information. The United States has employed sanctions and imposed visa restrictions on Venezuelan officials and their family members believed to be responsible for undermining democratic governance, perpetrating human rights abuses, or engaging in corrupt practices. If confirmed, I will continue to support efforts to hold the Maduro regime accountable.

Question. How will you support efforts to mobilize international attention to this issue?

Answer. The Department should continue to regularly engage the international community to raise awareness of human rights violations and abuses in Venezuela and to urge allies and partners to condemn the Maduro regime's human rights record, hold human rights abusers accountable, and call for the peaceful return to democracy and the rule of law. The Department should continue to encourage international bodies, in accordance with their respective mandates, to investigate crimes committed by the regime and its enablers. If confirmed, I will promote increased efforts to mobilize the international community to hold the Maduro regime accountable.

Question. The European movement to ban ritual slaughter by mandating stunning prior to slaughter threatens the existence of religiously observant national Jewish

and Muslim communities in Europe. Bans such as those passed in Belgium in 2018 and 2019 make no exception for religious purposes. Most recently, in December 2020, the European Court of Justice dismissed appeals by Jewish and Muslim groups, setting a precedent that may open the door to more such laws. This ruling and the laws it upholds are an infringement on religious freedom and endanger communities sustained by adherence to halal and kosher legal traditions. How will you work to encourage individual European countries to refrain from such legislation and support religious pluralism in Europe?

Answer. Religious freedom extends to the observance and practice of religion or beliefs, including dietary regulations. Slaughter in accordance with religious beliefs is a fundamental practice for members of certain religious groups, including Jews and Muslims. If confirmed, I intend to work with the Governments of Belgium, other European countries, and elsewhere, as well as Jewish, Muslim, and other groups, to ensure laws, such as those intended to protect animal welfare, do not have an undue negative impact on religious freedom.

Question. Atrocities are being perpetrated by armed actors throughout Ethiopia's Tigray region, including extra-judicial executions, sexual violence, forced displacement, and starvation crimes. Other Ethiopian communities outside of Tigray have also been the target of serious human rights abuses in recent months and years. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are set to begin a joint investigation; however it is unclear what level of access and cooperation the organizations will be given to conduct their inquiry. How can the U.S. best ensure that there is accountability for atrocities and other grave human rights abuses across Ethiopia?

Answer. I understand the United States will support the work of a joint investigation mechanism by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights as a first step in the accountability process. I understand the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa will monitor this process closely and work with international partners to press to ensure that the Ethiopian Government provides the promised access necessary for these investigations to proceed and respects their independence. If confirmed, I will work with international partners and organizations, including the UN and AU, to press for credible, independent, and transparent investigations into human rights violations and abuses. These investigations are critical for long-term transitional justice efforts, including criminal accountability, which are also necessary for reconciliation.

Question. Samia Suluhu Hassan has recently assumed the Tanzanian presidency and there is considerable hope she will turn the page on the repressive policies of her predecessor, John Magufuli. However, it remains to be seen whether the new President will pursue a concrete package of much needed political reforms. How can the U.S. best encourage the new administration to urgently improve Tanzania's political climate?

Answer. Although I am encouraged by President Hassan's first steps, including reinstating licenses for previously suspended media outlets, the new Tanzanian leadership is still in its early days and much remains to be seen. I understand the U.S. ambassador to Tanzania has already met with representatives of the new administration and has raised ongoing U.S. human rights concerns. If confirmed, I will support further engagement with the new Tanzanian Government at the highest levels, to both communicate our expectation of improvement on democracy and human rights markers and to explore how the United States can best support strengthening democratic institutions and preventing further democratic backsliding.

Question. Sudan has made significant progress over the last year in moving its political transition forward. Yet deep challenges remain, including persistent violence in Darfur and the still shaky political arrangements between the civilian and military components of the transitional government. What action should the U.S. take to better support a civilian-led, democratic transition in Sudan?

Answer. Sudan's civilian-led transitional government has made important progress in implementing economic and political reforms, improving human rights protections, and creating a pathway for ending conflict in Darfur and other areas in Sudan. However, more needs to be done to facilitate a transition to democracy as established under Sudan's Constitutional Declaration, to implement the Juba Peace Agreement, to establish peace accords with other armed groups, and to address the root causes of conflict. If confirmed, I will work with the Africa bureau, the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, and J family bureaus and offices

to develop comprehensive strategies to address these issues and support a peaceful democratic transition.

Question. The United States has recently taken actions to address the insurgency in northern Mozambique including terrorist designations of ISIS-Mozambique and its leader, the deployment of a Special Forces training mission, and publicly-acknowledged consideration of an antiterrorism assistance program for the Mozambican police. These actions seem to suggest a security-focused approach to counterterrorism, but I believe that a successful counterterrorism strategy must appropriately balance diplomacy, development, and defense. If confirmed, will you pursue a “3 D’s” approach to counterterrorism in Mozambique?

Answer. Yes. A successful response to the threat from ISIS-Mozambique must include more than a focus on security. If confirmed, I will support a strategy that focuses equally on development, diplomacy, and security, along with strategic communications, in coordination with regional partners and D-ISIS coalition members.

Question. The interim government in Mali has announced that a referendum on a new constitution will take place on October 31 of this year, followed by general elections in February of 2022. What role should the U.S. play in helping ensure a restoration of democracy in Mali?

Answer. I believe the United States should continue its support for regional efforts, including those by the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS), to broker a restoration of democracy in Mali. The ECOWAS-led effort to push for a civilian-led transition led to the establishment of a transitional government, the recent announcement of the constitutional referendum, and the scheduled series of elections. If confirmed, I will continue the United States’ role of coordinating assistance and support with our African and other international partners to continue these positive developments.

Question. What actions will you take if confirmed to support a civilian-led transition in Mali?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the ECOWAS-brokered transition effort, including by encouraging the transitional government to maintain its course toward a return to constitutional rule. I understand that due to the manner in which the security services overthrew the last democratically elected government, the United States restricts most bilateral assistance that benefits the Government of Mali except for certain specified categories including humanitarian needs and election support. I understand assistance can resume only once a democratically elected government is in place and, if confirmed, I will coordinate actions by other donor and partner states in support of timely democratic elections.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO UZRA ZEYA BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. How will you work to ensure efficient communication and facilitation among bureaus within the J family, the department, and in the interagency?

Answer. Today’s challenges are too complex for any one agency, bureau, or individual to undertake alone. Similar to the U.S. Government’s efforts on the global stage, the Department’s efforts are strengthened when done in partnership with others. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to facilitate cooperation and ensure efficient communication, not only among the J family of bureaus and offices but across the Department, the interagency, and our branches of government. These efforts will build on my 27-plus years of public service and longstanding efforts to strengthen the Department by empowering staff, incentivizing innovation, and promoting a workforce that is diverse in both its personnel and perspectives.

Question. If confirmed, you will be in a position historically dual-hatted as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues. How will you engage with the Tibetan community? Will you commit to hosting the Tibetan administration representative at the State Department?

Answer. If confirmed and designated as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, and consistent with the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, I will maintain close contact with Tibetan religious, cultural, and political leaders, including by seeking to travel regularly to Tibetan areas of the People’s Republic of China and to Tibetan refugee settlements in India and Nepal. This engagement will include hosting the Representative to North America of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration at the Department of State.

Question. The Atrocity Prevention Task Force is a key tool to understanding and targeting crises around the globe before they become atrocities. This task force lacks structure and a clear mandate. How will you bolster the efforts already in place to ensure this task force can fully mobilize?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support a whole-of-government approach to prevent, mitigate, and respond to atrocities in line with the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018. I understand there is collaboration across the J family and interagency to support a White House review of the structure, process, and interagency coordination of the Atrocity Early Warning Task Force. I understand that effort includes examining how best to integrate atrocity prevention across related administration priorities, including the Global Fragility Act and the Women, Peace, and Security Act. If confirmed, I will support these efforts and work closely with interagency partners, Congress, and civil society to improve U.S. atrocity prevention.

Question. The administration has announced a resumption of funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) without securing any reforms. What reforms will you seek to ensure that UNRWA's textbooks and materials will not be anti-Semitic? How many UNRWA beneficiaries have citizenship in another country where they reside?

Answer. I understand the Department has urged reforms in UNRWA and received commitments from the Agency prior to announcing the funding resumption. U.S. resumption of aid allows the Department to ensure UNRWA upholds the highest level of neutrality and a commitment to tolerance in educational materials; if confirmed, I will prioritize further progress in this area.

A significant majority of the 2.2 million registered Palestinian refugees in Jordan hold citizenship. Not all Palestinian refugees seek access to UNRWA services.

Question. How will you ensure there is not overlap between the work of the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and USAID's Bureau of Democracy, Development and Innovations?

Answer. President Biden has made clear in his Interim National Security Strategic Guidance that revitalizing democracy is a priority for U.S. foreign policy. If confirmed, I will work with the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) and USAID's Bureau of Democracy, Development and Innovations (DDI) to ensure their close coordination continues in support of this objective. The bureaus have complementary approaches to strengthen democratic institutions, including empowering and protecting local voices and strengthening government bodies. Using a complementary, holistic framework consistent with best practices reinforces prospects for success.

Question. Over the last 15 years, we have seen democratic backsliding around the world from countries in every hemisphere. Where is the democracy promotion toolkit failing? How can we improve our democracy promotion efforts?

Answer. I share your concerns about the 15-year global trend of democratic backsliding. The United States must continue to respond and adapt to growing authoritarianism and new challenges such as the rise of surveillance tools and the use of COVID by some governments to justify repression. If confirmed, I will utilize all of the diplomatic and programmatic tools available to address these trends, in close partnership with other U.S. agencies, Congress, and like-minded international partners. If confirmed, I also intend to ensure that U.S. efforts to promote democracy are driven by data to improve effectiveness, measurability and impact.

Question. Secretary Blinken has announced that the U.S. will be seeking a seat at the U.N. Human Rights Council for next year without securing reforms to the deeply flawed body. He has also indicated that the reforms the U.S. would seek are the same as the previous administration 1) Agenda Item 7 (Israel Bias) and 2) membership reform. What steps will you take to ensure that true reform is achieved? And if true reform is not achieved, what will the United States do?

Answer. I am committed to seeking reforms of the Human Rights Council, particularly with respect to the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel and to its membership. When the United States plays an active and constructive role on the Council, it can better advocate to protect Israel from unfair bias on the Council. This year, there has been a reduction in the number of resolutions targeting Israel under Agenda Item 7. I believe the United States can also better engage, in consultation with its partners, to keep some of the countries with the worst human rights records off the Council and encourage countries with better records to run for seats. If confirmed, I will ensure the United States continues to prioritize needed reforms as part of our re-engagement with the Council.

Question. Earlier this month, the State Department released its annual Human Rights Report, press reporting indicates that the Department decided to delete paragraphs which listed out abuses, including murder of Iranian citizens. If confirmed, would you work to ensure that instances like this do not occur in the Human Rights report? Do you believe this occurred because of administration's plan to re-open negotiations with Iran?

Answer. The most recent State Department Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Iran lays out in detail-based on credible sources-Iran's abysmal human rights record. It includes numerous reports of unlawful or arbitrary killings; forced disappearance and torture by government agents; life-threatening prison conditions; hundreds of political prisoners and detainees; serious problems with independence of the judiciary, particularly the revolutionary courts; and severe restrictions on free expression, the press, and the internet. If confirmed, I will not pull any punches in calling out Iran's human rights violations and abuses and will consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible for these actions.

Question. The administration has announced that it will host a Summit of Democracies. Can you please provide more details on this proposed summit? What will be the definition of democracy will be used?

Answer. I understand the administration is currently formulating its vision for the Summit of Democracy, which is intended to advance concrete commitments on pressing challenges to established and emerging democracies, including corruption, rising autocracy, and defending human rights at home and abroad. If confirmed, I promise to consult with the committee as details become available, including on definitional issues. I also commit to work with the committee to make the Summit as results-oriented as possible.

Question. We have multiple allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region with poor human rights records, but who we also cooperate with on economic and security issues that are important to the United States. Some of the allies, like the Philippines, are crucial to overarching U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific. In your view, what are the most effective ways to address human rights issues with countries that fall into this category?

Answer. I understand the United States promotes a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region. Upholding U.S. values, including promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, is a key pillar of U.S. foreign policy and an enormous contributor to security, prosperity, and stability as well as U.S. influence across the Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, I will utilize the full range of diplomatic tools to strengthen bilateral and multilateral relationships, to promote our values, to candidly address human security challenges with allies and partners, to support accountable government institutions, to strengthen local civil society capacity to hold their governments accountable, and to counter malign authoritarian influence.

Question. Nicaragua is scheduled to hold general elections in November. In October 2020, the Organization of American States adopted a resolution [AG/RES.2962 (L-O-20)] calling for the restoration of democratic institutions and respect for human rights in Nicaragua through free and fair elections. The Ortega regime responded by approving three statutes with the apparent aim of quashing dissent in Nicaragua ahead of the November 2021 elections. If confirmed, do you commit to prioritizing programs and policies that support the efforts of democratic actors in Nicaragua to be a credible challenger to Ortega ahead of the November 2021 elections.

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to prioritizing and maintaining U.S. efforts to create conditions for free and fair elections in Nicaragua. The United States should continue to use the economic and diplomatic tools at its disposal, including targeted sanctions and bilateral and multilateral engagement, to support the democratic opposition and advance free and fair elections. It is not too late for the Ortega regime to make the meaningful reforms required before the May Organization of American States deadline.

Question. How can the United States best reconcile its defense commitments to allies and partners, including through arms sales, with its need to adhere to U.S. values?

Answer. As President Biden has said, America's values—defending freedom, championing opportunity, upholding universal rights, respecting the rule of law, and treating every person with dignity—are the grounding wire of our foreign policy and our abiding advantage globally. U.S. diplomacy must be rooted in those values, and our defense commitments, including arms sales, are no exception. If confirmed, I will work to ensure we are mindful of both our values and our interests as we en-

gage allies and partners, and that our partners respect their commitments to the United States in turn.

Question. The Trump administration began initiatives to mitigate civilian casualties caused by the actions of U.S.-supported partner forces. How can we best build off of these efforts?

Answer. Human rights and civilian harm concerns should continue to be a critical consideration for every U.S. arms transfer review. The President and Secretary Blinken have said that human rights must be at the center of our foreign policy, and that includes policy regarding arms transfers and other security assistance.

If confirmed, I will build upon U.S. efforts to assist partners to mitigate risks of civilian casualties and ensure our partner forces are taking steps to comply with international law, including the law of armed conflict, and protect human rights. If confirmed, as programs are re-examined, I intend to make sure they promote these policies with our security partners.

Question. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, democratic gains are under threat as long-serving rulers manipulate constitutional and electoral processes to remain in power while stifling dissent and limiting opposition parties and candidates' activities. In 2020 alone, several African ruling parties and incumbent leaders applied authoritarian tactics that manipulated democratic processes and frameworks, including in Cameroon, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. If confirmed as Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights, will reinforcing democratic institutions and norms in Africa be a priority? What is your perspective on balancing competing U.S. priorities in the areas of security, democracy, and human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially when some of our top security partners—including Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Mali—periodically or consistently engage in undemocratic practices? In your view, which should take priority in Africa?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize encouraging governments across Africa to support democratic processes, strengthen democratic institutions, and respect the rights to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. I will also work to ensure that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is a pillar of U.S. foreign policy and that the United States takes a holistic approach to security challenges, ensuring that U.S. security and governance approaches are mutually reinforcing.

Question. In the last two years, Sudan and Ethiopia have embarked upon unexpected democratic transitions. While the United States was, and continues to be, eager to support these transitions, rapidly mobilizing adequate resources has been a challenge in both cases. If confirmed, how would you support the Department to respond to rapid democratic transitions and opportunities that emerge unexpected?

Answer. Democratic breakthroughs present an excellent opportunity for the U.S. Government to help consolidate democratic progress. Doing so often requires marshaling resources quickly to put in place effective programming. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with Department and USAID counterparts to ensure we have systems in place that provide flexibility to reallocate resources as needed. I will also work with embassies in the field and bureaus and offices that administer democracy programs to capitalize on these opportunities, including by pivoting quickly to support programs tailored for these situations. In all cases, I will work to ensure U.S. efforts empower democratic reformers and activists on the ground.

Question. In Africa, USAID maintains a large democracy and governance portfolio. In recent years, it has been the policy of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) to limit programming to countries in Africa without an active USAID presence. Do you agree with this approach? What benefits could be seen from complimentary efforts by USAID, DRL and other State Department bureaus?

Answer. I understand the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) is currently active in over 90 countries in the world, including many where there is a USAID presence. I believe that DRL's focus on empowering local activists and grassroots organizations to hold their government accountable complements USAID's work to build more effective government institutions. If confirmed, I will support DRL's efforts to coordinate closely with U.S. embassies, USAID, and other programming entities to maximize their collective impact.

Question. Since Georgian Dream's 2012 electoral win, democracy and governance in the Caucasian country has steadily declined. The political situation came to a head after the October 2020 parliamentary election culminated in an opposition boycott of parliament and a breakdown of negotiations between the major parties. What more can be done to steer Georgians of all political parties back on a democratic

trajectory? Does U.S. assistance to Georgia need to be conditioned on political progress? What would incentivize the major political parties to come to the negotiating table and compromise? Do you believe the U.S. should consider targeted sanctions on individuals or entities that are exacerbating or prolonging the crisis?

Answer. If confirmed, I will call on both sides to deescalate the situation, engage in constructive dialogue, and make compromises to allow Georgia to move forward. I believe U.S. assistance is integral to advancing democratic reforms, boosting economic growth, and helping Georgia resist Russian aggression. I understand the United States also assists Georgian civil society and independent media to raise public awareness and advocate for positive change. Any proposed conditionality should be approached with this in mind. I believe it is important that Georgia continues to make progress on institutionalizing democratic values. If progress continues to wane in these areas, and if confirmed, I would consider the deployment of additional tools to address these issues and would seek consultation with Congress.

Question. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was overwhelmingly elected in 2019 on an anti-corruption platform. After a few promising reforms, Zelenskyy and his government have stalled and even backslidden on democratic and market-based economic reforms. What do you see as the current priorities for reform in Ukraine, and what pressure or leverage can the U.S. use to ensure Ukraine continues down its previously positive path? While Ukraine's democracy and electoral process is fairly robust and free, the country continues to struggle with entrenched corruption. What further steps can the U.S. take, either through its aid programs or political influence, to help propel forward Ukraine's fight against corruption in all areas of its society? How can we work better with European nations and the EU to leverage our collective support for Ukraine into real reforms? How well do you believe State and USAID coordinate their activities in Ukraine? What would you change to better utilize scarce resources in such a needy country?

Answer. I am committed to revitalizing our bilateral relationship with Ukraine. If confirmed, I will support Ukraine's chosen Euro-Atlantic path, including by pushing for progress on rule of law, anti-corruption, and economic reforms that strengthen Ukraine's institutions and lead to a brighter future for all Ukrainians, in coordination with Allies and partners, including the EU. State and USAID are very well coordinated in Ukraine thanks to Assistance to Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia (AEECA) appropriations and the role of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia. If confirmed, I will promote accountability for those who try to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial and institutional integrity. I believe advancing reforms is just as important for Ukraine's future as opposing Russia's aggression.

Question. Several high-profile scandals have exposed the Western financial system's difficulty in preventing corruption. In the FY21 NDAA, the U.S. Congress updated its anti-money laundering laws to shift the burden of disclosure from the banks to the corporations and beneficial owners. And the EU has been working on a rule-of-law mechanism to link EU funds to good governance, as well as cracking down on "golden visas." This corruption hurts both the citizens of the countries where the money was stolen and where it is stored. European countries have found themselves at both ends of this corruption cycle. How will the Biden administration collaborate with our democratic allies to tackle corruption in our interconnected financial systems, and what concrete actions will you take? How will State collaborate with the interagency on this goal? With the Treasury Department? How important is it that the United States and its European allies take steps to make our own systems less friendly to kleptocracy and less penetrable by dirty money?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support enhanced coordination with our partners to apply diplomatic pressure, bilaterally and through key multi-stakeholder fora, to prevent and combat corruption, building upon recent Congressional legislation. I will prioritize foreign assistance to strengthen governments' and civil society's capacity to do so as well. If confirmed, I intend to work with the Department of the Treasury and our other partners to utilize tools, such as the Global Magnitsky sanctions program and visa restrictions, to protect our financial systems and prevent kleptocrats from using their ill-gotten gains in the United States. It is critical that the United States and European allies work in tandem to curb corruption's destabilizing impact.

Question. Several members of the EU's eastern bloc have experienced a rise in corruption, a decline in rule of law, and a strain on democratic institutions. Free and independent media in Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, to name a few, has been reduced and persecuted. Ruling parties have consolidated power in impor-

tant industries and in the government. The EU has begun the process of implementing rule-of-law conditionality to the disbursement of EU funding as a means to combat this trend. Does the United States have a role to play in EU and EU member states' anti-corruption efforts? If yes, what is that role?

Answer. I am concerned about the rise of corruption and attacks on the rule of law, media, and democratic institutions in a number of European states. I firmly support democratic values, including the rule of law and media freedom, and, if confirmed, will work to advance these values in multilateral fora to include the U.N. Convention against Corruption's Conference of States Parties and the G20 Anticorruption Group. These shared values underpin the United States' relationship with the EU and, I understand, are a topic of frank discussions with member state governments. If confirmed, I intend to use all tools at our disposal to address corruption within Eastern Europe and will encourage our EU partners to establish similar tools.

Question. The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP) authors one of the most important diplomatic tools we have each year, the Trafficking in Persons Report, which countless bodies rely on for crucial information, including Congress. Yet, this report is criticized for undue influence from regional bureaus or other parts of the department. What steps will you take, if confirmed, to ensure that the information and tier rankings in the TIP report accurately reflect anti-trafficking efforts and the real situations on the ground in-country?

Answer. The United States has always been a global leader in the fight against human trafficking. The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report is one of the most important diplomatic tools and information sources on this issue. If confirmed, I will strive to ensure the TIP Report is as objective and accurate as possible, and that tier rankings are based solely on each country's efforts to combat trafficking, as required by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

Question. The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) mandates that foreign assistance restrictions placed on countries receiving a "Tier 3" ranking can be waived. The previous administration used this tool, but the rollout was messy due to lack of guidance on what exactly non-trade, non-humanitarian assistance was. Will you continue to recommend to the Secretary that these Tier 3 restrictions be used for appropriate countries? Will you commit to working with Congress on clarifying the scope of non-trade, non-humanitarian assistance?

Answer. I understand the Department considers Tier 3 restrictions and waivers carefully every year. This review informs the Secretary's recommendations to the President, whom the TVPA requires to impose or waive restrictions. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that the State Department's recommendations to the President on restrictions and waivers are grounded by the facts on the ground in each country and an assessment of what would most effectively lead to improvements in those countries. I will welcome consultation with Congress on how to apply the trade-related exception.

Question. The International Criminal Court has open investigations in Afghanistan and the West Bank and Gaza. How will GCJ plan to engage with this court on these two cases? Do you agree that both cases are squarely outside of the court's jurisdiction?

Answer. I strongly agree with the administration's objection to attempts by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to assert jurisdiction over U.S. and Israeli personnel. The United States and Israel are not States Parties, and the Palestinians do not qualify as a sovereign State. If confirmed, I will work to address U.S. concerns about these cases through engagement with all stakeholders in the ICC process. The Office of Global Criminal Justice provides critical subject-matter expertise, advising the Secretary and other senior leaders formulating U.S. policy on accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. If confirmed, I intend to ensure engagement with the Court on these cases is part of an administration-wide strategy.

Question. Secretary Blinken has agreed to examine a genocide determination for the Rohingya. Do you agree with this examination and how would you execute it?

Answer. I am appalled by the Burmese military's reign of terror against Rohingya and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups, as well as those related to the devastating military coup. If confirmed, I will support the Secretary in any review process, and ensure the Department remains focused on promoting accountability for those responsible for abuses, seeking justice for victims, advocating for unhindered humanitarian access, supporting the return to Burma's democratic tran-

sition, and promoting reforms that will help prevent the recurrence of atrocities and other human rights violations and abuses across Burma.

Question. How will this administration engage with the office of Global Criminal Justice? Given crises like the Rohingya and Syria, engagement from you, if confirmed, alongside GCJ is important to curbing the atrocities being committed against some of the most vulnerable populations.

Answer. The Office of Global Criminal Justice (GCJ) provides policy advice and technical expertise to the Secretary of State and the Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy and Human Rights on preventing, mitigating, and responding to atrocities, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The office also plays a central role in coordinating U.S. policy to promote transitional justice and accountability, which is vital to atrocity prevention and prospects for lasting peace and stability. If confirmed, I will ensure GCJ's expertise is incorporated into U.S. policy formulation on these issues as part of the administration's efforts to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law.

Question. The CCP is actively committing genocide against the Uyghurs and other ethnic Muslims in Xinjiang. However, the IOC has given it the prestige of holding the Winter 2022 Olympics and Paralympics. Do you support China hosting the Winter Games in 2022? What other alternatives would you propose?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support extensive U.S. engagement and coordination with allies and partners to deny the CCP the ability to use the 2022 Winter Olympic Games to obscure China's abysmal human rights record. This would include outreach to the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, Olympics sponsors, and equipment and apparel suppliers to raise awareness of and promote accountability for the PRC Government's atrocities and human rights abuses, including genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, as well as forced labor. I will also consult closely with allies and partners to define our common concerns and establish a shared approach to the PRC in advance of and during the 2022 Winter Olympics.

Question. Can you please explain the mandate and operations of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations? How does it add value to the work of the Department? How does CSO's work differ from or overlap with USAID's Office of Transitions Initiative?

Answer. I understand the mission of the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) is to anticipate, prevent, and respond to conflicts that undermine U.S. national interests. CSO's work differs from USAID/OTI in that, as part of the State Department, CSO plays a vital role in enhancing the Department's strategies, policies, and programs on conflict prevention and stabilization. Top CSO priorities include implementation of the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018 and the Global Fragility Act of 2019, which builds upon the 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review and the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. If confirmed, I welcome Congressional consultation on CSO's mandate and operations.

Question. The Global Fragility Act (GFA) required the formulation of a whole-of-government strategy to identify and address the drivers of violence and conflict in fragile states and regions. Under the previous administration, a broadly accepted strategy was released. Unfortunately, the process for selecting the target countries and regions in which the strategy would be tested was fraught with challenges. Moreover, pilot initiatives brought to light how competing interests—namely between the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations and U.S. Embassies and USAID Missions—and a lack of appropriate consultation with the field could undermine the future success of GFA initiatives. The Biden administration will now be charged with relaunching the GFA country and region selection process and implementation plans in a manner that reflects these critical lessons learned. If confirmed, how will you approach the GFA selection process for target countries and regions? What, if anything, within the country/region diagnostic and selection process needs to be changed? Should the Sahel and the Northern Triangle automatically be included as priority regions given the national security interests at stake, or would you recommend reserving judgement and allowing selection to be strictly guided by the data?

Answer. It is my understanding that the White House is leading a renewal of the GFA country and region selection process to evaluate previous recommendations and consider others, followed by Congressional consultation and final approval by the President. I understand the review takes into account the impact on fragility of COVID-19, the global economic crisis, gender inequality, and climate change. I also understand the selection process is based on objective criteria outlined in the GFA, including assessed levels and risks of fragility, violent conflict, atrocities, gen-

der inequality, and resilience; political will and capacity; opportunity for impact; as well as U.S. national security and economic interests. If confirmed, I will support these efforts.

Question. There are also concerns about an apparent lack of senior-level buy-in from the Department of Defense, poor coordination between the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) and other key functional bureaus within the Department of State (such as Counterterrorism and Political Military Affairs), and poor communication with U.S. Embassies and Missions in the field. If confirmed, how would you work across departments and agencies to implement the GFA? How will Embassy and Mission priorities be reflected in selection and implementation plans? Should GFA implementation continue to be run out of CSO, or should leadership be elevated to a higher level, as Congress intended?

Answer. Successful GFA implementation will require fundamental changes in the way the U.S. Government works on issues of fragility and conflict, integrating more closely the work among functional and regional bureaus, different agencies, the field, and Washington. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Under Secretary for Political Affairs to ensure strong partnerships with embassies and missions. I believe elevated senior staff buy-in and CSO's expertise and coordination role are critical to effective implementation of the GFA, which will require ongoing learning, monitoring, and adaptive management to inform policy and programming decisions.

Question. A criticism of the previous administration was its focus on international religious freedom issues. How will you, if confirmed, ensure this administration does not overcorrect on IRF issues and therefore ignore the serious concerns of religious freedom issues globally?

Answer. I am committed to promoting and defending religious freedom, which has long been a key U.S. foreign policy objective I was proud to advance in my prior role as Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. If confirmed, I will look to leverage the tools of U.S. diplomacy and foreign assistance to advance this universal right, ensuring that efforts to promote respect for religious freedom are fully integrated into broader policies that promote freedom and dignity for all people.

Question. How will you work to empower the office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism?

Answer. I am deeply committed to combatting anti-Semitism at home and abroad and share the concerns of Congress about rising anti-Semitism around the world. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Special Envoy to reinforce her or his efforts, elevate the fight against global anti-Semitism in our engagements with foreign interlocutors, and ensure the office of the Special Envoy has the staff and resources it needs to execute its mission effectively.

Question. The Office of Global Women's Issues continue to be a separate office within the S bureau. Under the last administration, there was an effort to align this office within the J family. Will this continue to be an S office, or do you, if confirmed, plan to continue re-alignment of S/GWI under the J family? What steps will you take to integrate global women issue initiatives throughout the J family and the interagency, especially on projects like Women, Peace, and Security, and Women's Global Development and Prosperity Fund (WGDP)?

Answer. I am committed to supporting President Biden's goal of advancing gender equality and the full empowerment of women and girls around the world. The Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) plays a pivotal coordination role in ensuring the Department is bringing the full diplomatic toolbox to bear in support of gender equality goals, including through robust collaboration with J family bureaus and offices. If confirmed, I look forward to exploring how the J family can enhance coordination with S/GWI and mobilize its unique resources to support women and girls as part of a comprehensive U.S. Government gender equality strategy.

Question. The 2020 DEA report on fentanyl flows to the United States identifies the People's Republic of China as the primary source of fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances trafficked to the United States, increasingly through Mexico. 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 United States from Mexico. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs programs

are focusing on meaningfully reducing the flow of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids to the United States?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs to stop fentanyl trafficking by: reducing diversion and illicit production of synthetic drugs; strengthening the capacity of our partners to detect, interdict, and share information on synthetic drug threats; building capacity to target illicit online sales; shrinking the drug market by reducing global drug demand; and enhancing partnerships with governments, industry, and international organizations. If confirmed, I will work with partners such as Mexico to reduce production and improve interdiction, and I will continue U.S. efforts to press the People's Republic of China to better regulate its chemical industry and synthetic opioid precursors.

Question. On March 1st, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report with specific recommendations for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) to strengthen risk management for programs under the Merida Initiative (GAO-21-335). If confirmed, do you commit to ensure INL takes swift action to implement the recommendations in this report?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) swiftly implements Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommendations to strengthen risk management for programs under the Merida Initiative. I understand the Department concurred with GAO's important recommendations, and, for programs under the Merida Initiative, INL is in the process of completing an anti-fraud risk assessment; developing and implementing an anti-fraud strategy; developing and implementing a mandatory fraud awareness training program for staff; and re-evaluating practices for local vetting of non-security personnel.

Question. Please describe your understanding of the relationship between the Government of Cuba, the U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN), and the Maduro regime in Venezuela.

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the actions of the Government of Cuba, from its treatment of its own people, to its connection to and substantial support for the brutal Maduro regime. I understand members of the Colombian-origin National Liberation Army (ELN), including senior leadership, traveled to Cuba in 2018 for now-defunct peace negotiations with the Government of Colombia. When negotiations failed, Cuba continued to provide safe haven to ELN leadership. In January 2019, ELN claimed responsibility for a deadly bombing in Colombia. Citing peace protocols signed before the ELN negotiators traveled to Cuba, Cuba has refused to extradite ELN leaders to Colombia. With respect to Venezuela, Maduro and his associates use criminal activities to help maintain their hold on power, fostering a permissive environment for known terrorist groups, including the ELN and its sympathizers.

If confirmed, I will commit to closely reviewing the status of ELN leadership in Cuba and consulting with Congress as the Biden-Harris administration reviews U.S. policy toward Cuba.

Question. There are around 10,000 ISIS fighters at various detention facilities, including 2,000 foreign fighters (FTF) that U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) characterizes as "hardcore foreign terrorist fighters." Internally Displace Camps (IDP) in Syria, like al Hol, have become areas of systemic ISIS indoctrination of IDPs and refugees. The process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants plays a critical role in transitions from war to peace. Yet, countries around the world with foreign terrorist fighters have failed to make any progress to date. How does the Biden administration plan to address this problem?

Answer. I understand the Department urges countries of origin to repatriate their foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and associated family members from detention facilities and camps in northeast Syria, and to rehabilitate, reintegrate and prosecute those individuals as appropriate. I understand the Department does this through intensive diplomatic engagement, including through the Global Coalition to defeat ISIS, by helping to repatriate individuals whose countries of origin are willing to accept them, and helping develop rehabilitation and reintegration protocols and programs. If confirmed, I will urge FTF repatriation and leverage multilateral platforms in those efforts to prevent ISIS from reconstituting capability in Syria and Iraq.

Question. 10 USC 127e authority allows the Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the relevant Chief of Mission, to expend up to \$100 million each year to support foreign forces, irregular forces, groups, or individuals engaged in supporting or facilitating authorized ongoing military operations by United States special oper-

ations forces to combat terrorism. Despite the important counterterrorism (CT) collaboration between Department of Defense (DoD) and State Department, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) and the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) lack visibility into this space. Traditionally, SFRC and HFAC have not been afforded any insight into 127e programs and what our Chiefs of Mission are concurring with. Do we have your commitment to return to this committee and brief on areas of DoD and State CT cooperation, particularly the integration between 10 USC 127e and Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) programs?

Answer. I understand the Department of State works closely with the Department of Defense on a broad range of counterterrorism issues, including in the Department of Defense's activities under its Title 10, Section 127e authorities. I recognize that Congress has an important oversight role to play in the U.S. Government's counterterrorism efforts, and if confirmed, I will be committed to engaging with Congress to discuss these and other counterterrorism lines of effort.

Question. The previous administration disbanded the Defense Department's Defeat-ISIS Task Force, leading its then director Christopher Maier to resign in November 2020. Former President Trump similarly moved State Department's Special Envoy to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS under the Bureau of Counterterrorism, with Acting John Godfrey serving as that special envoy. Is this the right staffing and organizational structure to prevent an ISIS resurgence?

Answer. I understand that achieving the enduring defeat of ISIS remains a central priority of the administration. I do not believe the dual-hatting of the CT Coordinator and Special Envoy reflects a diminution of the position of the Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. It instead reflects the evolving nature of the ISIS threat to encompass areas outside Iraq and Syria, and a desire to situate the enduring D-ISIS mission within the established CT Bureau architecture. Doing so enables effective leverage of CT Bureau's civilian counterterrorism capacity-building assets and closer coordinate with other bureaus. If confirmed, I will ensure that both roles are prioritized and sustainably resourced.

Question. The Biden administration has launched a review of the February 29 agreement with the Taliban, including the CT assurances and posture issues associated with it. This is an issue with obvious and important CT ramifications given the origins of this war and the terrorist threats that endure. What role do you anticipate your bureau playing in this review? How do you plan on ensuring U.S. CT interests in Afghanistan are addressed?

Answer. I understand the Department of State, including the Bureau of Counterterrorism, is a part of the interagency effort to monitor and disrupt significant terrorist threats not only in Afghanistan but anywhere else they might arise. If confirmed, my focus will be to ensure our counterterrorism efforts maintain consistent pressure on terrorist groups to deny them the time, space, and resources they need to conduct complex, international attacks, including against the U.S. homeland.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO UZRA ZEYA BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. My most meaningful achievements in promoting human rights and democracy involve expanding coalitions to advance universal human rights, countering malign influence, and elevating protection for human rights defenders worldwide. In prior State Department leadership roles, I expanded the first public-private partnership (PPP) for LGBT equality to include private sector stakeholders, launched the first global PPP against gender-based violence, and created new regional platforms to protect journalists under siege. I helped persuade France to cancel a multi-billion dollar defense sale to Russia in the wake of the Crimea invasion, and successfully countered Russian disinformation efforts to interfere with France's 2017 election. I persuaded India to launch its first-ever third-country democracy promotion efforts with the United States, including programs to generate self-employment opportunities for Afghan women and build other nations' capacity to conduct free and fair elections.

Question. The Hong Kong National Security Law, which mainland Chinese authorities have imposed on Hong Kong, has already begun to fundamentally transform the space for democracy and human rights in the city. In your view, what steps

should the U.S. Government take to help defend the space for press freedom, free expression, and democracy in Hong Kong?

Answer. If confirmed, I will stand united with our allies and partners against the PRC's assault on Hong Kong's freedoms and its blatant disregard for its international obligations and commitments. I will use all available diplomatic tools at the U.S. Government's disposal, including sanctions, visa restrictions, and other measures, to promote accountability for the egregious actions of authorities in Hong Kong and Beijing, and I will urge our allies and partners to do the same. If confirmed, I will also help those who have been persecuted by the Hong Kong and Beijing authorities find safe haven in the United States and other countries.

Question. Since the February 1 coup by the Burmese military, the space for free expression and association has dramatically constricted as the junta attempts to suppress a sustained and countrywide civil disobedience movement against its rule. More than 700 civilians have been killed, and several thousand are currently detained. The solidarity already shown by the U.S. Government to the protestors is encouraging, but what further specific steps do you envision that this administration can take to ensure maximum support for human rights activists, journalists, and prominent voices of conscience at risk, and to urge the military to peacefully return power to the duly-elected government as soon as possible?

Answer. The United States, under the Biden-Harris administration, has condemned in the strongest possible terms and taken actions against those responsible for the military coup in Burma, the horrific violence against protesters, and the ongoing, unjust detentions of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint, and other democratically-elected leaders as well as more than 3,000 civil society actors from across ethnic and religious groups. If confirmed, I will use all available U.S. diplomatic tools, including sanctions, visa restrictions, and other measures, to promote accountability and build global coalitions to support the Burmese people's efforts to reestablish and safeguard their path to democracy.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO UZRA ZEYA BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. You were listed in the acknowledgements section of a 1990 book titled "Stealth PACs: How Israel's American Lobby Took control of U.S. Middle East Policy," published by your employer at the time, the American Educational Trust. Can you confirm today that you do not share the anti-Israel claims in this book or of the American Educational Trust? Do you believe pro-Israel Americans, and pro-Israel members of Congress, have dual loyalties?

Answer. I categorically reject the anti-Israel claims in this book and espoused by the American Educational Trust. Further, I had nothing to do with the content of the book. My entry-level employment at the American Educational Trust ended some 31 years ago, I have had no contact with the organization since then, and I reject the organization's positions with respect to Israel. I deplore any suggestion that American Jews or members of Congress who advocate for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship have dual loyalties or are disloyal to the United States.

Question. The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs routinely publishes a list of members of Congress who receive donations from pro-Israel Americans. Do you believe there is something untoward about pro-Israel Americans engaging in the political process?

Answer. I strongly support the right of every American, including those who strongly support the U.S.-Israel alliance, to engage in the U.S. political process, and see nothing untoward in this activity. As I noted, my entry-level employment at the American Educational Trust ended some 31 years ago, I have had no contact with the organization since then, and I categorically reject the organization's positions with respect to Israel. I strongly support the Biden administration's commitment to renewing democracy abroad and at home, and believe the latter is underpinned by the rights of every American to fully exercise their constitutional rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of religion, freedom to petition one's government, and equal protection under the law.

Question. What is your view of the U.S.-Israel relationship?

Answer. I support the United States' unwavering and ironclad commitment to Israel's security. If confirmed, I will support the administration in working to further strengthen all aspects of the U.S.-Israel alliance, including with respect to

countering Iranian state-sponsored terrorism, increasing international solidarity against Hezbollah and other Iran-supported foreign terrorist organizations, expanding global coalitions against anti-Semitism, building upon Israel's normalization agreements with key Arab Governments, and eliminating anti-Israel bias in the U.N. system, including the U.N. Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court.

Question. Do you agree that U.S. policy in the region is best advanced when working closely with our ally Israel?

Answer. Yes. President Biden has been one of Israel's strongest supporters over the last fifty years. I understand the U.S.-Israel alliance is deeply personal to him and, indeed, he's met and worked closely with every Israeli Prime Minister since Golda Meir. I understand the President believes the ties between our two countries, rooted in strategic interests and shared values, should transcend domestic politics. In this vein, I understand the administration will not only further strengthen the U.S.-Israel alliance, but also ensure that it enjoys bipartisan backing. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals to work closely with Israel, to include building on normalization agreements to strengthen cooperation between Israel and its neighbors.

Question. Do you fully support Israel's right to defend itself from terrorist attacks, including taking pre-emptive action to disrupt weapons shipments from Iran to its terrorist proxies?

Answer. Israel has the right to defend itself from terrorist attacks, and I understand the Biden-Harris administration's commitment to Israel's security to be a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. I support the administration's policy to continue U.S. security assistance to Israel and uphold Israel's Qualitative Military Edge, which is critical to ensuring Israel has the means to defend itself. If confirmed, I will support action, in coordination with our allies and partners, to deter and counter Iran's destabilizing activities. If confirmed, I will strongly support the administration's goals regarding Israel's security.

Question. Do you support full funding for United States security assistance to Israel as laid out in the current 10-year MOU? Do you support the position of President Biden that conditioning aid to Israel is wrong?

Answer. I understand President Biden's commitment to Israel's security is ironclad. The President played an important role in helping to negotiate the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on security assistance, among the largest aid packages in U.S. history. If confirmed, I will support the administration's pledge to preserve the terms of the MOU without reservation.

Question. What is your view of the Iranian regime and the country's human rights record?

Answer. The Iranian Government has the dubious distinction of being the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, a destabilizing force in the region, and a longtime and systematic human rights violator. Iran severely restricts the rights to peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of expression. If confirmed, I will call out Iran's human rights violations and abuses, which include arbitrary or unlawful detention of numerous individuals, some of whom have faced torture and/or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, and execution after unfair trials. I also will work with my colleagues to consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for human rights violators.

Question. Are you committed to robust human rights programming in Iran, regardless of how such programming may impact nuclear negotiations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support robust human rights programs in Iran. The Iranian Government denies Iranians the ability to exercise their human rights, including through severe restrictions on the rights to peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of expression. If confirmed, I will support all appropriate diplomatic tools to support the Iranian people so their voices are heard and they can hold their government accountable for its actions.

Question. Since the passage of the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, all but one of the U.S. Special Coordinators for Tibetan Issues have concurrently held your position. If you are designated the Special Coordinator, will you commit to promoting substantive dialogue without pre-conditions between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government that leads to a negotiated agreement on Tibet, as mandated by the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed and designated as Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, I will work with our allies and partners to press Beijing to return to direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions, to achieve meaningful autonomy for Tibetans.

Question. If Beijing continues to refuse to engage in dialogue, as it has done since 2010, will you insist that our dialogue with Beijing on some issues of importance to them be linked to their resumption of dialogue with the Tibetans?

Answer. If confirmed and designated as the Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, I will work with our allies and partners to press Beijing to return to direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives to achieve meaningful autonomy. I will also call upon Beijing to respect the human rights of Tibetans and to preserve Tibet's environment as well as to respect its distinct cultural, linguistic, and religious traditions.

Question. If confirmed, will you stand firm in communicating to Beijing the United States position that we will not under any circumstances accept a Chinese-controlled process to select the Dalai Lama's successor? If the Chinese authorities attempt to force a politically chosen successor on the Tibetan people, will you commit to imposing serious sanctions in response?

Answer. The PRC Government must have no role in the succession process of the Dalai Lama. PRC authorities' interference in the succession of the Panchen Lama 26 years ago, including disappearing the Panchen Lama as a child and attempting to replace him with a PRC Government-chosen successor, remains an outrageous abuse of religious freedom that I denounced as Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. If confirmed, I am committed to promoting respect for Tibetans' religious freedom and to taking all appropriate measures to promote accountability for PRC Government officials who attempt to interfere in the Dalai Lama's succession, consistent with the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020.

Question. Do you believe that the CCP is committing cultural genocide, also known as cultural erasure, against the Tibetans, whose civilization is distinct from that of China and boasts its own rich language, literature, religious tradition, and culture? Will you commit to undertaking programmatic and policy initiatives that will protect Tibetan culture and language in Tibet and in exile?

Answer. The Chinese Government has been relentless in seeking to suppress the distinct cultural, linguistic, and religious traditions of Tibetans. If confirmed, I will call on Beijing to end these policies and will explore every opportunity, including through policy and program initiatives, to help Tibetans preserve their traditions. This will include working with allies and partners to press Beijing to return to direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions, to achieve meaningful autonomy for Tibetans.

Question. Will you commit to regularly raise the case of the Panchen Lama and press for his release? Will you ensure that no U.S. official meets with, or provides a public platform, for the individual that Beijing appointed in his place?

Answer. Yes. I am saddened that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima—the Panchen Lama—remains disappeared since his 1995 forced disappearance by PRC authorities, separated from his community and denied his rightful place as a prominent Tibetan Buddhist leader. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting Tibetans' religious freedom, including their ability to select, educate, and venerate their religious leaders, like the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, according to their own beliefs and without government interference. I will also call on the PRC Government to publicize verifiable proof of the Tibetan-selected Panchen Lama's whereabouts and wellbeing and allow him to speak for himself.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit that the Biden administration will not provide aid to the PA if Palestinian officials have not ceased payments to those convicted of terrorist acts according to U.S. law?

Answer. I understand that the administration has been clear that all U.S. assistance for the Palestinians, including the recently announced assistance, will be provided consistent with U.S. law.

Question. UNRWA currently only discloses contracts over \$100,000 in its quarterly filings. However, the Annual Statistical Report on U.N. Procurement states that U.N. agencies must disclose all contracts over \$30,000. Will you hold UNRWA accountable for disclosing all contracts over \$30,000?

Answer. I understand UNRWA discloses all of its awards, including those above the \$30,000 threshold, to the United Nations Office for Procurement Services which then reports them together with all other U.N. agencies in the Annual Statistical Report on U.N. Procurement, published on the U.N. Global Market website (UNGM.org). If confirmed, I will seek to ensure UNRWA continues to abide by all relevant U.N. policies and regulations.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to supporting Cuba democracy programs?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that support for democracy and human rights is at the core of our efforts to empower the Cuban people to determine their own future. The recently released 2020 Human Rights Report notes the significant human rights abuses perpetrated by Cuban Government officials. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Government continues its steadfast support for and engagement with Cuban human rights defenders, activists, and civil society members to bolster their important work. I also will promote human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democracy, and will facilitate the free flow of information to the Cuban people.

Question. If confirmed, how will you support Cuba's democracy, civil society and human rights defenders in Cuba?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure the U.S. Government continues its steadfast support for and engagement with Cuban human rights defenders, activists, and civil society members to bolster their important work. I also will promote human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democracy, and will facilitate the free flow of information to the Cuban people. I will also denounce the Cuban Government's abuses and push for democratic reform. If confirmed, I will consult with Congress about Cuba policy.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO UZRA ZEYA BY SENATOR ROB PORTMAN

Question. North Korea is a topic of personal significance to me. Last year I gave a speech on the Senate floor to honor Otto Warmbier on the third anniversary of his passing, and I remain in contact with Fred and Cindy—Otto's parents who are constituents. How will this administration approach the challenge of North Korea from a national security and human rights perspective?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to placing human rights at the center of our foreign policy, including with North Korea, and working with like-minded partners to call out human rights abuses. I am deeply concerned by North Korea's deplorable human rights abuses, including its network of political prison and labor camps, use of forced labor, and severe restrictions of religious freedom, and horrific treatment of unjustly detained Americans like Mr. Warmbier. If confirmed, I will prioritize addressing North Korea's egregious human rights record and promoting respect for human rights in the closed country. I will also prioritize increased coordination with our allies and partners and will use all diplomatic tools at the U.S. Government's disposal to promote accountability for those responsible for the unspeakable abuses that occur in the country.

Question. I am deeply concerned regarding the ongoing reports of atrocities and human rights abuses occurring in the ongoing civil war in Ethiopia. As you are aware, civil wars are a unique threat, as this type of conflict often destabilizes neighboring states, attracts foreign fighters as well as third party proxy support for sides in the conflict. How can we ensure that Ethiopia's fragile transition toward democracy can continue given the current circumstances, and how can the United States ensure accountability for crimes occurring not just in the Tigray region, but all of Ethiopia?

Answer. The President and the Secretary of State have made clear that securing a ceasefire and supporting a political dialogue to defuse the political crisis in Ethiopia, including in Tigray, is an urgent priority, and I understand they plan to appoint a special envoy to lead a robust diplomatic effort to advance these goals. If confirmed, I will work closely with the special envoy in this regard. In addition, I will support the work of a joint investigation mechanism by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights as a first step in the accountability process. Credible, independent, and transparent investigations into human rights violations and abuses are critical for long-term justice, accountability, and reconciliation.

Question. Yesterday, President Biden announced his intention to withdraw all troops from Afghanistan by the 20th anniversary of the September 11th attacks. While the American people are understandably weary after two decades of war, any move to draw down our military presence in Afghanistan should be based on conditions on the ground, not in accordance with an arbitrary date. The Taliban have not upheld their commitments during the peace negotiations process. Before any withdrawal, we must ensure that the Taliban respects the legitimate governing authority of Afghanistan and see a de-association from extremist groups such as Al 'Qaeda and ISIS. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past, such as the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq in 2011. That decision led to more military intervention from the United States, not less, while giving rise to new extremist groups that filled the vacuum of instability. Do you share in my concern that a complete withdrawal of all U.S. forces in September without any sign that the Taliban is prepared to become a responsible partner in governing? What are the chances that Afghanistan becomes a failed state and a haven for terrorists who could once again strike the United States Homeland?

Answer. I support the administration's decision to complete a full military withdrawal by September 11, and to focus on diplomatic efforts to facilitate a negotiated settlement between the Taliban and the Afghan Government. If confirmed, I will work to ensure we remain vigilant to the terrorist threat and that U.S. humanitarian assistance preserves gains for Afghan women and civil society and mitigates prospects for state failure. I understand the administration will work with Afghan partners and Allies to counter any reemergence of a terrorist threat and to hold the Taliban to its commitment to ensure al Qaeda does not threaten the United States, our interests, or our allies.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO UZRA ZEYA BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is committing a genocide against the Uyghurs and other minorities in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) that is ongoing. The Biden administration had sent differing signals about the degree to which administration officials assessed that genocide is indeed ongoing, but on March 22, Secretary Blinken correctly emphasized "the P.R.C. continues to commit genocide and crimes against humanity." Do you agree with the assessment that the Chinese Government is engaged in a genocide against the Uyghurs and other minorities in the XUAR that is ongoing?

Answer. I agree with the Secretary of State's determination that the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is committing genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang. These crimes include imprisonment, torture, enforced sterilization, and persecution, including through forced labor and draconian restrictions on the freedoms of religion or belief, expression, and movement. These atrocities shock the conscience and must be met with serious consequences.

Question. What role do you see for the State Department in countering that ongoing genocide, and more broadly the human rights atrocities being committed by the Chinese Communist Party?

Answer. I share your deep concern about the ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious groups in Xinjiang. I understand the Department has reinvigorated cooperation with partners and allies and has imposed a number of measures to address these atrocities. If confirmed, I will support ongoing efforts to broaden this international coalition and call for an independent and unhindered investigation. I also will support using all appropriate tools, including those provided for in the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act, to pressure the PRC to end these atrocities and to promote accountability for those responsible and justice for victims.

Question. The Obama-Biden administration's approach to the Israeli-Arab conflict was justified on the basis of a theory of regional relations in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict prevented broader Israeli-Arab rapprochement. Among other decisions, that administration implemented discriminatory policies that distinguished between Jewish communities in places Israel controlled before and after 1967. That approach culminated in December 2016, when the Obama administration maneuvered the United Nations Security Council into passing UNSCR 2334, which among

other things denied Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights and part of its capital Jerusalem, including the Jewish Quarter. The Trump administration systematically worked to hollow out and render UNSCR 2334 null and void. They did so, including by recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, by moving our embassy to Jerusalem, by seeking to end discriminatory approaches that distinguished legally and for the purposes of aid and trade between different Israeli communities, and by taking several other steps. Do you believe that Israel has sovereignty over the Golan Heights?

Answer. In considering the U.S. position on the Golan Heights, I understand the administration gives great weight to Israel's security. The current Syrian regime and its Iranian allies pose a significant risk to Israel. It is apparent that the Golan Heights is critically important to Israel's security. As long as Bashar al-Assad is in control of Syria, it would be irresponsible to urge Israel to part with the Golan Heights. Control of the strategic Golan Heights provides Israel an added measure of security from the turmoil next door.

Question. Do you believe that Israel has sovereignty over Jerusalem, including the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. I understand the administration recognizes that Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. If confirmed, I will support the administration's efforts to handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. Do you believe that Israel is in illegal occupation of any part of Jerusalem?

Answer. I understand the administration recognizes that Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. Jerusalem itself is a final status issue to be resolved through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. If confirmed, I will support the administration's efforts to handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. Do you believe that Israel is in illegal occupation of the Old City of Jerusalem?

Answer. I understand the administration recognizes that Jerusalem is central to the national visions of both Israelis and Palestinians. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and its ultimate status is a final status issue which will need to be resolved by the parties in the context of direct negotiations. If confirmed, I will support the administration's efforts to handle all issues related to Jerusalem with the care and sensitivity that they deserve.

Question. On January 10, 2021, the State Department designated Ansarallah, sometimes called the Houthis, and Abdul Malik al-Houthi, Abd al-Khaliq Badr al-Din al-Houthi, and Abdullah Yahya al Hakim, three leaders of Ansarallah, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) pursuant to Executive Order 13224. On February 5, the Biden administration informed Congress of its intention to revoke those sanctions. The issue of humanitarianism was central to the public explanation of the decision: officials at the State Department have justified the delisting of what they described as the "broad" designation of Ansarallah on humanitarian grounds, e.g. that large parts of Yemen's population live under areas controlled by the group. Since then, the Houthis have escalated their violence across the region, bombarding civilians in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Yemen was already one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes in the world, in large part because the Houthis and their Iranian backers block aid, steal aid, and attack civilians. Please describe the role played by Iran and the Houthis in deepening the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen.

Answer. Iran continues to provide the Houthis with training, equipment, and monetary support, which assists them in promoting regional instability; threatening our partners, especially Saudi Arabia; and disrupting international shipping. Further, the Houthis use this support to threaten Yemeni civilians, especially at this time in the city of Marib. If confirmed, I am committed to working with our inter-agency partners to counter Iran's destabilizing activities.

The Houthis impede humanitarian access in the areas they control. If confirmed, I will support U.S. efforts to work with our partners on the ground to improve humanitarian access and facilitate the provision of critical commodities and humanitarian aid to Yemeni civilians.

Question. Please assess the degree to which the Biden administration's decision to lift terrorism sanctions against the Houthis and their leaders has enhanced the ability to provide humanitarian relief to Yemeni civilians in general.

Answer. As I understand, the revocations were aimed at ensuring that U.S. policies would not impede assistance to those already suffering what has been called the world's worst humanitarian crisis. I understand the administration heeded concerns from the United Nations, humanitarian groups, and bipartisan members of Congress, among others, that the designations could have had a devastating impact on Yemenis' access to basic commodities like food and fuel, which could increase the risk of famine. The short time that passed between the designations and the revocations limited the impact the designations could have had on humanitarian assistance and commercial imports, including food and other essential supplies.

Question. Please assess the degree to which the Biden administration's decision to lift terrorism sanctions against the Houthis and their leaders has enhanced the ability to provide humanitarian relief to Yemeni civilians in Marib.

Answer. As I understand, the revocations were aimed at ensuring that U.S. policies would not impede assistance to those already suffering what has been called the world's worst humanitarian crisis. This has been especially critical in Marib, where the escalation of hostilities has caused additional needs and secondary displacement. The lifting of sanctions has allowed for the delivery of life-saving food, emergency shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, and essential non-food items, such as blankets and water containers.

Question. The Obama administration was broadly criticized, especially in the context of its Middle East policy, for co-mingling unclassified documents with classified documents. This practice requires that documents be placed in a secure location, unnecessarily limiting access to unclassified documents and stifling public debate. The Biden administration already seems to be repeating such practices: according to an exchange during the State Department press briefing on February 11, a notification describing the lifting of terrorism sanctions on Iran-controlled terrorists in Yemen was unnecessarily transmitted to a Congressional SCIF.

- Can you commit to ensuring that unclassified information is not unnecessarily comingled with classified information in notifications provided by the State Department to Congress? If not, why not?

Answer. I am committed to working to ensure that information provided to Congress is, to the fullest extent possible, in a format that facilitates its access by authorized personnel, while complying with Executive Order 13526, the Department of State classification guide, and the executive branch rules on the handling and storage of classified information.

Question. The Obama administration was broadly criticized for inaction in response to Iranian human rights atrocities, and critics have suggested that those issues were subsumed beneath the administration's commitment to securing a nuclear deal. The Biden administration, which is rushing to secure another nuclear deal with Iran, has already come under similar criticism. Please describe your assessment of the scope and nature of Iran's human rights record.

Answer. The Iranian Government severely restricts the rights to peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of expression. If confirmed, I will call out Iran's systematic human rights violations and abuses, which include arbitrary or unlawful detention of numerous individuals, including American citizens. I will work with my colleagues and U.S. allies and partners to consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for regime officials responsible for human rights violations and abuses, including torture, executions, persecution of religious minorities, and digital repression.

Question. Please describe the degree to which you believe that Iranian human rights concerns should be highlighted vs. considerations related to nuclear negotiations or securing nuclear-related concessions.

Answer. President Biden has been clear that Iran must never obtain a nuclear weapon. Iran's development and proliferation of ballistic missiles pose a threat to international security and remain a significant nonproliferation challenge. The President has also emphasized that human rights must be at the center of our foreign policy. If confirmed, I will call out Iran's human rights violations and abuses, which I did forcefully in my prior role as Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. If confirmed, I intend to work with colleagues and U.S. allies and partners to consider all appropriate tools to promote account-

ability for Iranian regime officials responsible for pervasive human rights violations and abuses.

Question. Do you believe that imposing new human rights sanctions against Iran, or enforcing existing ones, would violate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or a successor agreement?

Answer. The Iranian Government denies Iranians the ability to exercise their human rights, including through severe restrictions on the rights to peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of expression.

I support continuing to maintain and impose sanctions on Iranian individuals and entities perpetrating human rights violations and abuses. Human rights sanctions are independent of JCPOA provisions and remain an invaluable, bipartisan tool to achieve the Biden-Harris administration's commitment to center human rights and democratic values in U.S. foreign policy.

Question. In July 1989, you were hired as director of the American Educational Trust's speakers' bureau, according to the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, which is published by the organization. The organization and outlet routinely suggest that American Jews who advocate for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship invite hostility and even violence because of their advocacy, that political expenditures and activities by Americans and especially American Jews are unseemly, and that such activities raise questions about their loyalty to the United States. The Washington Report has also lists of members of Congress who receive donations from Americans who politically advocate for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship.

- Do you agree that these sorts of rhetoric and tropes, including accusations that American Jews who advocate for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship are disloyal to the United States, are inappropriate?

Answer. Yes. I deplore any suggestion that American Jews who advocate for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship are disloyal to the United States. My entry-level employment at the American Educational Trust ended some 31 years ago, I have had no contact with the organization since then, and I categorically reject the organization's positions with respect to Israel.

Question. Do you agree that these sorts of rhetoric and tropes, including accusations that American Jews who advocate for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship are disloyal to the United States, are anti-Semitic?

Answer. Yes, I agree that accusations of dual loyalty against American Jews supportive of the U.S.-Israel alliance constitute anti-Semitic speech. I fully endorse the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of anti-Semitism, under which certain criticisms leveled against Israel, or Jewish persons as a collective, can be considered anti-Semitic. I strongly support the Biden administration's embrace of the IHRA working definition of anti-Semitism and join the Biden administration in categorically condemning all forms of anti-Semitism. If confirmed, I intend to combat anti-Semitism and intolerance in all forms and will work to expand international coalitions towards this objective.

Question. Do you agree that it is inappropriate to suggest that Americans who believe in a strong U.S.-Israel relationship should be excluded from engaging in political activities, including donating to members of Congress?

Answer. Yes. I categorically reject any suggestions that Americans who believe in a strong U.S.-Israel relationship should be excluded from engaging in political activities, including donating to members of Congress. I strongly support the Biden administration's commitment to renewing democracy abroad and at home, and believe the latter is underpinned by the rights of every American to fully exercise their Constitutional rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of religion, freedom to petition one's government, and equal protection under the law.

Question. Do you believe that a strong U.S.-Israel relationship boosts American national security?

Answer. Yes. I strongly support the Biden-Harris administration's unwavering and ironclad commitment to Israel's security and, if confirmed, will work to further strengthen all aspects of U.S.-Israel partnership. The ties between the United States and Israel are rooted in strategic interests and shared democratic values, and in this vein, I understand the Biden-Harris administration will seek to further strengthen the U.S.-Israel alliance. If confirmed, I will support the administration's goals to work closely with Israel, to include countering anti-Israel bias in the U.N. system, strengthening international coalitions against anti-Semitism, and building

on normalization agreements to strengthen cooperation between Israel and its neighbors.

Question. The term “universal human right” is frequently used throughout the international community, and it was a reference you made consistently throughout the hearing. Please provide in your own words a definition of universal human right.

Answer. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) represents a common understanding, which I share, of universal human rights and freedoms around the globe. The UDHR begins by stating that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. It sets out, for the first time at the international level, rights and freedoms to be universally protected. To me, many of these rights are inspired by those enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and hold U.N. member states to a common standard. The universality of human rights articulated in the UDHR also counters false arguments put forth by China, Russia, and other autocracies of a U.S. or Western agenda being imposed on the rest of the world.

Question. In your view, is the concept of a “human right” fluid or relative?

Answer. As human rights are universal, they are neither fluid nor relative. As an example, the right to freedom of expression has not changed since it was articulated even though our understanding of the application of the right has been challenged as we adapt to new methods of communication. From time to time, our understanding of rights may expand; for example, where once societies held other human beings in bondage, it is now universally recognized that slavery is a violation of one’s human rights. This does not make human rights fluid or relative, but reflects the reality that the understanding and application of human rights standards can evolve in a positive direction alongside societal progress.

Question. Do you believe that certain rights are unalienable?

Answer. In its preamble, the Declaration of Independence states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” I believe that these unalienable rights and those enshrined in the U.S. Constitution apply to all Americans, cannot be denied by government, and that there is no hierarchy of rights. Similarly, in the context of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I understand and support the concept of “inalienable” rights that cannot be denied or taken away from people, and which governments have a duty to protect and to refrain from violating.

Question. The Biden administration rejoined the United States to the United Nations Human Rights Council, a body that features some of the worst human rights violators in the world including China, Cuba, Somalia, and Venezuela. In your hearing you argued a lack of U.S. presence at the Council would create a “vacuum” for bad actors to direct policy initiatives. What substantive policy areas does the U.N. Human Rights Council hold jurisdiction over or govern?

Answer. The U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC), while not without flaws, provides a venue to raise human rights violations from around the world. It can play an important role in shining a spotlight on the world’s worst human rights violators. For example, the HRC is one of the few places in the U.N. where China has been called out for its abuses in Xinjiang and Hong Kong. HRC engagement allows the United States to keep countries with the worst human rights records off the Council and encourage more rights-respecting nations to run for seats. U.S. engagement decreased unfair HRC bias against Israel.

Question. If we accept the “vacuum argument,” is it your view that United States participation in the U.N. Human Rights Council should include the following (please explain your response for each): Advocate for the removal of well-known human rights violators from the Council; Withhold funding for certain activities or initiatives as a tool to produce changes in behavior from malign actors; Use the voice and vote of the United States at the Council to highlight human rights atrocities, including violations of protecting the right to life, by other nations, including nations who sit on the Council.

Answer. I understand the administration is committed to working with partners to ensure the Human Rights Council shines a spotlight on countries with the worst human rights records and serves as a forum for those fighting injustice and tyranny. U.S. re-engagement should advocate to keep some of the countries with the worst human rights records off the Council and encourage more rights-respecting nations to run for seats. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the United States continues to seek Council reforms, including elimination of anti-Israel Article Agenda Item 7,

and promote all appropriate, available, and effective accountability mechanisms for those who commit atrocities, to include forced abortions and sterilization, rape, torture, and mass killings.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO UZRA ZEYA BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. What is your understanding of U.S. law with respect to engagement with Hamas? News media reports indicate the Biden administration has committed to “resetting the U.S. relationship with the Palestinian people and leadership,” including robust engagement and provision of aid. On April 7, the State Department announced its intent to “restart U.S. economic, development, humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people” by providing \$75 million in aid to the West Bank and Gaza.

Answer. Hamas is designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order 13224. I strongly support the Biden-Harris administration commitment to disrupt and deter terrorist organizations worldwide, including Hamas. I understand U.S. engagement in the West Bank and Gaza and with the Palestinians is consistent with U.S. law and involves no engagement with Hamas, a designated FTO.

Question. What are the implications for U.S. engagement and provision of aid if the Palestinian Legislative Council includes, or is led by, members of Hamas? Under the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006, the United States is prohibited from providing assistance to a Palestinian Authority effectively controlled by Hamas.

Answer. I understand U.S. assistance for the Palestinians is provided consistent with U.S. law. I also understand the Department routinely assesses its foreign assistance programming, and would do so following Palestinian elections or any other significant change related to the Palestinian Authority.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit that the Biden administration will not engage with Hamas officials and will not seek to find technical loopholes to engaging with Hamas officials such as considering them as members of the PLO, which they are not?

Answer. Hamas is designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in accordance with section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order 13224. I understand U.S. engagement in the West Bank and Gaza and with the Palestinians is consistent with U.S. law and involves no engagement with Hamas, a designated FTO. If confirmed, I will comply with U.S. law and seek to ensure that “J family” bureaus and offices do the same.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m. in Room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Markey, Schatz, Van Hollen, Risch, 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.

Ambassador Jenkins, former Secretary Fernandez, congratulations on your nominations and my thanks for your willingness to return to the State Department with your demonstrated experience, strength, and commitment to advancing our national interests.

I have spoken often of the pivotal foreign policy challenges facing our country and the State Department, and this hearing will be no different. If confirmed, both of you will confront serious issues and challenges and a department in need of repair and rebuilding.

I am heartened by the Biden administration's emphasis on nominating knowledgeable and seasoned leaders with rich foreign policy experience.

Ambassador Jenkins, the Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security is one of the most vital senior positions in the Department of State. Its portfolio ranges from nuclear weapons to terrorism and from nonproliferation to landmines. It requires orchestrating global cooperation with both allies and adversaries on critical issues.

As you and I have discussed, I have long been concerned over the way that the Department of Defense has assumed the security assistance mission that should be the exclusive purview of the State Department and the Secretary of State.

I greatly respect the service of the men and women in our armed forces and particularly your own 20 years of naval service. But the person delivering assistance to officials of a foreign government should not be wearing a uniform. They should, instead, have the authority to advance and promote a comprehensive foreign policy vision consistent with our core values.

We also discussed the need for the State Department to respect this committee's crucial statutory oversight role over the arms sales process, including when the laws and regulations governing those sales may have been violated.

This relationship was poisoned by the last administration. Thus far, the relationship has been much improved, but more work is necessary to create an effective partnership.

Make no mistake. One way or another, this committee will conduct effective oversight, and I hope and expect that we can depend on your cooperation.

Finally, we stand at a crossroads in our nuclear relationship with Russia and China. We have extended the New START Treaty with Russia for five years. The question is now where do we go from here.

Do we seek deeper reductions in Russian strategic forces? Should we focus on shorter-range nonstrategic nuclear weapons not covered by New START?

Should we focus on engaging China which, although its force structure remains smaller than the United States or Russia, is rapidly modernizing and expanding its nuclear forces?

So I look forward to hearing your thoughts on those matters today.

Mr. Fernandez, if confirmed, I expect that your previous experience as Assistant Secretary for Economics, Energy, and Business Growth will serve you well. This is vitally important because the last four years have been especially difficult for the bureaus that you have been nominated to lead.

They suffered from neglect, a loss of an institutional experience, and an undervaluing of diplomacy at the highest levels. The former administration never even bothered to nominate an Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.

Given the sad state of affairs, your first priority, I believe, has to be rebuild the E Bureaus, restore morale, and provide clear leadership. This is especially important because President Biden has elevated the mission of the E Bureau by prioritizing climate change as a foreign policy imperative.

Energy, the environment, economic growth, leadership in all of these arenas is necessary to restore U.S. leadership and successfully combat the climate crisis.

If confirmed, you will also head the economic diplomacy wing at the State Department. I am interested in hearing about your views on building back better America's economic statecraft toolkit.

Economic diplomacy is an absolutely critical domain for competition in the 21st century, and there are many questions to be answered about a strategy for the post-COVID reconstruction of the global economy, as well as how to help poor countries administer vaccines and build resilience to the economic strains brought by the pandemic.

I am particularly interested in your views on Secretary Yellen's proposed \$650 billion in special drawing rights and how it promotes global economic stability and growth, and I would like to understand how you plan to engage on economic sanctions both within the department and in the interagency process.

So, Ambassador Jenkins and Mr. Fernandez, both of you face steep challenges ahead, but I have no doubt that you are up to the task.

And with that, we look forward to your testimony and turn to the distinguished ranking member for his opening remarks.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The two nominations before us today are important and, indeed, really critical to our nation's foreign policy. I would first like to start with the nomination to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

For the past few decades, the global threat landscape has been going through a paradigm shift. Unfortunately, many in the West have clung to the notion that we can simply rely on the policies of the past to keep us secure today.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In just the last 10 years since the New START Treaty was ratified, the threats facing the United States, its allies, and our collective security have only grown.

Russia has completely modernized its nuclear forces and has done so outside existing treaty limits. It is growing its nuclear stockpile and is developing new so-called exotic missile delivery systems.

In addition, State Department compliance reports have laid out a consistent pattern of Russian noncompliance, also known as cheating, with a majority of the international arms control obligations it has signed.

Meanwhile, China is on pace to at least double its nuclear stockpile over the next decade. It has tested more ballistic missiles in 2018 and '19 than the rest of the world combined, and is likely engaged in nuclear testing activities.

Currently, China is modernizing every element of its nuclear triad, including larger land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, new ballistic missile submarines, and long-range stealth bombers, and the Department of Defense assesses that China is raising the alert level of much of its nuclear force indefinitely.

Combined with lack of transparency, these actions contribute to potential miscommunication or inadvertent escalation in a conflict and each of these threats demands immediate attention.

Beyond Russia and China, we continue to face mounting threats from other malign actors like Iran and North Korea, who continue to vie for a place on the world stage by advancing their nuclear and missile programs and engaging in proxy and cyber warfare.

This arms race encourages other nations to question whether they too need to develop nuclear weapons—certainly, not a pretty picture—and in the process, it undermines—all of this undermines Cold War—the Cold War architecture.

The role of the Under Secretary for Arms Control is our lead negotiator and accountability monitor to keep other countries honest on these issues. This person must not only have a deep level of technical knowledge but also the skills and wherewithal to sit

across the table from leaders of these nations and push back against empty offers and veiled threats.

It is also critical that this administration recognize the interdependence between arms control and nuclear modernization, as explicitly as explicitly codified in the ratification of the New START Treaty.

The Obama administration committed to nuclear modernization in order to win ratification of the New START Treaty but promptly scrapped those promises and abandoned those commitments just a year later.

Trust must be rebuilt between Congress and the executive. To rebuild this trust, the Biden administration must commit to a full modernization of the nuclear triad and nuclear weapons complex.

This is vital to reassure our allies who have forgone developing nuclear weapons and instead rely on our nuclear umbrella that we provide for them. Dismantling our capabilities while our adversaries build their stockpiles, is inherently destabilizing and undermines international security.

Which brings me to the last but, certainly, one of the most important topics for this nominee, the Senate's role in approving arms control agreements and treaties. The Constitution plainly lays out the Senate's role in approving these types of international agreements.

I cannot stress enough that any international agreement in the arms control space, including reentry into a previous agreement, must be put to the Senate for its advice and consent, as demanded by the Founding Fathers and our Constitution.

And to win consent, the administration should take concrete steps to rebuild the trust previous congresses have placed in the executive branch.

Next, we have the nomination of the Honorable Jose Fernandez to be Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy and Environment. Our economy is one of our greatest assets and we all know economic policy is a crucial part of foreign policy.

The United States represents about 4.5 percent of the world's population, but we account for 22 percent of the world's economic activity. American creativity, innovation, and determination are hallmarks of the U.S. economic model and it is not surprising that countries around the world long to duplicate our success.

More government spending of borrowed money or of government-appropriated private capital is simply not the answer to our problems or those of other countries. Spending enormous sums at home and abroad in the hope that it will create a better world is not sustainable.

Instead, we must carefully define our objectives. Whether it is economic energy or environmental policy, we must be advocates of a free market system that resists the temptation to impose a one-size-fits-all solution to these incredibly diverse and difficult issues.

Further, how we steward our economy and help other countries develop is important to expanding the rule of law, encouraging compliance to international norms, and pushing back on corruption.

We must continue to promote the private sector-driven market-based economy that has led to the United States and its allies

achieving a level of prosperity for our citizens never before seen in history.

It is only through promoting this system that the West will truly be able to offer the world a better alternative to the socialists and parasitic Chinese economic policies and to reinforce the system of fair play rules we, along with other free and democratic countries, have constructed.

This is the economic landscape that lies ahead of us. With our allies, we must rise to this challenge. I look forward to hearing from both the witnesses on how they plan to address these very important issues.

Thank you, Senator Menendez.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

So we will turn to our two nominees. Your full statements will be included in the record. We ask you to summarize them in about five minutes or so we can have a conversation.

And we will start off with Ambassador Jenkins.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BONNIE D. JENKINS OF NEW YORK,
NOMINATED TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
ARMS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

Ms. JENKINS. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am grateful to President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Secretary Blinken for their trust and faith in nominating me to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

It is a great honor for me to come before this committee. If confirmed, I pledge to work tirelessly for the American people and in close coordination with members of Congress and this committee to advance our shared ideals for this great nation.

I would like to thank my mother, Dorothy Jenkins, my family, and my friends and colleagues who have inspired and supported me for so many years. I have been honored to serve the U.S. Government as both a civilian and in uniform from working on arms control treaties as a lawyer with the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the 1990s to over 20 years in the U.S. Air Force and Navy Reserves.

Most recently, I had the honor of being confirmed to serve as ambassador for the State Department Threat Reduction Programs from 2009 to 2017, working to bring the issues of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear security front and center.

My commitment to public service has always included advancing opportunities for all Americans. In 2017, I founded the nonprofit Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security, and Conflict Transformation in an effort to make sure that our nation's policymakers are engaging in and constitute all of our experts, regardless of race, gender, or background.

I am also a professor at Georgetown and George Washington Universities teaching our future generation of policymakers. If confirmed, I will bring this breadth of experience to bear on the challenges that our country is facing today.

An increasingly authoritarian People's Republic of China is pursuing a destabilizing military modernization project and rapid nuclear buildup, endangering the international rules-based order and inflaming regional and global tensions.

Iran has continued to expand and accelerate its nuclear program and ballistic missile development, in addition to its ongoing support for terrorist groups and violent armed militias.

Russia continues to violate arms control agreements and commitments, and we face new cybersecurity and emerging technology threats from our adversaries. Reducing the risk of war through effective arms control, limiting Russian and Chinese nuclear expansion, strengthening our efforts in biosecurity, pursuing accountability for the use of chemical weapons, and promoting a diverse workforce will be among my top priorities, if confirmed.

We must strengthen deterrence alliance in the Euro Atlantic and Indo-Pacific to better deter and defend against growing threats. We must develop and implement norms of responsible behavior in outer space.

We must grapple with advancements and emerging technologies that can threaten strategic stability. If confirmed, I will strive to ensure that arms transfers and security assistance are focused on building value-based security partnerships.

I will carefully assess all critical factors, including nonproliferation, arms control, and human rights, and will ensure other key commitments, such as maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge, are upheld.

I look forward to working with this committee, if confirmed, to look strategically at how our security assistance authorities are structured and how they are balanced and resourced across the Departments of State and Defense to ensure that our tools, including our security cooperation agreements, are the most efficient for the U.S. taxpayer and the most effective for U.S. national security.

Renewed American leadership, as set out in the administration's interim national security strategic guidance, will be essential to reducing the dangers from chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.

Further, working with allies and partners the United States must continue to stand up for an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet and stable cyberspace where international law and voluntary nonbinding norms apply to state behavior.

You have my commitment that if I am confirmed I will work in close coordination with you in our efforts to restore Congress' role in formulating foreign policy and to ensure the policies we enact are in the greatest interest of our national security of the American people.

The interests we face are numerous, but our commitment to our allies and to our American people is rock solid. We have much work to do and I am ready to get started.

With that, I welcome your questions and I look forward to our discussion today. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jenkins follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BONNIE R. JENKINS

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am grateful to President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Secretary Blinken for their trust and faith in nominating me to be the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. It is a great honor for me to come before this committee. If confirmed, I pledge to work tirelessly for the American people and in close coordination with Members of Congress and this committee to advance our shared ideals for this great nation.

I would like to thank my mother, Dorothy Jenkins, my family, and my friends and colleagues who have inspired and supported me for so many years.

I have been honored to serve the U.S. Government as both a civilian and in uniform, from working on arms control treaties as a lawyer with the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the 1990s, to over 20 years in the Air Force and U.S. Navy Reserves. Most recently, I had the honor of being confirmed to serve as Ambassador for the State Department's threat reduction programs from 2009 to 2017, working to bring the issues of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear security front and center.

My commitment to public service has always included advancing opportunities for all Americans. In 2017, I founded the non-profit Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict Transformation in an effort to make sure that our nation's policy makers are engaging in and constitute all of our experts, regardless of their race, gender, or background. I am also a professor at Georgetown and George Washington Universities, teaching our future generation of policy makers.

If confirmed, I will bring this breadth of experience to bear on the challenges that our country is facing today. An increasingly authoritarian People's Republic of China is pursuing a destabilizing military modernization project and rapid nuclear buildup, endangering the international rules-based order and inflaming regional and global tensions. Iran has continued to expand and accelerate its nuclear program and ballistic missile development, in addition to its ongoing support for terrorist groups and violent armed militias. Russia continues to violate arms control agreements and commitments. And we face new cybersecurity and emerging technology threats from our adversaries.

Reducing the risk of nuclear war through effective arms control, limiting Russian and Chinese nuclear expansion, strengthening our efforts in biosecurity, pursuing accountability for the use of chemical weapons, and promoting a diverse workforce will be among my top priorities, if confirmed. We must strengthen deterrence alliances in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific to better deter and defend against growing threats. We must develop and implement norms of responsible behavior in outer space. And we must grapple with advancements in emerging technologies that can threaten strategic stability.

If confirmed, I will strive to ensure that arms transfers and security assistance are focused on building values-based security partnerships. I will carefully assess all critical factors, including nonproliferation, arms control, and human rights, and will ensure other key commitments, such as maintaining Israel's Qualitative Military Edge, are upheld.

I look forward to working with this committee, if confirmed, to look strategically at how our security assistance authorities are structured, and how they are balanced and resourced across the Departments of State and Defense, to ensure that our tools, including our security cooperation agreements, are the most efficient for the U.S. taxpayer, and the most effective for U.S. national security.

Renewed American leadership—As set out in the administration's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance—will be essential to reducing the dangers from chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons, and their delivery systems. Further, working with allies and partners, the United States must continue to stand up for an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet and a stable cyberspace, where international law and voluntary, non-binding norms apply to state behavior.

You have my commitment that if confirmed I will work in close coordination with you in our efforts to restore Congress' role in formulating foreign policy, and to ensure the policies we enact are in the greatest interest of our national security and of the American people. The threats we face are numerous, but our commitment to our allies, and to the American people, is rock solid. We have much work to do, and I am ready to get started. With that, I welcome your questions and look forward to our discussion today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ambassador.
Mr. Fernandez?

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOSE W. FERNANDEZ OF NEW YORK,
NOMINATED TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (ECONOMIC GROWTH, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT);
UNITED STATES ALTERNATE GOVERNOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT;
UNITED STATES ALTERNATE GOVERNOR OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK; AND UNITED STATES ALTERNATE GOVERNOR OF THE EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman Menendez. Thank you, Ranking Member Risch, and other members of this committee for the opportunity that you have given me before—to appear before you today.

I would like to take a couple of seconds to introduce my family. I am blessed to have a supportive and loving family made up of three remarkable women. All three of them walk the talk of public service and I am very proud of them.

My wife, Andrea Gabor, is a professor at Baruch College in New York and the author of four books, in addition to being the mother of Sarah and Annie. Sarah, who is also here, spent a big chunk of her law school years volunteering at a death penalty clinic and is on her way to a graduate degree in psychology.

And not with us but very much in our thoughts is our second daughter, Annie, who is pursuing a joint public health and medical degree in California. I could not be here without them. So thank you for giving me the opportunity to introduce them.

I am honored to come before you as President Biden's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment. I am grateful for the confidence shown in me by the president and by Secretary Blinken.

If confirmed, I will consult frequently with this committee as we work to serve the interests of the American people.

Nearly a dozen years ago, in the midst of the Great Recession, I appeared before this committee as the nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Business Affairs.

I come to you today under circumstances that are different from those that we faced in 2009. But the reasons that brought me here have not changed.

My family and I left Cuba as refugees in 1967. We were fed in food kitchens by charities and we lost the lease in our first home. But when we settled in New Jersey in the town next to Union City in Hudson County, we began to rebuild lives that had been upended by revolution, fear, and deprivation.

A decade later, a country that owed us nothing had given me scholarships at Dartmouth College and Columbia Law School where I was challenged and nurtured by educators I will never be able to repay.

In short, I have lived the promise of America. I know that trading essential liberties for economic security is a false bargain, and I believe to my core that a humble but confident nation that celebrates its diversity while striving to reach a more perfect union can inspire others to tackle the existential challenges of our time.

With the exception of my four years here as Assistant Secretary, I practiced commercial law in New York since 1980. I have rep-

resented U.S. investors doing business abroad and foreign investors operating in the United States.

I have advised governments in Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere on pro-growth policies, and, unfortunately, over the last year I have also witnessed how workers and businesses everywhere have suffered in economies ravaged by COVID-19.

If confirmed, I will advance—seek to advance foreign policy initiatives that will benefit the American people and, particularly, our middle class, and I will focus on five priorities.

My first will be to support the State Department's critical role in stopping COVID-19. As Undersecretary, I would work to advance global vaccination, secure critical supply chains, promote economic recovery, and promote effective global systems.

My second priority will be to work on environmental and energy policies to accelerate economic growth. President Biden's executive order on tackling the climate crisis has established this goal as a national priority.

There is no greater challenge than climate change and we must work to include all countries in the effort while ensuring that our workers will share in the benefits of the new economy.

My third priority will be to ensure that our country will benefit from free, fair, and reciprocal trade. We need to focus on common goals with our trade partners while working to remove trade irritants.

We also need to support American innovation by protecting intellectual property rights overseas and preventing strategic competitors from gaming the system.

A fourth priority of mine will be to help maintain American leadership in the digital economy and emerging technologies.

U.S. technology companies face increasing challenges in maintaining U.S. preeminence in cutting-edge science and technology, and we need to engage diplomatically and with industry stakeholders so that international norms and standards are fair and transparent.

Finally, my last task will be to do what I have been doing now for almost 40 years and that is to facilitate new market opportunities for U.S. firms. Competing in the international arena is a strategic imperative for the United States and an opportunity for our companies and our workers.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fernandez follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JOSE W. FERNANDEZ

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch and members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am honored to come before you as President Biden's nominee for Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment. I am grateful for the confidence shown in me by the President and Secretary Blinken. If confirmed I will consult frequently with this Committee as we work to serve the interests of the American people.

Nearly a dozen years ago, in the midst of the Great Recession, I appeared before this committee as the nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs. I now come to you at a moment that is no less dire. A pandemic has robbed the lives of more than 570,000 Americans and millions more around the world. Generations wonder whether we can avert a climate cataclysm.

Emboldened rivals seek to expand their influence at America's expense. And traditional allies question whether the United States will remain at their side.

I come to you today under circumstances different from those we faced in 2009, but the reasons that brought me here have not changed. My family and I left Cuba as refugees in 1967. We were fed in food kitchens run by charities and lost the lease in our first home, but when we settled in New Jersey and my mother took a job as a seamstress in a local factory and my father became a bank clerk, we began to rebuild lives upended by revolution, fear and deprivation. A decade later, in a country that owed us nothing, I had received scholarships to Dartmouth College and Columbia Law School, where I was challenged and nurtured by educators I will never be able to repay.

In short, I have lived the promise of America. I know that trading essential liberties for economic security is a false bargain. And I believe to my core that a humble but confident nation that celebrates its diversity while striving to reach a more perfect union can inspire others to tackle the existential challenges of our time.

With the exception of my four years in Washington as Assistant Secretary, I have practiced commercial law in New York since 1980. I have represented U.S. investors operating in troubled countries, and foreign investors seeking to raise funds in our capital markets or navigate the U.S. foreign investment system. I have advised governments in Africa and Latin America on pro-growth policies. Unfortunately, over the last year I have also witnessed how workers and businesses everywhere have foundered in economies ravaged by COVID-19.

If confirmed I will seek to advance foreign policy initiatives that will benefit the American people, and particularly our middle class, focusing on five priorities:

1. *The State Department's critical role in stopping COVID-19:* As Secretary Blinken has said "This pandemic won't end at home until it ends worldwide." As Under Secretary I would work to advance global vaccination, secure critical supply chains, support safe international transportation systems, and—more broadly—promote inclusive economic recovery and effective global health systems.
2. *Environmental and energy policies to accelerate economic growth:* President Biden's Executive Order on tackling the climate crisis established as a national priority raising global climate ambition and integrating climate considerations across a wide range of international fora. There is no challenge greater than climate change, and we must work to enlist all countries. We also need to ensure that our workers will share in the benefits of the new economy.
3. *Free, fair, and reciprocal trade:* The United States needs to focus on common goals with our trade partners while working to remove trade irritants. We also need to support American innovation by enlisting partners to protect intellectual property rights overseas and prevent strategic competitors from circumventing the rules.
4. *Leadership in the digital economy and emerging technologies:* U.S. technology companies face increasing challenges in maintaining U.S. preeminence in cutting-edge science and technology. We need to engage diplomatically and with industry stakeholders to maintain U.S. competitiveness and ensure that international norms and standards are fair and transparent.
5. *Facilitating new market opportunities for U.S. firms:* As the Department's senior economic official, I would direct our network of economic officers in embassies around the world to help U.S. firms expand overseas, creating jobs in the United States and contributing to our economic growth. Competing in the international arena is a strategic imperative for the United States and an opportunity for our companies and workers.

Let me conclude by stressing that, if confirmed, I would be honored to serve with Secretary Blinken and my counterparts throughout the U.S. Government in support of the President's economic policy agenda. I will also seek your counsel throughout my tenure.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you both for your testimony. We will begin a series of five-minute rounds for members, and I will at the beginning say I have to go to introduce two judges to the Judiciary Committee. So I will—

Senator RISCH. I will take over.

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah, absolutely. I know you would be happy to. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. I have no doubt about that. So I will start off with my questions. Then I will turn to Senator Risch. I should be back by then. But if not, Senator Risch, if you would acknowledge according to the list that we have here.

Let me start off with you, Ambassador. I am glad I heard in your statement about your commitment to work with the committee. The leadership of State in the last administration had a very contentious relationship with this committee on arms sales matters, and it was clear that our legitimate statutory oversight role was neither recognized nor respected.

So far, Secretary Blinken has fostered a very different relationship that is professional, respectful, and consultative. Will you continue and broaden this relationship on arms sales oversight and will you commit to consult with us regarding policy changes and initiatives and not merely inform us of your decisions?

Ms. JENKINS. Thank you for your questions, Senator.

Yes, I can confirm that I am more than happy to consult with you.

The CHAIRMAN. All right.

Now, I have been concerned for some time that a Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Bureau does not have appropriate influence on the arms sales process. The Biden administration seems better disposed to consider the human rights components of the arms sales process.

I plan to reintroduce my Safeguarding Human Rights in Arms Sales Act, which seeks to reemphasize and enhance DRL's role. I have no ideological prohibition to having U.S. arms be sold abroad. I have no problem with that.

I do have a problem when we sell it to countries that violate human rights or act outside of the international norm and the use of those weapons.

So, if confirmed, will you enhance DRL's role in the arms sales process?

Ms. JENKINS. Yes, Senator. What I can certainly say is, as I said in my statement, I view human rights as forefront and fundamental to arms sales and arms transfers. So I will, certainly, do what I can, if I am confirmed, at State to include all issues and individuals in terms of promoting human rights.

The CHAIRMAN. Now, I want to turn to the question that I raised earlier, and I think you and I had an opportunity to discuss this. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, DOD has reproduced more and more of State's security assistance authority.

It has recently attempted to reproduce State's international military education and training program with a focus on its own priorities as it has done with other duplicated programs. It, essentially, runs its own foreign military financing grant program, which is considered far more flexible than State's.

If confirmed, will you give equal focus to all the issues in all of the bureaus and offices under your supervision and actively defend State's equities and authorities in this regard?

Ms. JENKINS. Thank you, Senator.

Yes, I am very concerned and would, certainly, be working with all the authorities and the offices within State and the interagency to strengthen the role of the State Department in this issue.

The CHAIRMAN. All right.

Mr. Fernandez, it is good to see your family here, incredibly gifted family, I must say. You have got all the bases covered. You can get educated, your health care is going to be taken care of, and that is a pretty good deal.

So I want to know—I hope you have had an opportunity maybe to see what this committee did last week, in a 21 to 1 vote, passed out the Strategic Competition Act, which is something that Senator Risch and I authored, along with many members of this committee, intended to restore our global economic leadership, including passages calling on the president to work with our G-7 allies in matters relevant to economic and democratic freedoms.

We see in this committee on a bipartisan basis as China being our most strategic competitor, a nation that we must confront when they violate international norms but we must also compete with.

If confirmed, what will be your goals when it comes to the global economy and in its post-COVID recovery, particularly as it relates to competing with China?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Thank you for your question, Senator, and I commend you and the committee for the work that you did last week on the China bill. It is an issue that I think will be an important part of my role at the State Department.

The fact of the matter is that, as you know, China is no longer biding its time. It is challenging us in the economic sphere every chance that it gets and it is doing so through practices that are inimical to many of the rules that it had to follow in order to get to where it is. The Chinese are now trying to challenge those rules.

We have pushed back but I think we must do more, and I think the bill that you worked on last week will be—will give us an additional tool to do that.

One of the areas on which I think I would like to concentrate my efforts will be to work with our allies more, to work with our private sector more, and to provide alternatives to other countries doing business with China.

Often times, they may not have other choices, and I think part of what we need to do is to work with our allies and to work with our companies to talk to them about the opportunities abroad and to get them much more involved in international business.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I am going to turn to Senator Risch. I am going to let Senator Risch preside in this period of time. After Senator Risch, Senator Cardin is next and then Senator Hagerty after that. But I should be back by that time.

Thank you, Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH [presiding]. I appreciate that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am going to ask a few questions here and then we will turn to Senator Cardin.

Ambassador Jenkins, as you know, the United States withdrew from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, commonly known as the INF Treaty. We believed it was the right thing to do—that is, the United States did—and so did NATO. NATO found that the U.S. was justified in withdrawing from INF. I am told you do not particularly agree with that decision. Is that correct?

Ms. JENKINS. Thank you, sir.

At the time the decision was made, my concern was whether, in fact, in my view, we had a significant strategy as a next step after that. So that was my concern at the time.

Senator RISCH. Do you still—are you still in the same spot you were?

Ms. JENKINS. I think that after I had time to see this, I am still concerned about the strategy, going forward. But I, certainly, understand why the U.S. withdrew. Senator Risch: All right. And, of course, that was the result of the fact that the treaty was a one-way street. That is, we were complying but the Russians were not. Fair statement?

Ms. JENKINS. Yes. Yes, a fair statement.

Senator RISCH. Do you have any plans of turning that around?

Ms. JENKINS. The statement or——

Senator RISCH. No.

[Laughter.]

Senator RISCH. The statement is the statement. I am talking about the—about the facts, about trying to get them back in the lane they are supposed to be in.

Ms. JENKINS. Well, I think what we—what the administration does have planned for the future, and if I am confirmed I would be, hopefully, involved in these kind of discussions, is a way forward to work with Russia, and the idea would be to have what they are calling strategic stability talks, in which time it would be an opportunity to really look at all the different issues with Russia. But also we want to continue to engage our allies on issues in—regarding Europe and NATO.

So I think that the idea now is to have some of these discussions with our allies and, of course, we will have our discussions with Russia, and then we will see where we are after we have had a chance to start these dialogues.

Senator RISCH. How about the Chemical Weapons Convention and Russia's compliance or, rather, noncompliance? Do you have thoughts on that?

Ms. JENKINS. Well, the use of chemical weapons is reprehensible and I—you know, I know the U.S. has instituted sanctions against Russia as a result of the use of nuclear—chemical weapons against their own citizens.

The U.S. continues to make the point at the OPCW in The Hague and also to raise the point with our allies as well. So my view is that that use of chemical weapons is, as I said, reprehensible.

Senator RISCH. I think we all agree with that. But the question is, how do you get them—how do you bring them to heel to comply with the convention that they have subscribed to?

Ms. JENKINS. Sir, you continue to use sanctions. You continue to work with our allies to put pressure on them. You continue to work with multilateral organizations like the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

You work through the U.N. You use all the tools that you have—in my view, use all the tools that you have at your disposal, whether they are diplomatic or others, to actually try to get the Russians to actually abide by what they are supposed to be doing.

Senator RISCH. How about the Biological Weapons Convention?

Ms. JENKINS. The Biological Weapons Convention is a convention that is significant and we need to continue to put more emphasis on the Biological Weapons Convention, to reinvigorate it.

It is another opportunity and another way that we can encourage Russia to abide by things that we think they should be abiding by.

Senator RISCH. And what about nuclear testing with Russia?

Ms. JENKINS. The concern there is, as you probably know, all of the P-5 countries, all the nuclear weapons countries, currently have a moratorium on nuclear testing. The concern there is if countries start to test again it can open a box to nuclear testing.

We have had a moratorium for a number of years so we want to try to prevent a situation where countries feel that that is something that they could be doing again.

Senator RISCH. I am assuming you are familiar with the 2020 State Department compliance report that Russia is, in fact, violating each one of these agreements. Are you familiar with that from the agency that you are about to join, that report?

Ms. JENKINS. I am aware of the compliance report. Obviously, I did not have any input on that.

Senator RISCH. Of course.

Ms. JENKINS. And I will have much more time to examine it after—of course, after—if I am confirmed, but after today.

Senator RISCH. Are you in disagreement with their conclusions that Russia is in noncompliance and violating all of these conventions and treaties that we have just talked about?

Ms. JENKINS. No, I am not in—I would not be in disagreement with that, sir.

Senator RISCH. Well, I think that underlies the heavy lift that you have ahead of you. You have talked to me generally about that. Can you give me any more specifics on your—on how you intend to go down that road?

Ms. JENKINS. Well, sir, I mean, I think that what we need to do is as the Government is planning—and I am not there so I cannot really attest to all of the discussions that are actually taking place in their interagency.

But as I said, what I am aware of are the next steps in terms of engaging on issues of nuclear weapons, the use of sanctions against Russia that have just been done. We can continue to do sanctions, continue to put pressure on them in other ways using the whole-of-government and all of the different tools that we have, using diplomacy, which is—which we have different avenues for that both bilaterally, multilaterally, through our multilateral organizations.

You know, we think—I think we just have to use all the tools that we have at our disposal to try to convince and to push Russia to comply with treaties.

Senator RISCH. In looking over some of the things that you have written, I was a little perplexed. On April 21st, 2019, you wrote, and I quote here, “Men make nuclear weapons more dangerous,” end quote.

I am a little perplexed by that. How do I make nuclear weapons more dangerous? What—could you drill down on that a little bit for me?

Ms. JENKINS. Yeah. I do not quite recall that statement. I am not saying I did not make it, but out of context I do not recall. If it is—I would have to know which article that was.

But I know that I have written about the importance of having diverse perspectives in terms of national security and foreign policy, in terms of having different viewpoints, in terms of having more women at the table. I assume that that is the context that you are—you are pulling that from.

Senator RISCH. Well, the—I am looking at it here and the exact quote is, “Men make nuclear weapons more dangerous,” a completed sentence. And I guess I am just perplexed as to how men make nuclear weapons more dangerous.

Ms. JENKINS. Well, I think what—if I can recall what you are pulling it from, essentially, what I am saying there is that we have a situation now where we have to reassess where we are in terms of where we have been.

We need to look at bringing more different diverse people to the table. To date, we have not had enough significant diversity, and it has been a situation where it has been, essentially, men at the table.

So it is more of an issue of we need to include more people and more diverse people because we only know what we have right now, and we do not have that.

Senator RISCH. I do not think anyone is in disagreement that diversity is appropriate. But I just do not understand how men make nuclear weapons more dangerous. That is very perplexing.

Ms. JENKINS. I think—yeah, what you are pushing at is that the context that men—without having to make any certain statements here, that the belief that women in conflict situations, and there has been study on this, that when women at the table that there is more peace and peace tends to last longer.

Senator RISCH. Senator Cardin, you are up.

[No response.]

Senator RISCH. Okay. We will go down in the list of people who signed up. Senator Van Hollen, are you with us by WebEx?

[No response.]

Senator RISCH. How about—

Senator CARDIN. No, I am sorry. Mr. Chairman?

Senator RISCH. Senator Cardin, it sounds like you, but I do not see you.

Senator CARDIN. I think I am now with you. Thank you very much, and let me thank both of our nominees for their willingness to serve in these two very important roles.

In both of your testimonies, you have indicated the importance of American values in our policies. Ambassador Jenkins, you specifically said that we need a value-based policy as it relates to our arms issues.

And certainly, Mr. Fernandez, your family experience points out the importance of value-based policies. So I want to ask both of you a question but, first, let me start with Ambassador Jenkins. And that is, our arms policy needs to be based upon our values and our values are respect for human rights.

So when we get involved in arms sales with countries that allow these arms to be used inappropriately against their own people, or

to deny human rights to others, we should not permit that to happen. We need to filter our considerations of arms sales through our human rights concerns.

What commitments can we have from you that, as you are at the table as these types of decisions are being made that, indeed, we will promote our values, our human rights, even though at times it might run some challenges in our bilateral relations with other countries?

Ms. JENKINS. Thank you for the question, Senator.

Yes, as I said, that we need to look at our values but also we need to highlight the importance of human rights. In that, I can—what I am aware of is that there is now a review ongoing on our conventional arms transfer policy which will inform decisions on transfers, and that I can certainly say, if I am confirmed, that things will change. It will not be business as usual.

So we need to continue to look at these on a case by case basis. We need to look at our national security concerns. We need to look at our strategic concerns that we have in the region, region stability, and we also need to continue to reassess anything that we decide to transfer to another country.

But, ultimately, we have to consider human rights in these issues, and if I am confirmed, I will be looking at the revised CAT policies that are being discussed right now.

Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. I will be working with you on those areas. I have introduced some legislation in this regard, and I am glad to see it is not business as usual. It is absolutely essential that, as we talk about arms sales that human rights be a component of those discussions.

Mr. Fernandez, I want to raise a subject I have raised consistently with nominees that have come before our committee, and that is the importance to standing up against corruption.

We have several tools that are available that are in your toolkit, including the use of the Global Magnitsky statute. There are pieces of legislation pending before this committee that I have authored on a bipartisan basis with other members of our committee that would set up a requirement that our missions evaluate every country's commitment to anti-corruption and evaluate how well they are doing, as well as making funds available to fight corruption.

Can I get your commitment—I have gotten this from so many of the members of the Biden administration—that you will be focused in your work on an anti-corruption agenda, recognizing that corruption many times is the fuel for anti-democratic regimes being able to stay in power and abuse power?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Senator, thank you for your question. Absolutely. You have my commitment. In fact, I will tell you that I am a firm believer from my time in the private sector that we are never going to out compete other countries through low environmental standards, intellectual property theft, corruption, or lack of respect for human rights.

Transparency is part of our DNA. It is part of what we are about as a country and it is also—I have seen it. I have seen it be a competitive advantage.

I have seen countries say, we are going to use an American company to build this road because we know that that contract was not obtained through illicit means. So you have my commitment and, in fact, I would love to work with you some more on these issues. It is something that is in my DNA as well, and I very much would welcome the opportunity to discuss it further with you.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, and again, I want to thank both of our nominees and their families. This is a tough time to serve in government.

Both of your roles that you have been nominated for are critically important to our national security and have challenges, and thank you for stepping forward and I look forward to working with both of you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Cardin. I understand Senator Hagerty is with us virtually.

Senator HAGERTY. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. You are recognized, Senator.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch. I appreciate your holding this meeting.

My first question is for Ambassador Jenkins. Thank you for being here today, Ambassador.

We are in a period right now where China is ramping up its nuclear weapons capability. At the same time, Russia is articulating a strategy of “escalate to de-escalate”. They are developing weapons like the Poseidon that has the capability of destroying cities.

So at this time, I want to get your perspective on which way the Biden administration is going to go, and if I could, I would like to read a couple of quotes and then get your thoughts on what direction we are going.

During her nomination hearing, Deputy Secretary of Defense Kath Hicks said that “The Triad has been the bedrock of our nuclear deterrent and I think it must be modernized in order to be safe, secure, and credible.”

Yet, on April 10th, 2021, two Biden administration officials gave an interview in Japan with the Asahi Shimbun with a fundamentally different message about U.S. nuclear policy.

During that interview, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance Alexandra Bell and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Missile Defense Policy Leonor Tomero said that, quote, “There is no doubt that President Biden’s goal is to reduce the role of nuclear weapons.”

So, Ambassador Jenkins, if you are confirmed, will you commit to supporting the modernization of nuclear weapons?

Ms. JENKINS. Thank you, sir. I think I, like President Biden, really support a safe, secure, and strong nuclear arsenal for as long as we do have our nuclear arsenal, and I know that this is a—this has been something that has had bipartisan support.

I know that right now this is being led—issues of modernization are led by our Department of Defense, our Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Department of Energy. So what I can say is that, obviously, I am not in the Government right now to know what is being discussed.

But I can, certainly, say that if I am confirmed I look forward to engaging with military components as well as Department of Energy in the modernization and process.

And, you know, I think we can agree—as I said, it is bipartisan—that we do need a safe, secure, and effective arsenal.

Senator HAGERTY. Well, help me rectify this, because we are at a time right now when China and Russia are both stepping up their nuclear programs and you have got people in the department that, if you are confirmed, the department that you will run, who are saying that they feel that President Biden wants to see us reduce our nuclear capability.

How do you square that?

Ms. JENKINS. I think the way to square it is it is going to be a whole-of-government approach in terms of how we—how we approach these issues. I think having a strong nuclear arsenal is not necessarily a contradiction in terms of looking at how we can also find a way in which we can safely and adequately reduce our arsenal.

I think a lot will depend on what is decided in terms of how we work with countries like Russia. It will determine, I assume, on ongoing discussions with China. So I cannot say because I am not in the Government.

But I think that we should be able to square this by having a whole-of-government approach in how we look at all of these issues of the nuclear Triad, the Nuclear Posture Review, and also the way in which we will approach countries on arms control and disarmament.

Senator HAGERTY. Ambassador, thank you. I will just say this. We live in a competitive world. We need to take account of what China is doing, what Russia is doing. We need not be naive in our process.

So I hope you will take a very careful look at what your staff, if you are to be confirmed, are saying and make certain that we have a consistent policy and that we are not articulating a confusing position to our own nation and to our adversaries.

Can I turn now to a discussion that I have been looking forward to having with Mr. Fernandez?

Mr. Fernandez, I would like to talk with you about the Clean Network initiative that you and I have discussed. It has been an undisputed success with some 60 countries that have already signed up. Two hundred companies have been involved in the Clean Network initiative, again, an initiative that enables us to keep untrusted vendors out of our infrastructure.

We have talked about this in the past. It has built tremendous brand equity, and given your background in mergers and acquisitions, I am certain you realize that that type of momentum has a great deal of value, something that we would certainly like to see captured and the momentum continue.

If you are confirmed, would you commit to working with Congress to secure the resources and any new authorities that you may need to continue to move this program forward?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Senator, thank you for your question, and we had a conversation yesterday about this and let me repeat what I said then, which is I very much agree that the stakes could not be

higher, that we need to trust that—and our allies need to trust that the 5G equipment that they purchase will not threaten national security, privacy, or basic infrastructure, and the Biden administration has reaffirmed the importance of a 5G strategy.

The Clean Network Initiative is currently under review. We share the goal. There has been lots of progress, and it is my intent to try and further those goals.

In a new administration, there may be some tweaks. But you have my commitment and you have my word that we will pursue the same goals because they involve national security at its core, not just for the United States but for the entire world.

And so I look forward to working with you on that and I would be delighted to spend some time working on furthering that objective.

Senator HAGERTY. Excellent, Mr. Fernandez, and I look forward to working with you, actually taking this approach across other sectors—technology sectors, energy sectors—as we think about, you know, the new infrastructure of the future, autonomous vehicles, et cetera. I think there is a lot of opportunity there.

One follow-up question. The State Department compiled a list of 1,100 companies that are involved in financing the PRC military. That list is very helpful to investment advisors as they think about and advise their clients on which companies to divest.

When will the State Department update that list of 1,100 companies?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Senator, thank you for the question. I am not familiar with those plans. I would be happy to get back to you on that. But I am not familiar with the—with that list of the names that are there or the plants that the State Department has to update them. I will certainly get back to you on that.

Senator HAGERTY. Great. It is very useful tool, and I appreciate the update schedule when you can get it. Thank you so much.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Of course.

MR. FERNANDEZ'S RESPONSE TO SENATOR HAGERTY'S QUESTION

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I understand that the State Department, in consultation with the Treasury Department, is currently evaluating entities based on required criteria under Executive Order 13959, as amended, and relevant published Frequently Asked Questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I understand Senator Van Hollen is with us virtually.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and congratulations to both witnesses on their nominations. Thank you for your willingness to serve.

Madam Ambassador, I want to follow up a little bit on some of the questions that Senator Hagerty raised, at least that line of questioning. I think we have long agreed on a bipartisan basis that our sort of strategic defense depends on a reliable and effective nuclear deterrent.

But we have also recognized that we can make ourselves safer through smart arms control agreements with previously the former Soviet Union and now with Russia and others, and I was pleased to see that President Biden chose to extend the New START agreement by five years.

That had some bipartisan support here. I had introduced a resolution with Senator Young to encourage that and I am glad that the administration moved forward, and that has the support, as you know, of our military leadership as well, who recognizes—who recognized that that is an important part of our stability, predictability, and verification regime.

But this five years will now give us an opportunity to look at follow-on negotiations, strategic nuclear negotiations, or other nuclear weapons negotiations with Russia.

How do you anticipate moving forward on that? Do you agree that we should be looking for deeper cuts in strategic nuclear weapons and looking at some of the Russian capabilities and bringing them within the fold of the next arms control agreement?

Ms. JENKINS. Thank you, sir. And I think, looking forward, and as I said, this is something also being looked at by the administration and they are also in the process of planning the next steps for engagement with Russia on these issues, certainly, I think the idea would be deeper cuts.

But I think a lot of that depends. A lot of that depends on what happens with the strategic stability talks that are being planned.

We, certainly, want to include discussions on some of the novel weapons that Russia have. We, certainly, want to look at their non-strategic nuclear weapons that they have, which they have a lot more and are planning to build more of these type of weapons.

So we, certainly, want to have a discussion in which we will bring in all of these weapons systems, as I said earlier, so we can—we can determine exactly where we need to have a conversation on deeper cuts.

And as you—and as you have acknowledged, this will be a decision by the administration looking at all the different relevant factors, including having a strong nuclear arsenal.

Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you.

Let me turn quickly to China. While China is working to develop and modernize its nuclear forces, there remain big, you know, differentials between both the size and the quantitative edge with respect to our nuclear arsenal.

That does not mean, however, that there is not room for some negotiations with China to avoid miscalculations. Could you talk a little bit about your vision of how we engage with China when it comes to nuclear arms control?

Ms. JENKINS. China is an important country in terms of nuclear arms issues. They are a significant threat to us, as we have noted earlier. As noted, they are trying to increase their nuclear arsenal two times by the end of the year. They are strengthening their nuclear Triad. They are looking at trying some novel systems.

So, certainly, we have to find a way to have a—to get them at the table. As you know, it has been a challenge to do that. There have been attempts to try to make that happen.

But I think we have to focus on results more than form. We do think and I think the administration thinks that a bilateral effort is the way to go and because there are certain security issues that I think that we want to look at specifically with China.

So we want to engage them and I believe the administration is discussing next steps for to engage—to engage China bilaterally to try to start the discussion so we can prevent miscalculation, we can have more transparency, and get a much better understanding of what is happening for everybody's security.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you.

And, Mr. Fernandez, just briefly, I want to mention Power Africa and whether you would agree that that has been a very useful tool in terms of engaging with Africa and trying to accomplish some of our objectives there and whether it makes sense to expand the use of Power Africa.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Thank you, Senator. Thank you for your question, and I am very familiar with your interest and commitment to working in Africa.

I think Power Africa has been a success. It has been a success on the renewables front. It has been a success on regulatory reform in Africa. I think we need to expand it. I think, as I said in my opening statement, one of the benefits, one of the competitive advantages that we have over countries such as China is a private sector, and we need to get our private sector involved in infrastructure in Africa.

That may be a tall order. But I think programs such as Power Africa are programs that we ought to deepen, and you have my commitment to work with this committee to do that, going forward.

I have spent a fair amount of time in Africa. I used to commute to Ghana for about two years, privatizing its phone company. It is a country that has great potential and it also presents an opportunity for U.S. business and U.S. workers.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Markey, I understand, is with us virtually.

Senator Markey?

Senator MARKEY. Can you hear me, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. You are recognized.

Senator MARKEY. Mr. Chairman, can you hear me?

The CHAIRMAN. I can, and you are recognized.

Senator MARKEY. Beautiful. Thank you.

Ambassador Jenkins, President Trump systematically dismantled the arms control architecture that you will oversee as undersecretary. He was egged on—President Trump—by John Bolton.

But, ultimately, President Trump tossed aside the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Arms Trade Treaty, the Iran nuclear deal, the treaty on open skies, and he flirted with taking a wrecking ball to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by signaling an interest in conducting a, quote, “demonstration” nuclear test just last year.

And at home, President Trump broke with his predecessors by increasing the role of U.S. nuclear weapons in military strategy by deploying a low-yield warhead on our strategic ballistic submarines and developing a new nuclear sea launch cruise missile after President George Herbert Walker Bush retired them three decades again.

So it is clear we need to build back a better nuclear posture, and so my question to you is are—is the Biden administration going to

carry out a review of its nuclear policy and do you agree that every effort should be made to follow the tradition of presidents on a bipartisan basis, going back to George Herbert Walker Bush but exempting Donald Trump?

Ms. JENKINS. Thank you, sir. It is my understanding that there is review taking place on the Nuclear Posture Review. There are reviews and interagency discussions, to my understanding, on a number of issues relating to arms control, relating to nonproliferation issues, and all the other—many of the other issues that we are discussing today.

So there is a review of that and I, certainly, look forward to and hope, if I am confirmed, that we can have a bipartisan process for going forward on all these issues that are within the T Bureau, particularly the ones we are talking today about arms control and nonproliferation, and finding ways that we can reassert the U.S. leadership role in arms control and nonproliferation.

Thank you.

Senator MARKEY. Yeah, thank you.

Well, in 2013, President Obama's nuclear employment guidance concluded that we could reduce our deployed stockpile by up to one-third and still meet our deterrence and reassurance commitments, and I hope that is the position that the Biden administration is once again going to reaffirm.

The Trump administration reportedly flirted with conducting the first U.S. nuclear test in over a generation in a clumsy attempt to bring Russia and China to the negotiating table. My PLANET Act last year helped to deny funds to make good on those Dr. Strange-love visions.

In your view, if we were to carry out such a test, what would the consequences be to the nuclear nonproliferation regime?

Ms. JENKINS. Sir, for the U.S.—if the U.S. did a test that would certainly—we, certainly, would not be considered leaders in the nonproliferation area. We have—we would go against our moratorium that we have on nuclear testing.

There would be lots of questions about why we are testing, what that mean in the future. So that would create a lot of confusion in the international community. It would create a lot of confusion by countries in terms of our overall role and obligations in arms control and it, certainly, would not bode well, in my opinion, in terms of our role and our position on nuclear testing.

Senator MARKEY. Good, thank you. And one final question. If confirmed, will you advocate for the president to recommit to the Arms Trade Treaty and work with members of this committee to build support for future senate advice and consent on that treaty?

Ms. JENKINS. Thank you for the question. If I am confirmed, I would, certainly, be interested in conversations and in the interagency on next steps or next possible steps for the U.S. in the Arms Trade Treaty.

Senator MARKEY. Okay. Beautiful. Thank you, and thank you for your service to our country.

Ms. JENKINS. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Schatz?

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to both of you for being willing to serve.

Ambassador Jenkins, there was a recent DOD report in which they essentially conceded an inability to track—to do end-use monitoring of arms in conflict areas like Ukraine and Afghanistan. We have seen American-made so-called nonlethal weapons used in Egypt and in Hong Kong.

I have a couple of questions about how we do end-use monitoring. I know there is a good partnership at the—at the State Department with the Department of Defense to track the weapons that we sell or provide to our foreign partners.

My understanding is that the Security Cooperation Office at our embassies is responsible for conducting these end-use checks. But often the people in these offices are stretched thin, and I am wondering if this is an area where a few more people or some new use of technology could strengthen our oversight in terms of weapons exports.

Can you comment on this and talk about what opportunities you see to improve the resources we dedicate to end-use monitoring checks?

Ms. JENKINS. Yes, thank you. Thank you, sir, for that question.

Yes, end-use monitoring is very important in terms of ensuring that the arms transfers actually end up where they are supposed to be.

So we, certainly, want to do everything we can to strengthen and make sure that end-use monitoring is happening. I am aware that there are cases, and I cannot recall which—in which case at the moment, but I know that it has been more successful I know in some cases where countries have actually gone out and done—have done more in terms of end-use monitoring and have more agreements.

I think one thing that we need to do, as you said, I think we should always look at more options if there is technology that can help. I think that, you know, if I were confirm happy to look at different options that can help us. Strengthening—if there is a need for more people to help out with that, I think that is great.

But I think, as I was saying earlier, as we have much more emphasis in the future on human rights, as we more have a much stronger emphasis on these issues in general in terms of where these—where these arms end up, I am, certainly, open to more discussion on what we can do to make it better, in particular, in light of the fact that we are relooking at our CAT policy and everything else.

Senator SCHATZ. So I think there are a couple areas for improvement.

First of all, technology. Second of all, just flat out resources. You need more human beings to do this work. And then third, sort of undergirding that, you do not want to just lay down a layer of technology on an old system under old assumptions.

And so I do think we need to do a comprehensive look and just concede it is not working right now. It may be working to greater and lesser degrees in certain countries, but where it needs to work it is not working.

Now, there is another question that I think is essential to this, which is that it is not just the geographic location of whatever arms have been transferred. It is how they are used, right, and that is a policy question.

I am wondering if we can work together on that, because it may be that it is in the possession of those—of that country that we transferred it to but used for something that is antithetical to our values.

And I think that is a more ticklish kind of difficult policy question to get to because it is after the fact. But I still think that is our basic obligation when we think about and use monitoring. I wonder if you can comment on that.

Ms. JENKINS. No, I think—I think you are right. I think—I think, I mean, obviously, as you said, one question is where do the arms land and the other one is how are they used, you know, and giving them to a country for one purpose and they are being used for something else.

You know, it is a challenge. You know, it is a challenge to always—to know exactly how it is going to be used. But I think that we, certainly, want to strengthen whatever we have now to make sure that we can do that.

If I am confirmed I am, certainly, happy and ready to work with you on that.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you very much.

Mr. Fernandez, just a final question. Our science bureaus play an important role in terms of our relationships with countries in Oceania. Their work is key to protecting marine resources and combating IUU fishing and tackling the climate crisis.

But I worry that these issues get a little bit isolated, stovepiped, from the day-to-day diplomacy run out of the East Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau.

Can you talk about how we can make sure that oceans and climate are elevated in our approach to Oceania so that it is not that we are separating science and conservation questions from the sort of big boy and big girl conversation around geopolitics, but that those are one and the same, especially in those areas where when you are dealing with heads of state where climate is their main issue, right?

When you have an inundated runway or you have an inability to farm or fish, climate is not some secondary optional conservation question. It is an existential question.

But I think that our bureaucratic systems have to reflect that prioritization, particularly in Oceania but also elsewhere.

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Thank you for your question, Senator, and I could not agree with you more that this is an existential question for the countries in Oceania. They are—they are facing, in some cases, extinction because of climate change. So I share very much your concern.

I also think that many of them—it also cuts across a number of other areas. They also are targets of Chinese influence, and so that is another national security challenge.

On the pollution front on the ocean, illegal fishing and those kinds of crimes, we have offices that are all over that and I have

spoken to a number of them already, and I think there is more we could do, going forward.

So I would very much welcome, if confirmed, the opportunity to talk to you about that and you have my commitment that we will certainly look at those again, because I do agree with you. Sometimes these issues do get overlooked.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Now, I understand there are no other colleagues seeking recognition, virtually or otherwise. So I have one final question.

Mr. Fernandez, during my time in this committee, I focused on reinvigorating the tools and instruments of our economic statecraft so that the Department of State, Treasury, Commerce, U.S. Trade Representative, and other elements of the U.S. Government are working in tandem to promote international development, U.S. business opportunities, and U.S. best practices for corporate social responsibility.

I am amazed—you know, we have the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, which we should. It does not allow U.S. businesses to suborn some entity or official abroad. Other countries do not have that. This has been one of Senator Cardin's passions on the question of corruption.

I go abroad and I see the chancellor of Germany with a trade mission directly engaged in trying to promote her country's services and products. Until recently, the Brazilians had a very powerful economic tool in their centralized effort.

So my question is what tools do we have, in your opinion, that are currently working? What tools are not working as effectively?

What additional authorities might you believe you might be needing and how do we bring a whole-of-government approach to an economic statecraft that creates greater opportunities for U.S. companies in selling their products and services abroad, opening up more markets, also instilling the business practices that are better than many others in the world so it has an economic benefit here at home?

We sell products abroad, our services abroad. We create jobs here at home. When we instill the right business practices, we improve governance in those countries.

Can you give me some insights as to how you are thinking about this?

Mr. FERNANDEZ. Sure. Thank you for the question. That is a big question and I am glad that you asked.

The CHAIRMAN. That is why you are going to get paid the big bucks if you get confirmed.

[Laughter.]

Mr. FERNANDEZ. I am very glad that you brought it up. You know, when I was here in—between 2009 and 2013, I was amazed by the fact that I would go to countries in the Middle East and, you know, I would go on my regular commercial flight and next to me would be the president of another country, and that president would come down the aisle and right behind them were a number of companies, were a number of business people.

It was not so much of a presidential visit as much as a Chamber of Commerce visit. We do not have that kind of ethos yet at the

State Department. We are working on it and you have given us a number of tools.

I think what was done with the DFC is something that that ups the ante on where we can compete with the Chinese and with others.

We need to—and I intend to do this, if confirmed, at the State Department—we need to do more on the training front. Our State Department employees have to have economic statecraft at the forefront of their tasks. It has got to be part of what they get graded on.

And I think I would like to focus more on the training side. I think getting more whole-of-government cooperation, for example, on deal teams that where we embed economic officers in some of the embassies to support American business.

We need to do more of that because at the end of the day, becoming involved in international opportunities are not just a strategic imperative for the United States but also business opportunities for companies and an opportunity to create better jobs in the United States.

And so, if confirmed, I will continue my push to try and get economics at the forefront of what the State Department does.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I am thrilled to hear you say that. I think that one of our challenges is trying to permeate throughout the State Department and its offices, particularly our embassies abroad, the concept that economic statecraft is one of the core missions that are critical for an ambassador and their staff to promote.

When I go abroad and visit our embassies—and they do incredible work and our people are just fantastic individuals—but I do not get the—I hear about the political component of what is happening in the country or our bilateral relations in dimensions that are everything but economic, in most cases.

And having that permeate to the thought that, in fact, what we are doing to promote U.S. economic interests, which I would argue also are about good governance issues as well within the country and better products and services for the nations receiving it, is, I think, an incredibly important element.

So we look forward upon your confirmation and working with you on this because I think this is a critical issue and it creates a real connection to Americans to understand if my business or the company I work for gets to sell X product abroad, my job here is not only more secure but maybe more prosperous. And so that is something we need to do a better job of.

Let me thank—oh, I am sorry.

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. So we look forward to working with you on that. I am going to say we have a colleague who is supposedly on his way here and in deference to him I will wait.

But I will say that when he finishes his line of questioning, the record will remain open until the close of business Friday, April 30th. I would urge both of you there will be questions for the record. I would urge both of you to respond to them fully and expeditiously as possible so that—excuse me, so that your nominations can be considered at a business meeting of the committee and move the process forward.

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. Excuse me for one moment.

[Pause.]

The CHAIRMAN. All right. I am not quite sure when our colleague would be here, and in deference to the rest of the committee, I am sure he will be able to pursue his questions for the record. He may call you as well.

I do not know if Senator Kaine has had an opportunity to engage with both of you. But if he has then I would urge you to do so.

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

[Whereupon, at 11:16 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BONNIE R. JENKINS BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Arms Control with China

Question. The recently passed “Strategic Competition Act” provides a blueprint for using all of the United States’ strategic, economic, and diplomatic tools to effectively compete with China. One section of this bipartisan bill lays out the need for effective arms control in the face of China’s military modernization and expansion. The previous administration made a clumsy attempt to engage China in arms control, which the PRC firmly rejected.

- What approach should the United States use to begin strategic stability talks or arms control with China?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work within the administration, in consultation with U.S. allies and partners, to pursue arms control measures to reduce the dangers from the People’s Republic of China’s growing nuclear arsenal. It is to be hoped that Beijing will come to see that arms control is in its security interest: not a trap designed to weaken China’s defenses, but rather a mechanism to reduce risk and the chances of uncontrollable arms races. If confirmed, I commit to consulting with Congress regarding the arms control approach the administration foresees pursuing with China.

Question. What issues do you believe the United States should focus on? Risk Reductions? Arms limitations?

Answer. The United States should pursue arms control, in the form of both numerical limitations and broader risk reduction measures, that advances the security of the United States, U.S. allies, and partners.

Question. What role should U.S. Indo-Pacific allies play in our arms control dialogue with China?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work within the administration, in consultation with U.S. allies and partners, to pursue arms control measures to reduce the dangers from the People’s Republic of China’s growing nuclear arsenal. It is to be hoped that Beijing will come to see that arms control is in its security interest: not a trap designed to weaken China’s defenses, but rather a mechanism to reduce risk and the chances of uncontrollable arms races. If confirmed, I will work with U.S. allies, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, to regularly urge Beijing to engage meaningfully with the United States on arms control, as doing so is essential to reducing global nuclear risks.

Question. Should the United States seek trilateral arms control talks involving both Russia and China?

Answer. The United States should pursue arms control measures with Russia and China that advance the security of the United States, U.S. allies, and partners. While there may be opportunities for trilateral initiatives that meet this criterion, I believe the United States should engage each country on a bilateral basis as well.

Open Skies

Question. In November of last year, the Trump administration made the reckless decision to withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty, leaving the United States and our allies less secure against Russia. The administration's decision to abandon the Treaty fits into a broader pattern of discarding arms control and non-proliferation agreements, which has raised deep concerns among our allies about our commitment to their security. I have urged the Biden administration to rejoin the Treaty in a manner consistent with our constitutional structure, but recognize that it will not be easy, and that the Open Skies treaty, while valuable, does not address many of the current security challenges we face from Russia.

- Do you believe the United States should seek to rejoin the Open Skies Treaty?

Answer. I share President Biden's view that it was a mistake to withdraw from the Treaty, notwithstanding Russian compliance issues. Many of our Allies pointed out that none of these compliance concerns impacted the overall operation of the Treaty. That said, leaving a treaty, and rejoining a treaty while Russia continues to violate it are two different things. I understand an interagency review of Open Skies is underway. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the internal discussions on the matter.

Question. The State Department and Congress have consistently expressed concerns about Russia's violation of some its treaty obligations; for example, limiting the length of flights over Kaliningrad and restricting flights near Russia's border with Georgia. If the United States decided to rejoin the treaty would the United States insist on resolving these compliance issues?

Answer. The United States has made it quite clear that Russia must return to compliance and that Russia's violations are an important consideration in our review of U.S. policy on the Treaty. I know the administration is committed to effective arms control that advances U.S., Allied, and partner security and will only join agreements that are deemed to be in our security interests. Compliance is an essential consideration in that regard.

Question. If the Biden administration decides not to rejoin the treaty, what steps should we take to reassure our allies that we still seek a European security system based upon transparency and cooperation?

Answer. I know the United States is committed to effective arms control, transparency and confidence building measures that advance U.S., Allied, and partner security. If confirmed, I would continue the ongoing U.S. effort to work closely with our allies in this regard and on a host of broader security issues at NATO and OSCE. These include ongoing efforts to modernize the Vienna Document to strengthen transparency on military activities and increase stability in Europe.

Firearms Export Control

Question. As a candidate, President Biden pledged to return the export control jurisdiction of semiautomatic weapons from the Department of Commerce to the Department of State. As part of "THE BIDEN PLAN TO END OUR GUN VIOLENCE EPIDEMIC", the following commitment was made:

Additionally, Biden will ensure that the authority for firearms exports stays with the State Department, and if needed, reverse a proposed rule by President Trump. This will ensure that the State Department continues to block the code use to 3D print firearms from being made available on the Internet.

Just this week, the appeals court for the Ninth Circuit lifted an injunction that prevented the transfer of 3D Printed firearm technical information from also being transferred to the Department of Commerce, whose regulations and ability to control the publication of such information is significantly more limited than that of the State Department's International Traffic in Arms (ITAR) regulations. This is a loosening of controls on these very dangerous "ghost guns".

I am concerned that the Department of State is not doing all it can to fulfill the President's promise to the American People. State has not yet even answered a letter I sent to Secretary Blinken on February 1 on this issue.

- If confirmed, what will you do, specifically, to fulfill the President's campaign promise?

Answer. I share the concerns expressed regarding the unregulated proliferation of "ghost guns." If confirmed, I commit to working, together with my interagency colleagues, to ensure that there are effective controls over the export of information necessary for the manufacture of firearms, or any defense articles, no matter how those items are manufactured.

Question. What options exist in the ITAR or other State authorities to maintain controls on 3D Gun Printing information?

Answer. The Arms Export Control Act provides the President with the authority to designate those items which shall be considered defense articles and defense services and to promulgate regulations for the import and export of such articles and services. That authority has been delegated to the Secretary of State, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Defense, in accordance with Executive Order 13637. It is my understanding that the Department conducts regular reviews of the United States Munitions List, in consultation with the Department of Defense and other relevant U.S. Government agencies, to ensure that any defense article or defense service designated on the USML provides a critical military or intelligence advantage such that it warrants control under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR).

Question. ITAR Sec. 126.2, "Temporary suspension or modification of this subchapter," states that "[T]he Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense Trade Controls may order the temporary suspension or modification [emphasis added] of any or all of the regulations of this subchapter in the interest of the security and foreign policy of the United States."

- Do you construe that passage to mean that you, if confirmed, could direct this Deputy Assistant Secretary to, on a temporary basis, alter the provisions of Category 1 of the ITAR to retain the technical information that enables the 3D Printing of firearms and components?

Answer. Under section 38 of the Arms Export Control Act and Executive Order 13637, the authority to designate defense articles and defense services on the United States Munitions List for the purpose of export and temporary import is delegated to the Secretary of State. If confirmed, I commit to working, together with my interagency colleagues, to control those defense articles and defense services that provide the United States with a critical military or intelligence advantage. In so doing, I will ensure that the United States Munitions List is appropriately revised and updated using the regulatory mechanisms that best clarify the controls and offer the greatest transparency and opportunity for public comment and agency consideration.

Question. Will you do so, if confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the United States Munitions List is appropriately revised and updated using the regulatory mechanisms that best clarify applicable controls and offer the greatest transparency and opportunity for public comment and agency consideration.

Compliance with Committee Oversight

Question. The Political-Military Affairs Bureau has refused to provide answers to my questions or those from my staff about their investigative and compliance activities. They have claimed that "it was not the policy or practice" to answer such questions, even to questions concerning whether certain activities are considered "defense services" and subject to licensing. In response, I have initiated a GAO investigation.

- If confirmed, will you continue this policy of blocking the legitimate oversight of this committee, or will you change this "policy and practice"?

Answer. I appreciate the critical role that Congress plays in providing oversight. If confirmed, I will work with Congress to ensure that it is able to effectively perform its oversight activities. In addition, if confirmed, I will seek to maintain the integrity of the Department's investigations into potential export control violations, which includes pursuing investigations of potential export control violations in a vigorous and timely manner.

CAATSA 231

Question. CAATSA section 231 imposes secondary sanctions on entities that conduct significant transactions with the Russian defense and intelligence sectors. The law has been instrumental in denying billions of dollars to the Russian defense sector, but there was no senior level leadership under the last administration in pushing for full implementation. I expect that to change and that the State Department will renew its diplomatic efforts at every post to ensure that every effort is being made to deter these transactions from taking place.

- Do I have your commitment to reinvigorate the department's efforts to ensure robust implementation of this law? Do you commit to report back to me on the specific actions taken by the department on CAATSA 231 implementation?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to full implementation of CAATSA 231 and to ensuring that the Department keeps you and other appropriate Congressional Members fully apprised of our implementation efforts.

Nagorno-Karabakh

Question. Azerbaijan's use of cluster munitions, rockets, and other such weapons during its attack on Nagorno-Karabakh last fall has increased the need for demining funding there, which the previous administration cut off. In his QFR responses, Secretary Blinken said that he "strongly support[s]" U.S. funding for demining efforts in Nagorno-Karabakh.

- If confirmed, will you support the resumption of U.S. funding for humanitarian demining in Nagorno-Karabakh?

Answer. The administration is deeply concerned by the renewed hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the ongoing humanitarian needs in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. Secretary Blinken has signaled strong support for funding demining efforts in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as his intent to work with Congress, international organizations such as the U.N., and our allies and partners to meet humanitarian needs in the region. I understand that the Department is evaluating the needs of affected populations and clarifying practical questions related to the United States' ability to commit funding and implement programs effectively.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. BONNIE R. JENKINS BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Do you believe there is a symbiotic connection between nuclear deterrence and arms control?

Answer. Yes, a credible, modern deterrent and arms control should work together to address nuclear threats and increase our security.

Question. Is it your understanding that that the New START Treaty was ratified only after the Obama administration agreed to modernize the nuclear triad and nuclear weapons complex, and that any unilateral reduction of these programs would make the Senate far less likely to ratify future arms control treaties?

Answer. I understand that the Obama administration pursued a combination of diplomacy, arms control, and nuclear deterrence to reduce nuclear dangers. If confirmed, I will provide analysis and advice to the Secretary of State on measures for reducing nuclear dangers, and I will be prepared to consult with members of Congress.

Question. Do you believe that unilateral U.S. reductions in the nuclear triad and the nuclear weapons complex would enable the United States to negotiate with Russia and China from a position of strength?

Answer. I am committed to ensuring the United States maintains an effective, credible and modern deterrent, while simultaneously using arms control to address nuclear threats and increase our security.

Question. Do you believe the President can rejoin the Open Skies Treaty without it being submitted to the Senate for advice and consent per the Treaty Clause of the U.S. Constitution?

Answer. I believe that Congressional authorization would be required for the United States to rejoin the Treaty on Open Skies.

Question. How should Russia's long-standing and ongoing violation of the Biological Weapons Convention and China's disinformation surrounding COVID-19 affect our efforts to strengthen U.S. biosecurity initiatives?

Answer. Russia's Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) violation and the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate the need to address the full range of biological threats—whether deliberate, accidental, or natural in origin. We must counter known BW programs and, increasingly, organized disinformation efforts. If confirmed, I will work with allies and partners to strengthen the BWC's ability to manage the risks of dual-use research and advanced biotechnologies and to improve global laboratory biosafety and biosecurity, as well as international preparedness. I will take a clear-eyed approach, recognizing that not all countries will share our goals, and I will work with Global Engagement Center colleagues to counter COVID-19 related and other disinformation campaigns.

Question. How can we best ensure accountability for Russia and Syria's use of chemical weapons?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to work with allies and partners, including through the U.N. and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), to hold Russia and Syria to account for their repeated violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). At the OPCW, the United States supported actions to add two Novichok families to the CWC Annex on Chemicals and to suspend Syria's rights and privileges under the CWC. The United States has also used other measures, including sanctions authorities against Russia and Syria. If confirmed, I will explore further measures to address any violation of the CWC.

Question. Which emerging technologies most threaten strategic stability, and why? How can we best address these technologies?

Answer. I would be most concerned about any technology that undermines the effectiveness of U.S. nuclear forces, especially the credibility of our second-strike capability. The best way to address potential threats is by taking steps to ensure our strategic deterrent remains effective and credible and pursuing arms control that enhances U.S., allied, and partner security.

Question. In your testimony, you reference building "values-based security partnerships." How do you define a values-based security partnership? Do you believe that the U.S. should only pursue security partnerships with liberal democracies?

Answer. As Secretary Blinken has said, the administration's foreign policy will reflect our values and human rights will be at the center. We will stand firm behind our commitments to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, and our security partnerships are no exception. While the United States will necessarily have security relationships with countries that are not liberal democracies, if confirmed, I will champion values like accountability, transparency, professionalism, and respect for human rights as we engage our security partners and help build their capacity to address shared challenges.

Question. Should the United States re-sign and then ratify the Arms Trade Treaty? Why or why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I support reviewing the implications of decisions taken to date on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), both in the United States and in the ATT Conferences of States Parties, to determine the proper relationship of the United States to the Treaty. I believe this review should be situated within a larger evaluation of U.S. policy on conventional arms transfers. The United States is the largest arms exporter in the world, and it is imperative that U.S. transfers of conventional arms are consistent with our laws, values, and interests.

Question. The Obama administration repeatedly declassified the topline number of the total U.S. nuclear stockpile. Russia and China never reciprocated. Would you support declassifying our nuclear stockpile number without any reciprocity by Russia or China today?

Answer. I believe that declassifying topline U.S. nuclear stockpile numbers demonstrates the United States' serious commitment to transparency and confidence building measures that can enable further progress on reducing nuclear risks. If confirmed, I will work to encourage Russia and China to be more transparent. The declassification of U.S. stockpile numbers has not harmed U.S. national security and has shown U.S. leadership in nuclear fora. Others have welcomed our transparency and joined us in calling on Russia or China to do the same.

Question. In your opinion, why does Russia maintain a nuclear-capable missile defense system consisting of 68 nuclear-armed interceptors?

Answer. Despite Moscow's complaints regarding U.S. ballistic missile defense programs and capabilities, it is clear that the Russian Federation also believes in the importance of developing, deploying, maintaining, and modernizing its ballistic missile defense capabilities.

Question. It was a significant concern of the Senate during the ratification of the New START treaty that it not constrain U.S. missile defense. Do you agree it is imperative that the U.S. not commit to arms control agreements that would limit U.S. missile defenses?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. support for effective missile defense programs and will only pursue agreements that enhance U.S., allied, and partner security.

Question. The administration has made clear its intent to negotiate another United States-Russia arms control treaty. At the same time, U.S. intelligence lead-

ers have found that Russia now “possesses up to 2,000 such non-strategic nuclear warheads not covered by the New Start Treaty” and now has “dozens of these [non-strategic delivery] systems already deployed or in development”. Indeed, 10 years after New START was ratified, Russia’s advantage under the treaty is now so profound that, according to Secretary of State Pompeo “[o]nly 45 percent of Russia’s nuclear arsenal is subject to numerical limits.[m]eanwhile, that agreement restricts 92 percent of America’s arsenal.” Do you agree, as expressed in its Resolution of Ratification for New START, that the next arms control treaty between the United States and Russia must include these unconstrained nuclear weapons, and not just so-called strategic nuclear weapons?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we use the time provided by a five-year extension of the New START Treaty to pursue with Russia, in consultation with Congress and U.S. allies and partners, arms control that addresses all Russian nuclear weapons, including novel strategic systems and non-strategic nuclear weapons. Incorporating Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons into arms control is a longstanding and bipartisan U.S. objective.

Question. Russian President Vladimir Putin has proffered a “deployment freeze” on intermediate range missiles in Europe. What is your view on this plan? In your opinion, what are President Putin’s motivations for making this proposal?

Answer. While the United States plans to pursue arms control that addresses all Russian nuclear weapons and engage Russia in strategic stability discussions, we must be clear that Russia’s proposed deployment moratorium proposal, which the administration opposes, would not actually prevent a Russian build-up of ground-launched intermediate-range missiles because Russia has already produced and deployed multiple battalions of the 9M729, including in Western Russia.

Question. Stakeholders are generally disappointed by the results of U.S.-UK and U.S.-Australia Defense Trade Treaties, despite the best efforts of both nations. In your opinion, why have the treaties not fulfilled their promise? What can the State Department or the interagency do to make them more useful?

Answer. I understand that, initially, companies did not take advantage of the U.S.-UK and U.S.-Australia Defense Trade Cooperation Treaties (DTCTs), as they found the requirements for using them to be overly burdensome and costly. Subsequently, many of the benefits envisioned under the DTCTs were superseded by the success of Export Control Reform, which moved many less sensitive items to the more flexible jurisdiction of the Department of Commerce. The Department continues to work closely with U.S. interagency colleagues and our UK and Australian counterparts to pursue novel solutions to defense trade issues.

Question. In your opinion, why did China stop reporting to the IAEA on its plutonium activities and holdings after 2017? What are the potential implications for U.S. security as a result of China’s decision to stop reporting?

Answer. While I cannot speculate on why China stopped reporting, if confirmed, I will call on China to submit its declaration report to the IAEA per Information Circular INFCIRC/549 concerning “Guidelines for the Management of Plutonium.” China’s lack of transparency on nuclear issues is very troubling, and if confirmed I will pursue measures with the PRC that preserve our national security interests.

Question. Given China’s rapidly growing nuclear and conventional military capabilities and pattern of aggression against many of its neighbors, do you believe that China has become over-confident in its ability to control escalation in a conflict? If so, how do you propose the United States deal with that reality?

Answer. I agree that China has increased its aggressive behavior in many spheres, but defer to the Intelligence Community for a specific assessment regarding China’s confidence to control escalation in a conflict.

Question. You have previously advocated for the United States to adopt a No First Use (NFU) policy for nuclear weapons. Do you still hold that view today?

Answer. I understand that the administration is undertaking a review of nuclear policy that will certainly include declaratory policy. I have thought, as many do, that the United States might consider changes to U.S. declaratory policy that could increase stability. I understand that there are varying perspectives on the issue, but I believe most agree that we want to reduce nuclear risks to the United States and our allies and partners. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the interagency and allies and Congress to find the best ways to do this.

Question. The Commander of U.S. Strategic Command, Adm. Charles Richard, recently commented that the exceptions in China’s No First Use policy are “large

enough to drive a truck through". What are your thoughts on the efficacy of China's No First Use policy? Why would one support a NFU policy for the United States when China's NFU policy is so ambiguous?

Answer. There is ambiguity over the conditions under which Beijing would act outside of its professed no first-use policy. China's ongoing advances to its nuclear arsenal, from an exploration of low-yield warheads to the development of a launch on warning posture, raise questions regarding China's intent and undermine its claims to seek a minimum nuclear deterrent backed by a no first-use policy. I understand that the administration is undertaking a review of nuclear policy that will include declaratory policy. If confirmed, I will participate in that process and will consult with Congress and our allies on any policies or actions in this area.

Question. Do you believe the United States should adopt a No First Use policy without the same concessions and policy reciprocity from Russia and China?

Answer. I understand that the administration is undertaking a review of nuclear policy that will include declaratory policy. I have thought, as many do, that the United States might consider changes to U.S. declaratory policy that could increase stability. I understand that there are varying perspectives on the issue, but I believe most agree that we want to reduce nuclear risks to the United States and our allies. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the interagency and allies and Congress to find the best ways to do this.

Question. Do you believe that the United States should adopt a Sole Purpose doctrine? How would adopting such a doctrine impact our deterrence options?

Answer. I understand that the administration is undertaking a review of nuclear policy that will certainly include declaratory policy. I have thought, as many do, that the United States might consider changes to U.S. declaratory policy that could increase stability. I understand that there are varying perspectives on the issue, but I believe most agree that we want to reduce nuclear risks to the United States and our allies. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the interagency and allies and Congress to find the best ways to do this, while ensuring that the United States maintains a credible strategic deterrent.

Question. Our extended deterrence commitments to allies in the Indo-Pacific are foundational to U.S. strategy in the region. That has been the case for seven decades. Do you agree that extended deterrence is key to regional stability in the Indo-Pacific, and that the United States must continue to honor, uphold, and strengthen these commitments?

Answer. Yes. Extended deterrence plays a foundational role in advancing U.S. national security objectives in the Indo-Pacific, and our strategic deterrent, including U.S. nuclear forces, underpins extended deterrence. It does so by providing assurance to allies and partners, which are our greatest strategic asset. If confirmed, I would work to ensure, in coordination with the rest of the Biden-Harris administration, that U.S. extended deterrence commitments to U.S. allies remain strong and credible.

Question. How would the adoption of a No First Use policy or a Sole Purpose doctrine impact our extended deterrence commitments? If we weaken or dilute our extended deterrence commitments in the Indo-Pacific, what do you assess would be the impact on the security environment in the region, given the threats from China and North Korea?

Answer. I understand that the administration is undertaking a review of nuclear policy that will include declaratory policy. If confirmed, I will participate in that process and will consult with Congress and our allies on any policies or actions in this area. This administration is committed to reinvigorating and modernizing alliances and partnerships around the world; this includes ensuring U.S. extended deterrence commitments to U.S. allies remain strong and credible.

Question. The PRC currently has thousands of missiles pointed at Taiwan, and Admiral Davidson, commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, has noted that "Taiwan is clearly one of [the PRC's] ambitions. during this decade." How can the United States best support Taiwan's defense against this threat?

Answer. The United States has long maintained our abiding interest in peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. If confirmed, I commit to maintaining America's rock-solid commitment to Taiwan. The United States will continue to make available to Taiwan the defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and our "one China" policy. The United States sold nearly \$30 billion worth of arms to Taiwan since 2009, but arms sales alone cannot ensure Taiwan's ability to defend itself.

Our expanding security cooperation seeks to encourage Taiwan to prioritize asymmetric capabilities including reserve force reform.

Question. Please describe your views on U.S. export control policies as they relate to China. What types of technologies should we seek to limit or cut off from nefarious end users in China?

Answer. Export controls are a critical tool to counter Chinese President Xi Jinping's strategy to bolster the PRC's military and security services and to challenge U.S. and allied technological leadership. It is imperative that U.S. arms embargo on China remains in place. If confirmed, I will work with the Commerce Department and other Departments, as appropriate, to keep dual-use controls as tight as possible for products and end-users that pose national security concerns, as called for by the Export Control Reform Act of 2018.

Question. Do you believe Huawei and its affiliates should remain on the Entity List? Are there any circumstances under which you would consider recommending the removal Huawei or any of its affiliates from the list?

Answer. I have no reason to believe that Huawei should be removed from the Entity List. Parties are placed on the Entity List for several reasons, including posing a threat to U.S. national security and foreign policy, and the threat that Huawei poses will remain a key factor moving forward. If confirmed, I will work closely with colleagues at the Department of Commerce to prevent U.S.-origin technology from being used in ways that threaten U.S. interests.

Question. Do you agree that it is in our national interest to strengthen our security cooperation with Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand? If so, please elaborate. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to advance security partnerships with these nations, including your views on continuing arms sales, engaging in capacity-building, and cooperating on advanced technology with South and Southeast Asian partner countries facing China's coercion and growing military power?

Answer. It is absolutely in the national interest of the United States to strengthen security cooperation with Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand. Security cooperation with these allies and partners is essential to ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific region, building interoperability and bolstering U.S. force projection, ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight, upholding rule of law, countering transnational crime and terror organizations, responding to natural and humanitarian crisis, and reassuring our allies and partners of U.S. commitment to the region, empowering them to stand up to coercion and malign influence. It also provides opportunities to reinforce our allies' and partners' commitment to the rules-based international order.

If confirmed, I will work to expand engagement with these nations at all levels, including by promoting the United States as the region's security partner of choice and ensuring they have the arms and training capabilities they need to protect and advance our shared interests in the region. I will also seek to deepen and expand our overall defense cooperation with these nations by advancing key foundational defense agreements, which will help enable the transfer of defense articles and establish mechanisms that allow for greater overall defense cooperation.

Question. What is your assessment of the U.S.-Philippine relationship and its importance to U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific region more broadly? Do you support continuing a robust security partnership with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, including through appropriate arms transfers consistent with existing U.S. law?

Answer. The alliance with the Philippines is foundational to the U.S. role in the Indo-Pacific, and the relationship is based on shared strategic interests, shared history, culture, and strong connections between our nations. If confirmed, I support continuing our robust security partnership with the Armed Forces of the Philippines. I would ensure that all arms transfers are appropriate and consistent with existing U.S. laws, including the Conventional Arms Transfer Policy, Arms Export Control Act, and the Foreign Assistance Act. In this regard, I would continue the current global policy of reviewing proposed arms sales according to a number of factors, which include: the degree to which the transfer contributes to ally and partner burden-sharing and interoperability in support of strategic, foreign policy, and defense interests of the United States; the recipient's ability to field, support, and employ the requested system effectively and appropriately in accordance with its intended end use; and the risk the transfer may be used to undermine international peace and security or contribute to abuses of human rights. When appropriate, that review includes consultations with Congress and input from DoD and other inter-agency partners.

Question. In your view, can U.S. security partnerships be a force for good in improving human rights conditions in a particular country?

Answer. The President and Secretary Blinken have stated that human rights must be at the center of our foreign policy. Strong U.S. security partnerships around the world come with a multitude of benefits, including the opportunity to positively influence a country's human rights practices. These relationships allow us to work closely with partners, set an example for human rights standards, and provide training, when appropriate.

If confirmed, I will support assistance to help ensure our partner forces are taking steps to comply with international law and protect human rights. Additionally, I will work to ensure human rights concerns are given full weight in arms transfer decisions, and I will support the Leahy laws, which prohibit assistance to foreign security forces units that are credibly implicated in gross violations of human rights.

Question. Will you ensure that the U.S. Department of State consults with Congress before taking action on issues that could jeopardize U.S. access to or create significant tensions in our relationships with key defense partners in the Indo-Pacific, especially those in Southeast Asia?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that the Department engages with Congress, as appropriate, on actions affecting our security partnerships.

Question. What is your understanding of the Russian Federation's nuclear doctrine and how it may be enacted in practice? Which aspect of Russia's nuclear doctrine do you find potentially most problematic for U.S. defense and strategy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consult with the U.S. intelligence community on Russian nuclear policy, strategy, doctrine, and forces. It is clear that Russia has a large arsenal of up to 2,000 non-strategic nuclear weapons that is projected to grow. It has developed a wide range of new dual-capable ground-, sea-, and air-based short- and intermediate-range missile systems. Such weapons can range U.S. allies and partners in Europe and East Asia—as well as U.S. forces stationed there—and both our deterrence strategy and our approach to arms control must address these threats.

Question. Which of the Russian Federation's new, so-called "exotic" weapons systems do you find the most geostrategically concerning? Please enumerate your specific concerns and explain why this system worries you more than the others.

Answer. If confirmed, I will consult with the U.S. intelligence community on Russia's "exotic" weapon systems and I will engage with the Department of Defense on the military implications of these systems. Based on the unclassified information that is available, the nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed cruise missile appears to be volatile, unreliable, and dangerous, posing a threat to the entire world, including Russia.

Question. It is likely that Russia has placed nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad, and there is great concern that they may do the same in occupied Crimea. How should the U.S. respond, if at all, should Russia place nuclear weapons in Crimea? Would that action, in your view, dramatically change the way that the U.S. looks at Black Sea security?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consult with the U.S. intelligence community on the location of Russian theater-range nuclear weapons and I will engage with the Department of Defense on the military implications of Russia's nuclear posture.

Question. The Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) was founded in 2005. Over the last 15 fiscal years, GPOI has received almost \$1.3 billion in funding. This funding has accomplished several objectives, including building self-sufficient peace operations training, supporting partner country development, enhancing partner country operational readiness, and expanded the participation, integration, and leadership women in peace operations, to name a few.

- GPOI has improved the capacity and operations of U.N. peacekeeping forces in Africa and globally. Please describe the efforts you will take to continue to integrate women into GPOI's work in both peacekeeping troops and in leadership positions in peacekeeping missions.

Answer. If confirmed, I will support GPOI's continued work to increase the meaningful participation of women in peace operations by promoting efforts to: encourage partners to increase recruitment, training, and deployment of women in all levels and aspects of peace operations—including in leadership and decision-making positions; train women peacekeepers; incorporate women, peace, and security (WPS) topics into peacekeeping training for all peacekeepers; invest in gender-responsive up-

grades at partner countries' training centers, including female barracks and latrines; and support the U.N.'s development of WPS training materials.

Question. GPOI provides critical training to partner countries looking to deploy peacekeepers, which includes topics like preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), violence against women, as well as technical training. Given the high number of instances of SEA committed by peacekeeping troops globally, how would you direct GPOI to enhance trainings to counter these occurrences?

Answer. If confirmed, I will direct GPOI to pursue activities that enhance existing SEA prevention and accountability training incorporated into pre-deployment training assistance. I will also support GPOI's joint efforts with the U.N. to launch a training-of-trainers course for National Investigation Officers who investigate allegations of SEA against military peacekeepers, as well as to fund a U.N. pilot course to train engagement platoons, at least half of which are women, to interact with the local population, identify vulnerable areas and at-risk populations, and conduct gender-responsive assessments to improve situational awareness.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. BONNIE R. JENKINS BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. My entire professional life has been dedicated to public service, often in direct promotion of human rights and democracy. For example, while at the Ford Foundation, I oversaw the funding of activities, programs and research on issues of human rights and democracy in my role as Program Officer of U.S. Foreign and Security Policy, and approved joint funding with the Human Rights officer. In addition, I also had a pool of funds for organizations doing work in the area of "conflicts," where the funds went to the issues of child soldiers, women in peacekeeping, and the problem of illicit trafficking of diamonds and its negative effects. At Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict Transformation, of which I am now the Executive Director, I have started a working group on Human Rights to host events and activities on issues of human rights. I am also engaged in several activities at the U.S. Institute of Peace, including serving on the Women Building Peace Council. Finally, my 22 years in the Air Force and Naval Reserves have been dedicated to promoting democracy both in the U.S. and internationally.

Question. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups?

Answer. My commitment to public service has always included advancing opportunities for all Americans. Fostering diversity and inclusion in the national security workforce is incredibly important to me personally, and I strongly support President Biden's policy of prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility as a national security imperative to ensure critical perspectives and talents are represented in the national security workforce. If confirmed, I commit to working with the new Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, the Bureau of Global Talent Management, the Secretary's Office of Civil Rights, and other Department leadership to foster an inclusive workplace in the T family so that every employee's contribution is valued. If confirmed, I will hold T family senior leadership accountable for the conduct of their teams and for promulgating an environment where each individual is heard and seen.

Question. Fighting corruption is one of the most important ways that we can promote democracy and human rights worldwide. What steps would you take to address global corruption within the role for which you are nominated?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with experts across the Department and interagency to promote and defend democracy. Through the targeted deployment of accountability tools, foreign assistance, and diplomatic engagement, we can address endemic corruption and human rights abuses. I will also prioritize working with allies, seeking opportunities to promote our shared ideals together.

Question. Do you commit to work with Congress to strengthen U.S. policies to combat global corruption?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will commit to working with Congress to strengthen U.S. policies, to the extent that my portfolio allows, to combat global corruption, in-

cluding efforts to improve global standards of transparency, accountability, and good governance.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BONNIE R. JENKINS BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

China

Question. Do you agree that Chinese state-directed Huawei is a threat to U.S. and global security?

Answer. Yes. Telecommunications equipment made by untrusted vendors, including Huawei, is a threat to U.S. and global security. Allowing untrusted telecommunications suppliers to participate in or control any part of a 5G network creates unacceptable risks to critical infrastructure, privacy, and human rights. In addition, the Chinese Government provides significant support to Huawei, including through subsidies and coercive tactics against host governments, that unfairly disadvantages market-based rivals. Huawei's history of unethical and unlawful behavior, including intellectual property theft, compounds the national security risks that it poses.

Question. Do you commit to use your position to oppose any measure to remove Huawei from the Commerce Department Entity List, including any measure to water down or provide licenses under that listing or the Foreign Direct Product Rule?

Answer. I have no reason to believe that Huawei should be removed from the Entity List. If confirmed, I will work closely with colleagues at the Department of Commerce to prevent U.S.-origin technology from being used in ways that threaten U.S. interests.

Question. On January 15, 2021, the State Department issued a fact sheet on activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which raised the possibility that the COVID-19 epidemic could have emerged from a laboratory accident. Do you agree that this is possible?

Answer. Yes, my understanding is that a range of possibilities exist, including the possibility of a laboratory accident. I believe that the full range of these possibilities should be considered. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration supports a robust and transparent investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. An impartial public health investigation, based on science, is vital to protecting against future health security threats.

Question. If confirmed, can you commit that the administration will take steps to investigate the origins of COVID-19, including pressing for a full forensic investigation of the labs in question?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has been clear about its concerns with the PRC's lack of transparency regarding the pandemic, including Beijing's refusal to provide the international health community timely and full access to data, scientists, records, and samples. This information is essential to our full understanding of the origins of the virus and how it spread. If confirmed, I am committed to providing the appropriate diplomatic and technical support to any relevant efforts as they relate to my portfolio.

Question. Are you concerned about China's development of biological and chemical weapons? If confirmed, how do you plan to address these issues?

Answer. In 2021, the State Department's Compliance Report found that the PRC engaged in biological activities with dual-use applications, which raises concerns regarding its compliance with Article I of the BWC. The report also noted uncertainty regarding the status of China's assessed historical biological warfare program. This year's Condition 10(c) report raised similar concerns related to chemical activities that prevented the U.S. from certifying the PRC's compliance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. I understand that the U.S. was unable to engage with the PRC on these issues in 2020 due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and the PRC's unwillingness to meet virtually. If confirmed, I will continue efforts to address these concerns, including in bilateral meetings.

Nuclear Posture Review (NPR)

Question. If confirmed, would you advise the Biden administration in the next nuclear posture review to return to language closer to the 2010 NPR?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is undertaking a review of nuclear policy that will certainly include declaratory policy. If confirmed, I will participate in that process and will consult with Congress and our allies on any policies or actions in this area.

Question. Do you believe that the United States nuclear posture is also critical for our allies and partners?

Answer. Yes. Extended deterrence plays a foundational role in advancing U.S. national security objectives, and our strategic deterrent, including U.S. nuclear forces, underpins extended deterrence. It provides assurance to allies and partners, which are our greatest strategic asset. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to reinvigorating and modernizing our alliances and partnerships around the world; this includes ensuring our extended deterrence commitments to our allies remain strong and credible.

Question. Do you believe that the United States nuclear arsenal is an effective deterrent against the use of these non-nuclear weapons against our allies?

Answer. All U.S. military capabilities contribute to extended deterrence commitments to U.S. allies. The Biden-Harris administration is undertaking a review of nuclear policy that will certainly include declaratory policy. If confirmed, I will participate in that process and will consult with Congress and our allies on any policies or actions in this area.

Question. The Obama administration declassified the topline number of the total U.S. nuclear stockpile. However, Russia and China never reciprocated. Would you support declassifying our nuclear stockpile number without any reciprocity by Russia or China?

Answer. I believe that declassifying topline U.S. nuclear stockpile numbers demonstrates the United States' serious commitment to transparency and confidence building measures that can enable further progress on reducing nuclear risks. If confirmed, I will work to encourage Russia and China to be more transparent. The declassification of U.S. stockpile numbers has not harmed U.S. national security and has shown U.S. leadership in nuclear fora. Others have welcomed our transparency and joined us in calling on Russia or China to do the same.

North Korea

Question. Do you agree that the only path forward for North Korea that the U.S. could accept is the complete, irreversible, verifiable, denuclearization of North Korea?

Answer. North Korea's unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs constitute serious threats to international peace and security and the global nonproliferation regime. The Biden-Harris administration recently completed a comprehensive review of U.S. policy towards North Korea that reiterates the goal of complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the administration's efforts to pursue calibrated and practical diplomacy with North Korea, in close consultation with our allies and partners, in order to increase the security of the United States, our allies, and our deployed forces.

Question. If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that the voices of North Korean defectors are included in negotiations of any agreement with North Korea?

Answer. I am deeply concerned about North Korea's egregious human rights record and how to promote respect for human rights in the closed country. If confirmed, I will be committed to placing human rights at the center of our foreign policy with North Korea and to integrating the voices of the North Korean defector community into our approach, including by meeting with North Korean escapees to hear their thoughts and recommendations.

Russia

Question. Do you agree that Russia was in violation the Treaty on Open Skies?

Answer. Yes, Russia has violated, and continues to violate, the Treaty on Open Skies. I am not aware that Russia has taken any action to return to compliance. As stated in the most recent compliance report, Russia has not rescinded its illegal 500-kilometer sublimit over Kaliningrad. Russia also remains in violation for refusing to allow observation flights to approach within 10 kilometers of its border with the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. While not a violation, Russia has also declared an airfield in Crimea as a Russian Open Skies refueling airfield, in an attempt to politicize the treaty.

Question. Do you agree that Russia's abuses the Open Skies Treaty and its actions posed an unacceptable risk to our national security?

Answer. In my view, while concerning, Russia's violations of the Treaty on Open Skies by themselves do not pose a direct and immediate threat to our national security. Russia's use of the treaty to collect information on military and civilian infrastructure, while not prohibited by the treaty, could pose a risk, although I understand there are measures in place to mitigate that risk.

Question. Russia has been implicated in the use of chemical weapons on several different occasions in the last several years, including assassination attempts. What should be done to counter Russia's use of chemical weapons and its violations of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)?

Answer. Russia's use of chemical weapons in assassination attempts against not only Sergei Skripal and his daughter, but also Aleksey Navalny, is reprehensible. In response to these attacks, the United States exercised its sanctions authorities and imposed other measures to send a clear signal that Russia's use of chemical weapons and abuse of human rights have severe consequences.

At the OPCW, the United States has worked with allies and partners to address Russia's violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, including submitting a technical change proposal to add two families of Novichoks to the CWC Annex on Chemicals, which the OPCW Conference of the States Parties adopted in 2019.

If confirmed I will work within the administration to take steps to deter Russia's use of chemical weapons, including engaging Russia bilaterally and multilaterally as well working with allies and partners at the OPCW Executive Council and Conference of the States Parties, and in U.N. fora, including the Security Council. If confirmed, I will explore further measures to address Russian non-compliance with the CWC. There can be no impunity for the use of chemical weapons.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. BONNIE R. JENKINS BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. For all of the missteps in converting the Singapore Summit Communique that President Trump agreed to with Chairman Kim Jong Un in 2018 into meaningful action, it did lay out a useful framework that committed the two countries to work towards better relations, cooperate on the return of Prisoner of War remains, and work towards peace and denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. Given the reality that any full denuclearization agreement is a long term endeavor, will you support efforts that make progress on the other elements agreed to in Singapore, provided such actions are in concert with U.S. allies and partners, and achieve the objective of lessening the nuclear weapons threat from North Korea as well as the threat of war?

Answer. North Korea's unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs constitute serious threats to international peace and security and the global nonproliferation regime. I understand that the administration recently completed a comprehensive review of U.S. policy towards North Korea that both reiterates the goal of complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and seeks to build on the Singapore Summit commitments. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the administration's efforts to pursue calibrated and practical diplomacy with North Korea, in close consultation with our allies and partners, in order to increase the security of the United States, our allies, and our deployed forces.

Question. I understand the total number of Washington DC-based full-time equivalents in the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance as of January 2017 was 113. The number of Washington DC-based FTEs as of late 2019 in the AVC Bureau was 94. In 2014, the Office of Inspector General reported 48 percent of the AVC workforce would be eligible to retire by 2019. If confirmed, what actions will you take to address the large number of FTEs eligible to retire, how can the "T cone" prioritize recruitment and hiring of diverse candidates, and what additional flexible hiring authorities—if any—does the Department need to fill this gap?

Answer. Rebuilding the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance is one of my top priorities. If confirmed, I will exercise the Excepted Service Appointment Authority to bring in a diverse cadre of arms control experts. Diversity is the key to unlocking an organization's potential because diverse teams consistently demonstrate high performance due to their creativity and innovation. The Department must rebuild the AVC workforce and ensure it is well-equipped to address the dan-

gers posed by chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons, and their delivery systems. If confirmed, I commit to uphold and fully implement the Department's leadership and management tenets, including support for diversity and inclusion, to strengthen teams across the T family of bureaus.

Question. Has the President provided any guidance to the Departments of State, Defense, and any other agencies, detailing his instructions for a review of U.S. nuclear policy and posture? If so, approximately when will that review be completed?

Answer. I understand that the President has directed his administration to conduct reviews of various nuclear policies. In accordance with the Biden administration's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, the administration will take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in the U.S. national security strategy, while ensuring the U.S. strategic deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective and that U.S. extended deterrence commitments to U.S. allies remain strong and credible. In that process, the administration will consult with U.S. allies and partners, including those in the Indo-Pacific, as well as with Congress.

Question. The United States is not one of the 164 States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, also known as the Ottawa Convention, which bans the production and stockpiling of anti-personnel landmines. President Trump opened up the geographies where the United States can use landmines provided they have a self-destruct mechanism, which superseded an Obama administration policy which narrowed persistent landmine use to the Korean Peninsula. The Biden administration has yet to rescind the permissive Trump administration-era policy. When confirmed, can you commit to advocate as the head of the "T cone" for President Biden to adopt a U.S. policy that brings us closer in line with the obligations under the Ottawa Convention? Additionally, will you support a robust budget request for de-mining activities in conflict zones?

Answer. As Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield noted last month, "President Biden believes we need to curtail the use of landmines. [L]et me speak plainly: President Biden has been clear that he intends to roll back [the Trump administration] policy, and our administration has begun a policy review to do just that." If confirmed, I will commit to supporting the administration's landmine policy review and will advocate for a clear and explicit role for the State Department in any future policy on landmines. I also will commit to consult with experts inside and outside of the Department, and with you in Congress, on the question of whether and how the United States should bring its policies closer in line with the provisions of the Ottawa Convention.

Thanks to bipartisan Congressional support, the United States has been the world's leader in fighting proliferation by safely destroying at-risk conventional weapons and saving lives by clearing of landmines and other explosive hazards for more than 25 years.

Question. The Biden administration is currently undertaking a global sanctions review to ensure that U.S. and multilateral sanctions do not inadvertently prevent humanitarian aid from getting to those in need. While food and medicine is exempt under U.S. and U.N. sanctions, aid workers are often forced to navigate massive red tape just to bring laptops to North Korea, which are considered "luxury goods," or even treatments for drug resistant tuberculosis. If confirmed, can you commit to work with interested Members to make practical changes to the implementation of existing exemptions to U.S. sanctions and seek additional exemptions in the U.N. Security Council Sanctions Committee of items related to providing life-saving assistance to North Koreans?

Answer. Sanctions are in place to address the threat posed by North Korea, including its ability to continue developing its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The U.S. Government maintains a number of sanctions exemptions and authorizations related to humanitarian aid, and has also led efforts to streamline the process for humanitarian exemptions in the U.N. sanctions committee. North Korea itself has created the most significant barriers to the delivery of aid by closing its borders and limiting access for the personnel responsible for implementing such projects. If confirmed, I will work to support efforts aimed at helping humanitarian aid reach the people of North Korea.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BONNIE R. JENKINS BY SENATOR ROB PORTMAN

Question. The position of arms control and international security is one of paramount importance to our nation's defense. Both Russia and China have made strides in their own force modernization and we must take steps to ensure that our adversaries are in compliance with existing arms control agreements while we look to new initiatives as well.

New START and U.S. Nuclear Force Modernization: In January 2021, the Biden administration agreed to an extension of the NEW Start treaty for a period of five years, while committing to pursue new arms control agreements with both Russia and China. As you are aware, New START does not limit non-strategic nuclear warheads which are a growing concern as Russia outnumbers the United States 10-1 in this category. China is on pace to more than triple its nuclear force in the coming decade. Clearly, more work is needed to ensure that our adversaries do not outpace U.S. capabilities in this space.

- The Obama administration in 2010 committed to Congress that it would address the disparity between the United States and Russia regarding non-strategic nuclear warheads, however several administrations have failed to make progress. What actions will you take, if confirmed, that will address this disparity?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that we use the time provided by a five-year extension of the New START Treaty to pursue with Russia, in consultation with Congress and U.S. allies and partners, arms control that addresses all Russian nuclear weapons, including novel strategic systems and non-strategic nuclear weapons. Incorporating Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons into arms control is a longstanding and bipartisan U.S. objective.

Question. Both Russia and China are in the process of expanding, diversifying, and modernizing its nuclear arsenals. The United States is just beginning this effort. Do you believe that a modernization of the U.S. Triad is necessary to negotiate from a position of strength?

Answer. A credible, modern deterrent and arms control should work together to address nuclear threats and increase our security.

Question. Do you believe that a unilateral reduction of our nuclear forces endangers U.S. national security?

Answer. I would never support any reductions in nuclear forces that endanger U.S. national security, but I do not believe that any type of reduction would automatically undermine U.S. and allied security.

Question. Iran's Ballistic Missile Program and the Abraham Accords: Iran's ballistic missile program and armed drones, including proliferation of these technologies to terrorist organizations, are increasingly becoming a regional threat in the Middle East. The continued threat from Iran is just one of the many reasons why many neighbors of Israel decided to sign normalization agreements such as the Abraham Accords last year.

Last month, I introduced a bill called the Israel Relations Normalization Act with Senator's Booker, Cardin, Risch, and Young, to require the Department of State to expand and strengthen these normalization agreements.

- Do you support these normalization agreements as a means to strengthen security in the region and pledge, if confirmed, to pursue additional normalization agreements?

Answer. As President Biden and Secretary Blinken have said, this administration welcomes and strongly supports the recent normalization agreements between Israel and countries in the Arab and Muslim world. I understand that the Department is leading the U.S. Government's efforts, working with the National Security Council and U.S. Government interagency, to deepen existing agreements and urge other countries to normalize relations with Israel. If confirmed, I will look for other opportunities to expand cooperation among countries in the region, which is critical to strengthening regional security.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BONNIE R. JENKINS BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. In April 2019, President Trump notified the Senate that he had decided to withdraw the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty from the Senate and requested the Senate return the treaty to the President. The United States notified the United Nations Secretary General that the “United States does not intend to become a party” to the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty despite its signature, adding that the United States “has no legal obligations arising” from its treaty signature.

- What is the current status of the United States with regards to the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty?

Answer. On December 9, 2016, the Department transmitted the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to the Senate for its advice and consent to ratification. On July 18, 2019, the Trump administration informed the Treaty Depository that the United States did not intend to become a State Party to the Treaty and that the United States had no legal obligations arising from its signature. The United States is participating in ATT meetings as an observer to protect U.S. national security interests, economic interests, and industry equities.

Question. Based on your knowledge and experience in this field, what position have you formulated on whether the United States should ratify the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty?

Answer. If confirmed, I support reviewing the implications of decisions taken to date on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), both in the United States and in the ATT Conferences of States Parties, to determine the proper relationship of the United States to the Treaty. I believe this review should be situated within a larger evaluation of U.S. policy on conventional arms transfers. The United States is the largest arms exporter in the world, and it is imperative that U.S. transfers of conventional arms are consistent with our laws, values, and interests.

Question. Have you ever supported, implicitly or explicitly in writing or in speech, the United States joining the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty? Please provide details.

Answer. To the best of my recollection, I have not made any statement on the issue of the United States joining the U.N. Arms Trade Treaty.

Question. What changes to our nation’s policies, regulations, or laws would be needed to comply with the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty?

Answer. It is my understanding that the United States would not need to change any policies, regulations, or laws to comply with the Arms Trade Treaty. U.S. national control systems and practices to regulate the international transfer of conventional arms already meet or exceed the requirements of the Treaty.

Question. The United States Constitution protects the rights of Americans to keep and bear arms. The Arms Trade Treaty would infringe on the second amendment. Article 12 of the Arms Trade Treaty encourages countries to maintain records on the importation of conventional arms including small arms. It specifically requests that states maintain records on the quantity, value, model/type and end user. These records must be maintained for a minimum of ten years. Article 13 requires signatory states to issue annual reports to the United Nations on all imports and exports.

- Do you support the United Nations establishing and maintaining a gun registry on law abiding U.S. gun owners?

Answer. No. If confirmed, I will not support the United Nations establishing and maintaining a gun registry on law-abiding U.S. gun owners. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) establishes standards for regulating only the international trade in conventional arms, not domestic trade or possession. The ATT does not touch on purely domestic arms transfers or private ownership, which are matters of national sovereignty.

Question. China is modernizing and expanding its nuclear forces. U.S. intelligence analysts estimate that China could double its nuclear warheads in the next decade.

- How is China modernizing and expanding its nuclear arsenal?

Answer. During this decade, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) is likely to more than double the size of its nuclear stockpile. According to open-source reporting I have read, this rapid expansion includes new delivery systems as Beijing works to establish a nuclear triad, which will include a long-range stealth bomber, new road-mobile ICBMs, multiple-warhead silo-based ICBMs, and a growing fleet of ballistic missile submarines. The PRC also appears to be working on hypersonic-

glide vehicles, air-launched ballistic missiles, and low-yield nuclear weapons that will fit into this nuclear triad. The PRC is also making additional advances toward developing a launch-on-warning posture.

Question. What is the projected size and composition of China's strategic nuclear forces by 2026 when the New START would expire?

Answer. During this decade, the People's Republic of China (PRC) is likely to more than double the size of its nuclear stockpile. Precisely because Beijing is the least transparent member of the P5 nuclear weapon states, accurate assessments of its nuclear trajectory and intentions are difficult. I defer to the intelligence community for a specific assessment on the projected size and composition of China's nuclear forces in 2026.

Question. Secretary of State Blinken noted his intent to "pursue arms control to reduce the dangers from China's modern and growing nuclear arsenal." China has so far refused U.S. efforts to engage in arms control negotiations.

- What specific steps would you take to reduce the dangers posed by China's modern and growing nuclear arsenal?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work within the administration, in consultation with U.S. allies and partners, to pursue arms control measures to reduce the dangers from the People's Republic of China's growing nuclear arsenal. It is to be hoped that Beijing will come to see that arms control is in its security interest: not a trap designed to weaken China's defenses, but rather a mechanism to reduce risk and the chances of uncontrollable arms races. If confirmed, I commit to consulting with Congress regarding the arms control approach the administration foresees pursuing with China.

Question. What specific leverage does the United States have to force China to participate in future arms control negotiations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work within the administration, in consultation with U.S. allies and partners, to pursue arms control measures to reduce the dangers from the People's Republic of China's growing nuclear arsenal. It is to be hoped that Beijing will come to see that arms control is in its security interest: not a trap designed to weaken China's defenses, but rather a mechanism to reduce risk and the chances of uncontrollable arms races, which is in the interest of both our countries. If confirmed, I will seek to work with U.S. allies and partners to urge Beijing to engage meaningfully with the United States on arms control, as doing so is essential to reducing global nuclear risks.

Question. Has the United States ever effectively used the leverage you mentioned in question 8? Please provide details.

Answer. As I understand, the People's Republic of China has thus far resisted engaging with the United States in any meaningful nuclear arms control discussions. If confirmed, I will work with the administration, along with U.S. allies and partners to regularly urge Beijing to engage meaningfully with the United States on arms control. Doing so is essential to reducing global nuclear risks.

Question. There is a very large disparity regarding non-strategic nuclear weapons, also known as tactical nuclear weapons. During the New START debate, there were a number of Senators including myself who were extremely concerned that the treaty did not include tactical nuclear weapons. The New START Resolution of Ratification specifically provided the President was to address the massive disparity in the tactical stockpiles prior to contemplating further reductions in the strategic arsenal.

- Can you assure the United States Senate that the next arms control agreement with Russia will focus on the massive numerical advantage Russia has over us and our allies in tactical nuclear weapons rather further reductions in the strategic arsenal?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we use the time provided by the five-year extension of the New START Treaty to pursue with Russia, in consultation with Congress and U.S. allies and partners, arms control that addresses all Russian nuclear weapons, including novel strategic systems and non-strategic nuclear weapons. Incorporating Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons into arms control is a longstanding and bipartisan U.S. objective.

Question. For more than six decades, the United States has employed an effective and credible nuclear deterrent. The U.S. nuclear triad is made up of the land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) and nuclear-capable heavy bomber aircraft. All three legs of the triad work hand-in-hand

to deter our adversaries and reassure our allies and partners. It provides weapon systems that are survivable, stabilizing and flexible.

- Please describe how each leg of the U.S. nuclear triad contributes to the effective and credible nuclear deterrent?

Answer. SSBNs are the most survivable leg of the nuclear triad. Nuclear-capable bombers are the most flexible. ICBMs are the most responsive and contribute to deterrence by requiring an adversary to exhaust a large number of warheads to destroy a smaller portion of the U.S. deterrent.

Question. Based on your expertise, are ICBMs on “hair trigger” alert or are they safe and secure?

Answer. In overall terms, U.S. ICBMs are not on “hair trigger” alert. U.S. nuclear forces are safe and secure as the United States maintains multiple redundant technical and procedural measures in place to prevent the unauthorized or accidental launch of U.S. missiles. I defer to the Department of Defense to discuss the specifics.

Question. Do you believe the ground based strategic deterrent will start an arms race with Russia and China?

Answer. No, replacing elements of the U.S. nuclear triad will not cause an arms race. If confirmed, I will work with the administration to head off costly arms races and re-establish U.S. credibility as a leader in arms control. I will also work to pursue new arms control agreements and arrangements by engaging in meaningful dialogues with Russia and China on a range of emerging military technological developments that implicate strategic stability.

Question. All three legs of the U.S. nuclear triad are required to maintain a reliable, credible and effective deterrent. This is especially true as Russia continues to modernize its nuclear forces and China is increasing its nuclear forces in an attempt at nuclear parity.

- Have you ever expressed, implicitly or explicitly in writing or in speech, support for eliminating any leg of the nuclear triad? Please provide details.

Answer. To the best of my knowledge, I have not made any statement saying that any leg of the nuclear triad should be eliminated.

Question. Based on your knowledge and background, what is your position on the United States modernizing our ICBMs with the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent, our submarines with the Columbia class, and our bombers with the B-21 Raider?

Answer. A credible, modern deterrent and arms control should work together to address nuclear threats and increase our security. If confirmed, I will review each element of the current modernization program during the course of the Nuclear Posture Review, and I will advise that the United States undertake the modernization necessary to sustain a credible strategic deterrent.

Question. Have you ever supported, implicitly or explicitly in writing or in speech, any delay or budget cuts related to or the elimination of any of the U.S. nuclear modernization programs? Please provide details.

Answer. To the best of my knowledge, I have not explicitly supported any delay or budget cuts to, or elimination of, the modernization program. I have asked questions about the total amount of funding that will be spent on the modernization program.

Question. What specific steps will you take to advocate for modernization of the U.S. nuclear program?

Answer. The United States will ensure its strategic deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective. If confirmed, I will advise that the United States undertake the modernization necessary to sustain a credible strategic deterrent.

Question. On December 4, 2019, you retweeted a post from PSR Nuclear Weapons Abolition supporting the United States adopting a no first use of nuclear weapons policy.

- Please explain why you support the United States adopting a “no-first use” policy.

Answer. I understand that the administration is undertaking a review of nuclear policy that will certainly include declaratory policy. I have thought, as many do, that the United States might consider changes to U.S. declaratory policy that could increase stability. I understand that there are varying perspectives on the issue, but I believe most agree that we want to reduce nuclear risks to the United States and our allies and partners. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the interagency and allies and Congress to find the best ways to do this.

Question. As our country continues to face threats from around the world, we should not take any action that will hinder our missile defense options. The United States must always remain in charge of our missile defense, not Russia or any other country. I have concerns about the efforts of Russia to limit our missile defense and actions the Obama administration took on this issue.

- Can you commit to me that, in any arms control discussions with Russia for which you are responsible, the United States will never agree to any limitation on our missile defense programs?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. support for effective missile defense programs and will only pursue arms control agreements that enhance U.S., allied, and partner security.

Question. President Putin announced Russia's development of new strategic nuclear weapons. The weapons include a nuclear powered cruise missile, a nuclear powered underwater drone that could be armed with a nuclear warhead, and a hypersonic missile. President Putin declared that these new additions to Russia's strategic nuclear arsenal would render U.S. missile defense "useless."

- How would you ensure the new weapons are covered under Russia's treaty and arms control obligations?

Answer. The New START Treaty limits Russia's Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle and will limit the Sarmat heavy ICBM at the appropriate point in its development cycle. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we use the time provided by the five-year extension of the New START Treaty to pursue with Russia, in consultation with Congress and U.S. allies and partners, arms control that addresses all Russian nuclear weapons, including novel strategic systems and non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Question. Does the United States have a current or prospective missile defense system to intercept these weapons? If not, what specific actions would you recommend the U.S. Government take to respond to and counter these new strategic nuclear weapons?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Department of Defense to better understand their capabilities to deter, and if deterrence fails, defend against, attack from the novel strategic systems being developed by the Russian Federation. If confirmed, I anticipate working closely with the Department of Defense to review U.S. capabilities to ensure the United States has robust capabilities to deter, and if deterrence fails, defend against, attacks on the U.S. Homeland and to examine ways that our allies can contribute to enhancing U.S. national security.

Question. During your testimony, you discussed pursuing deeper cuts to our nuclear weapons systems.

- At a time when Russia and China are modernizing their nuclear weapons, would you advocate for the United States to make unilaterally cuts to our nuclear deterrent?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review all relevant information on specific programs during the course of the Nuclear Posture Review and report my conclusions back to the committee. Prior to the review, it would be premature to speak to the sizing, including possible reductions, of U.S. forces.

Question. The U.S. withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Treaty (INF), the Open Skies Treaty and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. You opposed the United States withdrawing from each of these international agreements.

- Given your tweet confirming your statement that U.S. actions to withdraw from the INF treaty undermines global security, what is your view on whether the United States should rejoin the INF treaty?

Answer. As the INF Treaty terminated upon the U.S. withdrawal, it is not possible to re-enter it. I agree with NATO's August 2, 2019, statement that "Russia bears sole responsibility for the demise of the Treaty." Russia's material breach of the INF Treaty and refusal to return to compliance led to the U.S. withdrawal and thus to the Treaty's termination. The United States should work with its allies and partners to ensure Russia gains no advantage by possessing this class of missile.

Question. Based on your detailed knowledge on this treaty and strong statements opposing the United States leaving the treaty, do you believe the United States should rejoin the Open Skies Treaty?

Answer. I share President Biden's view that it was a mistake to withdraw from the treaty, notwithstanding Russian compliance issues. Many of our Allies pointed out that none of these compliance concerns impacted the overall operation of the

treaty. That said, leaving a treaty, and rejoining a treaty while Russia continues to violate it are two different things. I understand an interagency review of Open Skies is underway. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about internal discussions on the matter.

Question. Why do you support the United States rejoining the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to ensuring that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon and to addressing the many other issues of concern related to Iran. The JCPOA was concluded to ensure Iran never acquires nuclear weapons, and it provides the most intrusive verification and monitoring procedures ever negotiated. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration is engaging in meaningful diplomacy to achieve a mutual return to compliance with JCPOA commitments as a first step, but the work will not end there. The administration intends to build on the JCPOA and use it as a platform to lengthen and strengthen the constraints on Iran's nuclear program and to address other critical issues.

Question. The United States has not ratified the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

- Do you support the United States ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty? If so, why?

Answer. Yes. The United States maintains the safety, security, and effectiveness of our nuclear arsenal without having to conduct nuclear explosive tests. It is in our national security interest to prevent a world in which states are completely unconstrained from conducting such tests. An in-force CTBT would aid in that effort.

Question. The United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force in January 2021. It is the first multilateral legal document to outlaw nuclear weapons.

- Based on your experience and background in arms control, what is your view of the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons?

Answer. While I understand and share the desire to make progress toward a world without nuclear weapons, the TPNW is not the right way to achieve that goal. The TPNW risks undermining U.S. deterrence relationships that are still necessary for international peace and security and may reinforce divisions that hinder our ability to work together to address pressing proliferation and security challenges. All NATO Allies remain opposed to the TPNW, as repeatedly stated by the North Atlantic Council, most recently in December of 2020. The best way to achieve a world without nuclear weapons is through a process that takes into account the international security environment and seeks effective, verifiable arms control and disarmament measures.

Question. On January 3, 2020, you tweeted, "What is the U.S. logic to the strike on Qasem Soleimani?"

- The United States took decisive action on January 3, 2020, to prevent an imminent attack by a ruthless terrorist on Americans and our allies in the region. As the head of the Quds Force, General Soleimani created, supported, and directed a network of terrorist organizations that launched attacks across the region. As a war criminal, Soleimani was responsible for wounding and killing hundreds of Americans and he would have killed many more if given the chance.
- Based on your tweet, why did you disagree with the top U.S. commander in the region that the Soleimani strike re-established a deterrent in the region?

Answer. The tweet you referenced above was a retweet, without commentary, of a CNN article titled, "What is the U.S. logic to the strike on Iran's Qasem Soleimani?" The article was an analysis of the likely factors that went into the previous administration's decision to strike Soleimani. I have not expressed disagreement on this issue with the "top U.S. commander in the region."

Question. Why do you believe America is not safer today because Qasem Soleimani is gone?

Answer. Qasem Soleimani was a key architect of much of Iran's malign behavior. He had blood on his hands, including American blood, and I do not regret the killing of such an enemy of the United States. The question is not whether Soleimani was good or bad; the question is whether this action made the American people safer, based on the likelihood of Iranian retaliation and the broader strategic context in which the strike took place. I did not comment that America is not safer today be-

cause Qasem Soleimani is gone, nor do I have access to strategic assessments that would enable that conclusion, but it is a question that I and others have raised.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BONNIE R. JENKINS BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. The Trump administration made great progress unwinding the United States from outdated Cold War-style arms control agreements with Russia. Many of those treaties—and the approach behind them—eroded American national security by constraining us, permitting Russian noncompliance, and of course not constraining the Chinese at all.

- One significant step was to end U.S. participation in the Open Skies Treaty (OST). The Russians had been in chronic noncompliance for a decade, and were declared noncompliant in 2017: certain overflights of the Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad, flights in the vicinity of the enclaves that they essentially invaded and carved off of the country of Georgia, not allowing some overflights of Russian military exercises, etc. It was long past time to withdraw.
- You've publicly indicated that the U.S. withdrawing from the OST was a mistake.
- Do you believe the U.S. should reenter OST or a similar agreement?

Answer. I share President Biden's view that it was a mistake to withdraw from the treaty, notwithstanding Russian compliance issues. That said, leaving a treaty, and rejoining a treaty while Russia continues to violate it are two different things. I believe we should carefully consider the costs and benefits of rejoining before making any decision. As part of this analysis, we should consult with Allies and partners who are States Parties to the treaty, including on any future steps.

Question. Do you believe that if the U.S. did reenter OST or a similar agreement, such a step would require the advice and consent of the Senate?

Answer. I believe that Congressional authorization would be required for the United States to rejoin the Treaty on Open Skies.

Question. If you believe that the U.S. should reenter OST or a similar agreement, please describe your strategy for ending chronic Russian noncompliance.

Answer. If the administration were to decide to take steps to rejoin OST, I would recommend working with the interagency on ways to expand and enhance our work on compliance as it relates to the agreement.

Treaties/INF

Question. Another Cold War-style treaty from which the Trump administration withdrew was the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. China had arguably been the biggest beneficiary of the INF Treaty. According to then-Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command Harry Harris (now U.S. ambassador to South Korea), roughly 95 percent of China's missile forces would fall within INF Treaty parameters. The Treaty held us back from developing the technologies we needed to counter the Chinese.

- Do you believe it was a mistake to exit the INF?

Answer. I agree with NATO's August 2, 2019, statement that "Russia bears sole responsibility for the demise of the Treaty." Russia's material breach of the INF Treaty and refusal to return to compliance led to the U.S. withdrawal and thus to the treaty's termination. The United States should work with its allies and partners to ensure Russia gains no advantage by possessing this class of missile.

Question. Do you believe the U.S. should reenter the INF or a similar agreement?

Answer. As the INF Treaty terminated upon the United States' withdrawal, it is not possible to re-enter it. I look forward to working with Congress and relevant agencies and departments on ways to create new arms control agreements that serve U.S. interests.

Question. How do you believe that the missile asymmetry created by INF compliance in the Pacific affects America's efforts to operate within the first and second island chains in a conflict over Taiwan or the South China Sea?

Answer. China's expansion of its nuclear and missile arsenal presages a more dangerous future, with a larger number of sophisticated intermediate-range delivery systems able to target U.S., allied, and partner forces in the Indo-Pacific. I defer

to the Department of Defense for a direct assessment of their effects on regional U.S. military operations and posture.

Question. How should the U.S. craft an arms control framework that secures its ability to operate within contested zones in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the administration's pursuit of arms control measures to reduce the dangers from the People's Republic of China's growing nuclear arsenal, coupled with efforts designed to bolster deterrence in the region. It is critical that the United States consult closely with Indo-Pacific allies and partners to ensure arms control efforts both reduce the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. security strategy and ensure U.S. extended deterrence commitments remain strong and credible.

Treaties / CEF

Question. The 1996 Flank Agreement to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) is one of the canonical examples where the United States negotiated arms control restrictions that the Russians serially violated, but nevertheless it took years for the U.S. or its allies to formally unwind from the Treaty. Under most interpretations, Russia was never in compliance with the 1996 limits, though it arguably complied with parts of the Adapted treaty. You participated in negotiations regarding the Flank agreement. Please describe—

- Your assessment about whether the Russians ever came into compliance with the Flank parameters.
- Your assessment of whether the Flank Agreement enhanced U.S. national security.
- Your role in formulating, reviewing, and approving the Flank Agreement, including—
 - Your overall role in formulating, reviewing, and approving the Agreement.
 - Your role in the delegation, including who you reported to.

Answer. My understanding is that Russia has not been in compliance with the May 1996 flank limits, but is within the overall treaty limits. If Russia remains within the overall conventional treaty limits, I believe such limits continue to promote both U.S. and U.S. allied national security interests as envisioned when the treaty was negotiated.

- As noted, the flank limits text was negotiated in 1996, at a time when I had already transitioned to working on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and was working on CTBT backstopping in Washington, DC. I was therefore not involved in the drafting of the final text of the agreement. I refer you to the Department as to its staffing of this issue at that time.

Question. Any role you had in reviewing the final text of the Agreement. If you did not have a role in reviewing the agreement, why not and who provided legal advice for reviewing?

Answer. I was not involved in the drafting of the final text of the agreement because I had moved on to working on the CTBT. I refer you to the Department as to its staffing of this issue at that time.

Question. Any role you had in approving the final text of the Agreement. If you did not have a role in approving the agreement, why not and who provided legal advice for approving?

Answer. I was not involved in the drafting of the final text of the agreement because I had moved on to working on the CTBT. I refer you to the Department as to its staffing of this issue at that time.

China / NPT

Question. The Chinese plan to triple their nuclear arsenal in the coming years.

- What leverage does the U.S. have to get China to the negotiating table?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work within the administration, in consultation with U.S. allies and partners, to pursue arms control measures to reduce the dangers from the People's Republic of China's growing nuclear arsenal. It is to be hoped that Beijing will come to see that arms control is in its security interest: not a trap designed to weaken China's defenses, but rather a mechanism to reduce risk and the chances of uncontrollable arms races. U.S. allies and partners will be key to success, and if confirmed I will seek to work with them to regularly urge the PRC to engage meaningfully with the United States on arms control.

Question. What is your plan to realistically get China to the negotiating table for a credible arms control agreement?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the administration's pursuit of arms control measures to reduce the dangers from the People's Republic of China's growing nuclear arsenal. U.S. allies and partners will be key to success, and if confirmed I will seek to work with them to regularly urge the PRC to engage meaningfully with the United States on arms control. I understand that the administration is in the process of crafting specific proposals, and, if confirmed, I commit to consulting with Congress regarding the arms control approach the administration foresees pursuing with China.

Question. I introduced a bill last session that would impose sanctions on parts of the Chinese military sector unless they come into compliance with their already-existing NPT Article VI obligations for 'good faith' negotiations.

- Do you believe China is meeting its NPT Article VI obligations?

Answer. China's nuclear weapons build-up risks undermining decades of international progress toward nuclear disarmament. If confirmed, I will consult with legal and policy experts at the Department of State on a variety of matters related to China's behavior in the nuclear weapon arena, including its compliance with Article VI.

Iran/NPT

Question. As traditionally understood, Article IV of the NPT entitles member states to the benefits of peaceful civil-nuclear technology to the extent that they are members in good standing with the NPT. In the last administration, Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation Jeffrey L. Eberhardt confirmed to the SFRC in writing that "Iran's standing as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the NPT cannot be described as 'good.'"

- Do you consider Iran's past possession of the Nuclear Archive seized by Israel, including the materials in the Archive relevant to the development of nuclear weapons, to constitute non-compliance by Iran of its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why.

Answer. I have serious concerns about Iran's compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and if confirmed, I will work with legal and policy experts to monitor and assess Iran's NPT compliance. Iran must cooperate fully with the IAEA to address the serious, outstanding issues related to potential undeclared nuclear material in Iran. As a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the NPT, Iran is obligated not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons. Under the JCPOA, Iran reaffirmed this commitment, and if confirmed, I will work to ensure that Iran never obtains a nuclear weapon.

Question. All three legs of the U.S. nuclear triad are required to maintain a reliable, credible and effective deterrent. This is especially true as Russia continues to modernize its nuclear forces and China is increasing its nuclear forces in an attempt at nuclear parity.

- Do you consider Iran's past concealment of the Nuclear Archive seized by Israel, including the materials in the Archive relevant to the development of nuclear weapons, to constitute non-compliance by Iran of its obligations under the NPT. If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why.

Answer. Iran's long history of denial and concealment regarding its past nuclear weapons program is of serious concern. The Biden-Harris administration has stated that it will not take Iran at its word regarding assertions about its nuclear program, and fully supports the IAEA as it uses its safeguards authorities to investigate any indication of undeclared nuclear material or activities in Iran. If confirmed, I am committed to working to ensure that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

Question. Do you consider Iran a member in good standing of the NPT? If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why.

Answer. I have serious concerns about Iran's compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and if confirmed, I will work with legal and policy experts to monitor and assess Iran's NPT compliance. Given Iran's past noncompliance with both its safeguards agreement and its NPT obligations, its failure to fully and substantially address IAEA questions related to past activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device, its retention and concealment of documents, equipment, and personnel related to its past nuclear weapons program, and its failure to fully address current IAEA questions related to potential undeclared nuclear

materials and activities in Iran, Iran's nuclear activities are cause for serious concern.

Question. Do you consider Iran to be entitled to benefit from nuclear technology pursuant to Article IV the NPT? If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why.

Answer. Article IV of the NPT recognizes the right of all the Parties to the Treaty, including Iran, to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of the Treaty. Iran must, however, comply with its international obligations when undertaking nuclear activities, including its obligations under Article II of the NPT and its NPT-required safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Question. Do you consider Iran to be entitled to benefit from nuclear technology for any reason? If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why.

Answer. Article IV of the NPT recognizes the right of all the Parties to the Treaty, including Iran, to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I and II of the Treaty. Iran must, however, comply with its international obligations when undertaking nuclear activities, including its obligation under Article II of the NPT not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons.

Iran/UNSCR 2231 Snapback

Question. UNSCR 2231 ended a long-standing international arms embargo against Iran, described across the previous six resolutions terminated by paragraph 7(a) of the resolution. After an effort to extend that embargo, the Trump administration took two measures. First, it invoked the "snapback mechanism" described in paragraphs 10-15 of UNSCR 2231, reversing the termination of those resolutions. You and others have publicly suggested that the U.S. was not entitled to invoke that mechanism. Second, the Trump administration implemented EO 13949, "Blocking Property of Certain Persons with Respect to Conventional Arms Activities of Iran," which authorizes sanctions for transfers to and from Iran of arms or related material or military equipment. As a result, the U.S. established a baseline deterrent against major arms sales to Iran. Multi-billion dollar arms agreements publicly described and anticipated by Russia, China, and Iran did not occur.

However, in February 2021, the Biden administration rescinded that decision.

- Do you agree with the decision to rescind invoking the snapback mechanism?

Answer. The snapback mechanism was designed to provide leverage to help ensure Iran performed its commitments under the JCPOA. The previous administration invoked snapback in a way that was never contemplated by the deal, namely after unilaterally exiting it. Virtually none of our allies or partners recognized this invocation of snapback. The Biden-Harris administration believes that the United States will be in a stronger position to counter the full range of threats posed by Iran, including its nuclear program, by working in close concert with our allies.

Question. Do you believe that Russia would be in violation of any UNSCR if Russia sold advanced weapons to Iran? If so, which ones?

Answer. The provisions in UNSCR 2231 prohibiting the sale, supply, or transfer to Iran of items on the U.N. Register of conventional arms expired in October 2020. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to working with our allies and partners to counter Iran's destabilizing activities in the region, including its acquisition of advanced weapons from Russia. If confirmed, I will continue to work with our partners on the Security Council to dissuade countries from providing advanced weapons to Iran and fueling Iran's efforts to undermine the stability of its neighbors in the region. The United States retains numerous unilateral authorities, including E.O. 13949 ("Blocking Property of Certain Persons with Respect to Conventional Arms Activities of Iran") to deter and sanction transfers to and from Iran of advanced weapons.

Question. Do you believe that Russia would be in violation of any UNSCR if Russia purchased advanced weapons from Iran? If so, which ones?

Answer. The provisions in UNSCR 2231 prohibiting the sale, supply, or transfer from Iran of arms and related materiel expired in October 2020. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to working with our allies and partners to counter Iran's destabilizing activities in the region, including its sales of weapons and arms. If confirmed, I will continue to work with our partners on the Security Council to dissuade countries from purchasing such equipment from Iran and fueling Iran's ef-

forts to undermine the stability of its neighbors in the region. The United States retains numerous unilateral authorities, including E.O. 13949 (“Blocking Property of Certain Persons with Respect to Conventional Arms Activities of Iran”) to deter and sanction transfers to and from Iran of advanced weapons.

Question. Do you believe that China would be in violation of any UNSCR if China sold advanced weapons to Iran? If so, which ones?

Answer. The provisions in UNSCR 2231 prohibiting the sale, supply, or transfer to Iran of items on the U.N. Register of conventional arms expired in October 2020. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to working with our allies and partners to counter Iran’s destabilizing activities in the region, including its acquisition of advanced weapons from China. If confirmed, I will continue to work with our partners on the Security Council to dissuade countries from providing advanced weapons to Iran and fueling Iran’s efforts to undermine the stability of its neighbors in the region. The United States retains numerous unilateral authorities, including E.O. 13949 (“Blocking Property of Certain Persons with Respect to Conventional Arms Activities of Iran”) to deter and sanction transfers to and from Iran of advanced weapons.

Question. Do you believe that China would be in violation of any UNSCR if China purchased advanced weapons from Iran? If so, which ones?

Answer. The provisions in UNSCR 2231 prohibiting the sale, supply, or transfer from Iran of arms and related materiel expired in October 2020. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to working with our allies and partners to counter Iran’s destabilizing activities in the region, including its sales of weapons and arms. If confirmed, I will continue to work with our partners on the Security Council to dissuade countries from purchasing such equipment from Iran and fueling Iran’s efforts to undermine the stability of its neighbors in the region. The United States retains numerous unilateral authorities, including E.O. 13949 (“Blocking Property of Certain Persons with Respect to Conventional Arms Activities of Iran”) to deter and sanction transfers to and from Iran of advanced weapons.

Question. Do you believe that Iran would be in violation of any UNSCR if Iran conducted any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology?

Answer. United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 2231 calls upon Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology. The United States uses a number of tools to prevent transfers of equipment and technology to Iran’s missile programs and call attention to Iran’s missile development efforts. This includes reporting to the Security Council launches by Iran that use technologies related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons and urging the Council to address such activities.

Question. Do you believe that Iran would be in violation of any UNSCR if Iran conducted any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology?

Answer. United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 2231 calls upon Iran not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology. The United States uses a number of tools to prevent transfers of equipment and technology to Iran’s missile programs and call attention to Iran’s missile development efforts. This includes reporting to the Security Council launches by Iran that use technologies related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons and urging the Council to address such activities.

JCPOA/Treaty

Question. I believe that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and any similar arms control agreement with Iran should be brought to the U.S. Senate as a treaty for the Senate’s advice and consent. Officials from the Biden administration have indicated in public and private they disagree with that stance, because it is important in the context of such agreements to allow the U.S. to act “without the constraints of international treaty law.” I disagree with that analysis, which fails to account for the Senate’s prerogatives in general, and in the context of the JCPOA cannot be reconciled with the Obama-Biden administration’s move to lock in the JCPOA at through United Nations Security Council Resolution UNSCR 2231, which sought to constrain U.S. behavior at the level of international law.

- Do you believe that the JCPOA or a successor agreement should be brought to the U.S. Senate for advice and consent? If not, why not?

Answer. Secretary Blinken has committed to consulting fully with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program, as called for under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). The JCPOA was negotiated as a non-legally binding arrangement and transmitted to Congress under INARA in 2015, and it underwent close congressional and public scrutiny. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the Secretary, Special Envoy Malley, and other members of the administration in consultations on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program, and to complying with the provisions of INARA.

Question. Do you believe that the JCPOA or a successor agreement should not be brought to the Senate for advice and consent specifically because it would constrain U.S. options? If so, please describe those constraints.

Answer. Secretary Blinken has committed to consulting fully with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). The JCPOA was negotiated as a non-legally binding arrangement and transmitted to Congress under INARA in 2015, and it underwent close congressional and public scrutiny. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the Secretary, Special Envoy Malley, and other members of the administration in consultations on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program, and to complying with the provisions of INARA.

Question. If a future agreement with Iran is not submitted to the U.S. Senate for its advice and consent, do you believe that a future administration would be within its legal prerogatives to dismantle it?

Answer. Secretary Blinken has committed to consulting fully with Congress on any agreement relating to Iran's nuclear program as called for under the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). The JCPOA was negotiated as a non-legally binding arrangement and transmitted to Congress under INARA in 2015, and it underwent close congressional and public scrutiny. If there were to be a U.S. return to the JCPOA, the arrangement would impose no legal constraints on the United States' ability to protect its interests, including, for example, by ceasing participation in the deal if Iran were to fail to adhere to its JCPOA commitments.

State Department

Question. The Obama administration was broadly criticized, especially in the context of its Middle East policy, for co-mingling unclassified documents with classified documents. This practice requires that documents be placed in a secure location, unnecessarily limiting access to unclassified documents and stifling public debate. The Biden administration already seems to be repeating such practices: according to an exchange during the State Department press briefing on February 11, a notification describing the lifting of terrorism sanctions on Iran-controlled terrorists in Yemen was unnecessarily transmitted to a Congressional SCIF.

- Can you commit to ensuring that unclassified information is not unnecessarily comingled with classified information in notifications provided by the State Department to Congress? If not, why not?

Answer. I am committed to working to ensure that information provided to Congress is, to the fullest extent possible, in a format that facilitates its access by authorized personnel, while complying with Executive Order 13526, the Department of State classification guide, and the executive branch rules on the handling and storage of classified information.

Question. What are your goals for your bureau, if confirmed?

Answer. I have several priorities I would like to engage on if confirmed, the broadest and most important of which is to play a role in reducing the risk of nuclear war through effective arms control. I believe it is also critical that we make progress on limiting Russian and Chinese nuclear expansion, strengthening our efforts in biosecurity, pursuing accountability for the use of chemical weapons, and promoting a diverse workforce. If confirmed I hope to work to strengthen deterrence alliances in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific to better deter and defend against growing threats, and to help position the U.S. Government and State Department to grapple with advancements in emerging technologies that can threaten strategic stability. Finally, I intend if confirmed to strive to ensure that arms transfers and security assistance are focused on building values-based security partnerships.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BONNIE R. JENKINS BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. China voluntarily agreed, in 1997, to report its annual civil plutonium production figures and related activities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), along with the U.S., UK, France, Russia, Japan, Belgium, Switzerland, and Germany. The last Chinese report, which covered 2016, was submitted in 2017.

There is no public record of the U.S. taking them to task for no longer reporting this information, which is troubling due to their development of a fast-breeder reactor program.

Furthermore, the Commander of USSTRATCOM indicated, at an open Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on 14 April 2021, that “this will change the upper bounds of what China could choose to do, if they wanted to, in terms of further expansion of their nuclear capabilities.”

- Do you know if this has been discussed, with the Chinese, in diplomatic circles? Will you commit to meeting with me, if confirmed, to discuss this issue further?

Answer. I have not been privy to such conversations. However, if confirmed, I will call on China to submit its declaration report to the IAEA per Information Circular (INFCIRC)/549 concerning “Guidelines for the Management of Plutonium.” If confirmed, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this issue further.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. BONNIE R. JENKINS BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Nuclear Modernization

Question. If you are confirmed, will you commit supporting the modernization of U.S. nuclear forces? Please begin your answer with yes or no.

Answer. Yes, the United States should have a modern, credible, and effective deterrent.

Question. In your view, why is the modernization of U.S. nuclear forces critical to protecting the security of the United States?

Answer. The United States must maintain a credible nuclear deterrent as long as nuclear weapons exist. Nuclear weapons will continue to exist beyond the planned service lives of existing U.S. nuclear forces and modernization is necessary to sustain a credible deterrent.

Question. In your view, do you agree that the role of nuclear weapons should be reduced in U.S. foreign policy, as stated by two Biden administration officials in an interview with the Asahi Shimbun? Please begin your answer with yes or no. In an interview with Asahi Shimbun, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification, and Compliance Alexandra Bell and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Missile Defense Policy Leonor Tomero publicly stated that “there is no doubt that President Biden’s goal is to reduce the role of nuclear weapons.”

Answer. Yes, as the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance states, “We will take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, while ensuring our strategic deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective and that our extended deterrence commitments to our allies remain strong and credible.”

No First Use Policy

Question. If you are confirmed, will you commit to upholding the longstanding U.S. policy of not adopting a “no first use” policy? Please begin your answer with yes or no. Admiral Charles Richards, who heads the U.S. Strategic Command, said that his “best military advice would be not adopt a no-first-use policy.” During her nomination hearing, Deputy Secretary of Defense Kath Hicks said that a “no first use” policy is not in the interest of the United States.

Answer. The President of the United States determines U.S. declaratory policy. The Biden-Harris administration is undertaking a review of nuclear policy that will certainly include declaratory policy. If confirmed, I will participate in that process and will consult with Congress and our allies on any policies or actions in this area.

Question. In your view, what are the conditions in which the United States can actually use a nuclear weapon? On January 2021, you argued for declaring a “no first use” policy, stating that “the United States needs to define the conditions where we can actually use a nuclear weapon.”

Answer. The President of the United States determines the conditions under which the United States would consider the use of nuclear weapons. The Biden-Har-

ris administration is undertaking a review of nuclear policy that will certainly include declaratory policy. I have thought, as many do, that the United States might consider changes to U.S. declaratory policy that could increase stability. I understand that there are varying perspectives on the issue, but I believe most agree that we want to reduce nuclear risks to the United States and our allies and partners. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the interagency and allies and Congress to find the best ways to do this.

Question. What risks might U.S. allies face if the United States were to adopt a “no first use” policy?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is undertaking a review of nuclear policy that will certainly include declaratory policy. If confirmed, I will participate in that process and will consult with Congress and U.S. allies on any policies or actions in this area. It would be premature to speculate about risks prior to the completion of this review.

China & Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Question. In your view, if a country with nuclear weapons, which is a signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, deliberately and repeatedly refuses to engage in good faith negotiations on the issue of arms control, would you agree that country is in violation of Article VI of the NPT? Please begin your answer with yes or no. Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons clearly stipulates that countries with nuclear weapons should “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race.” In recent years, the United States repeatedly attempted to engage China on the issue of arms control, but Beijing refused, asserting that “the time is not yet ripe” for such discussions.

Answer. If confirmed, I will consult with legal and policy experts at the Department of State on a variety of matters related to China’s behavior in the nuclear weapon arena, including its compliance with Article VI of the NPT. It is urgent for China to take on greater responsibility, transparency, and restraint with respect to its nuclear weapons arsenal.

Security Assistance

Question. If you are confirmed, what metrics would you rely upon to determine whether China is violating VI of the NTP Treaty?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consult with legal and policy experts at the Department of State on a variety of matters related to China’s behavior in the nuclear weapons arena, including considerations relevant to assessing compliance with Article VI of the NPT.

On the Next Arms Control Treaty

Question. If you are confirmed, do you commit that the next arms control treaty should include China? Please begin your answer with yes or no.

Answer. No. While the United States will pursue arms control measures to reduce the dangers from the People’s Republic of China’s growing nuclear arsenal, arms control agreements and arrangements must be tailored to the security challenges they are intended to address. Although there may be opportunities for the United States and Russia to engage the PRC in a trilateral forum, I do not believe that all future arms control endeavors with Russia must include the PRC.

Question. If you are confirmed, do you commit that the next arms control treaty with Russia must address all nuclear warheads, to include Russia’s non-strategic nuclear weapons? Please begin your answer with yes or no.

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we use the time provided by a five-year extension of the New START Treaty to pursue with Russia, in consultation with Congress and U.S. allies and partners, arms control that addresses all Russian nuclear weapons, including novel strategic systems and non-strategic nuclear weapons. Incorporating Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons into arms control is a longstanding and bipartisan U.S. objective.

Question. If you are confirmed, do you commit to regularly briefing Congress on the status of diplomatic engagements with China on the issue of arms control?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed I commit to regularly consulting Congress on the status of the Biden-Harris administration’s approach to China and arms control.

Iran and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Question. In your view, is Iran in compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons? Please begin your answer with yes or no.

Answer. I have serious concerns about Iran's compliance with the NPT, and if confirmed, I will work with legal and policy experts to monitor and assess Iran's NPT compliance. President Biden has made clear he is committed to ensuring that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon, and I share that commitment.

Question. If yes, how is Iran in compliance when it has not answered the IAEA's questions on undeclared nuclear material and activities?

Answer. I have serious concerns about Iran's compliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in light of the IAEA's ongoing safeguards investigations and Iran's failure to provide the IAEA with the cooperation necessary to resolve them. If confirmed, I will work with legal and policy experts to monitor and assess Iran's NPT compliance. Iran must engage and cooperate fully with the IAEA in a way that leads to credible, concrete progress and toward resolution of these issues. Like President Biden, I have full confidence in the IAEA to pursue any indications of undeclared or diverted nuclear material that could contribute to any renewed Iranian pursuit of a nuclear weapon.

Question. If you are confirmed, do you commit to providing no sanctions relief to Iran until they comply with the IAEA's requests to resolve the outstanding issues on undeclared nuclear materials and activities? The 2021 Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments noted that during the 2020 reporting period, the IAEA Director General (DG) issued several reports on Iran that make clear that serious, outstanding concerns remain regarding possible undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran today.

Answer. Iran is obligated under its NPT-required safeguards agreement to declare to the IAEA nuclear material and nuclear activities in Iran. Iran's failure to provide substantive or technically credible responses to the IAEA's questions related to possible undeclared nuclear materials and activities in Iran is cause for serious concern. If confirmed, I will strongly support the IAEA's ongoing investigation in Iran into indications of possible undeclared nuclear material and, along with the rest of the international community, expect full Iranian cooperation with inspectors—without delay—as the IAEA works toward conclusions. President Biden has made clear he is committed to ensuring that Iran never acquires a nuclear weapon.

Open Skies Treaties

Question. In your view, do you agree that Russia has violated, and continues to violate, the Treaty on Open Skies? Please begin your answer with yes or no. The 2021 Adherence to and Compliance with Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Disarmament Agreements and Commitments noted that in "2020, the United States continued to assess that Russia was in violation of the Treaty on Open Skies (OST)." In May 2020, the Director of the U.S. National Counterintelligence and Security Center said: "For years, Russia has used the Open Skies Treaty to collect intelligence on civilian infrastructure and other sensitive sites in America, posing an unacceptable risk to our national security."

Answer. Yes, Russia has violated, and continues to violate, the Treaty on Open Skies. I am not aware that Russia has taken any action to return to compliance. As stated in this year's compliance report, Russia has not rescinded its illegal 500-kilometer sublimit over Kaliningrad. Russia also remains in violation for refusing to allow observation flights to approach within 10 kilometers of its border with the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. While not a violation of the treaty, Russia has also declared an airfield in Crimea as a Russian Open Skies refueling airfield, in an attempt to politicize the treaty.

Question. In your view, do you agree that Russia abuses the Treaty on Open Skies and its actions posed an unacceptable risk the security of the United States and our allies?

Answer. My view is that Russia's violations of the Treaty on Open Skies, while concerning, by themselves do not pose a direct and immediate threat to U.S. national security. Russia's use of the treaty to collect imagery of military and civilian infrastructure, while not prohibited by the treaty, could pose a risk, although I understand there are measures in place to mitigate that risk.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JOSE W. FERNANDEZ BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Rebuilding the Bureaus

Question. Neglect of the Economic Growth, Environment, and Energy Bureaus has resulted in a serious brain drain from the bureaus and hurt morale among the dedicated workforce of these Bureaus. The previous administration's skepticism and outright hostility towards environmental stewardship, climate change, clean energy diplomacy and economic cooperation were not only tone deaf and out of touch with the interests of the rest of the world, but were demoralizing to the very thoughtful and engaged personnel within these bureaus.

- How will you restore morale among personnel, build back the ranks of the "E" bureaus and offices, and demonstrate leadership and interest in the E Bureaus' priorities?

Answer. Rebuilding the "E" family will require commitment and dedication, not only in recruiting but in training and retention efforts. We will also need to pay special attention to groups whose lack of representation at the State Department pre-dates the previous administration. If confirmed, with your support and the help of my colleagues at State, I intend to pay special attention to this effort.

Question. How will you continue and build on this tradition of leadership to advance the values of transparency and accountability that the U.S. Government has championed across MDBs?

Answer. If confirmed, I will champion the values of transparency and accountability across all U.S. engagements with the multilateral development banks. In large part due to our significant shareholding size, the United States is in a position to continue to work with fellow shareholders to ensure the MDBs promote transparency and accountability in order to build more support among all stakeholders for the very important work they do to address systemic barriers to economic development.

Question. The U.S. National Contact Point (NCP) to the OECD is one of the only avenues for justice for harm caused by companies; however, reports have documented meaningful shortcomings in the NCP's ability for facilitating accountability and remedy. How will you ensure that the U.S. NCP is strong and effective to address business and human rights grievances?

Answer. The U.S. National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (Guidelines) serves an important role in promoting and implementing the Guidelines, and in facilitating the resolution of allegations brought against a company. The Guidelines provide important recommendations by governments to companies on responsible business practices, including with respect to human rights. If confirmed, I will review the current work of the U.S. NCP, consider feedback from concerned stakeholders, and take appropriate steps to ensure that the mechanism we have in place to address grievances is a meaningful one.

Question. What is your assessment of the push for an Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) capital increase?

Answer. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is a vital source of development finance for Latin America and the Caribbean and provides a high-quality alternative to unsustainable borrowing from China or other creditors. IDB lending and policy advice will be important for supporting the region in emerging from the multiple crises it faces. If confirmed, I intend look closely at the IDB's plans and current financing needs in collaboration with Treasury and other agencies.

Question. How can Congress best work with the administration to advance this goal (of an IDB capital increase)?

Answer. Discussions on the Inter-American Development Bank's (IDB) resources should occur from the bottom up, considering the views of all shareholders, including Congress and IDB management. Such discussions should include fulsome analyses of financial conditions, how its use of resources addresses the region's challenges, and the IDB's role within the larger financing and policy landscape for the region. If confirmed, I would look closely at the IDB's plans and current financing needs in collaboration with Congress, Treasury, and other agencies.

Question. How do you see the Under Secretary facilitating climate into the operations of State Department bureaus where the concept of "Climate Diplomacy" may still be new?

Answer. Among the many pressing international priorities on President Biden's agenda, reasserting American leadership in combating the global climate crisis is

among the most critical—having been identified by the President as one of the four “historic” crises confronting the United States. If confirmed, I plan to work closely with Secretary Kerry and his team to advance our climate diplomacy work. I understand that Secretary Kerry’s climate diplomacy work is closely coordinated with the Department’s. If confirmed, I am also committed to further integrating the climate agenda in the “E” family of bureaus and offices, and supporting the Biden-Harris administration’s broader diplomatic engagement.

Question. Can you describe how you see yourself, if confirmed, working in cooperation with the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate in realizing the full-scale integration and consideration of climate into our foreign policy apparatus?

Answer. If I am confirmed, while I will report to Secretary Blinken, I plan to work closely with Special Presidential Envoy Kerry and his team to advance our climate work. Addressing the climate crisis is going to take a whole-of-government and whole-of-Department of State approach. If confirmed, I will have the privilege of overseeing two of the bureaus most actively engaged in climate change diplomacy: the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, and the Bureau of Energy Resources. I anticipate a close working relationship with SPEC to ensure we are working together to advance this policy priority.

Question. Is it in the U.S. interest, or a sound reflection of U.S. values, to respond to BRI investments in fossil fuels by offering financing for comparable fossil fuel energy projects that have significant environmental impacts?

Answer. It is in the U.S. interest to work with countries to understand the full economic and environmental impact of energy investments and the availability of cost-effective, clean, and low-carbon alternatives to fossil fuels. This includes, but is not limited to, countries where the PRC is investing through its One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative. If confirmed, I commit to coordinating across U.S. Government agencies to work with international partners and expand competitive financing options for cost-effective, low carbon alternatives to PRC-backed, heavy-emitting infrastructure projects.

Question. Should the U.S. compete by providing better clean energy alternatives that provide wide ranging health, economic growth and social benefits to BRI energy projects that exacerbate the climate crisis and harm local health and the environment?

Answer. It is critical that countries’ energy needs be met in a safe, and fiscally and environmentally sustainable, manner. If confirmed, I commit to working with institutions like DFC and EXIM to advance U.S. clean energy financing options, with a focus on building partners’ capacities to assess and mitigate financial and environmental risks in the energy sector. I also commit to supporting international initiatives, such as the Blue Dot Network, to certify quality infrastructure projects that uphold global standards and are vital to strengthening shared climate, social, and environmental standards.

Question. Do you believe it is in the U.S. economic interest, and sound environmental policy, for the U.S. to pay foreign entities to take our plastic waste to create energy?

Answer. It is in the economic and environmental interest of the United States to support environmentally sound management of plastic waste and scrap. If confirmed, I will work with international partners to better understand international trade flows of plastic waste and scrap as the State Department and other Departments and agencies consider these important policy questions.

Question. Would you support a prohibition on export of U.S. plastic waste for foreign energy production?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support upholding and implementing U.S. export laws for waste and scrap, and supporting U.S. industry in understanding the policies of other countries related to trade in plastic waste and scrap. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration is still reviewing its position on international waste and scrap issues, and if confirmed I look forward to participating in that review.

Question. If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to increase U.S.-India cooperation on clean energy and address climate change?

Answer. I understand that U.S.-India cooperation on climate and clean energy is a core element of the bilateral relationship. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi launched the U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership at the Leaders Summit on Climate on April 22, 2021. Advancing India’s ambitious 2030 climate and clean energy targets, such as reaching 450 GW of renewable en-

ergy, will be critical to confronting the climate crisis. If confirmed, I intend to ensure that the State Department plays a leading role in advancing U.S.-India collaboration, including by building on existing initiatives through the Bureau of Energy Resources to mobilize clean energy finance and integrate renewable energy into a flexible power system.

Question. What role would you anticipate having in the implementation of the U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership?

Answer. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi launched the U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership at the Leaders Summit on Climate on April 22, 2021, elevating climate and clean energy collaboration to the core of the bilateral relationship. The Partnership goals are to support India's deployment of 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030, scale up innovative technologies, and build capacity for climate adaptation. If confirmed, I intend to ensure the State Department plays a leading role in this Partnership—through promoting clean energy finance, technical assistance on regulatory reform, and support for innovation and technology scale-up—and provides the resourcing to achieve the ambitious 2030 agenda.

Question. If confirmed, will you support the establishment of a U.S.-Eastern Mediterranean Energy Center?

Answer. I am familiar with the goals of the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act and, if confirmed, I will work with Congress and the Department of Energy to support the U.S.- Eastern Mediterranean Energy Center. I understand that the Department of Energy is working with counterparts from Israel, Greece, and the Republic of Cyprus, along with the State Department's Bureau of Energy Resources, to determine the Center's scope of activities, and expects to have a framework for establishment of the Center in the coming weeks.

Question. Will you commit to prioritizing labor rights and support for labor unions in relations with Bangladesh, if confirmed?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to prioritizing labor rights and support for labor unions in relations with Bangladesh. In 2013, President Obama suspended Bangladesh's trade benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) because the Government of Bangladesh had made insufficient progress in affording Bangladeshi workers internationally recognized worker rights. Since then, Bangladesh has made a few amendments to its labor law, but workers continue to face dismissals, blacklisting, and violence for attempting to join or form unions or demonstrate for their due wages and benefits. In response, the Department of State, USAID, and Department of Labor fund programs to improve workers' rights and safety in the garment, shrimp, and domestic work sectors, as well as for migrant workers. I understand that the State Department also coordinates with USAID, the International Labor Organization, and other partners to encourage Bangladesh to enact reforms to bring its labor legislation in line with international standards. If confirmed, I will ensure my team amplifies this work, and raises concerns about labor rights at the highest levels of the Government of Bangladesh.

Question. How specifically will you ensure that labor rights and labor unions are prioritized in initiatives such as High-Level Consultations on Economic Partnership with Bangladesh?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with leadership in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of Labor, and U.S. Trade Representative to ensure labor rights and labor unions are prioritized in initiatives with Bangladesh, including the High-Level Consultation on Economic Partnership. President Biden made clear in his address to a joint session of Congress on April 28: middle class workers grow the economy and unions build the middle class. Likewise, economic partnerships are only possible because of workers, so labor rights must be viewed as a priority across topics and sectors, rather than a standalone issue.

Question. Will you commit to working with international partners to combat plastic pollution and marine debris in the oceans?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to working with international partners to combat plastic pollution and marine debris in the ocean. I plan to work with colleagues at the Department and across the interagency, along with stakeholders, as the United States prepares for negotiations under the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly meeting, which is expected to deliberate on options for global action to address ocean plastic pollution in February 2022. If confirmed, I will also work with staff to implement the Department's activities under Save Our Seas 2.0, in-

cluding building international partnerships to build capacity to address marine debris.

Question. Will you help guide the State Department, working with other relevant federal agencies and multilateral institutions, to examine the environmental risks and social impact of foreign plastic waste processors that claim to recycle plastic waste?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will help guide the Department, including collaborating interagency partners and relevant multilateral institutions, to better understand the environmental and social impacts of foreign plastic waste processors that claim to recycle plastic waste.

Question. Will you make exploring the potential for new international agreements on land-based sources of marine debris and derelict fishing gear a priority for the Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Bureau?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to addressing ocean plastic pollution and working with countries and stakeholders to find innovative solutions to address land-based sources of marine debris as well as derelict fishing gear. The Biden-Harris administration has not taken a position on launching a new global instrument and is still developing its perspective on the best approaches to addressing marine litter and plastic pollution. If confirmed, I will work with interagency, stakeholders and international partners as we consider different approaches, including new global instruments.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JOSE W. FERNANDEZ BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Who is responsible for coordinating and effectively executing U.S. foreign policy, to include diplomatic engagement to advance U.S. global health security interests overseas—the Department of State, USAID, or CDC?

Answer. I understand that the United States takes a whole-of-government approach, under the President's leadership, and in coordination with the National Security Council, to advance U.S. foreign policy, including advancing U.S. global health security interests overseas. The President appointed a Coordinator for the Global COVID-19 Response and Health Security at the Department of State. This role leads diplomatic engagement on behalf of the U.S. Government on health security matters, coordinating closely with relevant departments and agencies. I understand that the Chief of Mission ultimately has authority and responsibility for U.S. activities in a respective country and is responsible for coordinating and effectively executing U.S. foreign policy. Staff across the U.S. interagency, including from the Department of State, USAID, and CDC, have critical roles to contribute to this effort.

Question. Who is responsible for coordinating and effectively executing U.S. foreign assistance overseas, to include diplomatic engagement to advance U.S. global health security interests in countries of all income categories—the Ambassador (Department of State), the Mission Director (USAID), or CDC country representatives?

Answer. I understand that under the direction of the President, the Secretary of State is responsible for the supervision and general direction of U.S. foreign assistance. I understand that the U.S. Ambassador, with Chief of Mission authority and responsibility for U.S. activities in a country, is responsible for ensuring adequate coordination among U.S. departments and agencies in country, as to best utilize the expertise of technical agencies such as USAID and CDC and ensure coordination across equities. The implementation of specific programs falls under USAID Mission Directors and CDC country representatives, who have important roles in directing country teams in the responsible and effective use of U.S. foreign assistance overseas.

Question. Who is best placed to coordinate the execution of a comprehensive U.S. global health security strategy overseas, including by resolving conflicts between implementing agencies and organizations—the Department of State, USAID, or CDC?

Answer. I understand that the Chief of Mission in a given country has ultimate responsibility for U.S. activities in the country, and the National Security Council coordinates implementation of U.S. foreign policy across agencies. I understand that the Department of State, USAID, CDC, DOD, and other agencies collaborate closely to coordinate and resolve conflicts in the execution of U.S. global health security strategy overseas.

Question. Given the leading role assigned to the Department of State by National Security Memorandum-1 (21 January 2021) and Executive Order 13747 (4 November 2016) in advancing U.S. global health security and diplomacy, the enormity of U.S. foreign assistance dedicated to advancing global health priorities overseas, and the fact that the major implementer of U.S. global health assistance overseas—USAID—falls under the foreign policy guidance of the Department of State, do you believe the Office of International Health and Biodefense, as currently structured, is fit for purpose?

Answer. The current pandemic highlights the importance of global health security. The Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs' Office of International Health and Biodefense (OES/IHB) advances these interests through diplomacy and foreign policy implementation bilaterally and multilaterally, in close coordination with the interagency. I understand that OES leadership will continue coordinating with relevant Department of State bureaus and offices and interagency partners to review global health security needs and assess the need for any additional resources, working with Congress.

Question. Do you agree that the PEPFAR model, to include the coordinating role played by the Department of State and the implementing roles played by USAID and the CDC, has been successful?

Answer. Yes. PEPFAR uses a whole-of-government model to harness the comparative advantages of seven U.S. Government implementing agencies, including USAID and CDC, with leadership and coordination through the U.S. Department of State, including at the country level through U.S. Chiefs of Mission worldwide. It may be the most rigorous global health program in terms of data collection. PEPFAR's interagency program implementation has been critical to PEPFAR's success in controlling the HIV/AIDS pandemic. As PEPFAR's work continues, it is seen as a model in global health, even in the context of COVID-19.

Question. As more and more countries approach epidemic control, do you believe this (PEPFAR) model could be adapted to advance broader global health security and diplomacy objectives, as the Obama administration envisioned under the GHI?

Answer. The current pandemic highlights the importance of strengthening global health security capacity and health systems. Various models for U.S. foreign assistance programs, including PEPFAR, have successfully bolstered health outcomes globally. Bureaus and offices at the Department of State—including the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, Office of International Health and Biodefense, and Office of Foreign Assistance—continue efforts to leverage the successes of various aid models to effectively strengthen global health security capacity, and I will look forward to reviewing those efforts and models if confirmed.

Question. As the Department and U.S. interagency work to help developing nations build their infrastructure and provide their energy needs, will you commit to considering all energy sources and fuels types that make the most sense for each project, particularly with respect to the needs of developing countries? Will you commit not to make general prohibitions on coal, oil, or natural gas projects?

Answer. I am committed, if confirmed, to help developing countries address their energy needs and support the Biden-Harris administration's whole-of-government approach to ensure that climate considerations are fully integrated into our energy-related engagements. This includes supporting developing countries as they plan for a low-emissions future that decarbonizes key sectors, increases competitive energy and infrastructure development, and increases energy access to sustainably meet growing demand. If confirmed, I will work within the Department and interagency to coordinate support to countries to meet their climate, energy access, and energy security needs in ways that further our climate and energy goals.

Question. If a capital increase is authorized for the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) this Congress, if confirmed, will you commit to working to establishing appropriate safeguards, transparency and conditionality measures to protect debt-vulnerable IADB member countries of that borrow from the IADB to restructure Chinese bilateral debt held by such countries? Do you also commit to establishing measures to protect such countries from incurring subsequent Chinese bilateral debt?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with our allies and partners to distinguish our approach to development from China's by ensuring that economic viability and transparency are built into the projects we support at the Inter-American Development Bank. I will also work to confront China's economic abuses and advocate for the highest transparency and accountability standards to promote development investments that are both beneficial and sustainable over the long term.

Question. China, through its Belt and Road Initiative, is financing and constructing infrastructure projects around the globe. These projects build relationships that will last years if not decades between China and other countries. Depending on the terms of the financing and the quality of the construction, China may secure an unfair advantage in the relationship to the detriment of the interests of the host country as well as the United States. How do you propose the United States counter these practices and strengthen relationships with countries in need of infrastructure development?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the United States distinguishes itself from Beijing's state-led approach to development, including the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, by promoting private-sector driven alternatives. The United States' approach focuses on partnerships that strengthen local capacity and promote entrepreneurship, transparency, good governance, fair practices, and internationally recognized environmental, social, and labor standards. If confirmed, I will work with partners and allies, and through existing U.S. Government agencies such as the Development Finance Corporation, the Export-Import Bank, and others, to promote and support infrastructure investments with high standards that ensure such projects are beneficial and sustainable over the long term.

Question. People's Republic of China (PRC) companies are making significant headway an important but often overlooked technology area: undersea cables. The prior administration focused on this issue through its Clean Cable initiative, and by providing financing for specific cable projects in the Indo-Pacific. Please describe your understanding of PRC activities in the undersea cable market and the implications for United States interests. Do you commit to prioritizing this area of technology if you are confirmed?

Answer. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration views undersea cables as critical to America's national security and economic prosperity. If confirmed, I will fully support Department efforts that prioritize protecting this critical infrastructure and work with allies and partners to prevent untrusted, high-risk, and unproven vendors, like those with ties to the PRC, from increasing their market share through unfair practices.

Question. After years of negotiations, on December 30th, 2020—nearly the final day of the German Council presidency—the European Union (EU) announced it had reached an agreement with China on an investment deal. What is your view of the EU's decision to conclude this agreement at this moment?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to early consultations with our EU and European partners on shared concerns about China, including through the recently relaunched U.S.-EU dialogue on China and on issues related to trade and investment. Ultimately, the onus will be on China to show that any new pledges in the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) on forced labor, state-owned enterprises, and subsidies are not just cheap talk, and the EU will need to hold the Chinese Government accountable. If confirmed, I will seek to engage with European counterparts on how to advance our shared economic interests and counter China's aggressive and coercive actions, as well as on China's failures to uphold its past international commitments.

Question. What are the economic and geopolitical implications of this agreement? Please be specific. Will it affect the EU's willingness to push back on China for its malign behavior, such as using the EU's new human rights sanctions regime? Do you believe that this agreement will affect, negatively or positively, U.S. attempts to hold China accountable for its malign trade and investment practices?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the administration's active engagement with EU and European counterparts on how to advance our shared economic interests and counter China's aggressive and coercive actions, including trade and investment practices. The economic and geopolitical implications of the deal will depend on whether it is ratified and, if so, whether the Chinese Government follows through on its commitments. The United States applauded the EU's imposition of sanctions in March under its global human rights sanctions regime against PRC individuals in connection with serious human rights abuses in Xinjiang, an action taken in unity with the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Question. The prior administration stood up an initiative called the Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network, designed to advance the development of sustainable, transparent, and high-quality infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific region by strengthening capacity-building programs; providing transaction advisory services and project preparation assistance to support sustainable infrastructure; and coordi-

inating the provision of United States assistance for the development of infrastructure. If confirmed, do you commit to supporting and continuing this program?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to continuing the Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network (ITAN). Public financing alone cannot fulfill the \$15 trillion global infrastructure gap over the next twenty years—we must mobilize private financing of quality infrastructure, particularly in the Indo-Pacific. Participants in ITAN representing 14 U.S. agencies have collaborated to identify and provide support for dozens of projects with a market value of \$190 billion. I will work to continue helping foreign partners build better enabling environments to mobilize greater private sector financing in quality infrastructure investment through ITAN.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to prioritizing advocacy, assistance, and other necessary initiatives to encourage, promote, and support greater investment in and economic and commercial engagement with Southeast Asia?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to supporting increased investment, economic, and commercial engagement in Southeast Asia. Transparent, inclusive, and resilient economic growth is key to ensuring that Southeast Asia remains free and open. Through our Indo-Pacific programs, if confirmed, I will work with U.S. Government economic agencies to help countries in the region attract quality investments, increase transparency, secure project financing for key transactions, and advocate for U.S. firms. I will also seek to work through multilateral organizations, such as APEC and ASEAN, to improve regional business environments, reduce trade barriers, and increase commercial ties between U.S. businesses and the region.

Question. How can the United States build more reliable trade and investment partnerships with African countries, particularly when the region faces severe economic impacts from the coronavirus pandemic, external debt, and inflationary pressures? What will it take to overcome these myriad challenges, and how do you believe the United States can assist?

Answer. I believe that fostering debt transparency is a key requirement for building back better in Africa. I understand that the United States supports the Paris Club-G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative and the Common Framework for Debt Treatments, both of which include debt transparency requirements. If confirmed, I will advance U.S. engagement in the multilateral debt initiatives, as well as ongoing World Bank and IMF support for economic recovery in Africa. The World Bank has provided \$50 billion for African countries, while a significant portion of the IMF's \$110 billion in COVID-related rapid financing has gone to Africa. If confirmed, I will also support development of a plan for a \$650 billion IMF special drawing rights allocation.

Question. Our strategy to counter malign foreign actors like the People's Republic of China (PRC) in African countries cannot be limited to still-nascent programs like Prosper Africa and aged initiatives like the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The United States' plan will also require strategic, targeted, and well-resourced "whole-of-country" initiatives that address not only the economic side of the issue, but the governance, cultural, and diplomatic sides as well. How can the United States better develop country- or city-level strategies (for Africa's ever-growing mega-cities) to properly incentivize U.S. private sector engagement in critical sectors to ensure they are well-positioned to compete?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that U.S. companies can compete on an even, transparent playing field. I will enhance our work to improve the investment climates on a country-by-country basis and inform U.S. firms of Africa's opportunities. U.S. businesses provide world-class products and services that Africans seek to grow their economies. If confirmed, I will examine how we can better coordinate our financing support across U.S. agencies. The Prosper Africa initiative has been working to coordinate many of these efforts, but we can do more. If confirmed, I will also support our soft power efforts, including engaging with youth and diaspora, and encouraging educational opportunities.

Question. Should the United States prioritize support of Africa's efforts to realize implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) or carve out strategic Free Trade Agreements with countries like Kenya? For regional economic blocs like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)?

Answer. I understand that the United States, while not a party to the AfCFTA, supports its goals of improved harmonization and coordination of trade in Africa. The agreement has the potential to foster a better business climate that would increase opportunities for U.S. businesses. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting USTR on any trade matters and strengthening alliances with our key partners, like

Kenya and the Regional Economic Communities across Africa. With respect to Kenya, I understand USTR is closely reviewing the negotiations that have taken place to date.

Question. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 establishes an Office of Sanctions Coordination within the Department of State. If confirmed, do you commit to work with my office and this committee to ensure that this office succeeds and fulfills its statutory mandate?

Answer. Yes. I share the Department's appreciation for Congress's deep and continued involvement in sanctions issues. If confirmed, I will work to leverage available expertise and resources throughout the Government on sanctions issues, including as the Department works to stand up the Office of Sanctions Coordination established in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, and will work with your office and the committee.

Question. Do you anticipate that the Office of the Special Envoy for Climate will coordinate with the E bureau? If so, how? Do you have an understanding of what the reporting structure would look like? In the event of a disagreement between your office and the Special Envoy's office, to whom would the matter be elevated?

Answer. While the Under Secretary position I have been nominated to reports to Secretary Blinken, if confirmed, I plan to work closely with Special Envoy for Climate (SPEC) Kerry and his team to advance our climate work. I understand Special Envoy Kerry's climate diplomacy work is closely coordinated with the Department's. If confirmed, I am committed to further integrating the climate agenda in the "E" (Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment) family. If confirmed, I will have the privilege of overseeing the two bureaus most engaged in climate diplomacy: the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs and the Bureau of Energy Resources. I anticipate a positive working relationship with SPEC.

Question. One of the irritants in the United States' relationship with our closest allies is the question of taxation of digital companies. Understandingly, European countries would like to tax companies operating in their territories, but this would have a direct and targeted harm on U.S. companies, since the U.S. is home to most of the largest tech companies. Resolving this issue is of primary importance both for our relationship with Europe, for pushing back on the influence of Chinese tech companies, and for the health of the U.S. tech companies. In this role, you would have a large part to play in the negotiations to resolve this issue. How do you view the issue? What do you believe is the right compromise? What are the consequences for not resolving it?

Answer. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration is committed to finding a multilateral solution to the current set of international tax issues that require collective action. If confirmed, I would seek to work within my role to pursue a strong international minimum tax to end the race to the bottom in corporate taxation, ensuring multinational enterprises pay their fair share. This should also include an equitable way to address the allocation of profits generated through the deployment of intangible property, including to resolve the issues that have been used to justify Digital Services Taxes. If confirmed, I look forward to working alongside colleagues throughout the U.S. Government to advance these efforts.

Question. Do you commit to continuing the previous administration's support for the Three Seas Initiative as a way to assist the infrastructure development of Eastern Europe in a sustainable way and to counter China's Belt and Road and 17+1 Initiative?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to continuing strong U.S. Government support for the Three Seas Initiative (3SI), a commitment already voiced by Secretary Blinken on several occasions. 3SI meets multiple strategic objectives of the Biden-Harris administration, including promoting the economic development and critical infrastructure resilience of some close U.S. Allies. 3SI contributes to closing development deficits left by communism; fostering the overall integration of Europe; strengthening Central and Eastern European resilience against, and Western alternatives to, Russian malign influence and the PRC's Belt and Road and 17+1 initiatives; and advancing multilateral partnership and transatlantic ties.

Question. What do you view as the DFC's role in this (3 Seas) Initiative? What additional steps can, and should, the U.S. Government take to incentivize the private sector to take the risks necessary to invest in the region?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Development Finance Corporation to maximize U.S. investment in Three Seas Initiative (3SI).

projects and in finding other ways, in coordination with members, international financial institutions, and private capital markets to support 3SI goals in the energy, digital, and transport sectors. The needs in the 3SI region cannot be addressed solely by the public sector; the United States must incentivize private capital and U.S. business to invest in this stable region whose economic indicators have long been strong and positive. The U.S. Government should also promote U.S. business investment in 3SI projects.

Question. Do you view the sanctions in the Protecting European Energy Security Act (PEESA), as amended, as a statutory requirement or an optional authority??

Answer. PEESA is U.S. law, and if confirmed, I will uphold the law. PEESA, as amended, is an important tool to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and ensure that Europe has a reliable, diversified energy supply that enhances rather than undermines its collective security. I understand that the Department continues to assess all potential targets involved in the construction of Nord Stream 2, to identify persons that engaged in conduct that meets the specific terms of the statute.

Question. Do you believe that it is possible to prevent the completion of NordStream 2, or is it inevitable?

Answer. Nord Stream 2 is a threat not only to Europe's energy security, but also to strategic stability on the continent. The administration will continue to work with allies and partners, using the tools at its disposal, to prevent the completion of the pipeline and to ensure that Europe has a reliable, diversified energy supply that enhances, rather than undermines, its collective security. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to work to bring an end to the project.

Question. Are U.S. sanctions on entities involved in NordStream 2 extraterritorial, as some have claimed?

Answer. The administration has made clear that any entity involved in the Nord Stream 2 pipeline risks U.S. sanctions and should immediately abandon work on the pipeline. I understand the administration continues to engage European allies and partners to make our opposition to the pipeline and the potential sanctions risk clear and will continue to underscore strong, bipartisan U.S. opposition to this Russian malign influence project.

Question. Do you believe it would be appropriate for the administration to negotiate a deal with Germany (or any foreign power) involving the waiving of mandatory sanctions absent prior consultations with Congress?

Answer. To the best of my knowledge, there is no such deal. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with Congress on this matter and others.

Question. Do you commit to upholding U.S. law and sanctioning entities that are building or supporting the building of the NordStream 2 pipeline?

Answer. PEESA is U.S. law, and if confirmed, I will uphold the law. I understand the Department continues to work to bring an end to the pipeline, which it views as a threat to European energy security and as a tool of Russian coercion. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to continue to assess and evaluate evidence available to determine the applicability of PEESA, as amended.

Question. How will you use your position as Under Secretary of Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment to use U.S. economic power to partner with, rather than coerce, European allies and partners to strengthen their mechanisms to push back on China, including strengthening and diversifying their economies, incentivizing western investment into eastern and southern Europe, building strong export control regimes, and reinforcing their investment screening mechanisms?

Answer. As Secretary Blinken said, the People's Republic of China is the only country with the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to seriously challenge the stable and open international system. To address this challenge, the United States must engage from a position of strength, which requires working with allies and partners since this combined weight is much harder for Beijing to ignore. If confirmed, I am committed to working closely with European partners who share our concerns to build resilience and reduce reliance on the PRC, and look forward to making progress on the issues you raise in upcoming G7 meetings, the U.S.-EU Summit and U.S.-EU China Dialogue, and in other venues.

Question. What are the most immediate and critical areas for State to prioritize in this effort? Will you have the capacity to prioritize both the removal of irritants in our relationship AND work to weaken China's economic power over Europe?

Answer. Our European partners share many of our concerns regarding the PRC's efforts to challenge the current economic order, but we will not always see eye to

eye, even with our closest allies. We must work together to build resilience by both protecting and promoting our technological advantages. We must work together to ensure global norms and standards reflect our values. We must work together to secure our global supply chains and promote fair trade. Managing our differences is essential to achieving our shared objectives and, if confirmed, I will ensure we find the common ground that will allow us to do so.

Question. The EU struck an investment deal with China last December, and yet, the U.S.-EU talks on trade and investment, through Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) negotiations, have crumbled. While the U.S. Trade Representative has primacy over trade talks, in this role, how will you push for enhanced trade and investment between the United States and the EU? What do you see as areas ripe for immediate cooperation in trade and investment? Do you believe there is room, despite protectionist instincts on both sides of the Atlantic, to complete any trade and investment agreements during the Biden administration? Will you push both sides to compromise for the sake of economic growth and unity against malign economic actors?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the administration's active engagement with EU and European counterparts on how to advance our shared economic interests. Failed FTA negotiations and tariff wars have badly damaged the U.S.-EU trade relationship over the past seven years. Resolving the trade disputes including Airbus-Boeing, Section 232 steel and aluminium, and Section 301 determinations in response to digital services taxes, in a manner that supports domestic jobs and growth in the United States, would remove key irritants in the relationship and allow us to focus on future challenges.

Question. Will you support a trade agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom? Do you believe that a US-UK free trade agreement would be a benefit to the United States as well as the UK? How will you work with the UK and EU to ensure that both sides of the Brexit deal uphold their commitments, which is to the benefit of the U.S., EU, and UK?

Answer. President Biden has been clear that he will make significant new investments in the United States for American workers before he signs any new trade deals. Now that a U.S. Trade Representative has been confirmed, I understand that the administration is reviewing the status of the negotiations and the text of the U.S.-UK FTA to determine the best way forward. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Department colleagues and USTR to engage with the UK Government on strengthening our ties across a wide range of economic issues. Further, President Biden has warned that any trade deal is contingent upon respect for the Good Friday Agreement.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JOSE W. FERNANDEZ BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. What are your most meaningful achievements to date in your career to promote human rights and democracy? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. While chairing the American Bar Association's Interamerican Law Committee at the height of the internal wars in Central America, I organized a network of lawyers from the hemisphere who sought to promote human rights and help mediate labor law conflicts in the region. Together with bar associations from Central America, from 1986 to 1989 we organized conferences in El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica that focused on the use of arbitration. The conferences received much attention in these jurisdictions, and at least in one country resulted in draft labor law legislation that incorporated arbitration procedures. While the results were modest and violence against labor unionists continues to this day, our efforts served to highlight alternative dispute resolution methods to adjudicate often-bloody conflicts.

In 1999 journalist Horacio Verbitsky filed a complaint with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights against the Republic of Argentina over his conviction for publishing criticisms of Argentine Government officials, including then-President Menem. At the request of a Columbia Law School professor, my team and I researched the applicable law and prepared a first draft of Mr. Verbitsky's legal brief. The case was ultimately decided in favor of Mr. Verbitsky.

In 2013, the Rana Plaza building in Dhaka, Bangladesh collapsed, killing more than 1,100 garment workers and injuring an additional 2,500-plus. The disaster followed several accidents in garment factories in the country. Shortly afterwards, as

Assistant Secretary of State for Economics, Energy and Business, I led a U.S. Government visit to Bangladesh, where we informed Bangladeshi officials that the United States would revoke GSP privileges over worker conditions. I followed up with several meetings in Washington DC with two industry groups that had been created by European and U.S. clothing retailers to improve worker conditions in Bangladesh. My main concern was that, although both groups had similar objectives, they were often in competition and were dissipating efforts that could not be wasted. Our meetings led the groups to agree on common standards and greater coordination. I understand that, largely through the efforts of both industry groups, safety has improved at the larger factories in Bangladesh, although more work remains to be done in smaller enterprises.

Question. Research from private industry demonstrates that, when managed well, diversity makes business teams better both in terms of creativity and in terms of productivity. What will you do to promote, mentor, and support your staff that come from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups?

Answer. Successful international economic policy is predicated on having a diverse and representative staff. President Biden has made diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility a national security imperative. Secretary Blinken has committed to recruit and retain a workforce that truly reflects the American people. Diversity and inclusion make our diplomatic team stronger, smarter, more creative, and more innovative. If confirmed, I commit to working with the new Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, the Bureau of Global Talent Management, the Secretary's Office of Civil Rights, and other Department leadership to foster an inclusive workplace in the E "family," promoting, mentoring, and supporting the advancement of diverse staff.

Question. Fighting corruption is one of the most important ways that we can promote democracy and human rights worldwide. What steps would you take to address global corruption within the role for which you are nominated?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to work with experts across the Department and interagency to promote and defend democracy. Through the targeted deployment of accountability tools, foreign assistance, and diplomatic engagement, we can address endemic corruption and human rights abuse. I will prioritize working with allies, seeking opportunities to promote our shared ideals together. I will work to expand opportunities for U.S. companies to compete for and win business globally by advancing the fight against foreign bribery and corruption, strengthening transparency and good governance, and promoting responsible business conduct.

Question. Do you commit to work with Congress to strengthen U.S. policies to combat global corruption?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with Congress to strengthen U.S. policies to combat global corruption, including efforts to bolster enforcement of foreign bribery laws and improve global standards of transparency, accountability, and good governance. These efforts directly support the American middle class through job creation by helping to level the playing field for U.S. business.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JOSE W. FERNANDEZ BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In 2015, you wrote an article stating that the loosening of restrictions on telecommunications investments in Cuba "had the greatest potential to accelerate the growth of civil society in Cuba." Although I believe that increasing connectivity and allowing the free flow of information to the Cuban people will help increase the communication among the Cuban people, ETECSA, Cuba's only telecommunication company sets high prices, and shuts down the access to those who voice opposition against the regime. Just recently the regime shut down internet access in response to the San Isidro protests. Can you describe your views towards Cuba today?

Answer. As a refugee from Castro's Cuba, I have no illusions about the Cuban Government. Many human rights activists from across the island rely on expanded internet access to communicate with each other and strengthen networks with other groups in Cuba and abroad, but the Cuban Government has restricted the country's internet access to keep independent media and journalists from reporting on government repression. If confirmed, I will seek to engage directly with Cuban civil society, and will work to design policies to empower Cuban civil society and recognize their

leadership on these issues. Further, I will directly engage the Cuban Government on human rights issues, including freedom of expression.

Question. As you know, the Cuban military plays a large role in controlling the flow of money in the Cuban economy. They use this control to support the Cuban regime. Do you support restricting financial transactions with the Cuban military as a way to promote freedom in Cuba?

Answer. The Cuban people face great hardship as they deal with the pandemic and decades of an oppressive government's economic mismanagement. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration has committed to reviewing U.S.-Cuba policy, including the U.S. posture regarding economic sanctions, to ensure they help empower the Cuban people to determine their future. If confirmed, I will support the Department's review, and I look forward to consulting with Congress on this issue.

Question. As you know, Taiwan has long pursued a bilateral trade agreement with the United States. Late last year, the Taiwanese Government expended tremendous political capital to lift a ban on the import of American pork, which was the last major stumbling block to an agreement with Washington. If confirmed, will you urge the U.S. trade Representative to prioritize free trade agreement negotiations with Taiwan?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to deepening trade, investment, and other economic ties with Taiwan, which is a critical economic partner. Trade with Taiwan advances U.S. interests and helps create economic opportunity and prosperity in the United States. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. Trade Representative to strengthen U.S. economic ties with Taiwan as an important priority.

Question. China engages in economic predatory behavior through initiatives like Belt and Road, conducts malign influence operations around the world, steals IP, and is working to reshape the international rules-based system to its benefit. If confirmed, how will you use your role to counter China's malign activities?

Answer. If confirmed, I will seek to work with partners and allies to promote democratic governance and transparency. In contrast to the PRC's approach to development, I will work to ensure that we continue to focus on strong fiscal, social, and environmental safeguards in the projects we support. This includes building partnerships and local capacity, and promoting U.S. leadership in science, technology, and innovation. Further, if confirmed, I will work to promote the highest standards in development investments that are both beneficial and sustainable over the long term, and advocate for these standards in international standard-setting bodies. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress on this issue.

Question. Do you think that the Belt and Road Initiative challenges U.S. strategic and economic interests? If so, could you expand on that?

Answer. The PRC's opaque and unilateral approach to its overseas lending and investments creates unknown financial risks and undermines the efforts of the international community to advance development in a transparent, accountable, and sustainable manner that includes appropriate social and environmental safeguards. If confirmed, I will actively contribute to the Biden-Harris administration's efforts to counter this malign PRC influence, including by working with partners and allies to offer sustainable, market-based alternatives and help countries increase transparency and accountability of existing PRC lending.

Question. How do you think the U.S. should work with our allies to make them aware of the repercussions of tightening economic engagement with China?

Answer. As Secretary Blinken said, the PRC is the only country with the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to seriously challenge the stable and open international system. The United States must address this challenge from a position of strength, which requires working with allies and partners. If confirmed, I will work to ensure our partners and allies are aware of the risks posed by Beijing's economic statecraft. These risks include vulnerability to predatory and unsustainable lending, malign investment, economic coercion, ICT networks with equipment that can be manipulated or controlled by the PRC, pressure to prioritize the PRC's interests in international organizations, and unfair competition from the PRC's state-owned enterprises.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JOSE W. FERNANDEZ BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

Question. If confirmed, you will serve as the Alternate Governor at the World Bank, the EBRD and the IDB. All three of these banks are involved and have influence in countries where sexual minorities are discriminated against and where there is violence and persecution based on sexual identity and gender preference. Will you commit for the United States to use its vote and voice to improve the situation in these countries and ensure that all citizens can benefit from development programs supported by these multilateral banks?

Answer. The United States is committed to ensuring that programs financed by the multilateral development banks are inclusive and reach the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in society, including those who may be victims of persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics. If confirmed as Alternate Governor, I will work with the U.S. Governor to promote inclusivity in the development programs we support.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JOSE W. FERNANDEZ BY SENATOR ROB PORTMAN

Question. As the senior economic officer of the State Department, your responsibilities often overlap with those of the Department of Commerce, the Treasury Department, the United States Trade Representative (USTR), among other agencies. I am interested in hearing what you see as your role in this effort and how you will work with other agencies to advance our goals?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the U.S. Trade Representative, the Department of Commerce, the Department of the Treasury, and others in the administration to ensure that all U.S. trading partners live up to their commitments in trade agreements, and I will encourage a whole-of-government approach to addressing these challenges. If confirmed as the State Department's senior economic officer, I will work to ensure the interagency considers the foreign policy implications of all decisions while taking into account the economic impacts on U.S. businesses, as well as those of our allies and partners.

Question. You have spoken in the past about how our trading partners must live up to their commitments, especially as it pertains to workers' rights. Currently, in the Xinjiang region of China, Uyghurs are currently being forced to produce products in atrocious conditions. How do you recommend we deal with this situation and how should we hold China accountable?

Answer. The PRC is engaged in human rights violations and abuses in Xinjiang, including forced labor, that shock the conscience and must be met with serious consequences. The United States has used several tools to confront the PRC's use of forced labor, including sanctions and Withhold Release Orders to prevent products made with forced labor from entering the United States. If confirmed, I will work with our interagency partners to use all appropriate levers available to us as we seek to eliminate all forms of human trafficking. In addition, I will work with allies and partners to promote accountability and call on Beijing to respect the human rights of Uyghurs and all other religious and ethnic minorities across China.

Question. The State Department, in concert with the Treasury Department and USAID, works to negotiate and executive conservation agreements under the Tropical Forest Conservation Act (TFCA) program. If you are confirmed to be Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment, will you commit to prioritizing additional TFCA deals using the funding that Congress has provided?

Answer. If confirmed I would welcome new TFCA deals and would actively seek such, including for coral reefs.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JOSE W. FERNANDEZ BY SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

Question. If confirmed, what role would you have in formulating U.S. policy at the multilateral development banks?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead three bureaus at the Department of State that play an important role in formulating the agency's views on projects and policies

at the multilateral development banks, including the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, which coordinates that process. In support of the Department of Treasury's role as the U.S. Government lead on multilateral development banks issues, the Department of State provides advice, expertise, insights, and recommendations that contribute to our Government's oversight of those institutions.

Question. How are the authorities divided up between the State Department and the U.S. Department of Treasury when it comes to international financial institutions?

Answer. The Department of the Treasury is the lead agency for U.S. engagement with the international financial institutions. The Department of State provides advice, expertise, insights, and recommendations in support of the Department of the Treasury's role.

Question. How does ending financing of fossil fuel projects at multilateral development banks help alleviate poverty and promote development?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support multilateral development banks' (MDBs) continued focus on energy policies that increase energy access, accelerate development, and reduce poverty. I will encourage MDBs to recognize and address the linkages between climate change and poverty, food insecurity and migration. The lack of recurring fuel costs for many clean energy systems allows countries to spend funds on development priorities rather than on the unpredictable costs of fuel.

Question. What role will you play in the administration's U.S. international climate finance plan?

Answer. The U.S. International Climate Finance Plan ("Plan") outlines how U.S. agencies will work with each other, the private sector, and other partners to most strategically mobilize investment for energy transformation and climate adaptation. The Plan recognizes the importance of suitable investment climates, leveraging private capital, and positioning the United States to seize the economic opportunity of a low-emissions future by promoting U.S. exports and private investment into low-carbon and climate-resilient technologies and services, which can be a catalyst for job growth here at home. If confirmed, I would leverage the resources of the Department to advance these objectives.

Question. What specific steps will you take to help U.S. businesses increase exports of American energy resources, including coal, oil, and natural gas?

Answer. America's energy resource abundance and exports have helped stabilize global markets, increased energy access and, in some cases, reduced energy costs, spurring economic growth and prosperity. If confirmed, I will work within my role at the State Department to help ensure that U.S. energy exporters are treated fairly in foreign markets. I also look forward, if confirmed, to further expanding the scope of U.S. solutions and U.S. businesses that can be supported through our diplomatic efforts as we embrace a diverse array of energy technologies, such as carbon capture, that can assist countries with their decarbonization goals, energy security, and development priorities.

Question. How will you ensure the State Department is helping developing countries with all types of energy projects, including oil, gas, and coal?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with developing countries to optimize technologies according to nationally integrated resource plans, which will cost-effectively meet clean energy deployment and energy access goals, while also driving economic growth. As developing countries navigate the transition to a clean energy economy and build a climate-resilient future, finance will play a crucial role. If confirmed, I will support the administration's climate finance plan to promote the flow of capital toward climate-aligned investments and to assist developing countries' implementation of emissions reduction measures.

Question. With billions of people without power, do you believe the United States should be promoting fossil fuels that are affordable and reliable, such as coal and natural gas, while supporting new technologies that reduce their carbon output?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support a foreign energy policy that advances energy access and energy security alongside decarbonization goals. While renewable energy and energy storage are increasingly the cheapest, most effective way of promoting energy access, carbon capture and storage technologies, if commercialized, could abate or decarbonize power generated by existing fossil-fuel infrastructure. If confirmed, I will work within the Department and with other agencies to coordinate efforts to support countries to meet their climate, energy access, and energy security needs in ways that further our climate and energy goals.

Question. Instead of regulating and placing impossible restrictions on the undeveloped energy sectors of the developing nations, we should be encouraging growth so that these countries can compete in the international marketplace, create jobs, and alleviate poverty. Do you agree?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to encouraging growth in developing nations and creating jobs and alleviating poverty. I understand that the Biden-Harris administration seeks to support developing nations' energy sectors to achieve this goal, while also comprehensively addressing multiple diplomatic goals, including climate change. Often, energy resources with the lowest costs—which can also offer health and environmental benefits—cannot compete due to barriers in existing regulatory and market structures, as well as country risk factors. If confirmed, I hope we can work together to ensure multilateral development banks support investments to increase access to affordable and reliable energy for development and support cleaner energy to support our climate change efforts.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. JOSE W. FERNANDEZ BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

State Department

Question. The Obama administration was broadly criticized, especially in the context of its Middle East policy, for co-mingling unclassified documents with classified documents. This practice requires that documents be placed in a secure location, unnecessarily limiting access to unclassified documents and stifling public debate. The Biden administration already seems to be repeating such practices: according to an exchange during the State Department press briefing on February 11, a notification describing the lifting of terrorism sanctions on Iran-controlled terrorists in Yemen was unnecessarily transmitted to a Congressional SCIF.

Can you commit to ensuring that unclassified information is not unnecessarily co-mingled with classified information in notifications provided by the State Department to Congress? If not, why not?

Answer. I am committed to working to ensure that information provided to Congress is, to the fullest extent possible, in a format that facilitates its access by authorized personnel, while complying with Executive Order 13526, the Department of State classification guide, and the executive branch rules on the handling and storage of classified information.

Question. What are your goals for your bureau, if confirmed?

Answer. During my confirmation hearings I listed five priorities for the “E” family, which I would like to summarize here:

- Support the administration's efforts to end COVID-19 globally, in a manner that reinforces America's global leadership, strengthens our alliances, and counteracts Russian and Chinese “vaccine diplomacy.”
- Promote environmental and energy policies that tackle climate change, and ensure that our companies and workers lead the world in the clean energy revolution.
- Insist on free, fair and reciprocal trade rules that our trade partners—both allies and adversaries—must adhere to, and that enable U.S. companies and workers to compete on a level playing field. Based on my experiences in the private sector, I am convinced that U.S. businesses and workers can thrive in the global marketplace if given fair shot.
- Help create alliances to maintain U.S. leadership in the technologies of the future. This includes confronting efforts to undermine American innovation, impose biased norms and standards and appropriate our intellectual property.
- Expand the international footprint of our workers and companies by providing information about opportunities abroad and facilitating U.S. participation in international projects. In particular, meeting the developing world's infrastructure needs should be a strategic imperative for the United States and a business opportunity for our companies.

Question. Please assess the degree to which China uses child labor for producing critical minerals, and manufacturing products that include critical minerals.

Answer. I understand that the U. S. Government is conducting a review of the critical minerals supply chain in accordance with Executive Order 14017 (America's Supply Chains). I understand that the State Department has found that PRC au-

thorities are increasingly placing the young children of interned Muslims in Xinjiang in state-run boarding schools, orphanages, and “child welfare guidance centers.” Reportedly, older children among these groups are placed in vocational schools, where some may be victims of forced labor. If confirmed, I am committed to helping end the forced labor of children in all sectors, including those involving critical minerals.

Question. Please assess the degree to which China uses slave labor for producing critical minerals, and manufacturing products that include critical minerals.

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to do everything in my authority to help end State-sponsored forced labor, which is increasingly prevalent in China. In 2013, the National People’s Congress ratified a decision to abolish “re-education through labor” (RTL), a punitive system that subjected individuals to extra-judicial detention involving forced labor, from which the Government reportedly profited. I understand that the Government closed most RTL facilities by October 2015; however, the Government reportedly converted some RTL facilities into state-sponsored drug rehabilitation facilities or administrative detention centers where, according to civil society and media reports, forced labor continues.

Question. Please assess the degree to which supply chains for critical minerals, and products made with critical minerals, run through the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR).

Answer. State-sponsored forced labor is intensifying under the PRC Government’s mass detention and political indoctrination campaign against predominantly Muslim minority groups in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang). Authorities have detained more than one million members of ethnic and religious minority groups, including Uyghurs, Hui, ethnic Kazakhs, and ethnic Kyrgyz, in as many as 1,200 “vocational training centers.” If confirmed, I am committed to eliminating forced labor from critical mineral supply chains, including any that run through Xinjiang.

Question. Over the last several years, the United States has taken a bipartisan, bicameral, whole-of-government approach to stopping the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. Production halted for a year after President Trump signed into law the Protecting Europe’s Energy Security Act (PEESA) and remained halted until after now-President Biden was elected. According to public reports, the Germans and Russians believe that the Biden administration will not impose crippling sanctions mandated by PEESA, as amended—and unfortunately, thus far, they have proven correct. Can you commit to using your role, if confirmed, to ensure the imposition of sanctions pursuant to PEESA, as mandated by Congress?

Answer. PEESA is U.S. law, and if confirmed, I will uphold the law. Congress has provided tools that ensure that Europe has a reliable, diversified energy supply that enhances rather than undermines its collective security. The Department of State continues to work to bring an end to the pipeline, which is a threat to European energy security and a tool of Russian coercion. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to continue to assess and evaluate evidence available to determine the applicability of PEESA, as amended.

Question. Please assess the effect that allowing Nord Stream 2 to come online would have on American national security and European energy security.

Answer. The administration has made clear its belief that Nord Stream 2 is a geopolitical, Kremlin malign influence project that threatens European energy security, including that of Ukraine and eastern flank NATO Allies and partners, while dividing the continent. The administration will continue to work with allies and partners, using the tools at its disposal, to ensure that Europe has a reliable, diversified energy supply that enhances, rather than undermines, its collective security.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. JOSE W. FERNANDEZ BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. What is your understanding of the current status of the Blue Dot Network under the Biden administration’s State Department?

Answer. The Blue Dot Network seeks to promote the development of quality, sustainable infrastructure around the world by certifying projects that uphold global infrastructure principles. I understand the State Department and the interagency continue to work with our Australian and Japanese partners to develop the technical

details of the initiative, including a methodology and metrics for certifying quality infrastructure projects in the developing world.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to advancing and fully implementing the Blue Dot Network?

Answer. If confirmed, I fully intend to advance and implement the Blue Dot Network initiative to certify quality infrastructure projects in the developing world. As the global economy recovers from the pandemic, infrastructure financing will play a central role in creating an economic recovery that is sustainable and long-lasting. Rigorous standards will ensure that infrastructure investment in developing countries serves the best interests of their citizens and are consistent with their economic, climate, environmental, and social goals.

Question. Do you plan to replicate the model created by the Clean Network Initiative across other tech sectors, infrastructure, and energy?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration views emerging technologies, infrastructure, and energy as critical to America's future national security and economic prosperity. If confirmed, I will support Department efforts to work with allies and partners to create an international environment that is competitive and open to innovation by American technology, infrastructure, and energy providers.

Question. What is your understanding of the Indo-Pacific Business Forum and what it accomplished when it was held in November 2019?

Answer. The 2019 Indo-Pacific Business Forum (IPBF) underscored the U.S. commitment to broad-based economic and commercial engagement in the Indo-Pacific. The IPBF is the premier conference where business leaders and government policy makers meet to discuss economic issues in the Indo-Pacific region. At the 2019 Forum, over 1,000 U.S. and Indo-Pacific business and government leaders discussed investment opportunities and new policy initiatives in infrastructure, energy, digital, and healthcare. Building on this success, in 2020 the United States organized an IPBF which attracted record attendance with 2,900 participants—including three U.S. cabinet secretaries—and over \$10 billion in deal signings and announcements.

Question. If you are confirmed, do you plan to continue and improve the Indo-Pacific Business Forum that the Biden administration inherited?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to work with U.S. Government economic agencies to continue and improve upon the Indo-Pacific Business Forum (IPBF). The event draws together business leaders, policymakers, and media from across the Indo-Pacific and serves as a venue to highlight U.S. economic policy developments, sign commitments for new investments, and build relationships between the private sector and governments. As with the 2020 forum, I understand that the 2021 forum will likely be a hybrid in-person and online event for maximum flexibility and engagement, and to help American businesses bring key commercial transactions to closure.

Question. If you are confirmed, do you commit to consulting with Congress on ways to make progress in the Indo-Pacific with respect to sectors such as energy, tech, and infrastructure?

Answer. If confirmed, I will be committed to open and robust communication with Congress, including through consultations on energy, technology, and infrastructure issues in the Indo-Pacific. Central to our efforts, the United States will promote private-sector alternatives in these areas. I intend to focus on partnerships that strengthen local capacity and promote entrepreneurship, transparency, good governance, fair practices, and internationally recognized environmental, social, and labor standards.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:01 a.m. in Room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Murphy, Kaine, Markey, Booker, Van Hollen, Risch, Young, Cruz, Rounds, and Hagerty.

Also present: Senator Whitehouse

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.

Ambassador Nichols, Ambassador Sison, congratulations on your nominations, and thank you for your willingness to continue serving our country, as well as your families.

We understand that that is a sacrifice of all of those who are part of the family and in terms of this continuing service, so we appreciate that as well.

At this pivotal moment for our foreign policy in the State Department, I am heartened that President Biden has nominated individuals to two critical positions.

I believe that your experience and commitment will be assets to the department and critical to the defense of our interests and values.

I understand that the Senator from Rhode Island will be introducing Ambassador Nichols this morning, and that the Senator from Maryland, a member of this committee, will be introducing Ambassador Sison.

I do not see Ambassador Whitehouse yet. I know he is very busy in Judiciary affairs. So he is probably is on his way here.

So let us recognize the Senator Van Hollen first for an introduction.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations to both the nominees.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to introduce to you the president's nominee to

serve as our next Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, Ambassador Michele Sison.

And in this nomination, President Biden has not only selected a nominee with impeccable credentials, unimpeachable character, and a deep knowledge of foreign policy, he has also wisely selected a longtime Marylander.

I had met Ambassador Sison before, but my conversation with her yesterday makes me even more confident that she has the knowledge and experience we need at this critical moment in our history.

President Biden is determined to renew American engagement around the world and leadership in international organizations and, if confirmed, I am confident Ambassador Sison will faithfully help achieve this goal.

Ambassador Sison has had a distinguished career at the highest levels of the United States Foreign Service. Her experience spans nearly four decades and six presidents.

She has served as our ambassador four times to different places: first, to the UAE, then to Lebanon, then to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and most recently, to Haiti, a post she was appointed to in 2018 and a post which brought her full circle from her first diplomatic position as the human rights officer at Embassy Port-au-Prince in 1982.

Throughout her 39 years at the forefront of U.S. diplomacy, she has served in a variety of roles that have taken her across the world, representing our nation's interests in West Africa, South Asia, and elsewhere.

She also spent four years as the United States deputy representative to the United Nations from 2014 to 2018, a position that makes her ideally prepared for this new post.

She also has a long track record of collaborating with U.N. peacekeepers and has gained a firsthand knowledge of the U.N. entities responsible for development, humanitarian relief, and human rights in the field.

Her superb talents have been recognized by our country many times. She is decorated with numerous awards for her service, including Superior Honor awards, the ambassadorial level awards for her contributions to counter proliferation and combating trafficking in persons, and she has received both a Distinguished Service Award and the Presidential Rank Award of meritorious service.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I could go on, but it would consume the entire hearing. So let me end with this. I grew up in a Foreign Service family and lived in some of the countries where Ambassador Sison has served.

I know a good diplomat when I see one, and Ambassador Sison fits the bill. She exemplifies the very best of what it means to serve our country as a career Foreign Service officer.

I urge the committee to support her nomination.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Van Hollen.

And after that sterling recommendation, Ambassador, maybe you should just rest your case. But we are not going to let you off that easy.

In any event, thank you, Senator Van Hollen. I understand that Senator Whitehouse is with us virtually.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. I am, Chairman.
The CHAIRMAN. Please proceed. Welcome.

**STATEMENT OF HON. SHELDON WHITEHOUSE,
U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE ISLAND**

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, and thank you, Ranking Member Risch, for welcoming me to your committee today.

Like Senator Van Hollen, I come from a Foreign Service family. I am the black sheep in a family of—my grandfather, father, uncle, and cousin who were all Foreign Service officers.

So it gives me particular pleasure to be here to recommend a career Foreign Service officer and a native Rhode Islander, Brian Nichols, as the nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs.

My father served for decades, not exactly on the champagne circuit but in countries embroiled in conflict and upheaval, where the comforts and security of America often felt very far away. But he always felt he was doing rewarding and deeply important work.

Brian Nichols has had a similar career serving in challenging State Department roles in South and Central America, Southeast Asia, and Africa.

He has won department honors for his contributions to State's trade development mission and helped lead the department's international narcotics and law enforcement work.

He has been our United States ambassador to both Peru and Zimbabwe, a country emerging from decades of dictatorial rule and dire economic hardship. So he knows the ropes and he has skills developed in our small, tight knit, and diverse state.

Rhode Islanders have, I think, an unusual ability to reach beyond seeming difference and even simmering enmity to find shared values and common humanity, and Ambassador Nichols is a shining example of that skill.

Building consensus is as simple, he says, as understanding people, a very Rhode Island quality, a very diplomatic quality, and one which Ambassador Nichols has demonstrated throughout his distinguished career.

I am confident that if we confirm his nomination, he will serve all Americans well and make us proud.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Whitehouse, for your introduction of Ambassador Nichols.

Ambassador Nichols, your nomination comes at a time when the Western Hemisphere is reeling under a cascade of challenges: the devastation wrought by COVID-19, the fraying of democratic consensus, major migration crises, and a void a four years of American absence that China is seeking to fill. The task at hand is immense.

With death rates among the highest in the world, COVID-19 is inflicting a terrible toll on the hemisphere, and the United States has to step up. As we accumulate surplus vaccines, we must prioritize vaccine access for countries in the hemisphere as part of our global efforts to ensure that the most vulnerable are vaccinated.

And as the region's economic health has a direct impact on the United States, we have to take bold steps to facilitate its recovery. That is why this committee voted to authorize a capital increase for the Inter-American Development Bank last month.

Additionally, Latin America is facing the recurrence of flawed elections, deterioration of the separation of powers, attacks on journalists and freedom of the press, and entrenched autocrats in Havana, Caracas, and Managua.

Indeed, we know where democratic decay can lead. After two decades, Venezuela is now a land of unbridled criminality and kleptocracy, where a humanitarian crisis has forced more than 5 million people to flee their homeland.

While the scale is distinct, we also know that irregular migration from Central America is rooted in decades of low levels of democratic governance.

Deficit, or I should say, deficient institutions are unable to meet the needs of the people and too many leaders have exploited weak rule of law to place their personal interests over those of their citizens.

Given the scale of the challenge, I am pleased to see that Vice President Harris is heading the administration's diplomatic efforts in Central America.

Under her leadership, we are already seeing an increased humanitarian response and a strong reaction to leaders that seek to undermine democracy.

So, Ambassador Nichols, I look forward to discussing with you. I appreciate our visit yesterday. We had a whole tour de force of the Western Hemisphere, and we look forward to discussing with you how we will address some of these challenges and best to collaborate to ensure your success.

Ambassador Sison—I am sorry, Sison. I do not know why I am—it is in my mind. But, Ambassador Sison, I apologize.

Welcome to your sixth Senate confirmation hearing. It is deeply reassuring that President Biden nominated you, a diplomat with extensive experience, immense skill, and a demonstrated management record to be the next Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of International Organization Affairs.

Over the course of the Trump administration, we witnessed a dramatic and troubling erosion of U.S. government leadership at the U.N. We tried to pull out of the World Health Organization in the middle of a pandemic.

We undermined international protections for women, girls, and LGBTI individuals, and we defunded or reduced funding to key agencies. We refused to pay our dues in full to U.N. peacekeeping operations and, as a result, the United States has accrued \$1.1 billion in arrears.

When we shun our responsibilities and fail to lead, other countries take note and seek to take advantage, to the detriment of our interests and security.

China and Russia have sought to fill the vacuum left by our absence. It is time for renewal and engagement with the United Nations and its agencies, like the World Food Programme and UNFPA.

In the wake of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, we must re-double the Biden administration's effort at restoring U.S. leadership at the WHO and other international health and humanitarian organizations.

The world will be closely watching how we more effectively engage within and work to strengthen international organizations.

So I look forward to hearing your views and working with you to ensure we restore our critical leadership role.

In closing, at a time of unprecedented challenges around the world, America needs outstanding leadership at the State Department. We look forward to your testimony.

And now I am going to return to the distinguished ranking member for his remarks.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to both of you for your willingness to serve. Certainly, outstanding credentials. It is not often we see a panel like this with the depth of experience that the two of you have.

I want to start at where the chairman started and that is on the issues in the Western Hemisphere. I am increasingly concerned that while a majority of nations in our hemisphere are considered democracies, authoritarian regimes in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba have systematically dismantled democratic institutions and have committed some of the world's worst human rights abuses.

These bad actors undermine their own countries, but they also undermine their neighbors. Transnational criminal organizations and malign state actors benefit from and contribute to these authoritarian regimes and pose a significant threat to the peace and stability of our hemisphere.

More broadly, I remain exceedingly concerned about the malign influence of China and Russia throughout our hemisphere and the apparent increase of that.

China's predatory lending practices and spread of corruption threaten the sovereignty and the privacy of our southern neighbors.

At the same time, Russia has exported repressive tactics to allow authoritarian regimes to maintain control and crackdown on dissent.

Beyond external malign influence, poor governance, violence, and lack of economic opportunity in countries like El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have prompted waves of illegal migrants to show up at our southern door.

The previous administration negotiated a number of agreements with these countries, and the current administration's failure to capitalize on those agreements has only fueled a surge of migrants over the past few months, along with other precipitating factors, and demonstrates a significant challenge to our government's ability to protect our homeland.

Lastly, as you know, Ambassador Nichols, the Columbia River Treaty between the United States and Canada is a great example of two nations managing a shared resource. I want to impress upon you the importance of a successful and timely conclusion to these negotiations for the entire North West congressional delegation.

As you know, a number of us on a bipartisan basis have been working diligently with the department to move the negotiations forward. We stand ready to continue to assist the administration however we can in this effort.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on all of these important matters. Next, we have the nomination for Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs. This position oversees a wide range of multilateral organizations, the largest being the United Nations. The United States remains the biggest donor to the U.N. in both assessed and voluntary funds.

While the Chinese Communist Party has increased its assessed dues, it is still severely lags behind the United States and our allies in voluntary contributions.

The Chinese Communist Party uses its minimal donations to leverage a large-scale malign influence campaign to reform global governance, as they call it, such that the international system is more conducive to its own interests.

As detailed in my report last fall on transatlantic cooperation on China, the Chinese Communist Party does so in part by inserting favorable language into U.N. resolutions, orchestrating the election of its top diplomats at U.N. agencies, and using its veto power as a member of the U.N. Security Council to block efforts to expose human rights violations.

This fall, the United States will have an opportunity to negotiate the scales of assessment of U.N. peacekeeping to be consistent with U.S. law. Currently, the United Nations assesses the United States at 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, the Congress of the United States enacted a bill that imposed 25 percent on U.S. contributions for this program. That law remains in effect today.

This mandate should be upheld during the upcoming negotiations. I will remind the administration that this is U.S. law and it must be used in the negotiating position.

I also remain concerned, really concerned, by the administration's recent decision to resume funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees in the Near East, also known as UNRWA.

This was done without securing, without insisting on, without even asking for any reforms. Over the years, the agency has employed individuals affiliated with Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization.

UNRWA schools have been used to store Hamas weapons and there have been numerous cases of UNRWA textbooks containing material that is anti-Semitic. U.S. government assistance to UNRWA should cease unless true reform, as described above, is secured.

Finally, I am also concerned about the administration's decision to seek a seat at the U.N. Human Rights Council, again, without seeking any reforms.

The Council is a broken body that focuses the majority of its time on bullying our ally, Israel, and allows some of the greatest human rights abusers like China, Cuba, Russia, Iran, and Venezuela a seat at the table.

I know it is a bumper sticker to say, oh, we are always better off with a seat at the table when issues are being discussed than not being there. That is not always true, particularly in this instance, when you are sitting there rubbing elbows with the worst human rights abusers on the planet.

Only true reform will bring legitimacy back to that Council and the administration should work to secure substantial changes.

With that, I thank both of you for being here today, your willingness to serve, and recognize the sacrifices of both you and your families in this effort.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

We will now turn to the two nominees. We ask you to summarize your testimony in about five minutes. Your full statements will be included in the record.

And we will start off with Ambassador Nichols.

STATEMENT OF HON. BRIAN A. NICHOLS OF RHODE ISLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS)

Mr. NICHOLS. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the next Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Secretary Blinken for the confidence that they have placed in me at this crucial moment in our hemisphere.

The opportunity to appear before this committee for the third time as a nominee to serve the American people steels my resolve to fight for the values that our nation holds dear—democracy, the rule of law, and the innate dignity of every individual.

With over 32 years serving our nation at some of our most challenging missions around the world, if confirmed, I look forward to bringing all my skills and experience to bear in that fight.

President Biden has said that democracy holds the key to freedom, prosperity, peace, and dignity, and if we work together with our democratic partners with strength and confidence, we will meet every challenge and outpace every challenger.

My experience serving in our embassies in North, Central, and South America, as well as directing our policy towards the Caribbean, convinces me of the vital urgency of the President's words.

Our home, the Western Hemisphere, remains central to America's welfare, our prosperity, and our future. America's fortunes cannot be separated from those of our closest neighbors.

If confirmed, I look forward to drawing on the enormous talent and dedication of the community of professionals within the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, as well as civil society throughout the Americas, our own private sector, and, of course, our Congress to advance America and the region's progress toward a more democratic, secure, and prosperous region.

I have spent most of my career within the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. If confirmed, I will strive to build an inclusive,

compassionate, and diverse team that reflects our nation's prowess and professionalism.

We will work to expand our engagement and partnerships throughout the Western Hemisphere, especially with our closest neighbors, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

The situation in Central America demands our urgent attention and unflagging efforts to promote democracy, prosperity, and security, addressing the root causes of irregular migration.

The disastrous effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and a recession in many countries have opened the door to malign influences from outside our region.

We will build upon the shared values, family ties, economic opportunities, and commitment to fundamental freedoms to counter those malign actors and deliver a better future for the people of our region.

My professional achievements owe to the women who surround me: my wonderful wife, Geri, a retired senior Foreign Service officer, my talented daughters, Alex and Sophie, and my brilliant mother, Mildred.

They have pushed me to be a better person, sacrifice for my career, and nurtured me with their love and support.

In 1959, my late father began our family's adventure in diplomacy and foreign affairs, serving as a Fulbright Scholar and then partnering with the U.S. Information Agency on various projects in Europe, and helping to start the American Studies Program at the Free University of Berlin.

My own past assignments provide rich experience, should the Senate confirm me, to serve as Assistant Secretary. During my tenure as ambassador to Zimbabwe, I have fought tenaciously for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. I have led my team in responding to the multi-dimensional humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe.

As ambassador to Peru, I led a large mission that focused on improving the rule of law, fighting transnational crime and corruption, and promoting respect for human rights, particularly of women, girls, and disadvantaged groups.

I also led a unified mission initiative to promote American businesses and grow American jobs, earning the department's Charles Cobb Award for those efforts.

Prior to that, as the principal deputy assistant secretary for international narcotics and law enforcement, I helped direct a team of nearly 7,000 professionals who worked to expand access to justice, protect civilians, and combat crime around the world.

I have hands-on experience shaping our rule of law programs in Mexico and Central America, as well as crafting innovative justice sector outreach to Afro descendant and indigenous populations in the Americas.

Should the Senate confirm me, I will aim to exemplify the highest standards of our great nation and strengthen our diplomacy. I look forward to partnering with you to advance America's interests in the Western Hemisphere.

I stand ready to answer any questions you might have now and in the future. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nichols follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. BRIAN A. NICHOLS

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The opportunity to appear before this committee for the third time as a nominee to serve the American people steels my resolve to fight for the values that our nation holds dear: democracy, the rule of law, and the innate dignity of every individual. With over 32 years serving our nation at some of our most challenging missions around the world, if confirmed I look forward to bringing all my skills and experience to bear in that fight. President Biden has said that "democracy holds the key to freedom, prosperity, peace, and dignity. . . . And, if we work together with our democratic partners, with strength and confidence, we will meet every challenge and outpace every challenger." My experience serving in our embassies in North, Central, and South America as well as directing our policy towards the Caribbean convinces me of the vital urgency of the President's words.

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I have spent most of my career within the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. If confirmed, I will strive to build an inclusive, compassionate, and diverse team that reflects our nation's prowess and professionalism. We will work to expand our engagement and partnerships throughout the Western Hemisphere—and especially with our closest neighbors Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean. The situation in Central America demands our urgent attention and unflagging efforts to promote democracy, prosperity, and security—addressing the root causes of irregular migration. The disastrous effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and a recession in many countries have opened the door to malign influences from outside our region. We will build on the shared values, family ties, economic opportunities, and commitment to fundamental freedoms to counter those malign actors and deliver a better future for the people of our region.

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Should the Senate confirm me, I will aim to exemplify the highest standards of our great nation and strengthen our diplomacy. I look forward to partnering with you to advance America's interests in the Western Hemisphere.

I stand ready to answer any questions you might have now and in the future.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ambassador Sison?

**STATEMENT OF HON. MICHELE JEANNE SISON OF MARYLAND,
A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE,
CLASS OF CAREER AMBASSADOR, NOMINATED TO BE AN AS-
SISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (INTERNATIONAL ORGANI-
ZATION AFFAIRS)**

Ms. SISON. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee.

I am honored to appear before you as President Biden's nominee to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, IO. I am grateful to President Biden and to Secretary Blinken for this opportunity.

I want to recognize my daughters, Alexandra and Jessica, who are watching virtually today. Their love has supported me as I represented our country around the world and at the United Nations.

Over the past 39 years, I have been privileged to serve under six U.S. administrations and as ambassador four times overseas to the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Maldives, and Haiti.

Given that experience, as well as service in Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, India, Pakistan, Iraq, and at the U.S. mission to the United Nations, I know that the United States cannot address today's global challenges alone.

From climate change to the COVID-19 pandemic, we must work in partnership with other nations. President Biden has made it clear that we will put our core U.S. values at the center of our foreign policy.

As U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative at the U.N. in New York, I saw that our nation is stronger when we lead the way in crafting strategic cross-regional partnerships. These alliances are key in safeguarding multilateral institutions from those such as the People's Republic of China that seek to bend the U.N. system to their authoritarian agendas.

We must actively out compete efforts by nations that stand in opposition to our U.S. values on human rights, democracy, labor rights, and transparent economic practices.

If confirmed, this will be at the top of my agenda. It is important that we uphold the rules-based order that upholds and promotes our values, advances sustainable development, and protects human rights.

The United States has a strong stake in leading efforts to preserve a free and open market, a free and open internet, and in advancing global governance in areas such as technology, trade, and climate change.

These rules and values benefit American interests and the American people. From the World Food Programme to UNICEF to the International Telecommunication Union, we have a deep stake in leading the international system, driving forward reforms with our partners.

We must also ensure that the voices of civil society, women, ethnic and religious minorities, and other marginalized communities are heard.

I have seen firsthand how U.N. peacekeepers and humanitarian workers protect civilians and save lives in places critical to U.S. national interests.

I have witnessed the positive impact of U.S. leadership when we insist on results and when we press for accountability, including accountability related to sexual exploitation and abuse.

We are the largest contributor to the U.N. system. It is in our interest to lead in promoting genuine reform. Thus, ensuring the transparency and integrity of multilateral bodies is a key priority.

We must promote qualified independent candidates to lead multilateral institutions and we must leverage the commitments of other countries to ensure that financial burdens are shared.

We must also fight bias against Israel across the U.N. system. The IO bureau support strong U.S. leadership at the U.N. and multilateral venues to advance our U.S. national interests, protect the American people, promote U.S. prosperity, and drive the reforms needed to ensure the effectiveness of international organizations.

As a Foreign Service practitioner, I know that our skilled diplomats at our missions abroad, our talented negotiators, and our amazing civil service subject matter experts are our force multipliers in the multilateral arena and in mobilizing global action.

If confirmed, prioritizing diversity and inclusion and building strong morale within the IO bureau will be at the top of my list, and if confirmed, I also pledge, number one, to look hard at U.N. and international organization management and budgeting practices and at how agencies implement ethics rules, including whistleblower protection; number two, to insist on effective peacekeeping operations that advance political solutions, have realistic and achievable mandates, and include women's participation; number three, to consult with you as we work together to meet the challenges of today's strategic competition and as we prove that respect for human rights, transparency, and democratic norms can and will prevail.

If confirmed, I know that you will be counting on me to make sure that U.S. taxpayer dollars are well spent and that our multilateral policies and programs improve the lives of the world's most vulnerable citizens, contribute to international peace and security, and serve the American people.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Sison follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MICHELE J. SISON

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee.

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- to look hard at U.N. and international organization management and budgeting practices, and at how agencies implement their ethics rules, including whistleblower protections;
- to insist on effective peacekeeping operations that advance political solutions, have realistic and achievable mandates, and include women's participation; and,
- to consult with you as we work to meet the challenges of today's strategic competition—and as we prove that respect for human rights, transparency, and democratic norms can and will prevail.

If confirmed, I know you will be counting on me to make sure that U.S. taxpayer dollars are well-spent, and that our multilateral policies and programs improve the lives of the world's most vulnerable citizens, contribute to international peace and security, and serve the American people.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you, and I welcome your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ambassador.

We will start a series of five-minute rounds and I will start.

Ambassador Nichols, we had a good tour of the hemisphere yesterday so I am not going to revisit all of those. But there is one or two I do want to drill down on.

As Miguel Diaz-Canel assumed the leadership of Cuba's Communist Party and completed his transition to what I believe is dictator and chief, the Cuban regime repeatedly has used the mantra of "somos continuidad," which means "we are the continuation," to make it clear that they need to maintain a single-party authoritarian state.

Nevertheless, in a renewed wave of civic activism, including protest by artists, singers, and others in the San Isidro movement, a, largely, Afro-Cuban movement, there is a demanding greater respect for democratic values and an end to human rights abuses.

So what our policy is, moving forward, is going to be incredibly important. Let me ask you a couple of questions. Do you believe that the attacks on our diplomatic personnel, known as the Havana syndrome, either were conducted by the Cubans or are known in terms of who conducted them by the Cubans?

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would just note, by way of entry, that I know that our Cuba policy is under review within the administration. But let me offer a few thoughts, and if confirmed, I look forward to contributing to that process.

Our priority in Cuba, as the rest of the hemisphere, needs to be democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Countries should not be grandfathered because they have failed to respect those tenets.

The new First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba does not appear to me to be significantly different from his predecessors. But time will tell on that point.

With regard to the Havana syndrome—my knowledge of the process of looking into that is limited, but I certainly believe that, given the amount of control that the Communist Party has in Cuba, there are more things that they can tell us about what was going on at that time.

And I think that the process that the Secretary has designated, led by Ambassador Pamela Spratlen and the Health Incident Response Team, working with our interagency partners, is an important opportunity to get to the bottom of these incidents, and if confirmed, I commit to contributing to that process.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I appreciate that.

It is impossible, if you understand Cuba's state-controlled system and its security apparatus to believe that anything can happen in the island without some knowledge of the Cuban regime, which they, certainly, have not shared with us, and now we find these attacks proliferating in other parts of the world.

Do you believe that the practice of the Cuban regime of taking 20 percent of remittances to Cuban families, then converting the balance of the remittance to Cuban pesos that are worth a fraction of what Americans send to their families, that can only be used at state-owned stores is an acceptable practice?

Mr. NICHOLS. Again, the Cuba policy is under review. But I do believe that those who are most responsible for abuses of human rights and democracy in Cuba should not benefit from remittances going to the Cuban people.

Our priority needs to be what is best for the Cuban people and focus our efforts on supporting them, and I believe that the best

ambassadors for doing that are the American people and, particularly, the Diaspora here.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, let me hone in on my question because I have a limited time.

I appreciate all of that but here is the point. If we want to help the Cuban people, taking 20 percent off of the \$100 I send to my aunt, converting the other \$80 of U.S. dollars into pesos, which is worth a fraction, and then being able, largely, to only buy at a government store, which is jacked up in prices, is not helping the Cuban people.

It is, certainly, helping the regime. So I am for sending my remittances to my aunt, but I want her to get the remittances I send.

Let me ask you this. Do you believe that sending, as the regime does, Cuban doctors abroad, then taking away their passports and getting paid for their services without fully paying the doctors is human trafficking?

Mr. NICHOLS. I believe that their labor rights are being violated in large measure, and I think it has many characteristics of human trafficking, yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And do you believe that the militarization of the Cuban economy, whereas Raul Castro's son and son-in-law, high-ranking officers of the Cuban military, is an acceptable practice for U.S. businesses to engage with?

Mr. NICHOLS. I think that we should be working to promote diversity in the economy in Cuba and focusing our efforts on what is best for the Cuban people.

The roles of senior officials and family members in the economy goes in the opposite direction and, if confirmed, I look forward to contributing to the department's review of our policies within the interagency.

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah. Well, let me just say that, and I will end on this note, so an American business wants to do business in Cuba or they want to do, you know, tourism or they want to sell agricultural products.

They either have to go to Raul's son or son-in-law, both high-ranking officials of the Cuban military who control the two, quote/unquote, "companies" that are run by the regime.

You become a partner with the state, in essence, a partner with those who oppress its people, and your partner is high-ranking officials of the Cuban military.

I do not know if we, for example, would accept that in China. I do not know if we would accept it elsewhere. And it is, certainly, not a help to the Cuban people.

So I look forward to continuing that conversation.

Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ambassador Nichols, I want to talk about a parochial issue. That is the Columbia River Treaty. How engaged have you been on that issue or have you been, prior to coming on board here?

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you. I have received a briefing on the treaty from our negotiators and legal team. I have not participated in the deliberations with regard to the negotiation.

Senator RISCH. Okay, thank you.

I hope you will familiarize yourself with this. I can tell you, this is not a partisan issue. Indeed, we have been—we—when I say we I am talking about the Senators, particularly from the Northwest, have been working with the negotiating team from the State Department, and we found them really good to work with.

They are working on an issue that is incredibly complex and incredibly difficult with a friend and neighbor but with whom we have, obviously, competing interests as we try to complete the negotiations.

I have trouble with some of my colleagues here whose last brush with the Columbia River was when they took geography in either grammar school or high school.

So they are learning how important the Columbia River is to those of us that have water that flows into the Columbia and the effects that it has upstream on us.

So, first of all, I do want to tell you, you have got a good team in place. We intend to continue to work with them, and it is bipartisan and I hope that we will continue down that road, and I look forward to your help in that regard.

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you, Senator, and I look forward to working with you on that, if confirmed.

The Columbia River and its basin have important implications for hydroelectric power, green energy, the environment and, obviously, flood control and the economy of the western part of our nation.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Sison, I want to underscore to you the disappointment a lot of us had when the administration jumped right back into UNRWA.

What UNRWA has done over the years is very disheartening and it is impossible to explain to the United States taxpayers, particularly my constituents, how the funds that—U.S. taxpayer dollars that flowed into UNRWA could be used to print textbooks that I have no doubt you have seen that have anti-Semitic materials in them—and this is paid for by U.S. dollars—and also the other things that UNRWA has done, allowing their facilities to be used for military facilities and that sort of thing.

Again, we want to participate always in these things. But when they are doing stuff like that, it becomes very difficult, and particularly when the funds have now been freed up for UNRWA to get those funds again, and we are a huge contributor to that operation.

What are your thoughts on that?

Ms. SISON. Good morning, Senator, and thank you for that question.

The issue of transparency, accountability, and oversight with regard to the U.N. Relief Works Agency, UNRWA, and across the U.N. system would be a key priority, if confirmed.

On UNRWA specifically, it is absolutely critical that we insist on neutrality, and that goes for the staff of UNRWA, the policies, the programs, the educational materials, that you have mentioned.

If confirmed, I will be insisting on these red lines of complete neutrality, no educational materials, whether it is textbook or online educational resources that contain references to anti-Semitism, incitement.

These are important issues and, if confirmed, I would be working with U.N. counterparts and others in the IO bureau and across our State Department to insist that these red lines are not crossed and that internal controls are maintained.

Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Well, I appreciate that, and I appreciate your commitment and your thoughts in that regard. It always amazes me when something like this happens where the funds were freed up without a commitment.

I mean, if they will not make the commitment before they get the money, how in the world can you possibly think they will make the commitment after they get the money?

So it amazes me how we transfer funds like this without getting anything back for it.

And my time is up and I thank you for that commitment.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

I understand Senator Cardin is with us virtually.

Senator CARDIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank both of our distinguished nominees for their service to our country.

Ambassador Sison, I am proud that you are a Marylander. I heard Senator Van Hollen's introductions. We are very proud of your career service, diplomatic service, to our country.

It is, clearly, going to be challenged as we reassert America's diplomacy globally in the work that we do with our international organizations.

So I look forward to working with you.

Ambassador Nichols, I, again, thank you for your career of public service. Both of you have served our nation with distinction and honor, and I join the chairman in thanking you and your families for your willingness to continue in public service.

Ambassador Nichols, you and I had a chance to talk. I just want to underscore a few of the points.

One area that affects both of the individuals that are before us is the U.S. role in the OAS. I mention that because Senator Wicker and I had introduced legislation that became law for a parliamentary dimension within the Organization of American States.

And I point that out, the more that we can get legislators working with our diplomats, particularly in international organizations or regional organizations, I think the more effective it will be.

So I look forward to a stronger parliamentary arm within the OAS. We have a very strong parliamentary arm within OSCE. I think we could improve our representation at the United Nations.

We have two of our members who are designated to represent the Senate. I think working with each other we can strengthen unity in U.S. foreign policy goals.

Ambassador Nichols, I want to ask you about a subject that we talked about at some length and that is making anti-corruption a key part of our policy in our hemisphere. We have seen an erosion of good governance.

We knew that in Northern and Central America. We see significant challenges as countries have gone back on their commitment for their anti-corruption institutions.

We see this in so many countries, of course, and Cuba is a country that the chairman has mentioned frequently is a corrupt country, Venezuela, et cetera.

We have legislation that you and I have talked about that passed our Senate last Congress that we are going to try to get to the finish line this time that will fine tune the missions—each of our missions in each of our countries on anti-corruption.

I want to just get your comments as to how high a priority this will be when you are confirmed.

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you very much, Senator.

Fighting corruption is vital to our efforts to strengthen democracy in our hemisphere and around the world. I want to thank you and the other members of this body for the tools that you have given us.

I believe that we should robustly use our Treasury OFAC sanctions, our 7031(c) sanctions, and the full range of tools available to deal with those who would steal from the public purse, deprive the peoples of the region of their resources and their wealth.

And given my experience in my current assignment and previously in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, I look forward to deploying those tools robustly in support of democracy around the region.

I would also like to note that I fully concur that the Article One branch of government and its engagement around the hemisphere with other legislatures will be an important tool in supporting democracy.

Senator CARDIN. Let me raise one more issue with you, if I might, and that is the Caribbean states. For too long we have not given them the attention that they need. We have not done well with their voting at the United Nations or at OAS, for that matter, and there are many Caribbean states. It does not take too much attention or resources to strengthen our ties.

What strategy do you have in order to increase our partnership with the Caribbean states?

Mr. NICHOLS. If confirmed, I look forward to building on our shared values with the Caribbean and their commitment to democracy and the rule of law.

I believe that our engagement with the Caribbean region needs to include a robust presence and, if confirmed, I look forward to advocating for that.

We need to leverage our development tools around the region, work with our multilateral partners, and international financial institutions to get them the resources that they need, and to make sure that we are attending to those issues that hold them back in their development.

Senator CARDIN. Dr. Sison, I would just underscore the point that we could do much better in getting support at the United Nations if our missions recognized how important those votes are to United States foreign policy.

We have got to connect the dots in more capitals around the world so that we have stronger support at the United Nations, and letting us know in Congress where we can be helpful and getting those types of relationships that can help us advance our foreign policy.

I hope you have a strategy to help us do that.

Ms. SISON. Good morning, Senator, and, indeed, the necessity of building broad cross-regional alliances and partnerships is critical across the U.N. and multilateral venues, whether we are talking about New York or Geneva, really, across the multilateral space.

And I do appreciate the offer that I just heard for the IO Bureau and, if confirmed, I will take you up on this. I think that so many of the members of this committee have built deep relationships with leaders across the world and, if confirmed, I would hope that I would be able to turn to you and ask for some help but with enough advance notice and placing a call or two when and if needed.

Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. I look forward to working with you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Young, I understand, is with us virtually.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you, Chairman. I am not sure my picture is appearing. Can I be heard?

The CHAIRMAN. You are certainly heard but not seen.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. Well, I will just go ahead and dive in.

So building on Senator Cardin's questions pertaining to the Caribbean Basin, as you know, Mr. Nichols, the Senate is considering a far-reaching China package, which includes American policies towards the Western Hemisphere, which, if confirmed, you will be tasked with overseeing.

One of your first responsibilities would be managing the creation of a strategy to strengthen economic competitiveness, good governance, human rights, and the rule of law in Latin America and the Caribbean.

I want to know what policies you believe have worked in the past in these areas and how we might better work to improve some of these policies across the region to reduce our neighbors' vulnerability to Chinese influence.

And, you know, you might include specifically how the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative could be utilized to push back on Chinese infrastructure developments.

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you, Senator.

I think that we have a robust menu of policies and options that I would seek to leverage, if confirmed. We need to work across the board in institution strengthening, using our Agency for International Development for political party strengthening, for grass roots policy support at the human level.

I think we've got to take advantage of our international financial institution partners and make sure that they are helping to advance democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in the region, particularly the Inter-American Development Bank as a tool within our own region.

The Organization of American States is similarly an important tool that, within its Charter, it is committed to those tenets of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law that we hold dear.

Working throughout the region, as I have, justice sector support has been crucial and, I think, very successful in many countries

around the region, and providing units and organizations that respect human rights and the rule of law that support democracy and the extent to which we can build upon those resources will be important.

I think CBSI has been an important tool throughout the region. In terms of the future and the way forward, we need to look to leverage that asset in building institutions, making trade, communication, service sector improvements.

Senator YOUNG. Okay. All right.

I am sorry to interject. Our time is just somewhat limited, understandably, in this format. So, my apologies, sir, I am going to move on because I have some other things I would like to turn to.

I just returned from our southern border with Mexico. I spent all day Friday down there in the Yuma, Arizona, area, where I actually spent some time years ago as a United States Marine, participating in counter trafficking operations and monitoring some of the activities there, working with other agencies.

The challenges continue. In fact, I think it is fair to say we are hearing this, Republicans and Democrats alike, that we have an ongoing crisis at the southern border, and that crisis has underscored the importance of identifying the root cause of unchecked immigration from the Northern Triangle region.

Despite \$3.6 billion in U.S. aid over the 2016 to 2021 fiscal years, immigration policy from the new administration has still resulted in a staggering number of migrants fleeing these countries.

And I suppose we do not need to really fixate on the massive uptick we have seen in the last couple of months. Everyone is aware of it.

Despite billions of dollars in U.S. aid to these economically distressed countries, why have we seen a recent surge in immigration when it was, largely, controlled for the past several years?

Mr. Nichols?

Mr. NICHOLS. I think there are a variety of reasons but I point to a couple that are driving the uptick. One is a loss of economic opportunities driven by climate disasters and climate change in the region, corruption, violence, rule of law, a lack of hope, and we need to work to address the root causes of those challenges urgently.

I will keep my answer brief, but happy to go into it further, if you would like, sir.

Senator YOUNG. Well, thank you for your time. I would also add the message from the White House has not been particularly helpful. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you both for your past service to this country and for your willingness to be considered for these important posts at this critical time.

Ambassador Nichols, I want to begin with you. As we heard from Senator Young, so much of the focus on America's borders has been on the southern border between the United States and Mexico.

But I want to ask about our northern border with Canada, because for states like New Hampshire that border Canada, the border closures have been very disruptive both for businesses that go

back and forth across the border to do business, but also for many of our residents who have relatives in Canada and have been limited in their travel.

Now, I understand that these were done because of the pandemic. But we are coming up on an end to the most recent extension of that border closure in May, and I wondered if you have any sense of what will happen on May 21st when the current restrictions expire and whether we need to keep this border closed or how soon we might be able to safely reopen it.

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you, Senator.

I am not yet confirmed. I have not been privy to the deliberations on that topic. I know that the HHS and Homeland Security are looking at this issue carefully.

I believe that the decision will be driven by the best science available. We are making important progress in our own country against the pandemic, and I hope that we'll be able to see progress with regard to the border soon.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. Do I have your commitment that, once confirmed, that you will look at this issue closely and urge an examination that recognizes the challenges that are faced by that border closure?

Mr. NICHOLS. Yes, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Sison, I still have fond memories of my visit to Lebanon during your tenure there as ambassador. Sadly, things have significantly declined in Lebanon since that time, and I know that you are very familiar with UNIFIL's mission in Lebanon, how important it has been to the country and to its relations with its neighbors.

If confirmed, how will you approach the mandate renewal in August and how can the U.S. be a moderator between the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL, and Lebanon's neighbors?

Ms. SISON. Good to see you again, Senator, and good morning.

As with all peacekeeping missions, we want to make sure that at the time of mandate renewal and discussion at the U.N. Security Council that we are looking at realistic and achievable mandates, that we are looking at mandates that include women in peacekeeping as both military and police peacekeepers, that when possible that this mandate promotes the political solution, and that we look at the reforms in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, to deliver on that mandate, and, of course, the mandates need to be well resourced as well to be effective.

UNIFIL has played a stabilizing role in southern Lebanon, and we are seeing this at the present time as well. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to consult with you, Senator, and other members of this committee on how we can make peacekeeping the most effective and efficient investment and that the peacekeepers are resourced to perform their mandates effectively.

Thank you.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. One of the most pressing issues facing the Security Council at the U.N. is the need to maintain humanitarian aid in Syria.

How can you and the State Department and those of us in Congress support Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield's efforts to push

back against Russia's obstructionism in allowing that humanitarian aid to those who need it?

Ms. SISON. Senator, I absolutely agree with you on the urgency of keeping humanitarian delivery, these corridors open.

The reauthorization of Bab al-Hawa for another 12 months is completely a priority and, if confirmed, would be looking to push on the other two cross-border points that are not currently authorized to be used.

The suffering that we see, particularly in northeast and northwestern Syria, is alarming: food insecurity, the inability to deliver badly-needed medical and other items, particularly in this period of the COVID pandemic.

So, if confirmed, I do look forward to consulting closely with you and with working with Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield and her team on this critical issue of the reauthorization of the cross-border delivery.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I am out of time. But I just want to weigh in in support of your point about the Havana syndrome and our efforts that we should be making with the Cuban regime to press them more on what they know.

And, Ambassador Nichols, I would also just like to weigh in. I appreciate the administration's appointment of Ambassador Spratlen.

But the fact is, in Congress, we are still not getting the information we need on what is actually happening with so-called Havana syndrome government wide, nor are we seeing the coordination that I think we would all hope to see and the assurance that those people who are affected are getting absolutely the best health care that they need.

So I hope you will share that with the State Department.

Mr. NICHOLS. I will, Senator, and those who were injured in those attacks and the health of our people throughout our service and throughout our government are my highest priority.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Rounds?

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to both of you for your service to our country. You, clearly, are both very well qualified and we appreciate your offer of continued service.

Ambassador Nichols, I am concerned about, I guess, the ongoing and, in some cases, increasing Chinese and Russian engagement in the Western Hemisphere.

One example is China's launching of a vaccine diplomacy strategy into Latin America, while Russia is launching countless disinformation campaigns in Latin America to discredit the West, specifically, the United States.

What do you think should be done to address this and what resources are available to you for that purpose? I know that you have indicated that there are some organizations and so forth.

But when it comes to their very aggressive approach to provide misinformation about our country but also to gather additional leverage within the Western Hemisphere, share with me your thoughts and what tools you would see available to you.

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you, Senator, and I fully share your concerns.

We have a number of tools available to us. We have the Global Engagement Center pushing back on disinformation. We are bolstering our public diplomacy at the embassy level throughout the hemisphere, and I think that is a very important tool.

We have shared values, and we need to point out to the peoples of the region the shared values that we have, and the difference between what we consider important and what the real costs of the engagement that the malign actors from outside our hemisphere, like China and Russia, are engaging in.

The Chinese offer all sorts of things. They don't come for free. The Chinese are getting something out of it, and we need to push back aggressively with a variety of tools.

They also offer in their economic engagement unfair competition practices and corruption, and when we see that we need to call it out.

Senator ROUNDS. I think sometimes their offer of assistance to a contrary is seen as a first step in where, later on, they will start asking for small favors and then move into more demands.

In our case, I would suspect that there are times in which we are seen as looking at some of our neighbors and saying, we expect you to behave in a particular way, and rather than talking about our shared values we try to impose values upon them.

Share with me your thoughts about the differentiation between our shared values and times in which we might be seen as placing our values upon them. I think it is a critical difference.

Mr. NICHOLS. I think that there are advantages in our hemisphere and that our founding documents in this hemisphere lay out what the nations of this region believe in and what they have committed to.

The OAS is the world's oldest regional multilateral organization, and its Charter lays out values very clearly that all of the nations in this hemisphere have signed onto, and I think we can point to those.

We can point to polling of the publics in this hemisphere and their value for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and I think when we talk about what the Chinese and the Russians are really offering, what they are really asking of governments, there is a big difference between what one individual official in a government might want and what, I think, the people of that nation might want.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Ambassador Sison, the COVID-19 pandemic, certainly, put a spotlight on the World Health Organization. Concerns have been expressed that the WHO lacks sufficient resources to manage a global pandemic as well as maintain its integrity.

Do you think that the WHO is resourced to handle a global pandemic, and do you believe that it is still an unbiased organization, despite Chinese influence?

And, finally, how do you think the Department of State can help to strengthen the organization?

Ms. SISON. Good morning, Senator.

Indeed, the issue of the World Health Organization—WHO's need to be fit for purpose and modernized is an important one, and there is an issue, of course, of the need for sustained financing.

We do not want to start down a road and only to find that we are not able to continue down the road as we work to strengthen WHO's ability in surveillance detection, in infectious disease prevention, the ability to respond, to insist that all member states report transparently.

But, of course, that sustained financing needs to be matched with a strong focus and, if confirmed, this would be a top priority on transparency, accountability, and oversight of the WHO's operations.

You mentioned the word integrity and, absolutely, we need to make sure that the WHO's assessments, findings, reports, are science based, expert led, free from outside influence.

And, again, we need to insist that all member states comply with the international norms on infectious disease reporting, international health regulations. We need full transparency on this. Could not agree more, Senator.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, my time has expired.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Rounds.

Senator Murphy?

Senator MURPHY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for your willingness to continue to serve, especially in these very important roles.

Ambassador Nichols, I wanted to turn to the topic of Venezuela. You know, by no metric can anyone suggest that President Trump's policy in Venezuela was a success. Maduro was more cemented in power at the end of his four years.

But there has been some interesting developments over the past few months. We have seen some compromises by the Maduro government on humanitarian access, the creation of a new electoral council, willingness to join the Norway-hosted talks.

And so I am interested to learn from you your early thoughts about how the United States can help push this momentum along, capitalize it, and then, specifically, whether this is the time to talk about restoring diesel swaps.

I have believed for a while that the United States should be engaged in this policy as a way to relieve humanitarian suffering inside the country.

But I wonder if this policy now makes even more sense, because not only does it provide an avenue to try to get much-needed economic relief to people who are suffering, but it also may be a way to show that the United States is open to helping to be a part of these sort of grass shoots of negotiating room.

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you, Senator.

There needs to be a key focus in our policy, in my view, which I should caveat that I understand is under review within the administration. So this will be my personal views.

But I believe that we have a major advantage in dealing with Venezuela, that there is a broad multilateral coalition working to promote democracy in Venezuela, and that is something that we

need to leverage aggressively to push the Maduro regime towards free and fair elections.

We need to support the Venezuelan people, both at the political level in the form of opposition leaders and interim President Guaidó, as well as pushing for humanitarian assistance and ensuring that the people of Venezuela do have access to the help that they need.

With regard to diesel swaps right now, as I understand it, there is enough diesel capacity within Venezuela, at least for the next six months or so.

I think that is something that needs to be watched, and if we see that there is a problem there for the Venezuelan people I think that is something to be looked at.

But I think maintaining economic pressure to negotiate on a government that has shown that it will use dilatory tactics to prevent progress toward free and fair elections in addition to things like releasing political prisoners and allowing a free press, we have to be very cautious on.

Senator MURPHY. Yeah, no doubt, as Senator Menendez regularly reminds us, this is Maduro's game is to sort of entertain hopes of reform, stringing the international community and the United States along with, you know, nothing to be found at the end of the rainbow.

And so I think we go into this with eyes wide open. But it is also interesting that Guaidó himself has proposed the incremental lifting of U.S. sanctions as an incentive to try to continue along this path.

But I look forward to working with you on this as the review continues.

Ambassador Sison, I wanted to talk to you about a topic that regularly comes up in this committee, and that is Yemen. We have a U.N. and WFP appeal that is right now about one-third funded.

Now, it is never 100 percent funded, but in prior years we have been able to stave off famine by making sure that we are at least 80, 90 percent funded on that appeal. There are some pretty important countries like Qatar that have made sort of no contribution.

There is talk of a second donors conference to try to make sure that we put our foot onto the pedal, because we are looking at a 2021 famine, a new outbreak of cholera, if we do not rally the world community through the U.N., through WFP, to make sure that the money is there.

And by the way, the United States put in less money this year than we did last year, which is not exactly helping the situation.

Just your thoughts on how we can make sure we get the humanitarian dollars we need in Yemen.

Ms. SISON. Good morning, Senator, and share your concern about the food insecurity and the need for humanitarian access to the vulnerable populations in Yemen and, in fact, just flew up for the hearing from Haiti.

But we did have WFP Executive Director David Beasley with us a couple of weeks ago, and we actually discussed Yemen and the alarming situation there with the mounting food insecurity.

So, if confirmed, you have my absolute commitment that I would be working both with stakeholders to create these broad partner-

ships with other donors and like-minded countries, also to support Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield and her team up in New York because, of course, the U.N. Security Council has put an enormous amount of effort and work into maintain Security Council voice—united Security Council voice on Yemen.

If confirmed, I look forward to consulting and talking with you more on this important topic.

Senator MURPHY. Great. Thank you very much to you both.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Hagerty?

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, thank you. And, Ambassadors, thank you for your service. Greatly appreciated.

I would like to, first, talk about the Western Hemisphere. I am from Tennessee. Since the border collapsed in late January, we have experienced a dramatic increase in drug trafficking, in overdoses, in human trafficking.

We have now got unaccompanied minors coming into Tennessee. Our schools and hospitals are asking whether we have the capacity to deal with this.

This has become the most urgent crisis in America from a national security standpoint, from an economic security standpoint, from a humanitarian standpoint.

So earlier this month, I traveled to Guatemala and to Mexico to meet with leaders there to try to get at the bottom of what the problem is, what is driving this.

I did not hear much talk about climate change. What I heard was that we are sending messages from here, whether it is talk, election talk, about how people will be treated if a certain outcome occurs, whether it is talk about the potential for a \$15 minimum wage, whether it is talk about checks for illegal immigrants, or the fact that we have extended unemployment—plussed-up unemployment benefits all the way to September, which is creating a giant job opening here in America.

Coyotes are taking these messages and marketing them to very vulnerable people. They are encouraging these vulnerable people to put their life savings on the line and to risk their lives, to make a very dangerous journey, a journey in which more than half of them are involved in some—in some way in crime, whether they become part of the drug trafficking, part of the sex trafficking, or in some other way violated horribly.

This is a very dangerous humanitarian crisis that is occurring at our border. The leaders of these countries are not happy about this at all. They blame us, in large part, but they also see opportunity.

That is what I was trying to get at and I want to share these with you, Ambassador Nichols, these observations, that when I met with the president of Guatemala, he said, look, I am not asking for you to send money or fund NGOs, but help us technically—night vision goggles, technical training, so we can manage our own border. Our own national sovereignty is being violated, he told me. We want to cooperate. We think we can cooperate, and if we can get our border under control and bring the rule of law more in line, we

will see more infrastructure investment, which is what they desperately need.

We have tools here. This committee has jurisdiction over some of the tools that we can help them with infrastructure investment, but we need to get the rule of law and public safety in order there.

I think there are great opportunities to cooperate with them, and I would look forward to working with you toward those ends.

They also want to see us stop the national security problem that they have got too because they do not know who is entering their country. It is a real issue.

It sounded even more so when I talked with the Mexican Foreign Minister and the Minister of Economy of Mexico. They have a grave concern about who is coming across their southern border and, again, they highlighted that opportunity for us to cooperate on a security basis, again, with training, with technology, with equipment. These are ways to help them address the problem.

But the most clear and urgent problem is dealing with our own border, to stop sending the wrong messages that are encouraging this sort of behavior. And what is happening, particularly in Mexico, is that with the movement of coyotes, the overwhelming force that is occurring at our southern border, that it is creating an opening for the cartels to move even more drugs, more sex trafficking, more contraband across our borders.

The cartels are getting larger and more powerful by the day and it is making it that much more difficult to manage the situation in Mexico, in Guatemala, and other countries in that region.

So I would look forward to working with you on this grave national security crisis, and I hope that you will commit to do that with me.

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you, Senator. I look forward to working with you and the other members of this body, if confirmed, on these issues.

I know that colleagues within the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and Population, Refugees and Migration, under the leadership of Vice President Harris and with the participation of Special Envoy Zúñiga are working hard on the issues that you have discussed.

Senator HAGERTY. We need to do more, but thank you for that commitment.

Ambassador Sison, again, thank you for your service.

Still related to this area, what was very clear to me is that China is increasing the movement of fentanyl and fentanyl precursors into Mexico. These are getting manufactured and then trafficked across our border. It appears that all the cooperation between Mexico and the United States to interdict this has collapsed.

I would be very interested in your thoughts on how, in the position that you are, hopefully, going to go to how you can increase our cooperation with Mexico to push back against China and their importation of this illegal drug that is killing our children.

Ms. SISON. Good morning, Senator, and I share your concerns about these illegal drugs coming into our country, as both a mother and a grandmother.

There is, definitely, an important role within the U.N. and multilateral space to push this U.S. priority forward and, if confirmed,

I look forward to consulting with you, working with you and with stakeholders, in organizations such as the Universal Postal Union because there is a postal piece of this.

And the work that we have done on some of the standards has actually made a difference in the multilateral sphere in enforcing and moving these norms into the international space as well as in the U.N. body that deals with drugs and crime.

Senator HAGERTY. I look forward to working with you, and I will just add this. The Mexican authorities made clear to me that they do not have the technology to examine the cargo that is coming in from China. They felt like we could help them significantly there.

You think about x-ray technology, heat-sensing technology, the types of things that they could use to deal with the fact that China has become very clever at hiding fentanyl and the precursors that are being shipped in to their country and then being remanufactured.

So I appreciate that commitment and look forward to working with you.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Kaine is recognized and he has graciously agreed to preside while I go to the Finance Committee. After Senator Kaine, at this point, no Republican colleagues who have sought recognition virtually are present.

So it would be Senator Booker, who is with us virtually, and then Senator Van Hollen.

Senator Kaine [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and congratulations to the witnesses for your service and for your nominations.

I want to ask three Western Hemisphere questions to—Ambassador Nichols, to you about the Northern Triangle, and then I cannot resist taking advantage of having the Haitian ambassador with us today to ask a question about Haiti, Ambassador Sison.

So, Ambassador Nichols, the Northern Triangle. We have seen real backsliding in the Northern Triangle on governments' transparency, corruption, violence, economic opportunity issues.

Recently, in both Guatemala and El Salvador, there have been a sacking of judges and prosecutors who have been known for trying to prosecute corruption. Even more troubling, in Honduras the Honduran election of 2016 was a sham and the OAS called for it to be rerun.

Instead of supporting the OAS, the U.S. recognized the government of Honduras, and what did we get for it? What we got for it was the government canceling transparency initiatives, canceling anti-corruption initiatives, and now the president of Honduras is implicated in a couple of high-profile drug smuggling prosecutions in the United States.

Obviously, if we are going to try to deal with this migration problem, one of the key pillars to it is strengthening governance, security, transparency in the Northern Triangle.

I suspect that there will be a request that we invest funds to do that, and I want to be supportive. But how can we invest funds to promote those ends when the governments in the Northern Triangle are often the causes or at least, in some cases, the causes of the problems rather than the solutions?

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you, Senator.

It is not enough to win office democratically. People have to govern democratically, and central to that is the importance of the separation of powers and a strong independent judiciary, and that is something, if confirmed, that I will argue for vociferously with our partners throughout the hemisphere and, particularly, in the Northern Triangle.

We have programming that has been successful around the world in strengthening the justice sector, and we need to press forward with those efforts, particularly in the Northern Triangle countries.

Corruption is a noxious influence in that region, in that part of our hemisphere, and we need to leverage the tools that you have given us to call out those corrupt actors who are preventing the course of justice from flowing properly.

We also need to leverage our development assistance and our multilateral partners to ensure that the institutions are built and people get the support that they need so they are not attracted to populist and easy solutions that quickly turn to ashes in their mouths.

Senator KAINE. Mr. Ambassador, I think all those are the right answers and I also think they are the things that we have tried to do for years with very little effect. So I hope we will not be in a Groundhog Day of repeatedly doing something and seeing it not work.

Let me make one point on economic opportunity in the region. Again, we would want there to be stronger economic opportunities so people can stay. But how do we invest in stronger economies with governments that have not proven to be reliable partners?

I have an idea. U.S. employers employ a lot of people in the Northern Triangle in the retail sector, in the textile sector.

Rather, if we are going to try to increase economic opportunities, I would hope State and Commerce and others, the vice president's office, would pull together American employers who employ folks in the region and say, for example, what could we do as policy that would make you hire and invest more in the Northern Triangle.

I will give you an example. There is probably a couple hundred thousand textile workers in the Northern Triangle who are employed by American firms.

This is just a brainstorm, but if we were to say, for example, the purchase of PPE during the pandemic was revealed to be a critical national security issue, we should only buy PPE that is American made or that is made with American product in nations with whom we have free trade agreements.

That would pull a huge part of the PPE supply chain out of China and it would give a strong preference for the production of PPE in the Northern Triangle, which is produced with American cotton in factories in that region. Something like that would lead to significant economic expansion or opportunities there.

So I hope, as we focus on economic opportunities, get the advice of the American companies that are already there.

Ambassador Sison, there is this, you know, obviously, huge challenge in Haiti, deep unrest over the term of the president, and a five-year term, but there is huge unrest over when did it start.

What is the U.S. doing to try to help solve this dilemma and pave a way for a less corrupt Haiti, going forward?

Ms. SISON. Good morning, Senator, and good to see you again.

The U.S. and, I will say as the sitting ambassador, U.S. ambassador to Haiti, we have been really urging all stakeholders, so the political actors, the economic leaders, civil society leaders, to come together and work in an inclusive manner to reach an accord that will serve the Haitian people.

And I say this because the political impasse has had an impact over the last two years on the security situation. We see increased gang violence has had a negative effect on the economic side, including economic development side.

The focus has got to be, I believe, on rule of law, combating corruption, promoting justice sector reform, and moving ahead on insisting that these overdue legislative elections, which should have been held in late 2019, do move ahead.

The president has been ruling by decree because there is no legislature. So to get a president out of ruling by presidential decree, there need to be free, fair, and credible legislative elections later this year, as announced by the government of Haiti, followed by a presidential election, so that at the end of the sitting president's term there is an elected president to take his place. The——

Senator KAINE. And thank you, Ambassador. I am over my time and I need to gavel myself out of order and—but thank you for that answer.

I believe Senator Cruz is on his way, but I believe Senator Markey, we are going in seniority and you are up next.

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

Ambassador Nichols, thank you for your service over the years. I want to talk a little bit about climate change and the United States government and its ability to use Global Magnitsky to strike back at those who are committing crimes against environmental defenders.

I know that you have experience in working on these issues. So could you please tell us what you believe we can do as a country to counter environmental human rights violations in the Western Hemisphere?

Because, clearly, we are at a tipping point and we have to make sure that we are using all of the influence of our government.

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you very much, Senator.

It is a complex question. I will touch on a few examples.

For example, if you are dealing with a company that is illegally dumping mining tailings in a river, suborning local officials, and improperly taking resources out of a nation, that seems to me like an example where you could leverage the full range of anti-corruption tools in response to illegal mining practices.

In Peru, artisanal and illegal gold mining was a huge problem and linked to narcotics trafficking, and when I was ambassador there, we worked intensively on leveraging law enforcement tools against those responsible, especially in that nexus of narcotics and illegal mining.

Senator MARKEY. Yeah, gold mining, logging, wildlife trafficking, environmental degradation, all of that. I have introduced legislation, the Targeting Environmental and Climate Recklessness Act,

and it is just to reinforce the reality that all across these countries, brave climate defenders in Central and South America are risking their lives peacefully in order to ensure that these carbon-intensive industries and unsustainable business practices are wreaking havoc on local communities.

And what my legislation would do is it would give the United States, give you, the ability to target foreign individuals and companies engaged in destructive climate actions to ensure that existing human rights and corruption sanctions under Global Magnitsky are used to strike back at those committing crimes against environmental defenders.

Can I just follow up? Just looking at the Amazon, if I may, and the degradation of that forest, which are, as we know, the lungs of the planet, how can we better work to prioritize its protection with the countries that it spans across in South America, in your opinion, Mr. Ambassador?

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you very much, Senator.

I think engaging with the key Amazon nations, starting with Brazil but also Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia that is crucial. Our diplomacy can have an important effect on their policies.

I know Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Kerry is deeply engaged in that exercise. Programmatically, we can leverage our development assistance on the issue of climate, particularly on the protection of forests and rain forests in the region.

We also need to think about how do we leverage our trade agreements, which include environmental provisions, to protect the environment and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you on these issues.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, sir. And just moving to Colombia, quickly, if I could, I am very concerned about the escalation of violence in Colombia.

My question to you is what do you believe we should be doing? What steps should the United States government be doing in order to use our political influence to decrease the—that violence and the suppression of ordinary citizens in that country?

Mr. NICHOLS. The situation in Colombia is a complicated one. Colombia is a long-term ally of the United States and we need to be engaging with President Duque, as I know, our ambassador and key leaders in the administration are, one, to work to deescalate the challenges, two, to address the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, which sort of was one of the reasons why the fiscal package that President Duque introduced was introduced, and three, to prioritize getting back on track to implementation of the 2016 peace agreement in Colombia.

And if confirmed, I look forward to working towards those goals.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, sir. Thank you both for your service.

The CHAIRMAN. [presiding]. Thank you.

Senator Van Hollen?

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, and again, congratulations to both of you on your nominations.

Ambassador Sison, in my introduction this morning, I mentioned your experience in the area of international humanitarian relief,

and in your new position and confirmed you will be a key player in that arena.

Now, I support an immediate ceasefire in the fighting between Israel and Hamas. But whenever the rockets and the bombs stop falling, we will have a humanitarian disaster in Gaza.

As you well know, there was a humanitarian crisis in Gaza before the fighting started and now it is much worse. We all know that Hamas is a terrorist organization that controls Gaza.

We also know that Israel has the right to self-defense, and I am glad that the United States and this committee have assisted Israel in the development and the deployment of the Iron Dome, which has intercepted thousands of Hamas rockets.

But I also think that the United States and the international community needs to do everything we can when the fighting stops to assist the millions of innocent Gazans who are trapped there and have nothing to do with Hamas.

So my first question is a simple one. Do you agree?

Ms. SISON. Yes, Senator, I certainly share your concern about the human suffering associated with this outbreak in violence, and I do believe that providing humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian population with, again, all the transparency, accountability, and oversight built into that, while maintaining our long-standing security relationship with Israel is in the U.S. interest.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you, Madam Ambassador.

Just to give an extent of the challenge we are going to face with the international community, this is—I am just quoting here from the New York Times' report today in terms of the humanitarian crisis:

"The fighting has destroyed 17 hospitals and clinics in Gaza, wrecked its only coronavirus test laboratory, sent fetid wastewater into its streets, and broke water pipes serving at least 800,000 people.

Sewage systems inside Gaza have been destroyed. A desalinization plant that helped provide fresh water to 250,000 people in the territory is offline. Dozens of schools have been damaged or closed, forcing some 600,000 students to miss class and some 72,000 Gazans have been forced to flee their homes."

Now, as your answer did and my question did, I am focused now on post-conflict humanitarian relief to millions of people who have nothing to do with the conflict in Gaza.

So do you agree that the United States and international relief agencies should insist that all parties involved give access consistent with security requirements, but access to provide humanitarian relief in Gaza?

Ms. SISON. Senator, yes, the issue of humanitarian access to provide needed food, medical items, particularly in this time of the COVID pandemic, is absolutely critical.

If confirmed, I would be working with the IO team and other stakeholders across our government and with U.N. partners not only to emphasize the urgency of working towards sustainable calm, but to ensuring that needed humanitarian relief with the built-in safeguards on transparency, accountability, oversight is delivered to the most vulnerable populations.

Thank you, Senator.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Madam Ambassador.

Now, we also have an ongoing humanitarian disaster in Ethiopia. President Biden has called for a ceasefire in that conflict and we, the United States, are working with international relief agencies to try to get humanitarian relief to those there.

This committee two days ago had a briefing with Ambassador Feltman and I had a follow-up conversation with Ambassador Feldman, the Special Envoy, yesterday. Can you just talk briefly about what we need to be doing and demanding in terms of providing humanitarian assistance in that conflict?

Ms. SISON. Indeed, Senator, I share your concern about the increasing food insecurity that we see. The U.N. and the International Organizations Bureau have an important role to play and, if confirmed, I would be working with a number of these U.N. agencies, including World Food Programme and others.

There are other associated human rights issues that I also believe the IO Bureau would be working on and, if confirmed, calling out those who are perpetrating these human rights abuses, these armed actors, widespread reports of sex- and gender-based violence and other atrocities.

We would want to continue to speak with one voice at the U.N. Security Council on these issues, and I look forward, if confirmed, to working with Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield up there in New York as well as the U.N. agencies providing this humanitarian relief and using the appropriate space to call out those armed actors and others perpetrating these atrocities and abuses.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you.

Senator Coons and I were in Sudan just a short time ago and visited one of the refugee camps that have been set up by UNHCR, and I think it is important the United States continues to support that effort as well as the World Food Programme. They are doing essential humanitarian work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cruz?

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for your service. Congratulations on your nominations.

Ambassador Sison, let me start with you. You have emphasized repeatedly that you intend to work to ensure that American taxpayer dollars are well spent at the U.N. and other organizations.

But Americans are deeply concerned about the structure and leadership of those organizations. Organizations like the Human Rights Council are hopelessly biased, especially against the nation of Israel, and they are mendaciously sympathetic to countries like Iran that commit atrocious human rights abuses.

It is no surprise why that is the case, given that those are the sorts of countries that make up a majority of the members of the Human Rights Council.

To take another example, the U.N.'s Commission on the Status of Women, the body's top legislative body on women's rights, recently elected Iran as a member. The Iranian regime, of course, enforces a broad array of gender apartheid policies and, concerning, when asked, the Biden administration declined to condemn that farce.

I worry that no amount of financial accountability can reform these deeply problematic organizations as long as we allow them to be led by countries that are antithetical to their purpose.

I would like your opinion on that. How can financial oversight, which you have discussed, fix these deep problems, especially if the Biden administration is unwilling to speak out clearly against them?

Ms. SISON. Senator, the issue of U.S. leadership is critical, I believe, to addressing the need for reform, and I agree with you there is a need for reform in many of these institutions.

We need the U.S. back at the table pushing for these reforms. There is the issue, yes, of financial accountability, transparency, oversight, but there is also the issue of U.S. leadership building strong cross-regional partnerships and alliances so that our U.S. core values—protection of human rights, labor rights, and economic transparency—are at the forefront.

We need to remind some of our like-minded of what we all signed on to in the Charter of the United Nations because its foundational document is strong on the human rights.

On the Human Rights Council, Senator, I do believe that when we are at the table and as we are coming back to the—to the HRC, we have the ability to better defend Israel from de-legitimization, from unfair targeting, from discriminatory efforts because we are there and we are present.

We have seen when we are there that the number of items brought up under this article, Agenda Item 7, the only single country targeting of Israel in that space, that we are able to push back by coming back also and, of course, with our candidacy better able to create these cross-regional alliances to encourage more human rights right-minded countries to firm up its members.

Senator CRUZ. But does the hypocrisy of some of the worst human rights abusers being themselves members, does that concern you?

Ms. SISON. Indeed, it does. But we have also seen, Senator, the Human Rights Council has put the spotlight on Venezuela. The Human Rights Council has put the spotlight on China and the treatment of Uighurs, has put the spotlight on Hong Kong.

So the issue of our people-to-people diplomacy creating these strong cross-regional alliances of like-minded countries to make sure that our core U.S. values are at the forefront. This is why we need to be at the table and back.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

Ambassador Nichols, I would also like to ask you, briefly, about Mexico, and our relationship with Mexico is complicated. They are a neighbor. We share a land border.

But they are also a country with its own interests, and when it comes to foreign policy we need to use all the foreign policy tools we have.

Recently, the Mexican Government has taken a range of steps to downgrade counternarcotics cooperation with the United States, and in one incident, Mexico even released sensitive information that we provided to them in violation of the U.S.-Mexico Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty.

I have introduced legislation to try to address some of these concerns. But, of course, there is an enormous role for the State Department to play in conveying American concerns and priorities.

Do you also share these concerns with Mexico's behavior in connection with, cooperation with, the United States in counter-narcotics and treaty violations, and how should we address those issues?

Mr. NICHOLS. Our cooperation with Mexico on rule of law, counternarcotics, justice issues, is vital. It is long standing. I had the pleasure of working on those issues when I was Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement.

If confirmed, I look forward to engaging proactively with the government of Mexico on our security cooperation. It is vital for both of our nations. Mexican cooperation is something that we need and they need.

The challenges as was discussed in terms of things like fentanyl and precursors, other opiate trafficking into the United States, illegal activities on the border—we need each other to resolve those, and I look forward to working with our law enforcement colleagues on the U.S. side, with our embassy Law Enforcement Working Group in Mexico City, and with Mexican officials, if confirmed, to press forward to ensure the highest level of cooperation, Senator.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

We normally do not have second rounds. But as I understand it, Senator Hagerty has—I am going to extend the courtesy to you.

Senator HAGERTY. I appreciate it, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Kaine, I am actually following up on a point that you raised. If I could borrow you for two minutes. But I just wanted to add a comment that Senator Kaine inspired.

In my recent visit to Guatemala and to Mexico, one thing that was clear to me that they were very interested in cooperating on was the fact that we are working very aggressively to reshore businesses from China.

We are all very concerned about security of our supply chain. Those companies that are coming back to the United States, I want to get every job I can. Let me be clear. I want every one of those jobs in America that I can get.

But to the extent that they are not coming back to America, rather than have them go to some other Southeast Asian country, why not find a way to work together to bring them into our hemisphere and to bring them to our friends there who need the economic opportunity, which this may help stem some of the root cause?

I do not want to overlook the immediate concern. We have to fix the border crisis now. But mid- and long-term, there is a real opportunity here.

Leaders cited CAFTA as a way to address this. You wisely brought this up, Senator, and I think taking a look at CAFTA, which actually presents now some restrictions and some constraints on what they can do, all of those constraints are being actually picked up by China right now because they are not part of that free trade agreement.

We need to look very aggressively at what we can do with the FTAs that are in place, what we can do with economic development on a joint basis.

I think that the United States can do a great deal to help these countries improve the rule of law and create the proper constructs.

Again, we have the mechanisms to help them with infrastructure because of the various funding mechanisms that exist here in Washington and elsewhere.

But creating that economic opportunity and seizing this trend right now coming from China is something that I encourage you very much to focus on.

Thank you.

Mr. NICHOLS. Thank you, Senator. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on that.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Senator Kaine.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. One or two final questions.

Venezuela, despite the recent charm offensive, and that is what I consider it, the fact remains that Nicolas Maduro is a brutal dictator whose regime has committed, from my perspective, crimes against humanity, perpetrated fraud in the country's presidential and legislative elections, responsible for Venezuela's massive humanitarian crisis.

So I, first of all, want to commend the president, President Biden, for providing TPS for Venezuelans. But with Venezuela descending into a failed state status, I know that interim President Guaidó and a coalition of democratic actors are pushing for comprehensive negotiations, both presidential and legislative ones, as well as a return to democratic governance and increase aid to address the humanitarian crisis.

So, Ambassador Nichols, is not that something that we should be able to get our arms around and supportive of and seek an international mobilization for a simple proposition, internationally supervise the fair and free presidential and legislative elections?

Mr. NICHOLS. Mr. Chairman, I agree that is something that the international coalition should be focused on. Our multilateral partners play an important role.

As you wisely state, the Maduro regime's goal is to delay, to deflect, to distract, and I think, cognizant of that, we need to take an approach that limits the regime's ability to do those things.

As I said earlier, our multilateral partners are a vital tool in that regard. But the protagonists of this need to be the Venezuelan people and the Venezuelan opposition, led by interim President Guaidó.

The CHAIRMAN. Mm-hmm. You are familiar, or maybe I should add, are you familiar with the roles that, for example, Russia, China, and Turkey are playing in Venezuela? Russia, not only through its entity there that they use for what I call mercenary soldiers, but also I hope you are familiar with reports of Russia taking out gold bars out of Venezuela and part of the national patrimony going to Russia, the realities of Turkey's banks being used to flush the cash out of Venezuela and try to evade our sanctions. Are you familiar with those elements?

Mr. NICHOLS. Yes, Mr. Chairman, and the broad efforts by China, Russia, Iran, Turkey, others, to work around the sanctions

regime that exists is deeply worrisome, and I think that the—those of us who wish to see democracy in Venezuela need to aggressively challenge those actions and work to ensure that the profits of their criminal activities are not returned to the regime.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

One last question for you. President Bukele in El Salvador—we had President Bukele here. We met with him before after he was elected but before he took office. He said all the right things then. He has done all the wrong things since then.

His firing of the attorney general, his elimination of the—all of the judges of the Constitutional Court, have all of the elements of a massive power grab consolidation in an autocratic way.

You know, he probably thinks that if we do not just go along with him he will turn to China. How should we face the challenges there?

Because I think beyond El Salvador it is going to send a hemispheric message that is very bad if we do not, you know, stand up for the principles of observance of the Constitution, rule of law, and other elements.

Mr. NICHOLS. As I said, Mr. Chairman, it is not enough to win office democratically or win elections democratically. Our friends and our rivals need to respect the rule of law and govern democratically and we need to hold them to account when they fail to do so.

El Salvador is a country that has been a long-time ally. I served there from 1991 to 1993. We, as a nation, have sacrificed much and provided a great deal of assistance to El Salvador to try and put it on a path towards success, and we need to use all of the tools that we can to ensure that El Salvador remains on a forward path and that the challenges that it faces can be overcome.

And I look forward to working on those issues, if confirmed.

The CHAIRMAN. Mm-hmm.

And finally, Ambassador Sison, I do not want you to feel that I have no affection for your position. So our legislation that Senator Risch and I put together on a bipartisan basis here passed the committee 21 to 1.

The Strategic Competition Act creates a special representative for advancing U.S. leadership in the United Nations.

That person would be responsible for, among other things, promoting U.S. leadership and participation in the U.N. system with a particular focus on issue areas in which authoritarian countries are increasing their influence and steering the U.N. agenda.

We are alarmed, as you have heard here from several members, about the increasing influence and role of authoritarian countries in U.N. bodies. What is your assessment as to how we can best counter those efforts?

And I know that there has been within your department to be a section that has been created. How do you see the role of this Special Representative playing within it?

Ms. SISON. Thank you, Chairman, for this question and also thank you to the members of this committee for the bipartisan focus on this need for the U.S. to engage vigorously in this strategic competition, and if confirmed, this is at the top of my agenda.

Indeed, the International Organizations Bureau is in the process of establishing and launching a new Multilateral Strategy and Personnel office. You mentioned the Special Representative position, and I look forward, if confirmed, to working with all stakeholders in this space.

The Special Representative, the IO Office of Multilateral Strategy and Personnel, what are we going to focus on? A, making sure that we get independent qualified U.S. candidates or like-minded candidates if there is no U.S. appropriate individual into these top U.N. leadership positions.

This is critical running the State Department and the Secretary of State, have put their weight behind, for example, an excellent U.S. candidate at the International Telecommunication Union, focused on that issue of candidates' long game, looking ahead at investing in the U.N.'s Junior Professional Officer program one to two years, having young Americans gain this experience and then be set up for mid-level and beyond positions to bring in our core U.S. values—adherence to democratic norms, protection of human rights.

China uses this program extensively. We need to be in there. Work with our embassies abroad, our ambassadors and chargés, our USAID missions, to make sure we are looking into the weeds as well.

We do not want to see U.N. agency documents coming out of these field offices that have Belt and Road Initiative or Communist Party of China language in their strategic program strategy documents out in the field. We need to be alert to this.

And I would add to this list of priorities preserving this space for Taiwan's participation at the expert technical level in the World Health Assembly, which is coming up next week up at ICAO, the International Civil Aviation Organization, and at Interpol.

These are transnational threats: global health security, civil aviation safety and security, transnational crime. Taiwan's experts' input should be heard.

Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, and I strongly support your views on Taiwan being included at those levels internationally.

Finally, for you, it was reassuring to hear Ambassador Greenfield reiterate her commitment to countering anti-Israel bias and unilateral Palestinian actions in international fora and multilateral organizations like the U.N. and U.N. agencies.

I think such a commitment is more pressing than ever as we search for ways to deescalate the current conflict and return to a two-state solution process.

If confirmed, will you work to counter anti-Israel bias at the U.N. and other multilateral organizations?

Ms. SISON. Yes, Senator, I will. I will push back, if confirmed, as I have done in the past in many different tours of duty against the de-legitimization of Israel, unfair bias, discrimination against Israel, anti-Semitism.

Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Well, Senator Risch?

[No response.]

The CHAIRMAN. With that, we appreciate your testimony. This record will remain open two business days. So right at—close of business Thursday.

Okay, I have to check with my ever-ready staff.

This record will remain open until the close of business on Thursday. There may be questions for the record that are submitted by members.

I urge both of you to answer them fully and expeditiously as soon as possible so that your nominations may be considered at a business meeting.

And with the thanks of the committee for your presence, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:57 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. BRIAN A. NICHOLS BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Canada is a NATO ally, a NORAD partner, a member of the Five Eyes, and a top trade partner to the United States, and our two countries have worked in close strategic partnership around the world in recent decades. However, the Trump administration introduced unnecessary friction into this important relationship, including imposing Section 232 tariffs on Canada. What is your assessment of the U.S.-Canada relationship and what steps will you take to repair this important bilateral partnership?

Answer. Our relationship with Canada is very strong. Relations with the United States remain the centerpiece of Canada's foreign policy. President Biden and PM Trudeau issued the "Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership" at their February virtual meeting. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the roadmap priorities, which include combatting the pandemic and cooperating on economic recovery, accelerating climate ambitions, advancing diversity and inclusion, bolstering security and defense, and building global alliances.

Our two governments coordinate daily at multiple levels and across multiple agencies on matters ranging from major global issues to our shared border, rivers, and lakes, our trade relationship, and joint security through NORAD and NATO. If confirmed, I look forward to furthering that cooperation.

The United States and Canada enjoy the most extensive and integrated economic partnership of any two nations in the world. While the Section 232 actions were deeply unpopular in Canada, the almost 400,000 people in pre-pandemic times and the nearly \$1.7 billion worth of goods and services that crossed our border daily are a testament to the importance and scale of our economic relationship. Canada is the primary foreign market for more than 30 U.S. states. Millions of U.S. and Canadian middle-class jobs—including well-paying jobs in the manufacturing sector—depend on our partnership. Given the thousands of businesses and the various, complex sectors operating across our borders, disagreements arise from time to time. That is understandable and expected. If confirmed, I would commit to working with our U.S. interagency colleagues to resolve these issues with Canada in a fair and transparent manner and ensure we put the interests of U.S. workers, farmers, ranchers, and businesses at the forefront of our foreign policy so that they are treated fairly under the terms of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

Question. The Government of China arbitrarily detained two Canadian citizens—Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor—in retaliation for Canada's decision to detain Meng Wanzhou at the request of U.S. prosecutors. For two years, Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor have been held in substandard conditions and routinely denied consular access by the Canadian Government. What is your assessment of the detention of Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor and how will you work with the Trudeau Government to help secure their release?

Answer. If confirmed, I would make clear that the United States stands with Canada in calling on Beijing to immediately release Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor. I will work closely with my counterparts in the Canadian Government to help secure their

release. The United States rejects the PRC's use of arbitrary detention as a political tool. Human beings are not bargaining chips.

The United States has endorsed the Canada-led multilateral Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations, together with over 60 countries. We are in discussions with Canada and other likeminded partners through the Partnership Action Plan to coordinate collective action against the practice of politically motivated, arbitrary detentions of foreign nationals to exert pressure on their governments.

Question. Mexico was the deadliest country in the world for journalists in 2020, accounting for almost a third of journalists killed this year, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Despite President Lopez-Obrador's pledge to tackle violence against journalists in 2018, his government continues to underfund the Federal Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists. How will you engage on the issue of press freedoms in Mexico and advocate for increased protections for journalists?

Answer. Respect for human rights is fundamental, and a free and active press is an integral part of a healthy democracy. The killing of journalists and human rights activists undermines freedoms of expression and association, as well as regional security.

The Department is committed to supporting efforts to increase respect for human rights and press freedom. Through USAID, the Department supports Mexico's National Protection Mechanism for Journalists and Human Rights Defenders and works with state-level counterparts to expand the protection measures available for these groups. USAID also supports the Specialized Prosecutor's Office for Crimes Against Freedom of Expression to investigate and sanction aggressions against journalists and defenders.

If confirmed, I will strongly promote respect for human rights and the rule of law and end impunity. We will continue to urge Mexican authorities to investigate and prosecute those responsible for crimes against journalists and human rights activists wherever they occur.

Question. Arms trafficked from the United States into Mexico have reached disturbing levels and, in some cases, transnational criminal organizations operating in Mexico possess more sophisticated weapons than those of Mexican law enforcement, all of which is enabling dangerous groups to expand their influence and activities in the country. If confirmed, what steps would you take to address international arms trafficking from the U.S. into Mexico?

Answer. U.S.-Mexico security cooperation remains a top national security priority. It is critical that the United States and Mexico work together to dismantle transnational criminal organizations and their operations, reduce impunity and corruption, and strengthen the rule of law in Mexico. I recognize that illegal weapons trafficking from the United States constitutes a major source of the arms used by criminal organizations in Mexico. If confirmed, I commit to working with you and other members of the U.S. Congress, my U.S. interagency colleagues, and Mexican Government officials to address border security and arms trafficking.

Question. Central America's Northern Triangle struggles with widespread insecurity, weak rule of law and extreme levels of poverty. These challenges are the main causes pushing people to leave their countries. If confirmed, what priorities will you establish to address citizens security, strengthen democratic governance, and facilitate conditions for equitable economic growth in the Northern Triangle?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize programs that directly impact everyday Central Americans to improve citizen security, strengthen democratic governance, and create the conditions for equitable economic growth, especially in areas prone to high emigration. To build political will, I will work across the U.S. Government to utilize a broad range of tools of diplomacy, public diplomacy, sanctions and visa revocations, and targeted foreign assistance programs to combat corruption, strengthen judiciaries, and promote transparency.

Our citizen security programs seek to transform the relationship between police and the communities they serve. We will work with civil society and partner governments to address community needs, including health and education, promote transparency, and hold government institutions accountable. Finally, if confirmed, I will work with our interagency partners to help create conditions for equitable economic growth, including by supporting businesses owned by women and disadvantaged groups.

Question. Across Central America, citizens have fled their homes and migrated from their countries in search of safety and opportunity. Additionally certain un-

democratic leaders have facilitated the criminality that leaves many Central Americans unable to see a future in their country. If confirmed, how will you prioritize the use of foreign assistance to support democratic civil society and struggling citizens, while also holding accountable certain leaders that have facilitated criminality and placed their own interests above their citizens?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support assistance programs to strengthen civil society and their efforts to denounce corruption, promote justice, protect human rights, and advocate for the needs of vulnerable populations. I will seek to build on administration efforts to consult with civil society representatives, both throughout the region and in the United States, to ensure their perspectives and input inform our policies and program design. It is critical that we work to guard civic space that allows for the free exercise of rights, and use all available tools to promote accountability for corrupt actors in the region.

Question. In November 2020, more than 7 million people were affected and hundreds of thousands were forced into shelters after two devastating hurricanes struck Central America, positioning already vulnerable individuals at greater risk. If confirmed, how will you prioritize support for recovery and relief efforts from these hurricanes and how will this align with a broader, longer-term effort to aid Central America in mitigating the impacts of climate change?

Answer. If confirmed, I will coordinate closely within the Department and the interagency, including by supporting international engagement efforts led by Vice President Harris to internationalize the effort and secure more donor commitments for responding to the immense humanitarian needs in Central America. The Department, together with USAID and others, provided immediate humanitarian relief in the aftermath of the hurricanes and continues to remain actively engaged in rebuilding efforts. In April, the U.S. Government announced an additional \$310 million in humanitarian support to the region and is working to secure increased donor commitments to address acute needs. We will continue to work to address the immediate needs while strengthening the capacity of Central American Governments for disaster risk mitigation and preparedness.

Question. Since taking office in 2007, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega has conducted widespread, systematic attacks against civilians, including murder, torture, and arbitrary detentions. Moreover, in recent weeks and months, the Ortega Government has taken a number of steps to undermine the possibility of free, fair and transparent elections in November 2021. If confirmed, how will you prioritize support for Nicaraguan civil society in light of the enactment of these troubling laws and how will you work with international partners to promote a free, fair and transparent electoral process in Nicaragua?

Answer. The United States is deeply concerned by a series of repressive laws that have been passed since October 2020 which aim to suffocate civil society in Nicaragua and quash freedom of expression. The regime has taken repressive action against several media outlets, and the administration has publicly denounced these actions. President Ortega's actions against civil society, the media, and the democratic opposition will only further distance him from the global community. If confirmed, I will actively work to defend Nicaragua's civil society groups, and will continue to work through diplomatic efforts, coordinated multilateral pressure, support for pro-democracy actors, and targeted economic measures, as appropriate, to advocate for free and fair presidential and legislative elections in Nicaragua. The administration will continue to work closely with partners in the OAS, EU, and elsewhere to urge the Nicaraguan Government to implement free and fair elections.

Question. During his campaign, President-elect Biden characterized Colombia as a "keystone" of U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America, pledging that restoring the partnership our countries would be a priority. If confirmed, what would be your priorities for and approach to strengthening the U.S.-Colombia relationship?

Answer. I agree with President Biden that Colombia is a vital strategic partner. If confirmed, I will support efforts to advance the many priorities we share with Colombia, including promoting sustainable peace and reconciliation; combatting narcotics trafficking and the transnational criminal groups that threaten hemispheric security; coordinating an effective diplomatic and humanitarian response to the crisis in Venezuela; protecting human rights; addressing the climate crisis; assisting Colombia to strengthen its health system; expanding economic ties, and promoting inclusive economic growth that will benefit the citizens of both countries.

Question. Five years ago, Colombia signed a historic peace accord with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). However, there have been delays in implementation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Venezuela crisis, and the eco-

conomic impacts of both, as well as continued security challenges. How will you support Colombia as it implements the accord amidst these many growing challenges?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the efforts of the Colombian Government and people as they continue to work towards a just and lasting peace and a more prosperous future. I believe that successful implementation of the 2016 peace accord is vital to sustainable progress on a broad range of priorities, including security, stability, counternarcotics, human rights, justice, and economic development. I will ensure that the United States continues to support the implementation of the accord through diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance programming. Our priorities include assisting Colombia to extend the benefits of the accord to vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas.

Question. In recent weeks, Colombia has confronted nationwide protests. While the majority of the protests have been peaceful, there have been incidents of violent protests, vandalism, and blockades—which have had a negative impact on the broader population. There also have been acts of violence and excessive use of force committed by Colombian security forces. Additionally, there have been incidents of citizens taking up arms and firing on protesters. What is your assessment of the protests, the acts of excessive force committed by security forces, and the attacks by armed citizens? How can the United States best support Colombia during this difficult period?

Answer. Colombia is a long-time and close partner. I am saddened by the loss of life during protests in Colombia this May. Citizens in democratic countries have the unquestionable right to protest peacefully. Violence and vandalism is not acceptable; nor are acts of vigilantism. If confirmed, I will encourage the Colombian Government to continue investigating all allegations of police misconduct and address any violations of human rights. I will also support the efforts of the Colombian Government and people as they continue to engage in dialogue to resolve the current situation and work together toward a more prosperous and peaceful future, particularly through continued implementation of the 2016 peace accord.

Question. Over the past four years, the U.S.-Ecuador relationship has improved significantly. After a decade of tensions, both countries have advanced multiple security, development, and economic agreements. What is your assessment of the U.S.-Ecuador relationship and if confirmed, what steps will you take to support the U.S.-Ecuador partnership?

Answer. Over the last few years, the United States and Ecuador have improved relations and built a cooperative bilateral relationship based on shared values related to democracy, sustainable development and prosperity, transparency, security, and the fight against drug trafficking, organized crime, and corruption. Ecuador is a steadfast regional partner. The United States seized this opening to increase bilateral cooperation across the board.

If confirmed, I will continue to pursue increased cooperation with the Ecuadorian Government in areas of mutual benefit for both our countries. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. interagency to ensure we are exploring all areas of cooperation with Ecuador and seeing where the U.S. can strategically provide assistance. The United States will continue supporting Ecuador's efforts to implement much-needed economic reforms to strengthen the economy, balance public finances, and revive growth in Ecuador, which is imperative given the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States is proud to stand with the Ecuadorian people as they continue on the path to sustainable prosperity.

Question. The Bolsonaro Government in Brazil has been highly criticized for its role in deforestation and forest destruction. While annual deforestation has increased over the past 11 years, the spike seen in 2019 is, according to many experts, was a direct result of the Government's actions. President-elect Biden has been outspoken about the need for a better approach to deforestation in the Amazon. If confirmed, do you commit to prioritizing environmental issues as a core agenda item for our bilateral relationship with Brazil and how will you approach the issue of Amazon deforestation?

Answer. Addressing deforestation is key to achieving Brazil's climate and development goals. If confirmed, I look forward to prioritizing efforts to combat the climate crisis and other environmental issues. We want to work with the Brazilian Government, Indigenous and Quilombo communities, and civil society to build economic value for Brazilians through forest management and protection rather than deforestation and to explore ways to increase investment into forests, combat conservation crimes, improve land titling, and create sustainable value chains to conserve biodiversity.

Question. As the crisis in Venezuela poses continued risks for U.S. national security and regional stability, what priority will you place on strengthening coordination with our closest partners to improve the effectiveness of our sanctions, humanitarian aid, and diplomacy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the State Department continues to prioritize strengthening coordination with our closest partners to improve the effectiveness of our sanctions, humanitarian aid, and diplomacy. The United States needs to work with partners and allies to build multilateral pressure on the illegitimate Maduro regime, promote accountability for regime officials' and their enablers' criminal activities, implement appropriate sanctions against those who undermine democracy or abuse human rights, and provide humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Venezuelan people.

Question. Given the Maduro regime's fraudulent legislative elections in December 2020 and the seating of a new, illegitimate National Assembly, what diplomatic efforts will you pursue to support Interim President Juan Guaidó and Venezuela's democratic opposition, as well as their ability to address the suffering of the Venezuelan people and counter Maduro's dictatorship?

Question. If confirmed, I will remain committed to working with our Venezuelan and international partners to foster an environment where all Venezuelans can chart a peaceful course out of the current crisis, with full respect for the freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, and an end to attacks against human rights defenders, journalists, and political opposition actors.

I will work with partners and allies to increase multilateral pressure on the illegitimate Maduro regime, promote accountability, including through the use of appropriate sanctions, of regime officials and their enablers for their criminal activities, undermining democracy, or abuse of human rights. If confirmed, I will also prioritize providing humanitarian aid to ease the suffering of people affected by the Venezuelan regional crisis.

Question. What is your assessment of efforts by our geopolitical competitors and adversaries—Russia, China, and Cuba—to prop up the Maduro regime in Venezuela?

Answer. I understand Russian support for the Maduro regime includes military advisors and proxies, disinformation mechanisms, political influence on the world stage, and financial backing. PRC companies such as ZTE support the Maduro regime by providing technology to surveil Venezuelans and reward regime supporters while punishing critics. Cuban military and intelligence advisors actively support Maduro through the provision of security forces, intelligence officers, and providing direction to regime actors. Collectively, these efforts provide substantial and worrisome support to the Maduro regime, which I will work to counter, if confirmed.

Question. China's presence in Latin America has grown over the past four years amidst a combination of U.S. neglect and aggression towards the region, as well as increased Chinese economic, diplomatic, and military engagement. How will you improve cooperation with our hemispheric partners, so as to reassert our leadership, deepen our ties with partner governments, and improve our competitiveness in the region?

Answer. The People's Republic of China (PRC) represents a serious challenge to U.S. interests in the region, with its growing security ties and infrastructure investments. If confirmed, I will lead our team to meet this challenge by advancing our positive agenda for the hemisphere. We will build on our shared values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. We will welcome our allies and partners' expertise and resources to support the region's COVID-19 response, entrepreneurship, and sustainable infrastructure. We will support high-standard investment in infrastructure and transparent economic development that creates jobs essential for regional pandemic recovery. If confirmed, I will work to broaden our diplomatic presence, promote increased educational and cultural exchanges, and help our partners face rule of law challenges.

Question. As the Government of China has expanded its presence in Latin America, aspects of its engagement have been characterized by predatory foreign investment, unsustainable loans to the region, or even through aggressive violations of international boundaries as we saw in the case of large Chinese illegal fishing off of the coast of the Galapagos Islands. What is your assessment of these aspects of China's engagement in Latin America and as Assistant Secretary of State what tools will you utilize to strengthen U.S. engagement and competitiveness in the region?

Answer. The hemisphere faces longstanding challenges of economic inequality, corruption, and weak democratic institutions, all of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic and make the region more vulnerable to aggressive and coercive practices, including by the People's Republic of China (PRC).

If confirmed, I will continue U.S. efforts to work with partners and share resources and expertise to support COVID-19 response, entrepreneurship, and economic development that creates jobs essential for regional pandemic recovery. With likeminded partners and allies, I will continue efforts to offer higher-standard, transparently governed infrastructure alternatives and push back on PRC economic pressure. I will also continue to raise concerns and distinguish ourselves from PRC infrastructure projects to advocate for the highest environmental, social, and labor standards to ensure investments are beneficial, sustainable in the long term, transparent and respect the rule of law. If confirmed, I will support the continued engagement of constructive actors who share our values, such as Taiwan.

I will also continue to work with the interagency and partners in our region to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which impacts local fisheries and national economies, including through developing a coordinated regional response to increase regional capacity to counter IUU fishing activities by PRC fleet and those of other flag states.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. BRIAN A. NICHOLS BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Has the Biden administration determined a specific timeline to complete its ongoing review of U.S. policy in Venezuela?

Answer. I understand the interagency is working diligently on the Venezuela policy review, which remains ongoing. There is widespread agreement on the need to restore democracy through free and fair elections, and to adopt a multilateral approach toward a negotiated solution to the crisis caused by the illegitimate Maduro regime. If confirmed, I will continue our work to encourage free and fair elections, urge the release of political prisoners, confront the escalating humanitarian crisis, and bring relief to the Venezuelan people, including the millions who have fled Venezuela.

Question. Do you commit to thoroughly and promptly brief the committee on the outcome of this policy review as soon as it is complete?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress as we seek to address the Venezuela crisis.

Question. In your view, how would you describe the nature of the Maduro regime?

Answer. The United States does not recognize Maduro's dictatorial regime as the Government of Venezuela. His repression, corruption, and mismanagement have created one of the worst humanitarian crises this hemisphere has seen. The Maduro regime enables criminal and terrorist networks and openly cooperates with many malign actors, which poses a serious threat to U.S. national security.

Question. What would you say are the pitfalls and potential incentives that could persuade such a regime to peacefully give up control of Venezuela?

Answer. If confirmed, I will 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. The United States stands ready to support such a negotiation, led by the Venezuelans themselves. I am committed to work with our partners inside Venezuela and in the international community to pressure Maduro to commit to a serious process. Recognizing the difficulties of engaging with such a regime, a potential incentive would be the lifting of economic sanctions and acknowledgement of the legitimacy of a Government in Venezuela—which, as the administration has noted previously, can and will only occur if democracy is restored.

A pitfall of engaging with the Maduro regime is that the regime continues to buy time while dividing the opposition and the international community, seeking only minimum concessions to obtain some domestic and international legitimacy without addressing the main issues that will lead to the restoration of democracy in Venezuela. I commit to remaining clear-eyed about these risks, if confirmed. I will seek to engage with Interim President Guaidó and other Venezuelans who wish to promote democracy and the international community to promote positive change and mitigate the risks laid out above.

Question. To what extent is the Maduro regime providing safe haven to transnational criminal organizations, including U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations?

Answer. The illegitimate Maduro regime allows and tolerates the use of its territory by terrorist organizations and non-state armed groups, including the National Liberation Army (ELN) and dissident members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, among others. The regime's practically nonexistent international drug control cooperation, usurpation of the judicial system and military and security services for its own illicit ends, public corruption, and cooperation with criminal elements have provided ideal conditions for transnational criminal organizations to thrive.

Question. To what extent do senior members of the Maduro regime support and protect various transnational criminal groups operating within the borders of Venezuela?

Answer. I understand that, at times, regime officials have openly welcomed transnational criminal groups' presence in Venezuela. During the closing remarks of the 2019 Sao Paulo Forum in Caracas, Maduro stated that Iván Murquez and Jesús Santrich (former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) leaders who were at that time missing and widely presumed to have left the peace process and returned to terrorist activities) were both welcome in Venezuela. The regime leverages drug trafficking, illegal and illicit gold mining, and a variety of black-market financial transactions to enrich its leaders and evade sanctions, necessarily working with transnational criminal organizations. These operations could not take place without acquiescence or approval at the highest levels.

Question. In your view, what is the nature of the relationships between senior members of the Maduro regime and transnational criminal organizations?

Answer. I understand the regime is complicit with transnational criminal organizations, including dissidents of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the Colombian-origin National Liberation Army (ELN), and Hezbollah sympathizers. Maduro and his associates use criminal activities to help maintain their illegitimate hold on power. Profit-seeking networks between FARC dissidents, ELN, and other Venezuelan non-state armed groups facilitate the regime's public corruption and graft schemes, to include those involving senior members of the Maduro regime.

Question. In your view, what is the nature of the relationships between Venezuelan security forces and transnational criminal organizations?

Answer. Profit-seeking ties between dissident members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the Colombian-origin National Liberation Army (ELN), and Venezuelan paramilitary groups facilitate the public corruption and graft schemes of the regime to include other members of the armed forces. According to the Department of Justice indictments of Maduro and 14 other regime officials unsealed in March 2020, some senior Venezuelan political, intelligence, and military officials have facilitated drug trafficking through the country since at least 1999. Venezuelan security services have also clashed with transnational criminal organizations, such as FARC dissident groups and the ELN. While Venezuelan security services do occasionally confront and even kill non-state armed group members, it is difficult to know if that reflects national strategy or local conflicts of interest on the part of regime commanders.

Question. Do actions by the Maduro regime related to transnational criminal activities undermine U.S. counter-narcotics cooperation with Colombia? Do actions related to transnational criminal activities undertaken by the Maduro regime undermine the 2016 Colombian agreement with the FARC?

Answer. The historically weak government presence at the border between Colombia and Venezuela has allowed terrorist groups to operate, particularly Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) dissidents, the National Liberation Army (ELN), and other criminal networks involved in trafficking and smuggling. A number of FARC dissidents engage in terrorist and other criminal activities, particularly in border regions and areas previously controlled by the FARC. Colombian drug-trafficking organizations—including various dissident FARC factions, the ELN, and other criminal groups—orchestrate the shipment of illicit drugs through Venezuela.

Question. Is the National Electoral Council named on May 5, 2021, a credible step to advance a negotiated and peaceful solution to Venezuela's political, economic, and humanitarian crises?

Answer. The goal of the United States is a peaceful, stable, and democratic Venezuela. While the National Electoral Council (CNE) that was named was slightly less imbalanced than others in recent memory, it is no substitute for a comprehensive process leading to free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections and other guarantees, which are long overdue.

The CNE in question was composed by an illegitimate body—a national assembly Maduro installed based on fraudulent elections on December 6, 2020. The real test is whether the CNE guarantees the right of Venezuelans to freely choose their representatives, not merely its composition.

Given Maduro's track record, if confirmed, I will work assiduously with our international partners to continue to press for the fundamental changes needed, including lifting bans on political parties, the unconditional release of political prisoners, invitations to credible international electoral observers, a public electoral calendar, and the unhindered access and distribution of humanitarian aid.

Question. Can the humanitarian crisis affecting Venezuela be resolved under Maduro's watch?

Answer. Venezuelans are suffering from one of the worst economic and humanitarian crises outside of a war in modern history. Since 2017, more than 5.6 million Venezuelans have been forced to flee their country.

The illegitimate Maduro regime mismanages the economy, plunders public coffers, and impedes access to critical humanitarian assistance, including lifesaving food and nutrition aid. If confirmed, I will work to open more possibilities for humanitarian workers, organizations, and assistance to reach the Venezuelan people in Venezuela and beyond.

Since 2017, the United States has provided more than \$1.2 billion in humanitarian, economic, development, and health assistance to help Venezuelans, including more than \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance, both inside Venezuela and throughout the region.

Question. Has the Biden administration determined a specific timeline for completion of its ongoing review of U.S. policy in Cuba?

Answer. I understand the administration has committed to carefully reviewing U.S.-Cuba policy, to ensure it advances the goals the administration is trying to achieve in empowering the Cuban people to determine their future. I understand there is no set timeline for the review, and the administration is eager to consider views from a variety of stakeholders from various sectors and viewpoints. If confirmed, I will support the Department's review with an eye toward assessing its impact on the political and economic wellbeing of the Cuban people as well as the promotion of democracy and human rights, and I look forward to consulting with Congress regularly on this issue.

Question. Should Cuba be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism (SST) while they continue to provide safe harbor to violent U.S. fugitives?

Answer. I understand 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. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the administration's review of Cuba policy and consulting regularly with Congress. Our priority in Cuba, as the rest of the Hemisphere, needs to be democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Countries should not be grandfathered because they have failed to respect those tenets.

Question. If confirmed, would you support Cuba's removal from the SST list without verifiable assurances that it would cease to foster a permissive environment for international terrorists?

Answer. If confirmed, I will carefully and thoroughly review all material related to the decision to designate Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, including the underlying rationale. I look forward to supporting the administration's review of Cuba policy, if confirmed.

Question. The United States has extradition treaties with Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. These treaties cover crimes that are often committed in relation to human trafficking activities feeding the illegal migration crisis at our southern border. If confirmed, do you commit to consider and report to the committee ways in which the U.S. could better leverage existing bilateral extradition treaties with the countries in Northern Central America to combat illegal migration from the region?

Answer. If confirmed, I plan to evaluate our extradition treaties with Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. These treaties can be powerful tools for combatting

crime, including human trafficking and migrant smuggling. I will consider all available tools at the Department's disposal to help address the root causes of irregular migration in and from Central America, including corruption and impunity, and I will continue to consult closely with Congress on these issues.

Question. The United States has leveraged sanctions and diplomatic efforts, but what other actions do you think are needed to significantly ramp up pressure ahead of the November general elections in Nicaragua?

Answer. I believe we need to continue to work through diplomatic efforts, coordinated multilateral pressure, support for democratic actors, and targeted economic measures, as appropriate, to advocate for free and fair presidential and legislative elections in Nicaragua. The United States will continue working closely with our partners in the OAS, EU, and others to urge the Nicaraguan Government to implement free and fair elections. If the Ortega regime fails to take meaningful reforms by the May OAS deadline, if confirmed, I will work with our partners to use the diplomatic and economic tools at our disposal, and will continue to coordinate on targeted measures with Canada, the EU, and the United Kingdom. The United States will keep using our voice, vote, and influence so that international financial institution lending does not support non-democratic actors in Nicaragua. It is important that the United States and our allies clearly state that we will give credibility to and work with the winner of a free and fair election, but it will be extremely difficult to work constructively with a government emerging from a fraudulent election.

Question. If confirmed, would you recommend reviewing Nicaragua's continued participation in—and access to—the full benefits afforded under the Dominican Republic-Central America FTA (CAFTA-DR) should the November elections fail to meet international standards?

Answer. CAFTA-DR has improved the lives of the people of Nicaragua and the United States. In order to continue to build on that partnership and expand our economic partnership, the U.S. should make clear that Nicaraguans would benefit from good governance, transparency, and the rule of law. Given the deterioration of those democratic principles in Nicaragua, we are already ensuring that trade capacity building and technical assistance, including joint efforts on customs and border management, labor, environment, and agriculture, are not directed toward the Nicaraguan Government. If the November elections are not free and fair, the U.S. would continue to review the Nicaraguan Government's participation in these trade-related activities, with a view toward promoting good governance and transparency in the region.

Question. According to the 2019 State Department Report on Human Rights in Nicaragua, "there were numerous reports that the Government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings" in response to the April 2018 pro-democracy protests, where the Government's violent crackdown left at least 325 people dead; over 2,000 injured; hundreds illegally detained; tortured, and disappeared; and more than 80,000 exiled in neighboring countries. An Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) team concluded in July 2018 that the Nicaraguan security forces' actions could be considered crimes against humanity. The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights also describes Nicaragua as suffering from a "climate of widespread terror." If confirmed, what specific actions would you support to hold members of the Ortega-Murillo regime accountable for serious human rights abuses and crimes against humanity?

Answer. The administration is committed to promoting accountability for Ortega and his collaborators who undermine democracy or violate human rights, and will continue to call out abuses when they occur. The United States was a co-sponsor, along with 51 countries, of the March 2021 U.N. Human Rights Council resolution which called for justice and accountability in Nicaragua. If confirmed, I will intensify our efforts to promote and protect freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, and I will urge the Ortega regime to fully and unconditionally release all arbitrarily detained persons. The United States will continue to use the economic and diplomatic tools at our disposal, including targeted sanctions and bilateral and multilateral engagement, to support Nicaraguans' calls for human rights, democracy, and justice.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to work with my office to clear the backlog of extraditions from Mexico to the United States?

Answer. U.S.-Mexico security cooperation remains a top national security priority. It is critical that the United States and Mexico work together to dismantle transnational criminal organizations and their operations, reduce impunity and cor-

ruption, and strengthen the rule of law in Mexico. If confirmed, I commit to working with you and other members of the U.S. Congress, my U.S. interagency colleagues, and Mexican Government officials to ensure we are working closely together to move extradition requests as quickly and effectively as possible.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BRIAN A. NICHOLS BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

Question. How can the State Department and interagency partners encourage Northern Triangle governments to promote a culture of tax compliance among their citizens and businesses? Will you commit to ensure that the State Department works with these governments to fulfill the legal and financial obligations necessary to foster an attractive investment environment and stimulate economic growth, including the timely refund of excess taxes paid by U.S. companies?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with interagency partners to provide technical assistance to host governments as they pursue more efficient, transparent, fair governance, including support for e-government solutions. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring the Department works with governments to foster a more attractive business environment as an important component of our efforts to address the root causes of migration.

Question. How can we work with Central American governments to improve the operating environment for business, including U.S. companies? What steps will you take to promote the speedy and fair resolution of commercial disputes, especially in Honduras?

Answer. I share your commitment to support U.S. investor and property interests in Central America. The Department urges foreign governments, including at the highest levels when appropriate, to resolve outstanding commercial disputes. The Department generally takes no position on the merits of any specific claim or dispute but advocates for a fair, transparent, and expeditious resolution. The Department will continue to assist in resolution of outstanding U.S. citizen claims as appropriate.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BRIAN A. NICHOLS BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. What is your view of the state of democracy in Latin America?

Answer. Our hemisphere is overwhelmingly committed to democracy, but there are troubling signs of backsliding in the region that require sustained and serious attention. September 11 will mark the 20th anniversary of the 2001 Inter-American Democratic Charter, which reflects the commitment of OAS member states to promote and defend democracy in the region. Through public diplomacy, increased engagement by civil society, and coordination with like-minded partners, the United States is promoting accountability for the actions of the Maduro regime and Cuba that undermine democracy and human rights; using diplomatic and economic measures and working multilaterally with partners to urge Nicaragua to hold free and fair presidential and legislative elections in November; and holding the government of Haiti to its commitment to hold free and fair legislative and presidential elections in 2021 to put an end to Haiti's prolonged rule by decree and facilitate a peaceful transfer of power to a newly elected president in February 2022.

The weakening of democratic institutions in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, is troubling. If confirmed, I will join the administration's commitment to supporting the rule of law and democracy in these countries, including through the use of Congressionally mandated corrupt actors lists to designate and sanction those responsible for the degrading of democracy in Central America. If confirmed, I will intensify efforts to work with allies and partners to further strengthen democratic institutions and support democracy throughout the region.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to bolster our democratic partners in the region?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work toward our strategic goal of a more inclusive, secure, prosperous, and democratic hemisphere aligned with U.S. values and interests. I will lead our team to support independent civil society throughout the region, and will encourage governments to support and promote press freedom and the safe-

ty of journalists and to counter those who may seek to undermine democracy and security. We will seek to work with allies, partners, and multilateral institutions to promote a shared vision to respect human rights and fight corruption and impunity, such as we do with our support of the Citizen Corruption Observatory. This initiative stemmed from the 2018 Summit of the Americas and builds the capacity of civil society to monitor governments' implementation of anticorruption efforts. In addition, we will work with USAID to enhance the region's anti-corruption efforts by bolstering the capacity of stakeholders to engage in advocacy, oversight, and monitoring.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to supporting ongoing U.S. programs which promote democracy and human rights in Cuba, such as through funding the office of Cuba Broadcasting?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to ensuring that support for democracy and human rights is at the core of our efforts to empower the Cuban people to determine their own future. I will also ensure the U.S. continues its steadfast support and engagement with Cuban human rights defenders, activists, and civil society members to bolster their important work; promote human rights, fundamental freedoms, and democracy; and facilitate the Cuban people's uncensored access to information.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensure that the U.S. does not lift restrictions or sanctions on Cuba until conditions are met pursuant to U.S. law?

Answer. The administration has committed to carefully reviewing U.S.-Cuba policy, including how it implements relevant legislation and our posture regarding economic sanctions on Cuba, to ensure they advance the goals the administration is trying to achieve in empowering the Cuban people to determine their future. We will do so in adherence to U.S. law. If confirmed, I will support the Department's review of the policy with an eye toward assessing its impact on the political and economic wellbeing of the Cuban people and the promotion of democracy. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting regularly with Congress on this issue. Throughout my career, I have worked diligently to promote respect for the rule of law, human rights and democracy. Democracy and support for human rights will be at the core of our policy toward Cuba.

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to prioritize Venezuela, and continue to work with regional allies, to hold the Maduro regime and his cronies accountable?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly with international partners and regional allies to promote accountability for the Maduro regime by building multilateral pressure and implementing appropriate and coordinated sanctions against regime officials and their enablers who undermine democracy, abuse human rights, or engage in other corrupt or criminal activity. A secure, democratic, and prosperous Venezuela would mean a more secure, democratic, and prosperous region. In this fundamental aspect, Venezuela is a top priority for the region.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to supporting the legitimate government of Venezuela under President Juan Guaidó and working to unify the opposition to the Maduro regime?

Answer. If confirmed, my team and I will continue to support the efforts of the interim government led by Juan Guaidó to peacefully restore democracy and rule of law in Venezuela via free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections. We are encouraged by and will continue to support unity on the fundamental goal of free and fair elections, and the pursuit of the guarantees required to restore democracy and rule of law to the country.

Question. If confirmed, what would you propose the United States do to support a free and fair elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I would seek to work through diplomatic efforts, coordinated multilateral pressure, support for pro-democracy actors, and targeted economic measures, as appropriate, to advocate for free and fair presidential and legislative elections in Nicaragua. The United States will continue to work closely with partners in the OAS, EU, and others to urge the Nicaraguan government to implement free and fair elections. If the Ortega regime fails to take meaningful reforms by the May OAS deadline, we will work with our partners to use the diplomatic and economic tools at our disposal. We will continue efforts to coordinate on targeted measures with Canada, the EU, and the United Kingdom. We will continue to use our voice, vote, and influence so that international financial institution lending does not support non-democratic actors in Nicaragua. It is important that the United States and our allies clearly state that we will give credibility to and work with the winner

of a free and fair election, but it will be extremely difficult to work constructively with a government emerging from a fraudulent election.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to prioritizing efforts to counter vaccine diplomacy by China in the region?

Answer. COVID-19 is the most pressing challenge to our collective health, well-being, and economic security in a century. If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. commitment to collaborate with partners across the globe, including Taiwan, to end the pandemic and mitigate its severe public health and economic impacts. The Biden administration has already loaned AstraZeneca vaccines to Mexico and Canada. If confirmed, I will work to support a science-based approach that prioritizes an equitable distribution of vaccines to countries in our region.

President Biden announced the United States will donate at least 80 million vaccine doses to meet global needs by the end of June, far more than any other nation has donated, including the People's Republic of China or Russia. Importantly, our shots do not come with strings attached; the United States views vaccines as a tool to end the pandemic, not a means to achieve political outcomes.

The United States is also the largest donor to Gavi for the COVAX Facility, having contributed \$2 billion with plans to donate an additional \$2 billion by 2022. I understand all countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have received one or more COVAX shipments, except for Cuba and Haiti who do not participate in COVAX. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure our close coordination with COVAX and other partners to ensure safe and effective vaccines are delivered in a way that is equitable and follows the science and public health data.

Question. What are your views on the need to prioritize the region for distribution of excess and surplus vaccines?

Answer. Vaccine distribution is a priority in the region. If confirmed, I will work within the administration to coordinate with our partners in the region to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the distribution of vaccines. The United States has loaned Canada and Mexico 1.5 million and 2.7 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccines, respectively, and the administration is currently considering the best manner in which to implement President Biden's further commitment to donate at least 80 million surplus vaccines. If confirmed, I will work to prioritize the region and advocate that it has the tools necessary, including via both bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, to bring a quick end to the current pandemic and prepare for, detect, and respond to the next pandemic.

Question. How might the United States support Ecuador's efforts to diversify its economy and decouple from China?

Answer. The United States remains Ecuador's largest trading partner, with \$10.2 billion in total two-way trade in goods in 2020. In December of 2020, the United States and Ecuador finalized the negotiation of a Protocol on Trade Rules and Transparency, an agreement that is a positive step forward in our trade relationship.

The United States is committed to increasing investment in Ecuador through projects that support long-term sustainable growth and prosperity. This includes enabling private sector investment in climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience, as well as investments in clean energy. The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) will also look to support investments in gender equality, financial inclusion, and recovery from COVID-19. The United States has provided funding and training to help the energy ministry and electric utility adopt new regulations to attract private investment in the electricity sector, as well as design and conduct Ecuador's first-ever competitive and transparent tenders for power sector projects, resulting in awards to qualified companies. The United States also is helping women with small businesses, through programs such as the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs and providing lines of credit to Ecuadorian banks to secure loans for small and medium enterprises. USAID in Ecuador is also working to pursue the most impactful projects investing in the most underserved communities. If confirmed, I will work with Ecuador to expand our partnership.

Question. What steps can the administration take to support other countries that would like to develop 5G networks without Huawei or other Chinese tech support?

Answer. The Biden administration is working throughout the region to communicate the risks associated with telecommunications equipment from untrusted, high-risk vendors and to support the growing number of governments and businesses concerned with safely capturing the benefits of 5G without jeopardizing national and economic security or personal privacy.

If confirmed, I would connect countries interested in developing secure 5G networks with trusted equipment and service providers, highlight available U.S. government financing tools, and underscore the potential for emerging technologies like open radio access networks (open RAN) to increase diversity, innovation, and transparency in 5G supply chains.

Question. As Colombia is facing many challenges, including the influx of almost 2 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants, in addition to violence presented in the country. What U.S. assistance to Colombia do you think would be most effective to ensure Colombia can face these challenges while also respecting the civil rights of protesters?

Answer. Colombia is a vital strategic partner that shares our democratic values. I recognize the devastating impacts the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the Colombian people and economy, as well as the fiscal challenges associated with its generous reception of Venezuelan refugees and migrants. If confirmed, I will ensure the United States continues to leverage diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance to help Colombia address urgent needs, including strengthening its health system, promoting inclusive economic growth to recover from the pandemic, facilitating an effective humanitarian response to the Venezuela crisis, and expanding security, state presence, and access to justice throughout the country, including continuing human rights training for security personnel.

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to encourage the government of Haiti conducts upcoming presidential elections in a manner that is free and fair?

Answer. I believe the Haitian people deserve the opportunity to elect their leaders and restore Haiti's democratic institutions. If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to hold the government of Haiti to its commitment to hold free and fair legislative and presidential elections in 2021, and to work with Haitian political, economic, and civil society stakeholders across the spectrum, as well as international partners, in support of elections this year.

I recognize that the legitimacy of Haiti's 2021 elections and the government's credibility with the Haitian population will depend on factors such as whether there is consensus on a political accord, the participation of credible political actors, widespread voter registration, and security and voter turnout on election day. The U.S. government is providing more than \$3 million to the Consortium for Elections and Political Processes Strengthening, which includes the National Democratic Institute, International Republican Institute, and International Foundation for Electoral Systems. The Consortium's pre-elections activities include focusing on improving electoral administration, strengthening the competitiveness of political parties, educating voters on electoral processes, promoting transparent electoral processes, and ensuring inclusive voter participation in Haiti. The United States also provides advice, training, and equipment to build the Haitian National Police's capacity to provide security. U.S.-supported training and equipment for the police's public order unit will help them prevent and respond to potential violence at voting centers.

Observers from organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) provide a regional voice and can help ensure free and fair elections. If confirmed, I will seek support from multilateral organizations, such as the OAS, and would welcome other international observers.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BRIAN A. NICHOLS BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. What are the Biden administration's plans to address increasing COVID-19 concerns in Central and South America considering the growing number of illegal migrants who are currently crossing the border?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to rebuilding a safe, orderly, and humane immigration system while ensuring public safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the weeks ahead, working with the world's democracies, if confirmed I will help coordinate a multilateral effort to end the pandemic. The United States will continue to review non-essential travel restrictions at land borders to help protect against cross-border transmission of COVID-19 and will consider easing restrictions when it is safe to do so. The administration is considering the best manner in which to implement President Biden's further commitment to donate at least 80 million surplus vaccines. The United States is also the largest donor to Gavi for the U.N. COVAX Facility, having already contributed \$2 billion with plans to donate an additional \$2 billion by 2022.

Question. Do you believe that the Biden administration should prioritize providing COVID-19 vaccines to countries in Central and South America given the proximity to the United States and the growing number of illegal migrants who are currently crossing the border?

Answer. Vaccine distribution is a priority in the region, and if confirmed, I will work with the interagency, COVAX, and other partners to prioritize the equitable delivery of COVID-19 vaccines in a way that follows the science and public health data. The administration has loaned Canada and Mexico 1.5 million and 2.7 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccines, respectively, and is currently considering the best manner in which to implement President Biden's further commitment to donate at least 80 million surplus vaccines. If confirmed, I will work to prioritize the region and advocate that it has the tools necessary, especially vaccines, including via both bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, to bring a quick end to the current pandemic and prepare for, detect, and respond to the next pandemic.

Question. What is the United States currently doing to counter China's growing influence in Central and South America and what can the United States do more?

Answer. The People's Republic of China (PRC) represents a serious challenge to U.S. interests in the region, with its growing security ties and infrastructure investments. If confirmed, I will lead our team to meet this challenge by advancing our positive agenda for the hemisphere. We will build on our shared values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. We will welcome our allies and partners' expertise and resources to support the region's COVID-19 response, entrepreneurship, and sustainable infrastructure. We will support high-standard investment in infrastructure and transparent economic development that creates jobs essential for regional pandemic recovery.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with our allies and partners in Central and South America to help the region address the pandemic and recover from the related economic crisis. We will work to ensure competitive and transparent investment environments that help level the playing field for U.S. and other trusted businesses, strengthen our security and law enforcement cooperation, and promote secure telecommunications networks. We will draw attention to and counter illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. We will support and expand Taiwan's bilateral relationships in Central and South America.

Question. Do you believe that Taiwan's ability to maintain formal diplomatic relations with countries in the Western hemisphere benefits U.S. strategic interests? Nine out of fifteen countries with formal diplomatic relations are in the Western hemisphere. As part of China's push to de-legitimize Taiwan, Beijing has used various tactics, including COVID-19 vaccine diplomacy, infrastructure assistance, elite capture, corrupt practices, to compel countries in the Western hemisphere to break diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

Answer. As a strong democracy, Taiwan is an essential partner in a region overwhelmingly committed to democratic values, human rights, and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. efforts to support Taiwan's diplomatic and unofficial relationships across the Western Hemisphere region. Together with like-minded countries we can support good governance, transparent investments, and economic growth.

Question. What is the Biden's administration's plans to address the increasing COVID-19 concerns in Central and South America considering the high number of migrants that are crossing the border each day?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration remains committed to rebuilding a safe, orderly, and humane immigration system while ensuring public safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the world's democracies to coordinate a multilateral effort to end the pandemic. The United States will continue to review non-essential travel restrictions at land borders to help protect against cross-border transmission of COVID-19 and will consider easing restrictions when it is safe to do so. The administration is considering the best manner in which to implement President Biden's further commitment to donate at least 80 million surplus vaccines. The United States is also the largest donor to Gavi for the U.N. COVAX Facility, having already contributed \$2 billion with plans to donate an additional \$2 billion by 2022.

Question. Do you agree that the Biden administration should prioritize COVID-19 vaccines to countries in Central and South America considering the proximity to the United States and the high number of migrants that are crossing the border?

Answer. I agree that the United States should continue to do more to help the world by taking a leading role in ending the pandemic globally and building a co-

ordinated, multilateral effort around the world aimed at ending the pandemic. Our overarching aim is to get as many safe and effective vaccines to as many people as fast as possible. If confirmed, I will work with COVAX and other partners to prioritize the equitable delivery of COVID-19 vaccines that follows the science and public health data.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. BRIAN A. NICHOLS BY SENATOR BRIAN SCHATZ

Question. The Caribbean region has abundant solar and wind resources, yet its electricity is overwhelmingly generated by fossil fuels. In 2012, Aruba set a target of 100 percent renewable energy by 2020. In 2019, 81 percent of its electricity still came from fossil fuels. Likewise, in 2011, Grenada established a goal of 100 percent renewable energy by 2030. With diesel currently providing 98.5 percent of the island's electricity, it is not on track to meet its goal.

Question. The United States works with Caribbean partners to promote energy supply diversification, to develop cost-effective and resilient power systems, and to help create investment opportunities for U.S. and Caribbean firms.

The Department has identified diversification of energy supplies away from a single source of fuel and promotion of U.S. exports, particularly renewable energy, as two primary objectives in promoting Caribbean energy security.

If confirmed, I will redouble our commitment to these efforts. The Caribbean's high dependency on imported diesel for power generation and low reliability of electric service and frequent power outages have led to the highest average electricity prices in the Western Hemisphere.

Question. What are the barriers to renewable energy development in the Caribbean, and how will you work to address these barriers and expedite renewable energy development as Assistant Secretary of State of Western Hemisphere Affairs?

Answer. Barriers to renewable energy development in the Caribbean include limited economies of scale, inadequate policy and regulatory frameworks, and antiquated transmission and distribution infrastructure. Integrating clean power generation also requires significant investments in transmission infrastructure and technologies such as battery storage to accommodate variable generation.

Caribbean nations have nevertheless made progress in energy diversification and U.S. cooperation has worked to advance stronger, more resilient, and more efficient power systems.

Question. Would it make sense to help an initial island or two decarbonize as models for the region?

Answer. Several Caribbean islands, including Jamaica and Nevis, have engaged with the United States to develop renewable energy sources. These are indeed model projects.

Our whole of government effort promotes energy diversification and resilient energy systems through improved governance, increased access to financing, and donor coordination. If confirmed, I will work with interagency partners, multilateral organizations, and Caribbean nations to advance those efforts.

We address the barrier of high-cost financing for energy project development through a \$25 million guarantee agreement with National Commercial Bank of Jamaica to help provide loans for clean energy projects across the Caribbean and a \$10 million credit guaranty to catalyze \$20 million in loans for clean energy borrowers, focused on off-grid solar projects.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MICHELE JEANNE SISON BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. President Biden's recent Presidential Memorandum on Advancing the Human rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Persons Around the World calls on the State Department to build coalitions of like-minded nations in international organizations to fight against LGBTQI+ discrimination. What more could the International Organization Bureau do to advance that mandate?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to utilizing the diversity and talent within the IO Bureau to play a leadership role in promoting the human rights and social

inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons abroad. IO leads an Interagency Working Group on leveraging multilateral tools to address LGBTQI+ issues and, if confirmed, I will ensure this group works to advance these issues across various multilateral fora, to include the United Nations, regional organizations, international development banks, and multi-stakeholder coalitions, such as the Equal Rights Coalition as well as the U.N. LGBTI Core Group. If confirmed, I will also work to strengthen existing multilateral mandates like the U.N. Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, and advance efforts to increase Global South support for the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons. If confirmed, I will also work to increase civil society engagement in the IO Bureau's efforts to advance the human rights of LGBTQI+ individuals.

Question. Debates at the U.N., and the programmatic activities of U.N. agencies, often revolve around government repression that leads to refugee flows, terrorism, and civil conflict.? Some of the populations most directly impacted by that repression are minority populations—whether sexual, ethnic, gender or racial in character. How can the U.N. be more active and impactful in heading off the causes of this repression, and in condemning it when it occurs?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage U.N. leadership to enhance its advocacy as well as U.N. monitoring and implementation efforts to address such repression. I will work closely with our U.N. partners to condemn violations of international law and continue the United States' strong support for the promotion and protection of human rights, including through access to justice, and humanitarian response and durable solutions for displaced persons. I will maintain strong U.S. engagement with and support for key U.N. mechanisms and bodies such as the Human Rights Council. I will encourage U.N. partners to take concrete measures to protect minority rights and deepen partnerships with stakeholders to address the root causes of repression.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MICHELE JEANNE SISON BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. The upcoming U.N. Security Council (UNSC) Syria Cross Border mandate renewal is of grave concern to me and my colleagues in Congress. Not only should this administration work to renew the one remaining crossing, Bab Al-Hawa, but it should actively work to build consensus in the Security Council to re-open two previously closed crossings, Bab Al-Salam and Yarubiyah.

- If confirmed, how would you engage with partners in the UNSC to ensure this mandate renewal passes?

Answer. Unhindered access to humanitarian assistance in Syria is an urgent priority for the United States, as it should be for all nations. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues its sustained high-level engagement with Security Council members and regional stakeholders, as well as with U.N. leadership, to include Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, to underscore the importance of the reauthorization and expansion of the U.N. cross-border humanitarian assistance mechanism.

Question. If confirmed, would you recommend that Secretary Blinken and even President Biden engage at the highest possible levels on this important issue?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will recommend that senior Department and White House officials continue to engage with key stakeholders on this issue, as that engagement is already underway. President Biden encouraged Security Council action on Syria when he hosted Permanent Representatives from the U.N. Security Council in March during the U.S. presidency of the Security Council. Also in March, Secretary Blinken represented the United States in the Syria humanitarian briefing to the Security Council and made clear the importance of this issue to help relieve the humanitarian crisis in Syria.

Question. How will you, if confirmed, work to ensure that U.S. taxpayer dollars that fund U.N. humanitarian assistance are not being used to effectively subsidize the Assad regime, which blockades assistance to innocent Syrians through seizure of cross-line assistance attempts?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with Department of State and USAID colleagues, U.N. stakeholders, and NGOs to ensure that aid intended for Syrians in need reaches its intended recipients and does not benefit the Assad regime. The United States remains the single largest humanitarian donor to the Syr-

ian people. The United States further supports all methods of delivering humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people throughout the country, including both cross-border and cross-line deliveries; however, cross-line deliveries from Damascus alone, even if executed properly and unhindered, do not have the capacity to fully address the needs of the Syrian people.

Question. The recent establishment of the office of “Multilateral Personnel and Strategy” within the bureau of International Organizations structure presents new avenues to address the growing malign influence across the U.N. system.

- How will you empower this office to address the systematic Chinese and/or Russia malign influence within the U.N.?

Answer. I believe the establishment of the new office of Multilateral Strategy and Personnel in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs will enable the United States to more strategically engage across the multilateral system to counter authoritarian countries’ efforts to undermine its institutions, values, and principles. The U.S. approach toward China and Russia at the U.N. will derive from a clear and compelling affirmative U.S. policy agenda centered on human rights, individual freedoms, transparency, and good governance. When China and Russia seek to undermine the international rules-based order, the United States will take decisive action to oppose those efforts. If confirmed, I will work to empower the new office and look forward to working with Congress to ensure it is well-equipped to lead this work.

Question. What is your strategy for increasing American representation in the U.N. system including through the Junior Professional Officer program, appointments, and elections?

Answer. Successfully increasing the number of U.S. citizens employed at all levels of the U.N. system requires a multifaceted approach that will involve identifying and recruiting qualified candidates, providing information on the application or election process, and advocating for their selection where appropriate. If confirmed, I will institutionalize efforts to establish and expand these capabilities on behalf of qualified U.S. candidates, and to consult closely with Congress to ensure that these efforts are sufficiently resourced. I will also work with the interagency and our allies and partners to support the election of qualified, independent U.S. citizens and other likeminded candidates for key leadership roles in the U.N. system.

Question. Do you believe that a designated U.N. Integrity Coordinator should be appointed and empowered to work across the Department to lead this effort?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize ensuring that the IO Bureau has the resources and staffing it needs to coordinate across the Department and with our partners and allies to advance an affirmative agenda and counter efforts by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and other countries to undermine the values at the foundation of the U.N. and multilateral system. That includes working with all relevant players, and in consultation with Congress. Addressing the challenges posed by these countries requires strong U.S. leadership to defend the foundational principles, values, and rules of the international system, and to support qualified and independent candidates for key leadership roles. I understand that IO appreciates the support that Congress has provided to date on strengthening these efforts, and has already begun to adapt its structure to prioritize this work.

Question. Please detail your strategy for engaging with the International Criminal Court, including with relevant bureaus like Global Criminal Justice, regarding their ongoing investigations into U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Israel.

Answer. I strongly agree with the administration’s objection to attempts by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to assert jurisdiction over U.S. and Israeli personnel. President Biden and Secretary Blinken have been clear that the United States will continue to oppose attempts by the ICC to assert such jurisdiction. The United States and Israel are not States Parties to the Rome Statute, and the Palestinians do not qualify as a State.

Question. U.S. Taxpayers have sent billions to U.N. Relief and Works Agency since the 1950s when it was originally established. Given the administrations resumption of funds without securing much needed reform, please detail your engagement plans to ensure no more taxpayer dollars are sent to a bloated organization straying from its mandate.

Answer. If confirmed, I will insist that UNRWA adhere to the U.N. principles of neutrality, tolerance, anti-discrimination, and protection of human rights, as well as insist on strict UNRWA internal controls. The best way for the United States to influence UNRWA’s operations and ensure its provision of quality education, health

services, and emergency humanitarian relief consistent with U.N. principles is to maintain our close working relationship with and assistance to UNRWA. This allows the United States to direct funding to priority areas of focus, especially ensuring neutrality in teaching materials, staff activities, and operations, while strengthening transparency, accountability, and internal oversight. If confirmed, I commit to working with you to ensure the Agency has the capacity to fulfill its service delivery mandate from the U.N. General Assembly in line with U.N. principles, and to achieving meaningful and sustainable reforms to UNRWA's operations.

Question. Preparations for the next scales of assessment negotiation are underway. The Biden administration should make this a top priority by negotiating a 25% cap on peacekeeping assessments without compromising the existing fixed rate of 22% for the regular budget. No one nation should pay over 25% for either budget. What strategies will you use, if confirmed, to negotiate our assessed peacekeeping dues to 25%?

Answer. The next negotiations among member states on U.N. assessment rates will take place later in 2021, and I understand the administration is strategizing for engagement on this issue. If confirmed, I will work with Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield and her team to advance U.S. interests in reaching agreement in the U.N. General Assembly to lower the U.S. assessment rates and to make sure other countries pay their fair share.

Question. Do you believe this administration should pay back arrears accrued before 2017?

Answer. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with Congress to determine how best to meet our financial obligations, including addressing the substantial level of arrears that have accumulated over the past four years and the 25-percent cap on peacekeeping funding.

Question. U.S.-assessed and voluntary contributions to the U.N., as appropriated under the Contributions to International Organizations (CIO), Contributions for International Peacekeeping Operations (CIPA), and International Organizations and Program (IO&P) accounts, represent only a small fraction of total U.S. contributions to the U.N. system.

- If confirmed, will you assist in compiling and sharing with Congress a comprehensive report on total U.S. contributions, from all sources, to the U.N. and its specialized agencies and programs?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead the efforts of the State Department's Bureau of International Organization Affairs to meet its statutory responsibility to publish annual reports to Congress on all U.S. Government contributions to international organizations.

Question. Will you ensure that other donors remain apprised of the full depth and breadth of U.S. contributions from all sources?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the annual reports on contributions created by the Bureau of International Organization Affairs are published on the Department of State's public website, thereby ensuring that they are available to other donors and the public generally.

Question. Whereas assessed contributions are determined on a scale and provide no discretion to nations, voluntary contributions are provided to advance specific U.S. goals and objectives. Moreover, voluntarily funded agencies, including the World Food Programme (WFP) and the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), must compete for resources and are subject to rigorous transparency and accountability measures. If confirmed, will you seek to ensure that the Secretary General adopts a rigorous performance matrix, transparency requirements, and accountability measures that apply across the U.N. system, including to agencies and programs funded through assessed contributions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to achieve a coordinated, government-wide effort to assess the performance of, and promote transparency and accountability at, international organizations in the U.N. system, including those funded through assessed contributions.

Question. Last Congress, I introduced the Multilateral Aid Review Act to assess the value of U.S. taxpayer investments in multilateral entities, including the U.N. and its affiliated agencies. If confirmed, would you support a comprehensive review of U.S. investments in multilateral organizations?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing this issue closely and working with Congress to ensure effective oversight of the U.N. and its affiliated agencies.

I am committed to ensuring prudent management of U.S. taxpayer investments in multilateral entities, including a constant focus on results, accountability, and the elimination of waste, fraud, and mismanagement.

Question. What is your view of the relationship between the United States and the United Nations (U.N.)?

Answer. I agree with the view of President Biden and Secretary Blinken that many of the biggest threats we face are transnational in nature and must be addressed collectively, including through international organizations. Since the U.N.'s founding 75 years ago, the United States has been critical to the U.N.'s success, and the United Nations, in turn, has been central to U.S. efforts to secure international peace and security. If confirmed, I will look forward to working with Congress to ensure the U.S. relationship with the United Nations remains constructive, continues to serve America's national security interests, and promotes our core U.S. values.

Question. What are your thoughts regarding the U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC)?

Answer. The U.N. Human Rights Council plays an important role in promoting and protecting human rights, humanitarian access, and fundamental freedoms globally, but has serious flaws as well. I am committed to seeking HRC reforms, particularly regarding the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel, and to its membership. When the United States plays an active and constructive role on the Council, we can better advocate to protect Israel from unfair bias on the Council. Recently, our engagement has helped lead to a reduction in the number of resolutions targeting Israel. Our engagement also helps us in our efforts to keep some of the countries with the worst human rights records off the Council, and to encourage countries with better records to run.

- If confirmed, I will ensure the United States continues to prioritize needed reforms as part of our re-engagement with the Council.

Question. Now that the Biden administration has stated its intent to run for reelection to the HRC, what reforms will the Biden administration seek?

Answer. The United States is committed to seeking reforms of the U.N. Human Rights Council, particularly with respect to the Council's disproportionate focus on Israel and its problematic membership. When we have had a seat at the table, we have been able to advocate on Israel's behalf, and we have seen changes like a reduction in the number of resolutions targeting Israel. We have also seen that when the United States plays an active and constructive role on the Council, we have been able to engage with our allies and partners to keep off some of the countries with the worst human rights records and to encourage countries with better records to run for seats. If confirmed, I will ensure the United States prioritizes these specific reforms.

Question. Does the Biden administration believe the HRC devotes a disproportionate amount of attention to criticizing Israel while ignoring more pressing human rights crises?

Answer. Yes. The United States remains concerned about the disproportionate focus by the U.N. Human Rights Council on Israel, including Agenda Item 7. If confirmed, I will oppose efforts to unfairly single out or delegitimize Israel through one-sided resolutions, reports, and other actions across the United Nations, including at the Human Rights Council. It is critical that the U.S. show up and engage with the Council directly. U.S. engagement at the Council can be a force for positive change and for holding countries with the worst human rights records to account.

Question. Understanding that the HRC has been "broken," in large part, by allowing human rights abusers to obtain seats on the Council, do you believe that conditioning U.S. participation on reform is beneficial?

Answer. I am committed to seeking reforms of the Human Rights Council, particularly with respect to the Council's membership and its disproportionate focus on Israel. We have seen that when the United States plays an active and constructive role on the Council, we can engage with our allies and partners to keep some of the countries with the worst human rights records off the Council and to encourage countries with better records to run for seats. We can also advocate on Israel's behalf. With U.S. engagement, we have seen changes such as a reduction in the number of resolutions targeting Israel. If confirmed, I will ensure the United States continues to prioritize needed reforms as part of our re-engagement with the Human Rights Council.

Question. There have been efforts to have the United States rejoin the World Tourism Organization. If confirmed, would you support the re-entry of the United States to the World Tourism Organization? What benefits would the United States receive by re-joining this organization?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure careful consideration and review before any efforts are made to rejoin the World Tourism Organization.

Question. What are your views on the need for management reform at the U.N.?

Answer. If confirmed, I pledge to look hard at U.N. and international organization management and budgeting practices, and at how agencies implement their ethics rules, including whistleblower protections.

Question. How will you work to address barriers to advancing U.N. management reforms, especially those created by the different priorities among member states?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to harness allies and likeminded member states who strongly support U.N. management reform to overcome any barriers that stand in the way of advancing reforms. It must be in the interests of all members to make implementation of reforms an urgent priority to make the United Nations the effective, efficient, and responsive organization it needs to be in the 21st century.

Question. How will you measure success in implementing management reforms at the U.N.?

Answer. If confirmed, my metric of success will be to ensure that U.S. taxpayer dollars are well-spent, and that our multilateral policies and programs improve the lives of the world's most vulnerable citizens, contribute to international peace and security, and serve the American people.

Question. What policies does the U.N. need to implement to maintain fiscal responsibility and accountability within the U.N. system?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that international organizations within the U.N. system are accountable and responsible for the U.S. taxpayer resources they receive. This includes continuing the longstanding U.S. policy of promoting budget discipline, as well as continuing efforts to ensure that other countries pay their fair share.

Question. While the U.N. has taken steps to improve its efficiency, operational effectiveness, and accountability, the continuing need for reform is obvious to most observers, including strong supporters of the institution. The U.N. Secretary-General has committed to an agenda of reform. The push for reform by the United States is one of the main drivers behind the reform movement's progress to date.

- In your opinion, what are the top three reforms that the U.N. could undertake over the next two years that will have the greatest impact?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure international organizations in the U.N. system adhere to the best management and oversight practices, including in the areas of protecting whistleblowers, addressing sexual exploitation and abuse, promoting zero tolerance for corruption, and ensuring financial and managerial transparency. This means greater transparency not only in budgeting practices, but also in U.N. procurement practices.

The United States expects to see tangible results from management reforms, including improved program delivery and greater accountability. Delegating more authority to U.N. teams in the field, closer to the point of mandate implementation, is also a key and necessary reform.

Question. The United States is the largest donor to the World Food Programme, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, and other U.N. agencies. Will you continue this pattern of voluntary donations to address some of the world's most pressing issues?

Answer. I am fully committed to upholding the Biden-Harris administration's promise to restore U.S. leadership and support for U.N. agencies, and to advance U.S. priorities in multilateral fora and at the United Nations. Voluntary contributions are an effective tool of U.S. leadership that allow us to ensure organizations are accountable, transparent, and responsive to humanitarian needs. The United States has long been the largest global contributor of humanitarian assistance and has increased its contributions due to the devastating impacts of COVID-19. Of course, we owe it to U.S. taxpayers and to the beneficiaries whose lives depend on U.N. programs to insist on continued reforms aimed at greater U.N. effectiveness and efficiency.

Question. How do you plan to monitor the activities of the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA) and ensure that it is not complicit in China's campaign of coercive abortion and sterilization of Uyghur women?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue our government's due diligence through our membership on the U.N. Population Fund's (UNFPA) Executive Board, including through the Board's country program document review mechanism. UNFPA does not condone China's coercive population policies nor does it operate in Xinjiang.

Question. There have been credible allegations that the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights shared the names of Chinese dissidents who were attending U.N. Human Rights Council sessions with the Chinese Government.

- If confirmed, how will you investigate these allegations?

Answer. President Biden has said he would defend the rights of activists, political dissidents, and journalists around the world to speak their minds freely without fear of persecution and violence. If confirmed, I will ask relevant Department officials for a detailed understanding of this issue and will ensure that U.S. Government personnel prioritize this matter in engagements with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Question. What reforms will you seek to ensure that this practice is never again used?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ask relevant Department officials for a detailed understanding of this issue and will ensure that U.S. Government personnel prioritize this matter in engagements with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Question. The United States is the single largest financial contributor to U.N. peacekeeping activities. Congress authorizes and appropriates U.S. contributions, and it has an ongoing interest in ensuring such funding is used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

- Do you believe that any nation, including the United States, should pay more than 25 percent of the U.N. peacekeeping budget?

Answer. The next negotiations among member states on U.N. assessment rates will take place later in 2021, and I understand that the administration is currently strategizing on how to engage on this issue. If confirmed, my team and I will do everything we can to make sure that other countries pay their fair share. If confirmed, I commit to consulting with you and your staff on this important matter.

Question. What is your position on U.S. repayment of U.N. peacekeeping arrears? As memorialized in the 1999 Helms-Biden agreement, the Late Ambassador Holbrooke, then-President Clinton, then-Secretary General Kofi Anan, and then-Senator Biden all believed that the United States has no obligation to pay, and thus should not pay, the roughly \$500 million in "contested arrears" that were explicitly excluded from the \$1.6 billion Helms-Biden agreement. However, since then, the U.N. has insisted upon keeping on its books, and the Obama administration sought to pay over Congressional objections. Do you commit not to pay these "contested arrears" per Congressional intent as outlined in the Helms-Biden agreement?

Answer. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with Congress to allow the United States to meet our financial obligations, including addressing the substantial level of arrears that have accumulated over the past four years and the 25-percent cap on peacekeeping funding.

Question. Are there any specific steps you believe the U.N. should take to reduce the overall size of the U.N. peacekeeping budget? If so, what are they?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing and assessing all existing peacekeeping missions to ensure they are still necessary for the promotion of international peace and security. I will also work to ensure they are as effective and efficient as possible, while providing they have the necessary resources to fully implement their mandates, including well-trained and well-equipped troops and police. I would press for structural changes, including aligning U.N. procurement with industry best practices, right-sizing mission support components, and reforming human resources to reduce staff costs. I would also press for the U.N. to implement financial reimbursement penalties for troop- and police-contributing countries for poor or under-performance, in line with the U.N. Security Council resolution 2436.

Question. Are there any specific U.N. peacekeeping missions you would support reducing or terminating in order to reduce U.N. peacekeeping costs? If so, what active and ongoing missions do you believe should be reduced or terminated?

Answer. U.N. peacekeeping operations are among the most effective mechanisms of burden-sharing in addressing the global challenges to international peace and security. We must ensure peacekeeping operations are using their resources as effectively and efficiently as possible to promote sustainable political solutions to conflict. Toward that end, I will, if confirmed, closely scrutinize missions, especially when their mandates come up for renewal by the U.N. Security Council.

Question. There have been numerous proposals to expand U.N. support for regional peacekeeping operations-particularly those deployed under the auspices of the African Union-ranging from providing limited logistical support to fully financing training, equipment, deployment, and sustainment costs through the use of assessed U.N. peacekeeping contributions. Whether regional missions would initially be subject to approval by the U.N. Security Council (like the AMISOM mission in Somalia was) is a topic of debate. However, using the U.N. as a financing mechanism for peacekeeping operations that do not fall under the command and control of the U.N.; lack adequate accountability measures; and place long-term political and financial obligations upon Member states absent Security Council oversight is a matter of serious concern. If confirmed, will you pledge to ensure that any peacekeeping mission funded by U.N. peacekeeping dollars is mandated and overseen by the Security Council?

Answer. The United States has long supported strengthening strategic AU-U.N. partnerships to better address collective peace and security threats on the continent. If confirmed, I will strive to ensure that any AU peace operation that receives U.N. financial support is mandated by and preserves the primacy of the U.N. Security Council and complies with applicable international human rights law and U.N. conduct and discipline standards.

Question. The United Nations maintains several particular bodies and departments that focus on the Palestinians. These include the Division on Palestinian Rights (DPR), the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), and the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL).

- Will you work to challenge the existence and funding of these departments?

Answer. If confirmed, I will oppose efforts to unfairly single out or delegitimize Israel through one-sided resolutions, reports, and other actions across the United Nations.

Question. The United States lacks a veto over membership decisions in U.N.-specialized agencies that the Palestinians could target for membership. When the Palestinians obtain membership, the United States must cut funding to that organization as required under two laws enacted by a Democratic-led Congress in the early 1990's. U.S. Code Title 22, Section 287e note, states:

No funds authorized to be appropriated by this Act or any other Act shall be available for the United Nations or any specialized agency thereof which accords the Palestine Liberation Organization the same standing as member states." (Adopted as Public Law 101-246 in 1990.)

The United States shall not make any voluntary or assessed contribution: (1) to any affiliated organization of the United Nations which grants full membership as a state to any organization or group that does not have the internationally recognized attributes of statehood, or (2) to the United Nations, if the United Nations grants full membership as a state in the United Nations to any organization or group that does not have the internationally recognized attributes of statehood, during any period in which such membership is effective." (Adopted as Public Law 103-236 in 1994.)

The language in these provisions is clear and provides no discretion or waiver authority. Will you support their enforcement as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support compliance with U.S. laws.

Question. Over the past several years, the Palestinian Authority has received votes in various U.N. bodies to upgrade its status. Such attempts undermine the long-held belief that peace between Israel and the Palestinian Authority can only come about as a direct result of direct negotiations.

- What is your plan to stop initiatives like this from even coming before U.N. entities, or the General Assembly, for a vote?

Answer. I believe that efforts by the Palestinians to join international entities are premature and counterproductive. There are no shortcuts to Palestinian statehood outside direct negotiations between the parties. If confirmed, I will continue to make

clear, both with the parties and with international partners, that the only realistic path forward to end this conflict is through direct negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace.

Question. How will you address future attempts by the Palestinian Authority to achieve statehood through the United Nations?

Answer. I believe that efforts by the Palestinians to join international entities are premature and counterproductive. There are no shortcuts to Palestinian statehood outside direct negotiations between the parties. If confirmed, I will continue to make clear, both with the parties and with international partners, that the only realistic path forward to end this conflict is through direct negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace.

Question. The United States has long maintained a policy of opposing many one-sided Security Council resolutions that, more often than not, criticize Israel but fail to address other issues such as Palestinian terrorism.

- Do you support the use of an American veto to block one-sided anti-Israel resolutions in the Security Council?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to uphold President Biden's strong commitment to Israel and its security. This includes opposing efforts to unfairly single out or delegitimize Israel through one-sided resolutions, reports, and other actions across the United Nations, including the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and other bodies.

Each decision to employ the veto is considered on the basis of U.S. policy interests and how they relate to the issue under consideration.

Question. What do you believe should be the standard employed in deciding whether to veto or not?

Answer. Each decision to employ the veto is considered on the basis of U.S. policy interests and how they relate to the issue under consideration.

Question. Do you believe that there is a disproportionate focus on Israel at the U.N.? How would you counter this at the U.N.?

Answer. Yes, and if confirmed I will continue the United States' opposition to efforts to unfairly single out or delegitimize Israel through one-sided resolutions, reports, and other actions across the United Nations, including the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and other bodies. If confirmed, I also look forward to working with our Israeli diplomatic colleagues to promote the election of Israel to U.N. leadership posts, inclusion in U.N. working groups, and support for qualified Israeli candidates for U.N. positions.

Question. In a report requested by the U.N. Human Rights Council, the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi said in September 2020 that there had been "little" in the way of "positive changes" since President Evariste Ndayishimiye "assumed office" in June 2020, and concerns remain about human rights abuses committed both domestically against Burundian citizens and through Burundi's engagements in the region.

- What are your views on the human rights situation in Burundi? Do you believe the United States is in a position to reset its relationship with Ndayishimiye's Government, given the seeming continuity in human rights abuses from the former Nkurunziza Government?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by ongoing serious human rights violations in Burundi, while recognizing some recent positive signs. The Government has committed to releasing over 4,000 prisoners and released some journalists jailed during the 2020 elections, convicted perpetrators of elections related crimes, started dialogue with previously banned local media, and engaged the international community. If confirmed, I will carefully assess the human rights situation in Burundi and seek to build on that progress.

Question. How would you evaluate the performance of Burundian troops in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)? How can the U.S. better monitor their human rights record in Somalia? Are there opportunities to build in stronger human rights reporting for AMISOM, including to better monitor the human rights record of Burundian troops in Somalia? How can the U.S. push for greater capabilities of AMISOM to monitor the human rights performance of Burundi and other peacekeeper contributing countries under mission? What can the U.N. do regarding the AMISOM Mission to decrease dependency on Burundian troops in Somalia?

Answer. I share your concerns about AMISOM's abilities to monitor the performance and conduct of contingents assigned to it. Somalia is a very challenging oper-

ating environment. The United States attempts to mitigate these challenges by drawing on multiple sources, including NGOs, media, U.N. agencies, intelligence reporting, and diplomatic contacts. We also regularly urge the AU to monitor contingents' performance and conduct and investigate and respond to reported abuse. If confirmed, I will work with the U.N., the Bureau of African Affairs, and AMISOM to continue to improve these efforts.

Question. The Anglophone conflict in Cameroon is one of the world's most neglected yet intensely brutal conflicts.

- How can the U.S. better push for the U.N. Security Council to hold regular formal briefings and discussions on the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, adding it formally to its agenda? If so, how do you propose the U.S. engage member states that have worked to block previous efforts to prioritize and regularize the Anglophone crisis within the U.N. Security Council?

Answer. The United States engages U.N. Security Council member states regarding the need to resolve the Anglophone crisis and the severity of the humanitarian crisis in Cameroon. For example, we raise the Anglophone crisis during briefings by the Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the U.N. Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) Francois Fall. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage UNOCA to engage the Government of Cameroon and ask other U.N. member states to play a constructive role to resolve the Anglophone crisis.

Question. Do you agree that the U.N. has a vital role in supporting inclusive internationally-mediated dialogue among the many actors in the Anglophone Crisis to find a lasting and sustainable solution to the crisis, addressing root causes and underlying grievances? If yes, what precisely should that role be, and how will you push for that within the U.N.?

Answer. Yes. The United States fully supports the U.N. Office in Central Africa (UNOCA)'s role in promoting inclusive political dialogue in Cameroon, which includes the resolution of the Anglophone crisis. The importance of this work was reinforced in the strategic review of UNOCA conducted in 2020. If confirmed, I will support UNOCA's role and priorities when its mandate expires on August 31, 2021. The United States also fully supports the Swiss-led mediation of the Anglophone crisis, which the U.N. also supports.

Question. The Cameroonian Government has consistently failed to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of atrocities committed against its civilians. It has proven itself unable to hold high-ranking government and military officials responsible for these crimes. How can the U.S. engage other like-minded countries in the U.N. to pursue accountability for atrocities committed in Cameroon, both by government and armed group actors?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review the tools we have at the United Nations to press for a resolution to this conflict and to hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations and abuses. I will also seek opportunities to engage with like-minded countries that share a desire to bring this conflict to an end. If confirmed, I will also engage other U.N. member states on the importance of the rule of law and ending impunity in Cameroon and explore ways we can work together to move toward a resolution.

Question. How can the United States more effectively encourage France to use its significant leverage in Cameroon to encourage the government to engage in meaningful dialogue and end the Anglophone conflict?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review the different tools we have to press for a resolution of this conflict, including through discussions with counterparts from France and the UK. The United States routinely raises the situation in Cameroon with French officials and will continue to pursue a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Anglophone regions.

Question. Russia's dominant presence in CAR is alarming on several fronts, not just as it relates to the Central African country's internal and regional security, but also vital U.S. national security interests. Will you commit to closely monitoring Russia's presence in CAR and corresponding activity at the U.N., particularly as it relates to internal and regional security arrangements and the arms embargo?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will closely monitor Russia's presence in CAR and corresponding activity at the U.N., with a particular focus on internal and regional security arrangements and the arms embargo. Russia's close ties to the Touadera Government, involvement in CAR's security sector, and stake in its natural resources are extremely concerning. If confirmed, I will carefully review all the diplomatic tools available to respond appropriately to Russia's activities in CAR.

Question. How can the United States best protect its interests in CAR and the broader region while also ensuring that other members of the U.N. Security Council are prioritizing the MINUSCA mission over their own foreign military operations in the country?

Answer. The humanitarian situation and ongoing conflict in CAR is deeply concerning. So, too, are reports of anti-MINUSCA propaganda and allegations that foreign security actors are failing to deconflict their activities with MINUSCA, committing human rights abuses, and impeding humanitarian access. MINUSCA continues to provide crucial stabilization support, human rights monitoring, assistance to CAR's justice sector, and support for elections. If confirmed, I will engage with our partners in the region and in Europe, as well as in the U.N., to ensure that MINUSCA remains well-resourced and can fully carry out its mandate, especially the protection of civilians.

Question. How does the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) contribute to the peace and security of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)? How effective is MONUSCO's current mandate and what changes might you propose should you be confirmed? What should the U.S., our European allies, and the U.N. peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO) be doing to support a peace process and end of the conflict in Eastern Congo?

Answer. MONUSCO serves U.S. national security interests by assisting the DRC Government in its stabilization and peace consolidation efforts and supporting DRC's security forces to combat threats posed by armed groups and transnational criminal networks. The mission also uses its good offices to assist President Tshisekedi's efforts to end impunity for certain human rights violations and to advance security sector reform. If confirmed, I will continue U.S. engagement through our ambassador, the U.N., and regional and international partners to support efforts to stabilize the region. I will also press for the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) to implement reforms to improve performance and for MONUSCO's responsible and sustainable transition and drawdown.

Question. How can the U.S. better push for the U.N. Security Council to hold regular formal briefings and make statements about the ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises in Ethiopia, including but not limited to the conflict in the Tigray region? How should the U.S. engage member states that have worked to block previous efforts to prioritize and regularize discussion of Ethiopia by the U.N. Security Council?

Answer. Opposition from Russia, China, and other member states to formal meetings and public statements on the deeply troubling humanitarian and security situation in Ethiopia impedes the Security Council from speaking with one voice. If confirmed, I am committed to calling out those member states for their unwillingness to uphold the fundamental responsibility of the Security Council to address threats to international peace and security like the crisis in Ethiopia. I will also work closely with likeminded partners to raise the profile of Ethiopia in other fora and press for other U.N. bodies like the Human Rights Council to take up this important issue.

Question. There has been considerable discussion about modifying the mandate of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and AMISOM to better address the challenges faced in Somalia.

- In your view, how can the U.S. engage in future mandate renewal processes, including with the penholder (U.K.), to have frank discussions about what we hope to achieve through UNSOS/AMISOM and how to push the government of Somalia to make progress?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing AMISOM's mandate closely with the UK, the AU, and other key stakeholders to ensure that it advances an approach that is sustainable, holistic, and appropriately geared toward supporting stabilization, counterterrorism, and transitioning security responsibilities to more capable, professional, and accountable Somali security forces. While military operations remain critical, addressing the drivers of Somalia's persistent instability, and the evolving hybrid threat posed by al-Shabaab, will require the Somalis and the international community, including AMISOM and the U.N., to utilize a broader range of tools.

Question. U.N. Special Representative James Swan commented in November 2020, following Somalia's decision to forgo direct universal suffrage elections for a selection process similar to that of 2016, that "we urge Somali leaders to prepare consensually a roadmap with clear timelines and benchmarks to ensure one-person-

one-vote elections take place in 2024/25.” To what extent do you feel, in reviewing the mandate for AMISOM, that consideration should be given as to how the U.N. could play a bigger role in supporting and making preparations for universal suffrage elections in the future?

Answer. The U.N. plays a critical role in assisting Somalia with stabilization and democratic development reforms. Among the U.N. elements operating in Somalia, the U.N. Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) is mandated with advising and assisting Somalia on political reforms, and is best suited to lead U.N. efforts in preparing the country for universal suffrage in the future. If confirmed, when UNSOM’s mandate comes up for renewal in August 2021, I will work to ensure that support for democratic and electoral reforms, including supporting preparations for universal suffrage elections, remain at the core of UNSOM’s responsibilities.

Question. The United States voted with other members of the Security Council in December to end the mandate of the United Nations—African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), despite warnings that Sudan’s Government had not yet demonstrated its ability to protect civilians in Darfur. The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights notes “severe gaps in protection by State authorities, as well as a lack of accountability for violations.”

- What, in your view, should UNITAMS’ role be in helping to address these issues?

Answer. The United States is committed to supporting Sudanese efforts to address civilian protection concerns in Darfur and throughout the country. I believe UNITAMS can play an important role in supporting Sudan’s civilian-led transitional government as it works to address protection concerns, strengthen rule of law institutions, and build trust among the Sudanese people. If confirmed, I will push the Security Council to provide UNITAMS the resources and tools to support these important initiatives.

Question. What is your view of the request by Sudan’s transitional government to lift the U.N. arms embargo on Darfur? What changes if any should be made to the U.N. sanctions regime established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005)?

Answer. U.N. sanctions remain an important tool in the international community’s response to the situation in Darfur. With the adoption of resolution 2562, the U.N. Security Council has requested the Secretary-General to conduct a review of the situation in Darfur and to provide by July 31, 2021 a report containing recommendations for clear and well identified benchmarks that could serve in guiding the Security Council to review the measures on Darfur under the 1591 regime. If confirmed, I will carefully assess the appropriateness of adjustments to the U.N. Sudan sanctions regime.

Question. How does the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) contribute to the peace and security of Sudan and South Sudan? How effective is UNISFA’s current mandate and what changes might you propose should you be confirmed?

Answer. UNISFA has effectively prevented tensions over the status of Abyei or other border areas from escalating into conflict between Sudan and South Sudan. It has also played an important role in preventing and responding to conflict between local communities in the absence of local administration. However, both Sudan and South Sudan need to renew efforts to establish interim administrative and security bodies and restart talks on resolving Abyei’s political status. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues to ensure that UNISFA’s mandate remains appropriately focused, particularly with regard to the protection of civilians.

Question. One of the key lessons from the Brahimi Report was that if a peace operation is to be part of implementing a peace agreement, it should have a role in the process and a seat at the table—in South Sudan, though the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) does not. Should UNMISS’s political strategy be reexamined, and if so how, and how would you go about building support within the Council for a more robust role for the mission? Should UNMISS have a greater role in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and/or security sector reform (SSR)?

Answer. If confirmed, I will monitor closely the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) with a view to making it as efficient and effective as possible to fulfill its mandate of protecting civilians, facilitating humanitarian assistance, supporting implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement and supporting respect for human rights. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector

reform are essential building blocks for the peace process in South Sudan. If confirmed, I will evaluate the role of UNMISS in these areas.

Question. The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response recently released its final report, in which the authors evaluated the WHO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and made recommendations to prevent future pandemics from occurring. Included were recommendations to reduce the WHO Director General's term to a single seven-year term and adopt merit-based recruitment standards for other leadership staff; refocus the WHO on its core capabilities (upholding norms, providing policy and technical guidance, collecting and sharing critical global health data, and coordinating—rather than implementing—emergency responses); strengthen the International Health Regulations, including by giving WHO the right to conduct assessments without advance approval by Member States; create a Heads of State-level Global Health Threats Council; and create a multilateral incentive fund to sustainably finance pandemic preparedness and response. Do you agree that the World Health Organization is in need of reform and, if so, what specific reforms should the United States seek to advance at the upcoming World Health Assembly?

Answer. Yes, the World Health Organization is in need of reform, and if confirmed I will support our efforts to make the WHO stronger, more independent and efficient. Proposed reforms will be informed by assessments of the COVID-19 response and past outbreaks, including the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response and the other two independent reviews of WHO and Member State performance. The United States is working with partners in bilateral and multilateral fora to improve WHO's functioning, transparency, and accountability. This includes a focus on core areas such as science, data collection, and evaluation and promotion of evidence-based approaches. Reform requires improved human resources and financial management practices. Reform proposals should also incorporate policies throughout the organization that are gender-sensitive and respect human rights as well as the social determinants of health. Member states also need to live up to their commitments as expressed within the International Health Regulations.

Question. Do you agree with the recommendations of the IPPPR? Which ones?

Answer. I understand that the State Department and other agencies are reviewing the IPPPR recommendations alongside those of other assessments. After so many lives lost, the global community and each country must take immediate, tangible actions to both end this pandemic and to prepare for the next by taking steps to improve preparedness and response capabilities, including by increasing sustainable financing, enhancing biosurveillance with clear "triggers" for action, and expanding pandemic-related manufacturing with rapid surge capacity. If confirmed, I will seek to strengthen the global health architecture to promote preparedness, transparency, accountability, innovation, and impact, so that the global community will be better prepared to successfully prevent the next outbreak from becoming a pandemic.

Question. If the U.S. is unwilling to leverage contributions, how will you ensure that far-reaching reforms are enacted?

Answer. If confirmed, I will advance reforms at the WHO through advocacy, diplomacy, and dialogue, and will work with a broad coalition of like-minded member states to ensure that WHO reforms advance and apply lessons learned from the pandemic response. I would also seek to implement innovative approaches such as the non-binding U.S.-WHO Partnership Arrangement, a model pioneered by the United Kingdom, to include defined metrics and timelines for improvement. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with you and your staff on this important matter.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MICHELE JEANNE SISON BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. If confirmed, what will you advise the Biden administration do regarding UNRWA?

Answer. If confirmed, I will advise that the administration continue to make clear to UNRWA that adhering to the U.N. principles of strict neutrality, tolerance, anti-discrimination and protection of human rights is non-negotiable. UNRWA's mandate is set by the U.N. General Assembly and is to provide essential services directly to Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. U.S.

resumption of aid allows the Department to ensure UNRWA provides cost-efficient and effective services to its beneficiaries and that UNRWA upholds the highest level of transparency, accountability, tolerance, and neutrality. If confirmed, I would work with others in the Department to advise the administration on meaningful and sustainable reforms to UNRWA's operations, including strengthening UNRWA internal controls and the Advisory Committee's oversight of UNRWA management.

Question. If confirmed, will you continue U.S. efforts to push back against international organizations, like the U.N., as they single out and attack Israel?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the United States' work in opposing efforts to unfairly single out or delegitimize Israel through one-sided resolutions, reports, and other actions across the United Nations, including the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and other bodies. If confirmed, I also look forward to working with our Israeli diplomatic colleagues, to promote the election of Israel to U.N. leadership posts, inclusion in U.N. working groups, and support for qualified Israeli candidates for U.N. positions.

Question. Iran was recently elected to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. Given Iran's treatment of women, this election damages the credibility of this institution. If confirmed, will you actively work to oppose Iranian membership in such international bodies?

Answer. I deeply share the concern that is the premise of your question, which is that some U.N. bodies include countries that do not live up to the objectives of the organization. In some cases, this is because the objectionable country runs on a clean regional slate which the majority of U.N. member states are unwilling to oppose.

For the CSW, the United States wants to see member state candidates who champion gender equality, oppose discrimination against women, promote women's empowerment, and further their well-being. In the case of this election, the U.S. called for a vote despite a clean regional slate due to the presence of countries on the slate that do not uphold these values. If confirmed, for each particular election, I will ensure we examine the entire list of candidates and determine who we should support and who we should oppose.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to direct U.S. representatives at international organizations to oppose growing Russian and Chinese influence at these institutions?

Answer. At the U.N., the People's Republic of China drives an authoritarian agenda that stands in opposition to the values of the United States and is inconsistent with the founding documents and principles of the U.N. itself, including on human rights, labor rights, transparency, and coercive economic practices. The PRC's efforts harm international organizations and their transparency, efficiency, values, and influence. If confirmed, I commit to work with U.S. representatives to international organizations to oppose the influence of the People's Republic of China, Russia, and others and to work with our partners and allies to lead on an affirmative agenda that strengthens the international rules-based order and its foundational values and principles.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MICHELE JEANNE SISON BY SENATOR TODD YOUNG

Question. Do you agree that international organizations and multinational forums have become a key battleground in the strategic competition between the United States and China?

Answer. Yes, and strategic competition with the People's Republic of China is one of the central challenges of the 21st century. The United States is able to respond to this challenge from a position of strength when we are engaged and leading international organizations, not pulling back and ceding the terrain to China to write the rules and norms that animate international institutions. If confirmed, I will use our engagement in the U.N. system to push back against the influence of China, and any country that seeks to undermine the rules-based order. I will steadfastly oppose activities that undermine the values, principles, and rules of the U.N. and other international organizations, and I will promote U.S. values and interests alongside our allies and partners.

Question. The United States has repeatedly been boxed out by China's comprehensive strategy of whipping votes for leadership positions of specialized agencies: how

would you lead the IO Bureau to ensure that the United States is laying the groundwork years in advance of vacancies to increase American or allied representation of these agencies?

Answer. The integrity of the U.N. and other international organizations is vital to U.S. multilateral interests. If confirmed, I will ensure that the IO Bureau, including the new Office of Multilateral Strategy and Personnel, prioritize and implement a robust and timely strategy to identify opportunities across the U.N. system to increase the representation of qualified and independent American and likeminded candidates at all levels. I will also coordinate closely with our allies and partners to plan for and support the election of qualified, independent candidates who will uphold the U.N.'s foundational principles, values, and norms, including a focus on human rights and economic transparency.

Question. What lessons can be learned by the 2020 election for the Director General role at the World I.P. Organization—or, WIPO—and how the United States proactively helped win support for the Singaporean candidate, beating out a Chinese official?

Answer. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) 2020 election was a powerful example of the strength of U.S. diplomacy and the importance of ensuring strong leadership in standard-setting bodies. Coordinating with partners and allies to rally support for qualified and independent candidates who promote transparency, accountability, and the rule of law is and will continue to be a recipe for success in future leadership elections within U.N./international bodies. We also need to emphasize that the PRC is driving an authoritarian agenda that stands in opposition to the values of the United States and the U.N.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MICHELE JEANNE SISON BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. What more should the United States do to ensure China does not achieve its objective of reshaping and dominating international institutions? PRC nationals now lead four of the United Nations' 15 specialized agencies and groups, and have added many Chinese nationals to the staff of these organizations. Some 30 United Nations agencies and institutions have signed memorandums in support of China's Belt and Road project.

Answer. I believe the United States must engage strategically to defend, strengthen, and revitalize the international order and its foundational values, rules, and principles, including through rebuilding and strengthening our alliances and partnerships. If confirmed, I will seek to improve the U.N.'s effectiveness and transparency, support qualified and independent candidates for key positions in U.N. agencies, advance strong reforms including whistleblower protections, and take targeted actions to oppose efforts by the PRC that undermine a rules-based international order. If confirmed, I commit to combatting PRC attempts to insert its domestic ideology and policy language into U.N. and multilateral policy documents. We must also work with the boards of U.N. organizations to increase oversight of the U.N.'s work in order to uphold the U.N.'s values rather than the promotion of a single country's flagship program.

Question. If confirmed, do you support standing up an office within the Bureau of International Organization to specifically address the threat of growing Chinese influence in global institutions?

Answer. Yes, I believe the establishment of the new office of Multilateral Strategy and Personnel in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs will enable the United States to more strategically engage across the multilateral system and uphold its foundational principles, values, and norms. Our approach toward the People's Republic of China (PRC) at the U.N. and other international organizations will derive from a clear and compelling affirmative U.S. policy agenda, and when the PRC seeks to undermine the international rules-based order, we will take action to oppose those efforts. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress to consider other ways to effectively outcompete the PRC and advance U.S. multilateral priorities.

Question. Do you agree that China under the Chinese Communist Party is pursuing a systematic, decades-long campaign to achieve global preeminence and reshape the international order to the CCP's benefit?

Answer. The People's Republic of China (PRC) engages in conduct around the world that undermines the international system that has supported global peace and security, stability, prosperity, and human rights for more than 75 years. The PRC drives an authoritarian agenda that stands in opposition to the foundational values and principles of the U.N. and other international organizations. If confirmed, pushing back against the PRC's attempts to reshape the international system will be a top priority of mine. I will rally support with allies, partners, and other countries to oppose the PRC's efforts to undercut international institutions, values, and rules, and will ensure that the United States advances an affirmative agenda centered on human rights, individual freedoms, transparency, and good governance.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to pushing the World Health Organization to conduct a transparent and thorough investigation regarding the origin of COVID-19 as a critical step to preventing the next pandemic?

Answer. Yes. If I am confirmed, I will press the WHO to conduct a thorough second phase of the COVID-19 study in China. The world needs to understand how this pandemic originated so that we can better prepare our governments, our people and our public health institutions for future health crises. That is why we are continuing to work with the WHO and with other Member States to support a science-based and expert-driven study of the pandemic's origins that is free from interference or politicization.

Question. Do you believe it is prudent for the United States to support gain-of-function research in China?

Answer. As underscored by the COVID-19 pandemic, all nations, including China, must commit to cooperation that is rooted in openness, transparency, and scientific independence. As a general matter, I believe scientific cooperation between nations is crucial to addressing transnational threats to global health.

On the particular matter of research funding, I would defer to the relevant authorities, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

NOMINATIONS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m. via Video-conference, Hon. Chris Van Hollen, presiding.

Present: Senators Van Hollen [presiding], Kaine, Booker, Young, and Rounds.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND

Senator VAN HOLLEN. The nominations hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Welcome, everybody, to the committee, and I do want to begin by giving a special salute and shout out to my colleague, Senator Mike Rounds, who is the ranking member of the Global Health and Africa Subcommittee, and look forward to working with him and all our colleagues on the subcommittee and the full committee on the large range of pressing issues that are before the subcommittee and the full committee.

I see we have also been joined by my colleague, Senator Kaine from Virginia, and I am sure others will be joining us as we go.

Let me acknowledge our nominees and congratulations to all of you on your nominations to be ambassadors to these countries, and thank you for your service.

We have with us today Ambassador Larry Edward André, Jr., to be the United States Ambassador to Somalia, Ambassador Maria E. Brewer to be the United States Ambassador to Lesotho, Ambassador Tulinabo Mushingi to be U.S. Ambassador to Angola and São Tome and Principe, and Ms. Elizabeth Moore Aubin to be the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, and Mr. Eugene S. Young to be the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Congo, and finally, last but not least, Mr. Christopher John Lamora to be the United States Ambassador to Cameroon.

Again, welcome everybody, and I am going to give some brief opening remarks, turn it over to my colleague, Senator Rounds, and then we will hear from each of you.

Today's hearing is first and foremost a nominations hearing. But in the broader sense, it is an opportunity for us to reexamine our nation's diplomatic relationships with countries across Africa.

President Biden has made clear his mission to restore America's role on the world stage as a force for democracy, for diplomacy, for human rights, and for international cooperation.

Those principles must be front and center in our ongoing engagement with African countries and with their citizens. The best way to advance that cause is by focusing on the opportunities for action, opportunities to invest in and engage with some of the fastest growing countries and economies in the world.

By 2050, the population of Africa is expected to double and will account for one quarter of the world's population. Africa is also the youngest continent in the world, and 60 percent of Africans are under the age of 25.

These young people will be at the vanguard of the next global generation, helping to lead the charge in innovation, technology, business, and economic growth. Our investment in their futures will help ensure greater prosperity, opportunity, peace, and security, both abroad but also here at home.

That cause holds an added measure of urgency as we confront the reality that many of our biggest threats are interconnected and global.

As we have seen throughout the past year, viruses know no borders and our ability to defeat COVID-19 and tackle future outbreaks as well as outbreaks of other diseases requires our participation and our leadership in a global and coordinated response.

The same is true for taking on the climate crisis, which, obviously, has impact here at home and everywhere in the world. It is a key driver of the plight of displacement in many countries like Somalia.

It also represents a real opportunity at home and around the world for the production of new sources of clean energy, both for Africa and for the global economy.

We are engaging in projects that advance these goals and others through ventures like the Power Africa initiative and President Biden's pledge on the coronavirus fight front to donate now hundreds of millions of doses worldwide and our contribution to COVAX.

So the United States has now pledged \$4 billion to fight COVID-19 through COVAX. Prior to today, the president has announced 80 million doses that we would contribute to countries around the world, and just this afternoon it was indicated that tomorrow the president will announce the United States intends to purchase another 500 million doses to help defeat COVID-19 around the world.

Of the 25 million original doses, the first tranche of doses that the United States will distribute 5 million will be devoted to Africa. So this is an important moment for the United States to take a leadership role in that area, and so many others.

My colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, have been right to also recognize that China is using its mercantilist and debt trap strategies to gain more influence in countries around the world, including Africa, and if we keep up business as usual we will give China a free pass to use that leverage to export its model of authoritarianism to governments in developing countries.

I think we are all pleased that just yesterday the United States Senate passed on a bipartisan basis legislation to significantly in-

crease our competitiveness here at home but also to reassert U.S. leadership in many of these areas overseas.

So, for example, a part of that bill that emerged from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee included an increase of \$100 billion authorization for the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, which we hope will be investing in Africa.

Africa, of course, is not a monolith. All of you know that better than anybody. You are all going to countries that have their own unique histories and own complex issues and challenges.

And so today gives us an opportunity both to address those individual issues as well as a take a look at the broader situation.

So let me now turn it over to Senator Rounds for any opening statement he wishes to give, and then I will introduce our nominees and then turn it over to them for questioning.

Senator Rounds?

**STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE ROUNDS,
U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH DAKOTA**

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I most certainly appreciate your opening comments, and I think that this is one of those committees where bipartisan agreement can be found and I think we begin today in a very good way.

I am very pleased to see such a qualified panel of nominees before us today, with three previously confirmed by the committee to serve in ambassadorial posts as well as experienced State Department personnel with great records of service.

I want to thank you and your families for your service to our country.

Ambassador André, your deep background with Africa will serve you well if you are confirmed to be our next ambassador to Somalia. I look forward to hearing your views on Somalia, a country struggling to overcome 30 years of instability in order to achieve democratic development and viable national institutions.

Somalia's successful revolution, socially, politically and economically, is vital for our interests in the region to include significant counterterrorism efforts against the violent extremist group al-Shabaab.

If confirmed, it will be critical that you maintain a close relationship with Congress to help assure a prudent way forward.

Ambassador Brewer, if confirmed, your experience as ambassador to Sierra Leone, a small nation where the U.S. relationship focuses on foreign assistance, particularly in the health sector, would make you well placed to serve as our ambassador to Lesotho, and I commend you for your desire to lead a U.S. embassy and a USAID team, a small mission to help mentor the next generation of the Foreign Service.

Given the challenges in fully staffing posts in Africa, seasoned diplomats willing to serve in such a mentorship role are definitely needed. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how USAID programs and trade relations with Lesotho can help that nation advance politically and economically.

Ambassador Mushingi, if you are confirmed, I will be glad that we will be sending such an experienced diplomat with experience

in five African countries to be our next ambassador to Angola and the Democratic Republic of São Tome and Principe.

Seems to me that Angola's reformist President Lourenço continues to provide an opportunity to deepen our relationship with that nation. I look forward to hearing how you, if confirmed, would support those reform efforts.

Ms. Aubin, your experience in Algeria would well qualify you, if confirmed, to be our next ambassador to that nation. I look forward to hearing from you about how you would lead our embassy in Algiers, in context of the problem sets facing the North African region, and Algeria's ongoing political challenges.

Also Of particular interest to me are your views on how we can best meet the challenges of Morocco's unfortunate annexation with U.S. approval, I might add, of Western Sahara, an action which I find deeply troubling.

Mr. Young, your experience in sub-Saharan Africa and as an economic and commercial officer at numerous posts will prepare you well, if confirmed, to be our next ambassador to the Republic of Congo. I look forward to hearing from you about Congo and particularly how you would advance our relationship with that nation in the face of tremendous corruption and increased Chinese influence.

Mr. Lamora, your Africa experience makes you well prepared for the difficult post for which you have been nominated.

I am interested in your views on how the U.S. can work with the Cameroonian institutions as well as with other nations to address violent extremism, as well as the Anglophone crisis affecting the northwest and southwest regions of Cameroon.

I would also like to hear from you on the tremendous challenges to democratic development posed by the Government's crackdown on political opposition and press, the president's reelection to a seventh term in 2018 election marred by violence and absence of a clear successor with concerns for further instability should he die or become incapacitated.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you, Senator, and thank you for providing some background on each of these nominees.

I am going to provide a little more background on each of them because I think it is important that people who are tuning in to the committee recognize the breadth and depth of experience that these diplomats have, and I think we can take great pride in the fact that the president has nominated this distinguished group of individuals.

So Ambassador André, Jr., is currently the chargé d'affaires ad interim at the U.S. Embassy in Juba, South Sudan. He is a former ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and to the Republic of Djibouti, which has a majority ethnic Somali population and a peacekeeping contingent in Somalia.

Ambassador André's earlier assignments also include service as the political counselor in Nairobi, Kenya, at which time his section oversaw Somali affairs.

He is the recipient of more than a dozen notable senior State Department awards, including the Director General Award for reporting. So thank you for joining us.

Ambassador Brewer recently served as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Sierra Leone. Prior to that role, Ambassador Brewer was the Deputy Director of Career Development and Assignments at the State Department's Bureau of Human Resources, and she also served as the deputy chief of mission and charge ad interim at the U.S. Embassy in Abuja, Nigeria.

In Nigeria, she oversaw a \$500 million annual PEPFAR program as part of a global campaign to fight HIV/AIDS. She earned the State Department's Distinguished Honor Award.

Ambassador Mushingi is currently the U.S. ambassador to Senegal and the Republic of Guinea Bissau. Earlier in his career, Ambassador Mushingi served as the United States Ambassador to Burkina Faso and as the deputy chief of mission to the United States Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In Washington, Ambassador Mushingi served as executive director at the Executive Office of the Secretary of State, and in 2017 he received the prestigious Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy.

Ms. Aubin is currently the acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Throughout her three decades of service she has held the posts as executive director of the Joint Executive Office of the Bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs, deputy chief of mission of the United States Embassy in Ottawa, Canada, executive director of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, and deputy chief of mission at the United States Embassy in Algiers, Algeria.

Ms. Aubin has received numerous State Department awards, including multiple performance awards for her work in the senior Foreign Service.

Mr. Young is the economic counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem, Israel. Previously, Mr. Young was the charge d'affaires and ad interim and deputy chief of mission at the United States Embassy in Vienna, Austria, and counsel and senior civilian representative at the U.S. consulate in Herat, Afghanistan, and deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

He has also served as the economic counselor at the United States Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, and U.S. Consul General in Durban, South Africa. His service has been honored with several State Department awards, and I welcome him as well.

Mr. Lamora is currently the deputy chief of mission at the United States Embassy in Accra, Ghana, which is the fifth largest U.S. embassy in sub-Saharan Africa. Previously, he was Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Central Africa and African Security Affairs.

Mr. Lamora has nearly 30 years of Foreign Service experience, 12 of which has been spent focused on African policy security, economic development, and partnerships, and he has served in three African countries including Cameroon. He is the recipient of numerous State Department awards as well.

So thank you all very much, again, for your prior service. We look forward to the discussion today.

And with that, I call upon Ambassador André to deliver an opening statement.

Ambassador André?

STATEMENT HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ, JR., OF TEXAS, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

Mr. ANDRÉ. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, greetings from South Sudan. I am honored to come before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia.

I am grateful to the president and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me. My wife, Ouroukou André, and my children, Ruhiyyih and Isidore André, are watching online.

I thank all my family, friends, and colleagues for their support.

Mr. Chairman, I first came to Africa in 1983 as a Peace Corps volunteer in Senegal. I then worked in Chad on post-war reconstruction. I joined the State Department in 1990, intending to continue my focus on Africa. I am now serving my tenth tour on the continent.

My three domestic assignments were also Africa related. I have served at our embassies in each of the countries that border Somalia.

If confirmed, I will draw on these experiences to lead our U.S. Embassy Mogadishu team in advancing our partnership with Somalia's people and their federal and state governments for greater peace and prosperity.

I commit to keep you and your staff informed of our progress.

Mr. Chairman, having spent much of my career serving in dangerous places, I feel deeply the responsibility of an ambassador toward all resident Americans and toward all U.S. Government employees in country.

If confirmed, I will promote the safety of American citizens and of my embassy colleagues.

Mr. Chairman, the United States needs a stable Somalia as do the Somali people, East Africa, and the international community. If confirmed, I will work with Somalia's federal and state governments, Somali civil society, regional organizations and like-minded international partners to promote stability through credible elections and governance reforms that advance peace and prosperity.

Mr. Chairman, among other needed reforms, Somalia would benefit from a compromise leading to national consensus on the relationship between the federal government and state governments. The nature of Somali federalism has remained an open question for too long.

Mr. Chairman, the people of Somalia and their neighbors are attacked regularly by al-Qaeda's East Africa branch al-Shabaab. There is a smaller ISIS Somalia presence in the north. Both international terrorist networks threaten our interests in the region and aspire to attack Americans.

If confirmed, I will continue the work of Ambassador Yamamoto, applying the full range of tools to help Somalis defend themselves and rid their country of terrorism.

I will also coordinate with the African Union's peacekeeping operation in Somalia. I will be guided by our shared goal of more operationally capable and professional Somali security forces that respect human rights, protect civilians, and hold accountable those responsible for abuses.

In recent years, Somali security forces have made progress in this direction. The U.S. military, the European Union, and the United Nations has contributed to that progress.

Mr. Chairman, aside from political and security challenges, Somalis also confront a variety of natural calamities, economic dysfunction, and deficient educational and other public services. These difficulties contribute to poverty, hunger, and displacement.

If confirmed, I would support the work of our development, humanitarian, and economic professionals in coordination with Somali authorities and international organizations to provide aid from the American people to Somalis in need and to promote inclusive economic growth.

Ethnic Somali communities around the world are known for their resourcefulness, dynamism, and entrepreneurial spirit. Under the right conditions, Somalia will thrive due to the qualities of the Somali people.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I am eager to respond to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Larry Edward André follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ, JR.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, greetings from Juba, South Sudan. I am honored to come before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia. I am grateful to the President and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me.

My wife, Ouroukou André, and my children, Ruhiyyih André and Isidore André, are watching online. I thank all my family, friends, and colleagues for their support.

Mr. Chairman, I first came to Africa in 1983 as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Senegal, and then in Chad working on post-war reconstruction. I joined the State Department in 1990. I am now serving my tenth tour in Africa. With an additional three domestic Africa-related assignments, my over 31-year diplomatic career has focused almost exclusively on the continent. I have served at our embassies in each of the countries that border Somalia. If confirmed, I will draw on these experiences to advance our partnership with Somalia's people and their federal and state-level governments toward greater peace and prosperity.

The United States needs a stable Somalia, as do the Somali people, East Africa and the international community. If confirmed, I will work with the Somali federal government, Somalia's state governments, regional organizations, and like-minded international partners to promote stability through credible elections that advance peace and prosperity. Mr. Chairman, Somalia's political stability also requires compromise leading to national consensus on the relationship between the federal government and state governments. The nature of Somali federalism has remained an open question for too long.

Mr. Chairman, the people of Somalia and their neighbors are attacked regularly by al-Qaeda's East Africa branch, al-Shabaab. There is a smaller ISIS-Somalia presence in the north. Both international terrorist networks threaten our interests in the region and aspire to attack our country. If confirmed, I will continue the work of Ambassador Yamamoto to bring to bear the full range of tools to help Somalis defend themselves and rid their country of terrorism. I will also coordinate with AMISOM, the African Union's peacekeeping operation. I will be guided by our shared goal of more operationally capable and professional Somali security forces that respect human rights, protect civilians, and hold accountable those responsible for abuses. In recent years, the Somali National Army has made progress in this

direction. The U.S. military, the European Union, and the United Nations have contributed to that progress.

Mr. Chairman, having spent much of my career serving at U.S. embassies in dangerous places, I feel deeply the responsibility of an Ambassador toward all resident Americans and to all U.S. Government employees and contractors. If confirmed, I will lead our team in Somalia to take all necessary measures to promote the security of American citizens and of U.S. Government colleagues while we work with the Somali people, their government, and our international partners to advance shared objectives.

Aside from political and security challenges, Somalis also confront a variety of natural calamities, economic dysfunction, and deficient educational and other public services that contribute to poverty, hunger, and displacement. If confirmed, I would support the work of our development, humanitarian, and economic professionals, in coordination with Somali authorities and international organizations, to provide aid from the American people to Somalis in need and to promote inclusive economic growth.

If confirmed, I will lead our U.S. Embassy Mogadishu team to advance peace and prosperity through diplomacy, defense, and development efforts in partnership with the Somali people and their federal and state governments. I commit to keep you and your staff informed.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I am eager to respond to your questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

And next, we will hear from Ambassador Brewer.

STATEMENT OF HON. MARIA E. BREWER OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

Ms. BREWER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rounds, members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you as you consider my nomination as U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho.

I thank President Biden for this opportunity and for the trust that he and Secretary Blinken have shown in my ability to serve our country again as U.S. Ambassador.

If confirmed, I look forward to collaborating with this committee as we advance U.S. objectives in Lesotho. I would like to thank my husband, Mark, and our 12-year-old daughter, Arina, for their love and support, along with my parents, William and Maria Pallick, who are watching from their home in Texas. Also, today is my father's 77th birthday. So I would like to say happy birthday, Dad.

Having served nearly 25 years with the U.S. Department of State, I have substantial experience working on African affairs, most recently as the U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone.

My experience has taught me the need to develop diverse teams that reflect the countries we serve and to foster high morale in challenging environments.

If confirmed, I will draw on this experience to pursue U.S. goals and protect U.S. interests in Lesotho. Promoting democratic governance is at the core of U.S. values and of what we wish to accomplish in Lesotho.

Lesotho seeks to implement reforms to reduce political instability, strengthen its institutions, and professionalize its military. These goals align with our own.

Our embassy has made great strides in promoting the rule of law, civilian control of the Lesotho's military, and government accountability.

If confirmed, I will collaborate with this committee, the inter-agency, and the Government of Lesotho to strengthen Lesotho's institutions, reinforce its ability to meet the needs of its people, and build capacity to be a better partner to us.

Last year taught every country that promoting the health of its people is a core imperative. In Lesotho, health system strengthening is at the center of our assistance.

With one in four adults afflicted by HIV/AIDS, and many children orphaned by it, shoring up the Lesotho's capacity to fight HIV/AIDS will remain a critical component of U.S. engagement.

The President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, generously funded by Congress, has transformed the Lesotho. Lesotho is one of the first countries to reach epidemic control, surpassing U.N. AIDS targets and cutting new infections by half. Our health partnerships have also bolstered Lesotho's capacity to confront COVID-19.

Curbing the spread of these pandemics contributes to global health security, which benefits Americans here at home. To increase internal stability and its ability to be an effective partner, Lesotho needs economic development.

AGOA, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, revolutionized Lesotho's economy, creating more than 45,000 private sector jobs. More progress is needed improving work conditions and preparing Lesotho for its post-AGOA future.

I will support economic diversification, continued progress on AGOA eligibility criteria, and overall improvement of the business climate, if confirmed. Doing so not only improves the lives of Basotho, but also improves conditions for U.S. companies seeking to do business with Lesotho.

The Department of State in 2020 ranked Lesotho among the countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. The State Department has worked with the Government of Lesotho to urge it to devote resources to combating trafficking in persons. Lesotho and its people are receptive to this message and we are seeing real progress.

If confirmed, I commit to pressing Lesotho for increased prevention and prosecution of these crimes and increased protection for victims. I will paramount the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Lesotho and the entire U.S. Embassy team, including U.S. citizen employees, their families, and our Lesotho colleagues.

If confirmed, I would do all within my power to ensure the security of our mission and oversee its operation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I welcome the challenge and privilege of protecting and advancing U.S. interests in Maseru as the U.S. ambassador. I look forward to any questions you may have.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Maria E. Brewer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARIA E. BREWER

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, It is an honor to appear before you as you consider my nomination as U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho. I want to thank President Biden for this opportunity and for the trust that he and Secretary Blinken have in my ability to serve our country again as U.S. ambassador. If confirmed, I look forward to collaborating with this committee as we advance U.S. foreign policy objectives in Lesotho. I am honored and fortunate to have my husband, Mark, and our twelve-year-old daughter, Arina, here with me today. I thank them for their constant love and support, along with my parents, William and Maria Pallick, who are watching from their home in Texas.

Having served nearly 25 years with the U.S. Department of State, I have substantial experience working on African affairs, most recently as U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone. My experience has taught me the need to develop diverse teams that reflect the country we serve and to foster high morale in challenging environments. If confirmed, I will draw upon this wealth of knowledge and management experience to pursue U.S. goals and to protect U.S. interests in Lesotho.

Promoting democratic governance is at the core of U.S. values and of what we seek to accomplish in Lesotho. As Secretary Blinken noted, “strong democracies are more stable, better partners to us, more committed to human rights, less prone to conflict, and more dependable markets for our goods and services.” Along with its Southern African Development Community partners, Lesotho seeks to implement reforms to reduce political instability, strengthen its institutions, and professionalize its military. Our embassy has already made great strides in promoting the rule of law, civilian control of Lesotho’s military, and government accountability. If confirmed, I will collaborate with this committee, the interagency, and the Government of Lesotho to strengthen Lesotho’s institutions, to reinforce its ability to meet the needs of its people, and to build its capacity to be a better partner to us.

The last year taught every country that promoting the health of its people is a core imperative. In Lesotho, health system strengthening is at the center of our assistance efforts. With one in four adults living with HIV/AIDS and many more children orphaned by it, shoring up Lesotho’s capacity to confront HIV/AIDS will remain a critical component to U.S. engagement. PEPFAR, which Congress generously funds, has transformed Lesotho, which was one of the first countries to reach epidemic control, surpassing UNAIDS targets and cutting new infections by half. Our health partnerships have also bolstered Lesotho’s capacity to confront COVID–19. Curbing the spread of these pandemics in Lesotho contributes to global health security which benefits Americans at home. If confirmed, I will seek to sustain momentum in these areas.

To increase internal stability and its ability to be an effective partner, Lesotho needs economic development. AGOA—the African Growth and Opportunity Act—revolutionized Lesotho’s economy, creating over 45,000 private sector jobs in Lesotho, making it the second largest sub-Saharan supplier of textiles and apparel to the United States. Nevertheless, there is still important progress to be made, particularly improving work conditions and preparing Lesotho for its post-AGO future once the Act expires in 2025. I will work diligently to support economic diversification, continued progress on AGOA eligibility criteria, and overall improvement of the business climate, if confirmed. Doing so not only improves the lives of Basotho, but also improves conditions for U.S. companies seeking to do business with Lesotho.

The Department of State in 2020 ranked Lesotho among the countries whose governments do not fully comply with the minimum standards in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and which are not making significant efforts to comply. The Department has worked assiduously with the Government of Lesotho to urge it to devote resources to combatting trafficking in persons. Lesotho and its people are receptive to this message and making real progress. If confirmed, I will commit to pushing Lesotho for increased prevention and prosecution of these crimes and increased protection for victims.

In addition to these policy aims, I hold paramount the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Lesotho, and the entire U.S. Embassy team, including U.S. citizen employees, their families, and our Basotho colleagues. If confirmed, I would do all within my power to ensure the security of our Mission and oversee its operations.

In closing, I would like to thank you all again for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I would welcome the challenge and privilege of protecting and advancing U.S. interests in Maseru as the U.S. Ambassador. I look forward to any questions you may have.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Madam Ambassador. I think the full committee would like to extend a happy birthday to your father.

And now we will turn to Ambassador Mushingi. The floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF HON. TULINABO S. MUSHINGI OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

Mr. MUSHINGI. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege, indeed, to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Angola and to the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe.

I thank the president and the secretary of state for their confidence in me. I am equally grateful for this distinguished committee's consideration.

I appear today with unfailing support of my wife of 40 years, Rebecca, who has also served our country, working for 13 years with the U.S. Peace Corps, and of our beloved daughter, Furaha.

My work across Africa, from Mozambique to Morocco, from Ethiopia to Senegal, as well as through various assignments in Washington, D.C., have prepared me to deliver meaningful results for the American people in the role for which I have been nominated.

If confirmed, I will work to foster stronger ties between the United States and Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe.

President Lourenço's economic and political reform agenda aligns with U.S. interests and presents us a unique opportunity to develop a mutually beneficial partnership with this fast-emerging economy and rising African nation.

As the Government of Angola fosters a better business climate, U.S. companies seek tremendous trade and investment opportunities, and recently, U.S. companies have achieved major successes in the energy and IT sectors.

Angola's legacy of land mines continues to impede economic development and conservation efforts. Since 1995, U.S.A. has been the largest donor to demining efforts in Angola, investing more than \$145 million dollars to clear land mines.

The 2018 Defending Economic Livelihoods and Threatened Animals Act helps to combat wildlife trafficking and to protect land and water resources.

If confirmed, I will reinforce our commitment to help Angola eliminate the threat of land mines and protect its natural resources.

Deep ties bind the United States and Angola. An estimated one-quarter of all African Americans have Angolan roots. In fact, the

first enslaved Africans to arrive in what is now the United States in 1619 were from what is now Angola.

If confirmed, I will look to be honest about this history while sharing the experience of the United States of America as we continue to seek to improve our nation.

Turning to São Tome, São Tome and Principe has a small land footprint but a large and strategically important maritime domain in the Gulf of Guinea shipping lanes.

Enhancing the country's ability to monitor its waters and share information on maritime activity and piracy is a key component to improve regional security. São Tome and Principe also has a long tradition of democracy and peaceful transfers of power.

I will focus on these priorities, if confirmed. As the world hopefully emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, we expect to see more Americans coming to Angola and São Tome and Principe. The safety of our staff and U.S. citizens is always paramount.

Finally, American diplomacy works best when our diplomats best exemplify our nation. If confirmed, I will promote an interagency embassy team that reflects the values of our country.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Tulinabo S. Mushingi follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. TULINABO S. MUSHINGI

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Angola and to the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe. I thank the President and the Secretary of State for their confidence in me. I am equally grateful for this distinguished committee's consideration.

I appear today with the unfailing support of my wife Rebecca, who has also served our country working for 13 years with the U.S. Peace Corps, and our beloved daughter Furaha.

My work across Africa, from Mozambique to Morocco, Ethiopia to Senegal, as well as through assignments in Washington, DC, has prepared me to deliver meaningful results for the American people in the role I have been nominated for. If confirmed, I will work hard to foster stronger ties between the United States and Angola and São Tome & Principe.

Bilateral relations between the United States and Angola have markedly improved in recent years. President Lourenço's economic and political reform agenda aligns with U.S. interests and presents a unique opportunity to develop a mutually beneficial partnership with this fast-emerging economy and rising African nation.

Angola plays an influential role in Africa and is looking to diversify its ties away from historic alliances. As such, it has attracted high-level U.S. visits and interaction since 2019, and if confirmed, with your help, I will work to deepen the U.S.-Angola partnership.

Angola has made tangible progress towards transparency and good governance, while initiating the fight against corruption and promoting accountability for human rights violations. Angola still faces many challenges as it addresses a stagnant economy, exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID pandemic. If confirmed, I will continue to press for political and economic reforms, support the fight against corruption, and buttress Angola's development efforts.

As the Government of Angola fosters a better business climate, U.S. companies see tremendous trade and investment opportunities. Recently, U.S. companies have achieved major successes in the energy and IT sectors. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. interagency team to advocate for U.S. businesses while supporting Angolan efforts to comply with international standards and improve regulatory adherence.

Angola's legacy of land mines continues to impede economic development and environmental conservation. Since 1995, the United States has been the largest donor to demining efforts in Angola, investing more than \$145 million to clear landmines

and other dangerous explosive hazards so the people of Angola can advance a wide range of social and economic development efforts safe from buried bombs. The 2018 Defending Economic Livelihoods and Threatened Animals (DELTA) Act helps to combat wildlife trafficking and coordinate with transboundary land and water resource governance authorities. If confirmed, I will reinforce our commitment to help Angola eliminate the threat of landmines and protect its natural resources.

Deep ties bind the United States and Angola: an estimated one-quarter of African-Americans have Angolan roots. The first enslaved Africans to arrive in what is now the United States in 1619 were from what is now Angola. If confirmed, I will look to be honest about this history, while sharing the experience of the United States as we continue to seek improve our nation. I will seek to expand our growing people-to-people ties and promote programs focusing on talented Angolan youth.

São Tome and Principe (STP) has a small land footprint but a large and strategically important maritime domain in the Gulf of Guinea shipping lanes. Enhancing the country's ability to monitor its waters and share information on maritime activity and piracy is a key component to improve regional security. STP successfully completed a Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Threshold Program in 2011, and further MCC engagement is a priority for the future. STP also has a long tradition of democracy and peaceful transfers of power. I will focus on these priorities if confirmed.

As the world hopefully emerges from the COVID pandemic, we expect to see a resurgence in the number of Americans coming to Angola. The safety of our staff and U.S. citizens is always paramount.

Finally, American diplomacy works best when American diplomats best exemplify our nation. If confirmed, I will promote an interagency Embassy team that reflects the values of the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Next, we will turn to Ms. Aubin for her testimony.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ELIZABETH MOORE AUBIN OF VIRGINIA,
A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE,
CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AM-
BASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PEOPLE'S DEMO-
CRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA**

Ms. AUBIN. Thank you, Chairman Van Hollen, Ranking Member Rounds, and members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today.

As the Texas-born child of a U.S. Air Force officer, I feel an immeasurable debt of gratitude to my parents, Tom and Virginia Moore, who raised me to put country over self, and I owe them everything for preparing me to take on my chosen vocation 31 years ago as a Foreign Service officer, and to my husband, Daniel Aubin, for his incredible love and support.

It is a huge honor to be nominated by President Biden to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic People's Republic of Algeria, and I appreciate deeply the confidence he and Secretary Blinken have shown.

I served in Algeria from 2011 to 2014 as the Deputy Chief of Mission, so I was there for the 2013 terrorist attack at the Amenas gas production facility, and I, along with every member of the embassy, did not stop working until American hostages were released and three deceased Americans brought back to their families.

It was a formative experience. If confirmed, my highest priority will be to keep all Americans in Algeria safe.

If confirmed, I hope to advance three critical priorities: first, strengthening our security cooperation to fight terrorism and pro-

mote regional stability; second, expanding investment opportunities for U.S. companies to deliver economic benefits to the American people; third, advocating for necessary political and economic reforms to foster stability as Algeria navigates a post-COVID economy.

Although it rarely makes the front page, we have an important relationship with Algeria, and I will work to increase the impact of U.S. activities there. I also believe in the enduring value of deepening people-to-people ties. Embassy Algiers supports an ever-growing spectrum of programs that strengthen our security, economic governance, educational, and cultural ties.

Algeria's large youth population is curious about America and wants to learn English. That is an opportunity I hope to make the most of.

If confirmed, I will return to a country that has changed in important ways since I last lived there. Last year, the Algerian Government adopted a package of constitutional reforms to strengthen Algeria's political system. Legislative elections will occur in three days. The Algerian public continues to demonstrate peacefully for core civil rights and liberties.

I will continue to press for expanding observance of human rights, including freedoms of expression and association and space for civil society.

Algeria fought against violent extremism in the 1990s and it has maintained its stability through rigorous counterterrorism efforts, national reconciliation programs, and de-radicalization initiatives.

Algeria has found ways to export this peace dividend in a difficult neighborhood. It played a critical role in brokering reconciliation in Mali with the 2015 Algiers Accord.

Algeria provides security assistance to Tunisia and Niger. It actively participates in the African Union, the Arab League, the OIC, and it hosts AFRIPOL and the African Union Center for Study and Research on Terrorism.

While new investments are essential, Algeria also remains one of the key regional producers of oil and gas, ranking ninth in the world in gas reserves and sixteenth in oil reserves, and has vast promise for renewables.

If confirmed, I will promote U.S. companies as they seek to partner with Algerian firms to advance development of this vital energy sector for our mutual benefit.

The United States and Algeria have a rich history on which to continue to build. From the Treaty of Peace and Amity with the U.S. signed in Algiers in 1795 to American troops liberating Algeria in World War II, to the United States being the first country to recognize Algerian independence on July 3rd, 1962 to Algeria playing a role of creative and active mediation to help release the 52 American diplomat hostages from Iran, we have an enduring partnership that can face the opportunities and the challenges of the 21st century together.

Thank you, Chairman Van Hollen, Ranking Member Rounds, and members of the committee for this opportunity to address you. If confirmed, it will be the honor of my life to represent America to the Algerian people and to lead our tremendous and talented mission there.

I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Elizabeth Moore Aubin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. ELIZABETH MOORE AUBIN

Thank you, Chairman Van Hollen and Ranking Member Rounds, and members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. As the Texas-born child of a U.S. Air Force officer, I feel an immeasurable debt of gratitude to my parents, Tom and Virginia Moore, who raised me to put country over self, and I owe them everything for preparing me to take on my chosen vocation 31 years ago as a Foreign Service Officer; and to my husband, Daniel Aubin, for his incredible love and support.

It is a huge honor to be nominated by President Biden to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, and I deeply appreciate the confidence he and Secretary Blinken have shown in me.

I served in Algeria from 2011–2014 as the Deputy Chief of Mission, so I was there for the 2013 terrorist attack at the In Amenas gas production facility. I, along with every member of the Embassy, did not stop working until American hostages were released, and three deceased Americans brought back to their families. It was a formative experience. If confirmed, my highest priority will be to keep every American safe in Algeria.

If confirmed, I hope to advance three critical priorities. First, strengthening our security cooperation to fight terrorism and promote regional stability. Second, expanding investment opportunities for U.S. companies to deliver economic benefits to the American people. Third, advocating for necessary political and economic reforms to foster stability as Algeria navigates a post-COVID economy.

Although it rarely makes the front page, we have an important relationship with Algeria, and I will work to increase the impact of U.S. activities there.

I also believe in the enduring value of deepening people-to-people ties. Embassy Algiers supports an ever-growing spectrum of programs that strengthen our security, economic, governance, educational and cultural ties. Algeria's large youth population is curious about America and wants to learn English. That's an opportunity I hope to make the most of.

If confirmed, I will return to a country that is changed in important ways since I last lived there. Last year, the Algerian Government adopted a package of constitutional reforms to strengthen Algeria's political system. Legislative elections will occur in three days. The Algerian public continues to demonstrate peacefully for core civil rights and liberties. I will continue to press for expanding observance of human rights, including freedoms of expression and association, and space for civil society.

Algeria fought against violent extremism in the 1990s. It has maintained its stability through rigorous counterterrorism efforts, national reconciliation programs, and de-radicalization initiatives. Algeria has found ways to export this peace dividend in a difficult neighborhood: it played a critical role in brokering reconciliation in Mali with the 2015 Algiers Accord; it provides security assistance to Tunisia and Niger; it actively participates in the African Union, the Arab League, and the OIC; and it hosts AFRIPOL and the African Union Center for Study and Research on Terrorism.

While new investments are essential, Algeria also remains one of the key regional producers of oil and gas ranking ninth in the world in gas reserves and 16th in oil reserves, and has vast promise for renewables. If confirmed, I will promote U.S. companies as they seek to partner with Algerian firms to advance development of this vital energy sector for our mutual benefit.

The United States and Algeria have a rich history on which to continue to build. From the Treaty of Peace and Amity with the U.S. signed in Algiers in September of 1795, to American troops liberating Algeria in World War II; from the United States being the first country to recognize Algerian independence on July 3, 1962, to Algeria playing a role of creative and active mediation to help release the 52 American diplomat hostages from Iran. We have an enduring partnership that can face the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century together.

Thank you, Chairman Van Hollen and Ranking Member Rounds, and members of the committee for this opportunity to address you. If confirmed, it will be the honor of my life to represent America to the Algerian people and to lead our tremendous and talented mission there.

I look forward to your questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you very much for your testimony.

Next, we are going to hear from Mr. Young.

STATEMENT OF EUGENE S. YOUNG OF NEW YORK, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, it really is an honor to appear before you today as the president's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo.

I am very grateful for the trust and confidence that President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed in me. I want to acknowledge my remarkable wife, Zoe, and our two boys today. I know they are watching and I thank them for their enduring support and love.

I believe my mother, Margaret, is also watching from home and I am so grateful to her and my late father, Sanford, for their encouragement, their care, and their rock-solid upbringing. I think my brother, Roland, is out there too, and I am grateful to him as well with his family. So thanks for this chance.

Thanks to the hard work of our diplomats on the ground in Brazzaville and the local staff at the embassy, the United States has built a strong relationship with the Republic of the Congo. We have been able to deepen the ties between our governments, engage in regular and serious dialogue, and work on issues of mutual concern.

Our countries are working together to effectively fight COVID, to protect our shared environmental heritage, and to combat trafficking in persons. If confirmed, I will seek to maintain this improved U.S.-Congo partnership.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, as you well know, the Republic of the Congo occupies a vital but tenuous position in Central Africa. Congo itself is stable, but it lies in a region beset with challenges.

In the past year, Congo has dealt with a suspected Ebola outbreak from across the Congo River and accommodated refugees fleeing the Central African Republic.

Congo is also home to the Great Congo Rain Forest, an invaluable ecological treasure known as the second lung of the world, but one—I am sorry, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. It is okay. Take your time.

Mr. YOUNG. Congo is also home to the Great Congo Rain Forest, an invaluable ecological treasure known as the second lung of the world, but one that is in danger of imprudent exploitation.

Congo's significant oil reserves, which have boosted its economy but also fueled corruption, will still be crucial to the country's immediate future.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work tirelessly to address these challenges and to ensure the safety and security of American citizens in Congo as well as for our American and Congolese staff at the embassy.

Working with this committee, the various agencies of the U.S. Government active in Congo, other donor nations, and multilateral organizations, I will continue the good work our mission is supporting across key economic and social sectors in Congo.

If confirmed, I will focus on encouraging democratic progress, supporting efforts to protect the Congo Basin, working with Congo to protect against this, our current pandemic and future pandemics, as well as encouraging the diversification of the Congolese economy.

And for U.S. business, I will continue the efforts of our embassy team in seeking a level playing field and a more transparent and inviting business environment.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you once again for the opportunity to appear before you today.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and other interested members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Congo, and I am very happy to respond to any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Young follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF EUGENE S. YOUNG

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo. I am grateful for the trust and confidence that President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed in me.

I would like to acknowledge my wife, Zoë, and our two sons today and thank them for their enduring support and love. I believe my mother Margaret is also watching from home and I am so grateful to her and my late father, Sanford, for their encouragement, care and rock solid upbringing.

Thanks to the hard work of our diplomats on the ground in Brazzaville and the local staff at the Embassy, the United States has built a strong relationship with the Republic of the Congo. We've been able to deepen the ties between our governments, engage in regular and serious dialogue, and work on issues of mutual concern. Our countries are working together to effectively fight COVID, to protect our shared environmental heritage, and to combat trafficking in persons. If confirmed, I will seek to maintain this improved U.S.-Congo partnership.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, as you well know, the Republic of the Congo occupies a vital but tenuous position in Central Africa. Congo itself is stable, but it lies in a region beset with challenges. In the past year, Congo has dealt with a suspected Ebola outbreak from across the Congo river and accommodated refugees fleeing the Central African Republic. Congo is also home to the great Congo rainforest, an invaluable ecological treasure, known as the second lung of the world, but one that is in danger of imprudent exploitation. Congo's significant oil reserves, which have boosted its economy, but also fueled corruption, will still be crucial to the country's immediate future.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work tirelessly to address these challenges and to ensure the safety and security of American citizens in Congo as well as for our American and Congolese staff at the Embassy. Working with this committee, the various agencies of the U.S. Government active in Congo, other donor nations and multilateral organizations, I will continue the good work our mission is supporting across key economic and social sectors in Congo. If confirmed, I will focus on encouraging democratic progress, supporting efforts to protect the Congo Basin, working with Congo to protect against this and future pandemics, as well as encouraging the diversification of the Congolese economy. And for U.S. business, I will continue the efforts of our Embassy team in seeking a level playing field and a more transparent and inviting business environment.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you once again for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and other interested members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Congo and I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you for your testimony. And now we will turn to Mr. Lamora. The floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA OF RHODE ISLAND, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Mr. LAMORA. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Rounds, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon.

I thank the president and the secretary of state for their confidence in me, and I am equally grateful for this distinguished committee's consideration.

While the virtual nature of this hearing precludes my family from joining us in person, I nonetheless want to recognize my husband, Eric, my sister, Michelle, and my nephews, Jack and Patrick, who have all supported and encouraged me over many years and who are watching today from home.

I also want to pay homage to my late parents, Thomas and Elizabeth Lamora, without whose love and support I would not be here today.

The United States was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Cameroon in 1960. Since then, nearly 4,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in Cameroon. It is a country with great cultural and geographic diversity, a capsule of the entire continent: active volcanoes, rain forest jungles teeming with wild-life, broad savannas, and a beautiful coastline.

I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to experience much of this personally when I served in Cameroon previously. Unfortunately, this beautiful, warm, and welcoming country that launched my love of Africa nearly 30 years ago also faces significant challenges, as you well know.

The United States is deeply concerned by the continued violence in Cameroon's Anglophone regions. What began as peaceful protests in late 2016 have tragically escalated into a protracted violent crisis with more than 3,000 persons killed and more than 1 million internally displaced.

Children have been threatened and in some places killed for attending school. Schools, hospitals, and religious sites have been attacked. Humanitarian actors continue to face numerous obstacles in carrying out their work.

We condemn violence in all its forms regardless of who is perpetrating it, and call for an end to the suffering of the civilian population, regardless of their location or affiliation.

No one undermining peace in Cameroon has our support or our tolerance, whether members of the security forces or of armed separatists groups. We are acting vigorously to help resolve the crisis and, if confirmed, I commit that that will be my highest priority.

This week, secretary of state established a policy imposing visa restrictions on those undermining efforts to peacefully resolve the situation.

We continue to have discussions about Cameroon with the Cameroonian Government and to other Cameroonians, as well as with key international partners to foster greater, stronger, and more unified engagement. This will remain our highest priority in our Cameroon policy.

Cameroon also faces a number of other challenges that are all too common in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, including health, security, and governance.

The Cameroonian people have enormous potential. I have seen it firsthand. If I am confirmed, our embassy team and I will do everything we can to help the people and Government of Cameroon make that potential a reality.

The coronavirus pandemic has added a layer of difficulty to reaching that day. As a global health security agenda Phase 1 country, Cameroon partners with the United States to strengthen its ability to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious diseases with pandemic potential.

Cameroon also benefits from U.S. assistance through PEPFAR and the president's Malaria Initiative, such that it has reduced its HIV prevalence and is working to achieve epidemic control within the next two years.

On security, the United States continues to support Cameroon and its Lake Chad Basin neighbors in their joint effort to defeat Boko Haram and its offshoot, ISIS West Africa.

This is a key element of the fight against global terrorism. Our support, however, is neither limitless nor without conditions. Cameroonian security forces must abide by accepted human rights norms and those who violate those norms must be held appropriately accountable.

In the same vein, there is still substantial work to be done to promote democracy, human rights, combat corruption, and ensure accountability of those who violate Cameroonian laws or the citizens' trust.

We must continue to press on all these important issues while helping the Cameroonian Government and people, including civil society, to find a path to peace.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, members of the committee, I thank you once again for this opportunity to appear before you, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with you and others in Congress to advance U.S. interests in Cameroon.

I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Christopher John Lamora follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the committee, it is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon. I thank the President and the Secretary of State for their confidence in me. I am equally grateful for this distinguished committee's consideration.

While the virtual nature of this hearing precludes my family from joining us in person, I nonetheless want to recognize my husband Eric, my sister Michelle, and my nephews Jack and Patrick, who have all supported and encouraged me over many years and who are watching today from home. I also want to pay homage to my late parents, Thomas and Elizabeth Lamora, without whose love and support I would not be here today.

I'm grateful as well to my Africa Bureau family, whose collegiality, confidence, friendship, and mentoring have sustained me and fostered my personal and professional growth for nearly three decades -- from my first assignment at the U.S. Consulate in Douala, Cameroon from 1992-1993 to my past three years as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Accra, Ghana.

The United States was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Cameroon in 1960. Since then, nearly 4,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in Cameroon. It is a country with great cultural and geographic diversity, a capsule of the entire continent: active volcanoes, rainforest jungles teeming with wildlife, broad savannahs, and a beautiful coastline. I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to experience much of this personally when I served in Cameroon previously.

Unfortunately, this beautiful, warm, and welcoming country that launched my love of Africa nearly 30 years ago also faces significant challenges, as you well know.

The United States is deeply concerned by the continued violence in Cameroon's Anglophone regions. What began as peaceful protests in late 2016 has tragically escalated into a protracted violent crisis with more than 3,000 persons killed and more than one million internally displaced. Children have been threatened, and in some cases killed, for attending school. Schools, hospitals, and religious sites have been attacked. Humanitarian actors continue to face numerous obstacles in carrying out their work.

We condemn violence in all its forms, regardless of who is perpetrating it, and call for an end to the suffering of the civilian population regardless of their location or affiliation. No one undermining peace in Cameroon has our support or tolerance, whether members of the security forces or of armed separatist groups.

We are acting vigorously to help resolve the crisis. This week, the Secretary of State established a policy imposing visa restrictions on those undermining efforts to peacefully resolve the crisis. We continue to have discussions about Cameroon with the Cameroonian Government and other Cameroonians, as well as with key international partners to foster greater, stronger, and more unified engagement. Working to resolve this crisis is, and will continue to be, the single highest priority in our Cameroon policy.

Cameroon also faces a number of other challenges that are all too common in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, including health, security, and governance. The Cameroonian people have enormous potential; I've seen it first-hand. If I am confirmed, our Embassy team and I will do everything we can to help the people and Government of Cameroon to make that potential a reality.

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On security, the United States continues to support Cameroon and its Lake Chad Basin neighbors in their joint effort to defeat Boko Haram and its offshoot, ISIS-West Africa. This is a key element of the fight against global terrorism. Our support, however, is neither limitless nor without conditions. Cameroonian security forces must abide by accepted human rights norms, and those who violate these norms must be held appropriately accountable.

In that same vein, there is still substantial work to be done to promote democracy, and human rights, combat corruption, and ensure accountability of those who violate Cameroonian laws or the citizens' trust. We must continue to press on all these important issues while helping the Cameroonian Government and people, including civil society find a path to peace.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I thank you once again for this opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and others in Congress to advance U.S. interests in Cameroon. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Lamora, and thank you all very much for your testimony. And as somebody who grew up in a Foreign Service family, I understand and grateful you acknowledged that representing United States is a family affair and a team effort.

With that, given my colleague's, Senator Rounds, time constraints, I think I will just turn it over to you, Mike, if you want to begin the questioning. I understood you said you had to leave shortly. So I do not know how much time you have got.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You were cutting out a little bit there. But if you would allow me, I would make quick work of my time and ask a few questions if that is okay with you, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Absolutely. No, I want to make sure you have a chance to ask whatever you want. So why do you not lead off?

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the courtesy.

Ambassador André, as you know, Somalia is wracked by a political crisis over the September 17th agreement to forego a "one person one vote" election in favor of an indirect selection process similar to that of 2016 and 2017.

However, I am particularly curious about how you see Somalia as a longer-term political situation. Looking past the current political crisis, what are the reasonable benchmarks the United States should expect with regard to Somalia's democratic development?

Mr. ANDRÉ. Thank you, Senator, for that question. Looking forward to the immediate situation, as you said, we need to assist the Somalis to develop a permanent constitution.

They are using a provisional one right now. The Somali political class recognizes that the indirect method that they have used in the past and that they are intending to use this time is a stop-gap measure until they are able to have the "one person one vote" direct elections, which all seem to agree is their ending point.

They do not control all of their territory at this point and they do not want to disadvantage Somalis who, having nothing to do with their own will, are trapped behind the lines and territory controlled by terrorist networks.

So the constitution and getting to that direct election that you refer to.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, sir.

Ms. Aubin, I am very concerned about the recent U.S. policy change to recognize Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara.

I have been to the Sahrawi people's refugee camps twice. I was impressed by their strong desire for independence and frustration with the long delay of the time period for a referendum to determine whether Western Sahara should become a part of Morocco or be an independent nation.

Please tell me how you think this change in U.S. policy has impacted U.S.-Algeria relations, and also under what conditions, if any, might Algeria increase military assistance to the Polisario to support it against Morocco?

Ms. AUBIN. Thank you for the question, Senator Rounds.

Algeria has supported the political process led by the U.N. and by the U.N. Secretary General's personal envoy for Western Sahara.

So I think Algeria welcomes the fact that we are resuming active diplomacy and supported of the U.N., and together with our inter-

national partners want to bring a halt to the violence and restart a credible U.N. process.

We are working privately with all the parties involved and discussing the path forward. To your question about military assistance, I do not believe Algeria is providing military assistance. It is not something they highlight.

But, most definitively, they have called for a de-escalation of violence and for the political process to continue.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you.

And, Mr. Chairman, I have a couple questions that I will offer for the record. But I appreciate your courtesy in allowing me to move forward first and I thank you, and at this point I will have to step out of the meeting.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all the nominees before us. I most certainly have appreciated your comments today.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you, Senator, and thank you for your questions, and look forward to working with you. So I am going to also start with Ambassador André.

And, you know, as was referenced earlier in this hearing, we have a continued al-Shabaab presence in Somalia. We also have the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel from Somalia, a decision made by the previous president.

How has that decision to withdraw U.S. forces impacted the situation in Somalia, in your opinion?

Mr. ANDRÉ. Well, Senator, in my capacity as ambassador in Djibouti, I was present in January when AFRICOM took on that instruction. It was a repositioning of U.S. forces from Somalia to elsewhere in the region, which has slowed the tempo of our efforts to assist the Somali people with their security but it has not stopped it.

We continue to build the capacity of Somalia security forces, support AMISOM, African Union's peacekeeping force, and to keep the U.S. embassy open and operational.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, I appreciate that. In fact, I was just speaking the other day with the mayor of the city of Salisbury, Maryland, who happens to be a member of the Maryland National Guard and was recently deployed to Djibouti as well, and we talked a little bit about that sort of redeployment, as you said.

I have also heard concerns from others in the region that there has been some vacuum created, although there is, obviously, an attempt to compensate for that.

You referenced in your testimony Somali federalism. So how does the—and we are heading into elections here. Can you just talk a little bit about how the situation in Somalia compares with the regional situation in Somaliland and then Puntland? And I know that Somaliland and Puntland have different relationships than with the national sort of government, at least as seen by Puntland.

So could you just describe that and what the challenges are and what role, if any, the United States should play in mediating this effort, especially in the context of elections?

Mr. ANDRÉ. Yes, Senator.

I want to emphasize, as I said in the testimony, the importance of establishing, through consensus and compromise, a consistent

pattern, a framework, for the relations between the central government and the states.

Twenty years ago, I spent some time in Puntland. I was there looking mostly at fisheries issues, and they have been able to govern themselves well.

They see themselves very much as a part of Somalia. But they are also very interested in having significant control over their own governance.

There are other federal states of Somalia that have different understandings and different relationships. Somaliland, as you know, does not consider itself part of Somalia.

The United States recognizes a single Somalia, which includes Somaliland. So the picture here is a bit confused because there is not a consistent relationship between the center and the states.

That is something for Somalis to work out. They have many international examples to choose from, to consider, as the Somali people build that compromised national consensus on what the nature of Somali federalism should be.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Turning to Ambassador Brewer and Lesotho, you referenced in your testimony the AGOA agreement, which has helped the Lesotho economy. But at the same time, I think Lesotho would like to see greater diversification in its economy outside the textile sector.

Are there things that the United States can do to be helpful to that effort by the Government of Lesotho?

Ms. BREWER. Thank you, sir, for that question. Thank you, Senator.

We do see that AGOA has been a massive help to that country. About 12 percent of the GDP in 2019 came from AGOA from the export of mainly textiles, as you note, sir.

But there are many opportunities for U.S. companies, and one of the challenges of serving in Africa, particularly in smaller countries such as Sierra Leone and Lesotho, is how to attract those U.S. companies, how to encourage them that they will have their goods and services treated fairly and they will have a level playing field when they get there.

So one of the issues that, if confirmed, I will be carrying forward with the host nation will be the need to have a welcoming climate, a business climate that encourages international companies, including those from the U.S., to come. That means anti-corruption. That means a rule of law. That means political stability.

All of these are ingredients that lead to, you know, diversification. So, certainly, we see potential in the energy sector through Power Africa, through a whole of U.S. Government engagement.

We understand that the Government of Lesotho would like to increase their agricultural output.

I am originally from Indiana, a state with a proud agricultural tradition, and I think there is a lot that America can do, certainly, through the commercial sector to be able to help them with goods, services, and equipment.

So I think there is great potential and I believe that the U.S. is there ready to help. We are the partner of choice, we have a great

reputation, and I think we can assist them through a commercial context, not just through foreign assistance.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

And you mentioned also the success of our efforts on HIV/AIDS in Lesotho and we look forward to keeping in touch with you on that, especially the extent to which Lesotho has been able to take ownership of that.

I am told that there are no other committee members on right now. And if that is the case, I will continue asking questions of our nominees.

Ambassador Mushingi, the United States has signed a number of cooperative agreements with Angola in recent years, including engagements with Prosper Africa, the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative, Young African Leaders Initiative.

Could you talk about the areas that you think create the most, you know, fruitful opportunities of engagement with Angola and also what you see is our biggest challenges? And I should say a lot of you covered a lot of our questions in your opening statements.

That will cut down on the questions. But I do want to talk to you about some of the issues that do remain.

Mr. MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator. Clearly, we see an opportunity here to engage now with Angola, especially since the new regime took over about three years ago.

Where we have a big opening here is really on promoting economic recovery, promoting a two-way trade between our two countries, and opening these opportunities to U.S. companies in Angola, a country of more than 30 million people, and we see this desire of the Angolans to move away from their traditional historic alliances and that is where we come in as the U.S.

The majority of the Angolans, as you described in your opening remarks about the youth born in Angola or in many of the other African countries, know what is going on outside of Angola, know what the U.S. can bring to the table.

And each American company, what I call the U.S. model, has these three ingredients that so far have been missing in Angola and that really—Angolans want to take advantage of.

One of them is the transparency, the second one is the transfer of technology, and the third one is creation of jobs. So those are the opportunities that I see for American companies in Angola.

But moving forward as far as extending the cooperative agreement you were talking about, on the security cooperation we see also an opportunity here to get into the door because the history of Angola has been—their security cooperation with Russia has been there for a long time, and now the signing of our cooperative agreement a few years ago between the ministry of defense and our DOD we see an opening where the security forces are eager to be trained by us, are eager to be equipped by us, are eager to see the intelligence technologies and how they can use that for their own security in the region.

Finally is, of course, the security of the region and to everyone that Angola can help us in the region, whether we are talking about southern Africa region but also Central Africa and what is in that, in the Central African Republic, in the DRC—Democratic Republic of the Congo—in Uganda and Rwanda as well.

Over to you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I think you have covered some of this. You mentioned Russia. But I think of all the countries that we are talking about at this hearing, China probably has established the greatest amount of influence and footprint in Angola.

To what extent does China's economic and diplomatic and military influence in Angola impact our interests there?

Mr. MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

Yes, China and Russia have these traditional relations with Angola. It is no secret to anybody that, indeed, when we look at the major infrastructure projects many of them have been developed by China. But also, when we look at the debt issue, again, China is at the top of the list for that country.

Now, where we come in is, again, as I said, for our U.S. companies, and we saw a few successes that I referred to earlier in my testimony, in the last few months three American companies that have been able to penetrate the market and win over the competition in various sectors.

We have looked at telecommunication, IT, solar energy, but also energy, and both were U.S. companies, the latest three successes we have seen. And I think, for me, the way I see this is for us to talk about what we, the U.S.A., are bringing to the table and let the Angolans decide themselves.

At the end of the day, I am confident that we can compete in this market and, indeed, not only compete, but we can win in this market. Over to you, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Ambassador.

Just one question on São Tome and Principe, which is you mentioned their sort of government structure and process, which has been, I think, one that we have encouraged and supported.

With respect to their economy, my understanding is they would also like to diversify their economy a little bit more. What role can the United States play with respect to that objective?

Mr. MUSHINGI. Thank you, Senator.

One role that we can play is, really, to build on what we already have. As I said, it is a small land footprint but the long maritime borders and for us talking about maritime security, that is one thing where, really, we can play the biggest role.

But I was really happy to see that when I looked at the American companies that are on the ground—Kosmos Energy, Caterpillar, Dell—so that gives me an idea of the openness that São Tome has to American businesses with American models and, if confirmed, that is what I will be pushing, and especially many of those companies or agencies that work in the security area when we are talking about maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Over.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Ms. Aubin, the United States, as you know, has praised Algeria for its cooperation on counterterrorism issues and regional matters, and you referenced in your testimony its role as a mediator, notably, in Mali in 2015.

At the same time, its close ties to and its arms deals with Russia, especially in the aftermath of the CAATSA legislation passed here in Congress, have been concerning.

So what do you see as the main areas of agreement between the United States and Algeria and some of the areas of friction?

Ms. AUBIN. Thank you for the question, Senator Van Hollen.

I see the U.S. and Algeria having a lot of areas of agreement: regional stability in the Maghreb, the desire to have a more inclusive economic environment, and, certainly, they are very interested in the Human Rights Report—Trafficking in Persons Report and other reports that we do, and they are working to make gains in those areas.

You are right about Russia and Algeria's military relationship. Algeria procured two-thirds of its arms from Russia between 2015 and 2019. So that is an issue, and the sale of C-130s were part of the United States' larger policy goal of deterring Algeria from engaging in sanctionable activity.

And if confirmed, I will prioritize that in my conversations with Algerian officials.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. No, I appreciate that, because there were the arms sales, as you say, dating back to 2015 and before. But I think more concerning have been some of the arms sales since the CAATSA legislation passed.

What impact, if any, have you seen has that had on the calculations of the Algerian Government in terms of purchases?

Ms. AUBIN. So thank you for allowing me to clarify that I think the C-130 sales helped deter that, and I think the United States needs to continue conversations with Algeria to explain what Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act really means and how that will impact our relationship, moving forward.

And so that is something that I will prioritize in my conversations when I get there. Algeria has had a policy of sovereignty and noninterference in domestic affairs and that is how they have moved forward in their bilateral relationships.

But I think this is a really important point and if confirmed, I will continue to raise that with Algerian colleagues.

Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. No, I appreciate that, and Senator Rounds mentioned his opposition to the former administration's policy change with respect to recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara.

You already answered that question. I do want to go on record in agreement with my colleague, Senator Rounds, on that matter.

So let me turn now to Mr. Young, if I may, and a couple questions, because you covered a lot of it in your testimony with respect to the Republic of Congo.

One of the concerns I am sure you have seen expressed here on the Hill, in the United States, and elsewhere, has been the regional impact of weak control over the security sector and abuses committed by Congolese peacekeepers and park rangers.

Can you speak a little bit to that issue and, you know, what role you can play in expressing our concerns and what kind of changes that we can expect?

Mr. YOUNG. Thank you, Senator. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think it is really important that we continue to direct dialogue with the Government on issues like these that my predecessor and our embassy is still having at this point, to have that regular dialogue, to have an open discussion.

In terms of the peacekeepers that you mentioned, sir, my understanding, and this is one of the positive signs that we have seen, and that is that those peacekeepers that I think you are referring to were, in fact, held accountable for the crimes that they committed.

So that was one plus that we have seen recently. But it is important that we—across this and across all of these issues around democratic progress that we have a dialogue with the Government, we have dialogue with civil society, with youth, with the security and maintain some of the training programs we have had with security forces and with law enforcement. I think those can help address the issues that you are referring to, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, right. No, I am referring to the situation in Central African Republic, their troops there, and we do look forward to working with you to make sure that everyone is held accountable in what happened there.

Let me turn to Mr. Lamora. And as you referenced in your testimony, Cameroon has seen significant violence in recent years owing to the Anglophone Conflict as well as the Boko Haram insurgency in the far north.

I represent a very active and engaged and terrific Cameroonian-American constituency in the state of Maryland and I have been engaged with them in conversations about their concerns about what is happening.

Can you talk a little more about what the United States can do to support a peaceful resolution of Cameroon's Anglophone Conflict?

Mr. LAMORA. Thank you, Senator.

Yes. One of the things that we have been trying to do and will try to do with Cameroon is to bring the parties together to get them to talk. There has not been complete willingness on any side thus far to come to the table.

As you are aware I know, sir, the Swiss have led a process of trying to do that and we have supported and aligned ourselves with that. I think an important thing that we have been doing increasingly in recent weeks is to engage the French at higher levels.

France has a long-standing close relationship with the Government in Yaounde. Secretary Blinken recently raised his concerns, our concerns, about Cameroon with his French counterpart. I think greater French engagement certainly would help. We are hopeful that we can move that forward.

As I mentioned in my testimony also, following on the resolution that the Senate passed, S.R. 684, that talked about the possibility of sanctions, Secretary Blinken announced these visa sanctions, visa restrictions, earlier this week on those who are impeding peace in the Anglophone regions, in particular.

So I think there is a variety of things that we can do and that our international partners can do. But, ultimately, we can help move them all in the best direction we can.

But it will have to be the Cameroonian Government, the parties to the violence, and the Cameroonian people who really commit themselves to finding a peaceful way forward.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Thank you all. I am getting word that another committee I serve on with the attorney general may be wrapping up and I hope to get over there and have a chance to ask him some questions.

So let me thank all of you, again, for your previous service to our country. I look forward to supporting your nominations and, again, thank you for what you do and to your families.

And with that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:46 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Gulf Influence in Somalia

Question. Countries such as the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey are playing an increasing role in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Somalia, though much of their efforts remain bilateral and somewhat opaque. What seems certain, however, is that despite all four of these countries being allies and friends of the United States, their agendas and efforts often do not align with our own.

- What is your assessment of the influence of these actors in the Horn of Africa?

Answer. The Gulf states, particularly the UAE and Qatar, have significant influence in Somalia by virtue of their political, economic, and security engagement.

Our NATO ally Turkey's relationship with Somalia is strong. Turkey has built schools, hospitals, and infrastructure in Somalia. It also provides extensive security assistance focused on the recruitment, training, and equipping of both police and Somali National Army forces.

Question. Are their collective efforts contributing to or taking away from peace and stability in the region?

Answer. The Gulf rift has had a destabilizing impact on Somalia, as Gulf states vied for influence with the Federal Government (FGS) in Mogadishu and Federal Member States (FMS). The dispute distracted the FGS and its FMS from implementing security sector, political, and economic reforms critical to stabilizing the country, including countering the influence of al-Shabaab and ISIS.

Meanwhile, in recent months Turkey joined other countries when the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) issued a joint statement welcoming the May 20 Summit. It did not join statements of concern about President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo's term extension or subsequent violence in Mogadishu, which were issued immediately prior.

Question. If the latter, what is the United States doing to try and bring their efforts more in line with our own?

Answer. The United States repeatedly has urged external actors, including the Gulf states, not to use Somalia as a proxy battleground for bilateral disputes. We hold regular consultations with these governments and demarche them to join us and like-minded partners in seeking political progress and stability in Somalia.

Vision for Somalia

Question. Infighting between Somalia's Federal Member States and the central member states continues to threaten the stability of the country; the United States conducted airstrikes in Somalia against Al Shabab and Al Qaeda for over a decade while Al Shabab continues to carry out major attacks in cities and in the countryside; and Gulf actors compete for influence. Tensions between Ethiopia, Sudan, Eritrea, Kenya, and Somalia threaten the stability of the entire Horn of Africa.

- What are the United States' goals in Somalia in the short, medium, and long term?

- With the grave potential for instability in yet another country in the Horn of Africa, what will be your priorities if confirmed?
- How do you plan to work with Special Envoy Feltman and other Ambassadors in the region to develop a coherent and integrated approach to U.S. policy in the Horn?

Answer. The United States' near- and medium-term objectives in Somalia are to degrade terrorist groups that pose a threat to U.S. persons and interests; strengthen Somalia's security forces so that they can assume greater responsibility from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM); advance political reconciliation and governance reforms necessary for lasting stability; and promote economic growth and opportunity that will reduce Somalia's dependence on U.S. and international assistance, while delivering humanitarian aid to people in need. It is our hope that, over time, these efforts will lead to a peaceful, stable, democratic Somalia that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms and that can provide security and services for its citizens.

If confirmed, I will build on the work of Ambassador Yamamoto to bring to bear the full range of tools to help Somalis defend themselves and rid their country of terrorism. I will support Somalia's completion of a peaceful, inclusive, transparent, and timely electoral process and strengthened cooperation among Somalia's national and federal member state governments. And I will support the work of our development, humanitarian, and economic professionals to provide aid to Somalis in need and to promote inclusive economic growth.

The stabilization of Somalia is an international challenge that requires close coordination with its neighbors and other international stakeholders. I am committed to working closely with our Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Envoy Jeffrey Feltman and our ambassadors in East Africa and in other critical partner capitals to ensure a cohesive and coordinated approach.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ, JR. BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, Somalia was identified as a special case due to ongoing conflict, insecurity, and protracted humanitarian crises. Given the complicated security situation and sustained insurgency by Al-Shabaab across the country, how will you work with the host government and U.S. Government interagency to help Somalia improve efforts of protection, prosecution, and prevention?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. Government's interagency commitment to working with the Somali federal and member state governments to help build the capacity of Somali institutions to prevent trafficking, prosecute those engaged in the illicit activity, and protect victims.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom report, the Somali Government is listed as continuing to discriminate against non-Islamic religions, including Christianity. In addition, Al-Shabaab has committed egregious crimes against those who practice religions other than Islam. What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Office of International Religious Freedom to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. Al-Shabaab's brutal treatment of those whose beliefs differ from their own is appalling. If confirmed, I would condemn Al-Shabaab's ruthless acts and urge that Somalia's laws allow all people to worship in a manner of their choosing. If confirmed, I would engage senior officials in the Federal Government of Somalia, as well as its Federal Member States, to advocate for religious freedom and express concern over actions by authorities against individuals and groups attempting to practice their faith freely. If confirmed, my team will continue to work closely with the Office of International Religious Freedom.

Question. In the 2020 Human Rights Report, Somalia was identified as having committed or baring witness to severe human rights abuses specifically committed by Al-Shabaab.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?
- How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

Answer. Al-Shabaab is the leading perpetrator of human rights violations in Somalia. Working with the Somali Government, AMISOM, and like-minded partners to degrade al-Shabaab militarily and economically while bolstering Somali governance and institutions should reduce their operational space to commit abuses against Somali and foreign nationals.

If confirmed, I would continue to engage with the highest levels of the Somali Government, sub-national authorities, and local communities, members of the diplomatic corps, the U.N., and NGOs to promote respect for human rights for all Somalis.

AMISOM

Question. There is much discussion about AMISOM's mandate in Somalia and potential realignments. If your opinion, what adjustments to AMISOM's mandate are needed to improve its effectiveness?

Answer. AMISOM remains critical to Somalia's stabilization, and its continued presence is necessary to provide time and space to build effective Somali security institutions. The United States supports a smart and deliberate conditions-based transition from AMISOM to Somali security forces. If confirmed, I am committed to working closely with the African Union, AMISOM troop contributors, the U.N., EU, and other international stakeholders to support revisions to AMISOM's mandate to enable it to conduct more effective operations against al-Shabaab, while supporting the development of Somali security forces that can ultimately take over the country's security.

Somaliland

Question. What is your perspective on U.S. policy toward Somaliland? Do you think the U.S. has missed an important opportunity over the last several years to support and engage more fully with a more stable and democratic entity at the behest of Mogadishu?

Answer. The United States recognizes a single Somalia, which includes Somaliland. Given Somalia's federal system, I believe it is in the U.S. interest to maintain positive engagement with Somalia's national and regional government authorities, while also encouraging those authorities to strengthen cooperation with one another. In June 2020, in my capacity as U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti, I attended Djibouti-hosted talks between senior representatives of Somaliland and Somalia. This experience provided insights into the points of view of both sides and where their interests overlap. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing to engage with regional administrations like Somaliland to promote good governance, stability, and economic development, and to explore opportunities to strengthen cooperation.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Violence and Instability in Cameroon and Beyond

Question. U.S. relations with Cameroon have been mostly positive, although they have been adversely affected by concerns over human rights abuses, in particular in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions, and the pace of political and economic liberalization. Cameroon plays a key role in regional stability and remains a regional partner in countering terrorism in the Lake Chad Region.

- Last year, I joined with 19 of my Senate colleagues to sign a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Cameroon, and remain deeply concerned by the ongoing violence there. I am curious as to what you think it will take to conclude and uphold a ceasefire, guaranteed humanitarian access, and establish a process of political dialogue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make resolving the Anglophone crisis my top policy priority. Our position remains that all sides must end violence and engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. The Government is focused on countering armed separatists in the field and maintains that its convening of a Grand National Dialogue in 2019 and decentralization efforts thus far, including regional elections in late 2020 and the establishment of a special status for the two Anglophone regions, address the root causes of the crisis. I believe the Government must do more to resolve the crisis. Specifically, it must be willing to engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. The armed separatist groups, as well, must be willing to engage peacefully in such a dialogue and cease human rights abuses, as called for in the Senate resolution.

If confirmed, I will consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions. We will engage in discussions with other partners on the ground and look for tangible ways to advance peace in Cameroon.

Question. In 2019, the United States took the relatively rare step of terminating Cameroon's AGOA eligibility due to persistent gross violations of human rights. Unfortunately, this does not appear to have impacted the Government's behavior in the ongoing conflict. If confirmed, what other measures do you plan to take to hold state and non-state actors in Cameroon accountable for human rights abuses?

Answer. On June 7, 2021, Secretary Blinken announced that the United States was taking steps to impose visa restrictions on individuals who are believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. This decision reflects the continuing U.S. commitment to advance dialogue and promote respect for human rights. This decision followed cuts in security assistance in recent years, and, as you noted, the determination that Cameroon was ineligible for AGOA starting on January 1, 2020. These actions demonstrate the U.S. Government's resolve to back up words with actions.

If confirmed, I will consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions. We will engage in discussions with other partners on the ground, as well as the Cameroonian Government and people, to identify tangible ways to advance peace in Cameroon.

Question. In addition to the internal violence related to the Anglophone Crisis, Cameroon is also facing threats from Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa. How do we square our support for Cameroon's efforts against Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa with our concerns about human rights abuses and political abuses inside Cameroon? In other words, how can the State Department ensure that President Biya does not use foreign counterterrorism assistance to fund its efforts against Anglophone separatists in the Southwest and Northwest part of the country?

Answer. Cameroon has long played a crucial role in regional stability. With the protracted crisis in the Central African Republic, instability in Nigeria, the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa, and increasing incidents of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Cameroon's role as a partner in securing and maintaining stability in the region is even more important. Since early 2019, we have significantly reduced security assistance because the Government of Cameroon had not taken sufficient action to investigate credible accusations of gross violations of human rights by its security forces or hold the perpetrators accountable. The United States continues to review security assistance on a case-by-case basis so that assistance we provide aligns with U.S. interests, including promotion of respect for human rights. We vet potential recipients of security assistance, consistent with the Leahy laws, and do not provide assistance to Cameroonian security force units where there is credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. U.S.-granted assistance is explicitly prohibited from being used in the Anglophone regions. We have made this prohibition clear at all levels of the Cameroonian Government and we carefully monitor the use of U.S. assistance to ensure this commitment is followed. Risk of misuse or potential diversion to the Anglophone regions are key criteria in our security assistance decision-making.

Since our cuts, the Cameroonian Government has taken some limited steps towards holding security forces accountable, including the conviction of four soldiers for murder in August 2020 and the arrest of soldiers believed to be responsible for one case of extrajudicial killings and one case of alleged torture of a detainee. While we hope these steps indicate a willingness to address the problem, abuses by government forces continue.

Between FY 2019 (the last year for which there is full obligation data) and FY 2020 funding, the State Department has obligated approximately \$8.3 million in assistance to support the Cameroonian military. This funding supported professional military education; technical support for unarmed intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms; small boat training; communications training; and air-to-ground integration training. If confirmed, I would work to ensure that U.S.-provided equipment is not misused by Cameroonian security forces, and would actively and fully address verified reports of such misuse.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. LARRY EDWARD ANDRÉ BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. Ambassador Andre, The U.S. maintains a very modest embassy on the compound of the Mogadishu International Airport, and our diplomats are extremely limited in their ability to leave the airport complex.

What is your perspective on this posture, and what do you believe is its impact on U.S. diplomatic relations with Somalia and our allies?

Answer. If confirmed, the safety of U.S. citizens in Somalia and of U.S. Embassy personnel will be my highest priority. I will work with the Diplomatic Security Service to maximize the ability of our diplomats to advance our goals and interests through engagements throughout Somalia whenever possible through effective risk mitigation and management decisions. I am doing that now in my role as Chargé d'affaires in South Sudan, which can be a dangerous place. I will consider both the security environment in Somalia and specific opportunities to advance the goals assigned to us through an interagency process. I will ensure we remain able to engage effectively with all levels of the Somali Government as well as with our international partners, many of whom are also located on the Mogadishu International Airport compound.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARIA E. BREWER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Ambassador Brewer, as you know, Lesotho has been plagued with political instability since independence in 1966, and no prime minister has served a full term for the past decade.

- In light of Lesotho's recurrent political instability, what are some opportunities that you see for the U.S. to support the development of Lesotho's democratic institutions?

Answer. Promoting democratic governance is at the core of U.S. values and of what we seek to accomplish in Lesotho. Lesotho has a complicated history with several instances of political and armed instability, driven in part by politicians pulling the security services into political disputes and the security sector's inability to remain neutral. In recent years, Embassy Maseru has worked to improve civilian-military relationships, encourage the neutrality of security and law enforcement bodies, and support Lesotho's ongoing efforts to depoliticize its security forces. The mission also collaborates with like-minded partners (including the UK) to advance these goals. Building on existing U.S. Embassy efforts to promote civilian control of Lesotho's military and government accountability, if confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee, the interagency, and the Government of Lesotho to strengthen Lesotho's institutions, to further promote the professionalization of Lesotho's security forces and to foster improved civilian oversight of the military and law enforcement. I will also continue to work with the interagency to identify ways to reinforce Lesotho's ability to meet the needs of its people and build its capacity to be a better partner to us.

Question. Ambassador Brewer, support to the health sector, mainly through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, is a significant element of the U.S./Lesotho bilateral relationship.

- What is your assessment of the importance and effectiveness of U.S. support to combatting HIV/AIDS and other public health emergencies in Lesotho, including the COVID pandemic?

Answer. America's interests at home are strengthened by improving lives globally. Investments in preventing disease and improving public health and nutrition are among our best means to articulate and embody our values, while simultaneously pursuing our national security interests. U.S. support to combat HIV/AIDS and other public health emergencies in Lesotho is important because it is both the right and the smart thing to do. In Lesotho, our PEPFAR investment has seen a remarkable return in terms of lives saved and increased social stability.

Largely because of U.S. support, Lesotho is one of the first PEPFAR countries to achieve the UNAIDS targets for epidemic control; moreover, it has cut its rate of new HIV infections in half since 2016. These historic achievements lay the groundwork for an HIV/AIDS-free generation and are landmarks in PEPFAR's 18-year history.

U.S. health and development investments in Lesotho, including but not limited to PEPFAR, are important and effective, certainly in terms of controlling the HIV/AIDS pandemic, but also in terms of combatting COVID-19, TB and other communicable diseases; confronting health-related issues such as immunizations, clean water, and sanitation; and enhancing health security by preventing, detecting, and responding to infectious disease threats.

If confirmed, I will ensure good stewardship of U.S. taxpayers' investment in health and development in Lesotho. Building on the outstanding success achieved through our previous and existing partnerships with the Government and people of Lesotho, I will also work to secure sustainability and help Lesotho move towards self-reliance in meeting the future needs of its population.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARIA E. BREWER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP), Lesotho was identified as Tier 3 due to lack of significant efforts by the Government to increase prosecution, protection, and prevention. How will you work with the Lesotho Government to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. I understand Lesotho was placed on Tier 3 due to chronic poor progress towards addressing our recommendations and credible allegations of official complicity. The Government of Lesotho has taken many steps to combat trafficking in persons since the release of the 2020 TIP Report. The Government convicted and sentenced the first trafficker in four years; closed key legislative gaps in anti-trafficking laws; criminalized all forms of sex trafficking and outlined stringent penalties; increased its investigations into official complicity; and launched a five-year anti-trafficking national action plan. The Secretary will release the 2021 TIP Report with updated tier rankings and updated prioritized recommendations this summer. If confirmed, I will continue to press for progress on recommendations in the TIP Report.

Question. Given Lesotho's enclosure by South Africa, a Tier 2 country, are there connections to be made with South Africa and the U.S. Embassy there to improve trafficking regionally?

Answer. Trafficking is indeed a regional problem that demands a regional response. If confirmed, I will not only lead our bilateral engagement urging the Government of Lesotho to pursue and punish traffickers and better protect victims, but will also work with the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria to encourage regional solutions and inter-governmental cooperation to combat cross-border trafficking.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom report, Lesotho was identified as partially tolerant of religious freedom. What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Office of International Religious Freedom to bolster religious freedom in-country and expand on the work the U.S. Embassy is currently undertaking to prevent further discrimination of religious minorities?

Answer. As noted in the 2020 International Religious Freedom report, the constitution of Lesotho prohibits religious discrimination and provides for freedom of conscience, thought, and religion, including the freedom to change religion or belief and to manifest and propagate one's religion. Religious leaders of all faiths have told the U.S. Embassy that there is broad religious tolerance among the people of Lesotho.

Some business and government leaders occasionally express distrust of entrepreneurs of South Asian origin, many of whom are Muslim. Nonetheless, the U.S. Embassy is unaware of any act of discrimination targeting Lesotho's Muslims, whether those who have recently immigrated to Lesotho or the longstanding Muslim communities in the north of the country.

If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. Embassy's regular contact with religious, government, business, and civil society leaders to discuss religious freedom and tolerance and the need to be proactive in preventing discrimination against adherents of the country's growing minority religions, particularly Islam.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Human Rights Report, Lesotho was identified as having committed human rights abuses, including using the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown as a façade to stifle freedom of assembly and movement.

If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. Many observers argued that Lesotho's previous administration used the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext to stifle freedoms of peaceful assembly and movement. That was a clear human rights concern, as are ongoing problems such as trafficking in persons, police brutality, and child labor. The United States is also concerned about prolonged pretrial detentions and prison conditions. Some other concerns detailed in the 2020 Human Rights Report include reports of unlawful or arbitrary killings by security forces, arbitrary arrest and detention, and mistreatment while in custody. There are also issues with official corruption, a lack of judicial independence, violence against women, and continued criminalization of consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults.

The mission pushes for greater accountability in cases of police abuse and encourages the Lesotho Mounted Police Service to strengthen its police complaints board, with some success. The mission also works to promote better understanding of community-based policing via training programs at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Botswana. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts as I engage the Government of Lesotho to address concerns detailed in the 2020 Human Rights Report.

Question. How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

Answer. The U.S. Embassy maintains excellent relationships with all of Lesotho's major civil society organizations, who rely on us to act as a voice of conscience both in the public sphere and in our private consultations with the Government. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with Lesotho's community of civil society organizations. I will also encourage them to focus their attentions on the most pressing human rights concerns and will look for synergistic opportunities to cooperate with these groups to advocate for reform, accountability, and protection of human rights.

Question. In your opinion, is Lesotho a potential target for improved U.S. trade and investment? What tools should the U.S. apply in Lesotho to encourage export diversification and investment by American firms?

Answer. Yes. Several economic sectors in Lesotho have growth potential, including water (hydropower and pipeline infrastructure), diamonds, tourism, agriculture, and power generation. The Government has also noted that it seeks to improve transportation and its information technology infrastructure. In 2019, the United States exported about \$1 million in goods to Lesotho, mostly machinery, medical instruments, and aircraft. In the same year, the United States imported around \$325 million in goods, mostly apparel, precious stones, and some machinery.

Lesotho is a long-time beneficiary of trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which has helped create over 45,000 jobs in the textile industry. According to 2019 numbers, AGOA exports accounted for approximately 12% of Lesotho's GDP (\$325 million out of \$2.7 billion). One of the AGOA eligibility requirements is that a country must have established, or make progress towards establishing, a market-based economy. This creates a more-level playing field for U.S. companies and serves as a useful counterweight to actors seeking to influence Lesotho to adopt policies that would be counter to U.S. interests. By creating a more-level playing field for U.S. companies overseas, we contribute to economic prosperity at home, too. Several U.S. brands already manufacture products in Lesotho. If confirmed, I will utilize initiatives such as Prosper Africa to actively seek opportunities to increase reciprocal trade and investment.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARIA E. BREWER BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. Ambassador Brewer, As you know, Lesotho has been plagued with political instability since independence in 1966, and no prime minister has served a full term for the past decade.

- In light of Lesotho's recurrent political instability, what are some opportunities that you see for the U.S. to support the development of Lesotho's democratic institutions?

Answer. Promoting democratic governance is at the core of U.S. values and of what we seek to accomplish in Lesotho. Lesotho has a complicated history with several instances of political and armed instability, driven in part by politicians pulling

the security services into political disputes and the security sector's inability to remain neutral. In recent years, Embassy Maseru has worked to improve civilian-military relationships, encourage the neutrality of security and law enforcement bodies, and support Lesotho's ongoing efforts to depoliticize its security forces. The mission also collaborates with like-minded partners (including the UK) to advance these goals. Building on existing U.S. Embassy efforts to promote civilian control of Lesotho's military and government accountability, if confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee, the interagency, and the Government of Lesotho to strengthen Lesotho's institutions, to further promote the professionalization of Lesotho's security forces and to foster improved civilian oversight of the military and law enforcement. I will also continue to work with the interagency to identify ways to reinforce Lesotho's ability to meet the needs of its people and build its capacity to be a better partner to us.

Question. Ambassador Brewer, Support to the health sector, mainly through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, is a significant element of the U.S./Lesotho bilateral relationship.

What is your assessment of the importance and effectiveness of U.S. support to combatting HIV/AIDS and other public health emergencies in Lesotho, including the COVID pandemic?

Answer. America's interests at home are strengthened by improving lives globally. Investments in preventing disease and improving public health and nutrition are among our best means to articulate and embody our values, while simultaneously pursuing our national security interests. U.S. support to combat HIV/AIDS and other public health emergencies in Lesotho is important because it is both the right and the smart thing to do. In Lesotho, our PEPFAR investment has seen a remarkable return in terms of lives saved and increased social stability.

Largely because of U.S. support, Lesotho is one of the first PEPFAR countries to achieve the UNAIDS targets for epidemic control; moreover, it has cut its rate of new HIV infections in half since 2016. These historic achievements lay the groundwork for an HIV/AIDS-free generation and are landmarks in PEPFAR's 18-year history.

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If confirmed, I will ensure good stewardship of U.S. taxpayers' investment in health and development in Lesotho. Building on the outstanding success achieved through our previous and existing partnerships with the Government and people of Lesotho, I will also work to secure sustainability and help Lesotho move towards self-reliance in meeting the future needs of its population.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TULINABO S. MUSHINGI BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. What role can the United States play in efforts of the Lourenco administration to root out corruption and repatriate stolen assets?

Answer. The Government of Angola needs to continue to improve its public financial management capacity as well as to strengthen accounting, oversight, and auditing capabilities. It should also increase law enforcement and judicial capacity to investigate and prosecute corruption and financial crimes and better coordinate the efforts of public institutions working on the investigations. The Government should also ensure that private sector financial institutions are regularly reporting suspicious transactions to the appropriate authorities for action.

U.S. engagement includes technical assistance for Angola's Financial Intelligence Unit and Ministry of Finance. If confirmed, I would seek to expand cooperation on potential corruption investigations, capacity building in the justice system in constructing corruption cases, and capacity building in the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) reporting mechanisms.

Question. In advance of elections in 2022, what can the U.S. Embassy do to ensure free political expression and the conduct of fair elections?

Answer. The U.S. Government has encouraged the Government of Angola to follow through on its commitment to hold local government elections, which would be

a positive step in the democratization process of Angola, giving people direct representation at the local level of government. If confirmed, I will continue to communicate this message.

Question. If confirmed, how will you ensure that Embassy Luanda exercises proper management and oversight of the U.S. presence in São Tome and Principe?

Answer. If confirmed, with your help, I will work to deepen the U.S. partnership with both Angola and São Tome and Principe. I have experience being accredited as ambassador to two countries concurrently, and will draw on that experience to ensure proper management and oversight of the U.S. presence in São Tome and Principe.

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to support democracy and human rights? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. Promoting democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights has been a central theme throughout my 30-year career at the Department of State. From my early postings to the current one, I have endeavored to share with host country counterparts the U.S. position on human rights and democracy. My strategy has always been to honestly explain our position showing the benefits of respecting human rights and promoting democratic principles, a winning proposition for the host country as well.

I have supported the conduct of peaceful elections, passing laws on inclusive participation in elections, and raising disability awareness. I have advocated against restrictive LGBTQI+ laws, empowered women's participation in elections, given a voice to civil society, and emphasized the importance of a free press.

As Ambassador to Guinea-Bissau, our promotion of free and fair elections with credible and appropriately transparent processes led to the first ever peaceful transition of power between two civilian presidents in the history of the country.

During my tenure as Ambassador in Burkina Faso, I advised against a proposed constitutional amendment to presidential term limits, designed to extend the time in office of an already long-term sitting president. Additionally, I pushed the Government of Transition of Burkina Faso for timely elections during a sensitive time when some voices were considering a delay. Finally, following the free and fair presidential election, Burkina Faso and its people witnessed the first ever peaceful transition of power from one civilian government to another. Previously, in Mozambique I participated as an international observer in the country's first-ever democratic elections and worked closely with the rest of the Embassy team to empower the Mozambican people as they freely elected their leaders.

As the Deputy Chief of Mission in Ethiopia from 2009-2011, I encouraged the Ethiopian Government to allow civil society and opposition political parties to operate freely. Our Embassy efforts helped provide a path for opposition parties in Ethiopia to publicize their platforms, thus allowing a broader range of Ethiopian citizens to have a voice in their government, resulting in an increase in voter registration and participation.

Based on my dedication to promote and support respect for human rights and democracy during my career, I am honored to have been selected for the AFSA's Mark Palmer Award for the Advancement of Democracy in 2017. This award is given to members of the Foreign Service, by their peers, for the promotion of U.S. policies focused on advancing democracy, freedom and governance through bold, exemplary, imaginative and effective efforts during one or more assignments.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Angola and São Tome and Principe? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Angola has made tangible progress towards transparency and good governance, while initiating the fight against corruption and promoting accountability for human rights violations and abuses. However, the legacy of corruption, lack of capacity and weak institutions are the biggest challenges, along with the need for increased professionalism in law enforcement. Civil society, press freedoms and political competition exist in Angola, but would benefit from further strengthening.

São Tome and Principe (STP) has a small land footprint but a large and strategically important maritime domain in the Gulf of Guinea shipping lanes. Enhancing the country's ability to monitor its waters and share information on maritime activity and piracy is a key component to improve regional security. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage São Tome's support for democracy, human rights, and rule of law and to support its development efforts.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Angola and in São Tome and Principe? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. The Government of Angola has made significant improvements on human rights-related issues over the last few years, and if confirmed, I will continue to engage with Angolan Government officials to support progress in this area. I will work to ensure the United States and Angola hold a human rights dialogue in 2021, which will give the United States an opportunity to assess progress and press on remaining human rights and democracy issues. Finally, the United States has encouraged the Government of Angola to follow through on its commitment to hold local government elections in 2022, which would be a positive step in the democratization process of Angola, giving people direct representation at the local level of government and if confirmed, I will continue to encourage the Government to prioritize forward progress in this area.

São Tome and Principe has a long record of good governance and support for democracy and human rights, and if confirmed, I will work with its government to encourage and support these priorities.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. U.S. Government assistance to Angola currently advances democracy and governance through several avenues, including by providing assistance to advance electoral reforms, enhance fiscal transparency and accountability, and promote increased participation by women in the political process. Additionally, the United States supports the introduction and expansion of good governance within financial administration and service delivery systems, which bolsters transparency, citizen participation, and accountability within planning and financial management processes. If confirmed, I will continue to engage within the Department and with inter-agency partners to support the establishment and continuation of complementary and expanded programs that advance U.S. interests in Angola and São Tome and Principe. I also will emphasize the importance of making continual progress on democracy and governance as an element of both countries' AGOA eligibility.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Angola and in São Tome and Principe? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. Human rights NGOs—local, regional, and international—are active in both Angola and São Tome and Principe. Civil society organizations, regardless of where they are registered or where they operate, can be critical allies in advancing democratic governance, expanding respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and assisting the United States to strengthen its bilateral and multilateral relationships. If confirmed, I am committed to engaging broadly to help advance these objectives. I will leverage our strong relationships in Angola and in São Tome and Principe to communicate privately or publicly (as the situation dictates) to proactively address efforts to restrict or penalize civil society through legal or regulatory measures.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties, and I will advocate openly in support of access and inclusivity for all individuals in Angola and in São Tome and Principe, including women, minorities, and youth. If confirmed, I will work with the host governments, civil society, and like-minded missions to encourage genuine political competition. I will emphasize the importance of promoting diverse viewpoints and supporting an open arena for peaceful, good faith discussions of political differences.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Angola and São Tome and Principe on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in both Angola and São Tome and Principe?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with media practitioners, like-minded missions, civil society, government, and international partners to underscore the importance of an independent, professional, and open media to a free and democratic society. I will seek resources to continue support to Angola and São Tome and Principe's media, including professional exchanges, targeted training programs, and seminars to educate journalists and media stakeholders about their rights. Angolan and São Tomean journalists have participated in U.S. Government-sponsored professional exchange programs on investigative reporting, safeguarding freedom of expression, and the media's role in strengthening democratic institutions.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. If confirmed, I will engage with civil society and government actors on countering disinformation and malign propaganda by foreign state and non-state actors. I also will commit to working with like-minded partners in Angola and in São Tome and Principe to counter disinformation and malign propaganda campaigns.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Angola and São Tome and Principe on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. The United States has a long and proud tradition of supporting the rights of workers, including to form labor organizations, internationally. If confirmed, I will commit to engage with unions, relevant government offices, and the private sector to support labor rights.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Angola and São Tome and Principe, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will strive to defend the human rights and dignity of all individuals in Angola and São Tome and Principe, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Question. What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Angola and in São Tome and Principe?

Answer. President Lourenço has expanded legal protections for LGBTQI+ persons since he was elected, including decriminalization of homosexuality. However, LGBTQI+ persons in Angola tell us culturally they face resistance in being accepted, even at the family level. While not criminalized, homosexuality is stigmatized in São Tome and Principe. Members of the LGBTQI+ community can face ostracism and violence.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Angola and São Tome and Principe?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to defend the human rights and dignity of all individuals in Angola, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity. I will seek ways to expand Embassy support for the efforts of LGBTQI+ NGOs in Angola, including through advocacy, leadership development opportunities, and programmatic support. Similarly, I will reach out to the LGBTQI+ community in São Tome and Principe to respond to its concerns.

Question. Will you commit, if confirmed, to ensuring that you fully brief Members of Congress and/or their staff each time you are in Washington for visits or consultations during your tenure as Ambassador to Angola and São Tome and Principe?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit, in coordination with the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, to appropriately respond to requests for briefings and information by this committee.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TULINABO S. MUSHINGI BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Strengthening Angola and the Region

Question. After decades of corrupt and authoritarian rule under former President dos Santos, Angola has undergone a remarkable transition since President Lourenço came to power in 2017. Under Lourenço, Angola has undertaken an economic and political reform agenda that aligns with U.S. interests and presents a unique opportunity to develop a mutually beneficial partnership.

- Four years into President Lourenço's term, Angola appears headed in the right direction with a growing economy, tangible efforts at political reform, and a focus on combatting corruption. What can the United States do to help Angola as it seeks to diversify its economy, improve governance, and continue combatting corruption?

Answer. Angola still faces many challenges in the form of high debt, a legacy of corruption, lack of capacity, and weak institutions, along with the need for increased professionalism in law enforcement. Civil society, press freedoms and political competition exist in Angola, but would benefit from further strengthening. If confirmed, I will continue to press for political and economic reforms, support the fight against corruption, and buttress Angola's development efforts. Opportunities exist for the U.S. Government to continue providing technical assistance and to cooperate further on potential corruption investigations, and on capacity building in the justice system in constructing corruption cases. As Angola explores options to diversify its economy and to create an environment more welcoming to investors, I will seek to foster continued U.S. investment if confirmed.

Question. Angola has a reasonably strong military, and recently played a helpful role in mediating conflict between Uganda and Rwanda. Is Angola prepared to take more of a leadership role in the region? Do you see potential for Angola increasing its participation in peacekeeping or other stability operations on the continent?

Answer. I understand that under President Lourenço, Angola has systematically raised its level of active participation in international organizations such as the African Union (AU), the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), successfully proposing candidates for leadership roles. Using these leadership roles, Angola has shown a willingness to be at the forefront of resolving some of the continent's most difficult crises, including its current role in encouraging stability in the Central African Republic and Chad.

Angola also recently enacted legislation which provides the structure for its military to be deployed in peacekeeping operations. The United States can better engage Angola to serve as a constructive voice in Southern and Central Africa by consulting with the Angolan Government in Luanda and in Washington, exchanging views and encouraging mutually beneficial courses of action.

Question. Despite Angola's vast natural resource reserves and economic reforms that have pleased international financial institutions, much of the country still lives in poverty and remains in need of assistance? How can the United States help ensure that Angola's wealth and opportunity reach all corners of the country?

Answer. U.S. Government assistance programs in health and landmine clearance improve the health and living conditions for Angolans throughout the country. Our programs stress capacity building within the Angolan Government and reinforce the need to address the issues of all Angolans. In addition, multiple small grant programs target economic development throughout the country. If confirmed, I will continue to engage within the U.S. Government to support the establishment and continuation of complementary and expanded programs that advance U.S. interests in Angola.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TULINABO S. MUSHINGI BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

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Question. After decades of corrupt and authoritarian rule under former President dos Santos, Angola has undergone a remarkable transition since President Lourenço came to power in 2017. Under Lourenço, Angola has undertaken an economic and political reform agenda that aligns with U.S. interests and presents a unique opportunity to develop a mutually beneficial partnership.

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petition exist in Angola, but would benefit from further strengthening. If confirmed, I will continue to press for political and economic reforms, support the fight against corruption, and buttress Angola's development efforts. Opportunities exist for the U.S. Government to continue providing technical assistance and to cooperate further on potential corruption investigations, and on capacity building in the justice system in constructing corruption cases. As Angola explores options to diversify its economy and to create an environment more welcoming to investors, I will seek to foster continued U.S. investment if confirmed.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TULINABO S. MUSHINGI BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. Ambassador Mushingi, the election of a new president in Angola in 2017 provided a clear opportunity for the U.S. to support political and economic reforms, including in the areas of anti-corruption and human rights. While the Angolan administration continues to make progress, there continues to be limited U.S.-support for Angola in the democracy and governance space.

- What opportunities do you see for U.S. engagement and assistance in this space?

Answer. The Government of Angola needs to continue to improve its public financial management capacity as well as to strengthen accounting, oversight, and auditing capabilities. It should also increase law enforcement and judicial capacity to investigate and prosecute corruption and financial crimes and better coordinate the efforts of public institutions working on the investigations. The Government should also ensure that private sector financial institutions are regularly reporting suspicious transactions to the appropriate authorities for action.

U.S. engagement in this space will include technical assistance for Angola's Financial Intelligence Unit and Ministry of Finance. Additional opportunities exist for the USG to cooperate further on potential corruption investigations and possible sanctions, capacity building in the justice system in constructing corruption cases/prosecutions in international courts, and capacity building in the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) reporting mechanisms.

The Government of Angola has made significant improvements on human rights-related issues over the last few years, and if confirmed, I and the Embassy will con-

tinue to engage with Angolan Government officials to support progress in this area. In 2020, the United States and Angola held their third ministerial level dialogue on human rights, discussing the need for respect for freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression as well as the continued need for training of law enforcement, which the U.S. will continue to support, consistent with Leahy law and Department policy. I understand the United States and Angola are planning the 2021 human rights dialogue, which will give the U.S. an opportunity to assess progress and press on any remaining issues. Finally, Post has encouraged the Government of Angola to follow through on its commitment to hold local government elections, which would be a positive step in the democratization process of Angola, giving people direct representation at the local level of government.

Question. Ambassador Mushingi, China's presence looms large in Angola. Angola is one of China's largest borrowers in Africa, with more than \$20 billion in outstanding debt to some Chinese entities.

- How can the United States help Angola to begin chipping away at that debt and the restraint put on Angola's economy and political system by China?

Answer. As a key condition of its IMF program, Angola cannot hold new oil collateralized debt. The United States supports the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) agreed to by the G-20 which has suspended official bilateral debt payments for 40 countries including Angola since May 2020. Rolling back dependency on oil will require significant investment in other economic sectors to stimulate growth. The Embassy has leveraged U.S. interagency technical assistance and high-level messaging to support Angola's anti-corruption campaign and economic reforms, especially ongoing efforts to improve transparency and compliance in the financial sector. An improved environment will make U.S. firms more competitive in Angola. I understand that the Embassy has successfully advocated for U.S. investors to break into sectors long dominated by Chinese companies, such as telecommunications. President Lourenço lobbied U.S. private sector representatives in a December 2020 virtual roundtable to invest in Angola, demonstrating the high-level desire to attract U.S. investment in various sectors. If confirmed, I will lead the Embassy to continue reporting on opportunities for American companies and advocate for them to compete for tenders and other investment opportunities as the Angolan economy diversifies. Programs such as the DFC and Prosper Africa will also help target alternatives to Chinese investment and commercial interests.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ELIZABETH MOORE AUBIN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, Algeria was identified as Tier 3 due to lack of significant efforts to combat human trafficking in the reporting period. The Government made little to no attempts to improve resources for victims, including punishing victims for crimes their traffickers forced them to commit. What steps would you take as Ambassador, if confirmed, to engage with the host government and civil society organizations on bolstering efforts to improve prosecution and protection efforts?

Answer. If confirmed, improving Algeria's efforts to combat human trafficking will be one of my highest priorities. The Embassy is already working with the Algerian Government to improve its efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers and proactively identify and assist trafficking victims, including by offering technical support. If confirmed, I will urge Algerian officials to pass a standalone Trafficking in Persons (TIP) law this year to bring their legal framework in line with international commitments and to formalize their victim referral mechanism. We will continue to support Algerian efforts to raise awareness of TIP in the law enforcement community, including through trainings for prosecutors and judges.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom Report and the 2021 U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report, the U.S. identified Algeria as having poor religious freedom conditions, with the Government continuing its repression of Christian and minority Muslim communities. What is your assessment of this particular issue and if confirmed, how will you work with the Office of International Religious Freedom to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. Government-led persecution of marginalized minorities, including Christian and minority Muslim and non-Muslim religious groups, continues to be a significant issue in Algeria. Our Embassy is in regular contact with a wide variety of

religious leaders in Algeria and maintains an active dialogue with the Algerian Government on religious freedom issues. The United States Government has publicly and privately stressed the importance of religious tolerance and the equal and transparent application of the laws governing religious organizations. If confirmed, I will raise issues of religious persecution identified by the Office of International Religious Freedom with the Algerian Government and encourage embassy reporting on specific cases.

Question. Algeria was subsequently designated as a Special Watch List country by USCIRF for its actions to systematically repress religious minorities. If confirmed, will you suggest Algeria for the State Department's Special Watch List for engaging and tolerating severe violations of religious freedom?

Answer. USCIRF's Special Watch List (SWL) functions as a warning to avoid possible Country of Particular Concern (CPC) designation by the Department of State. For countries designated as CPCs, the International Religious Freedom Act provides the Secretary of State with a range of policy options to address serious violations of religious freedom. The SWL applies to countries that we deem to have engaged in or tolerated severe violations of religious freedom, but that do not meet all of the CPC criteria. If confirmed, I will prioritize the promotion of religious tolerance and impress upon the Algerian Government the seriousness of the potentiality of a SWL or CPC designation, and actions that could be taken now to preclude these designations.

Question. If confirmed, will you encourage embassy officials to attend public country proceedings on church closures to emphasize USG concern regarding this issue?

Answer. The Algerian Government continues to use COVID-19 restrictions and the status of churches as un-registered associations to justify closures. If confirmed, I will encourage embassy officials to attend public proceedings on church closures, as appropriate, to emphasize U.S. Government concern regarding this issue and to urge the Algerian Government to allow the legalization of religious minority groups by approving their requests to be registered associations.

Question. The constitutional referendum passed in November indicates a further erosion of religious freedom conditions in country. Please describe your potential engagement with the Algerian Government regarding this referendum.

Answer. The Algerian constitution provides for freedom of worship, but religious minorities continue to face difficulty registering as legally recognized organizations. Though the new constitution allows for the creation of a religious organization by declaration, the Government needs to amend the 2012 Law of Associations to implement this change. The State Department's Annual Human Rights and Religious Freedom Reports for Algeria cite this need and, if confirmed, I will continue to advocate for religious freedom.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Human Rights Report, Algeria was identified as having committed severe human rights abuses, including government sanctioned attacks on freedom of assembly for protestors in early 2020. If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. If confirmed, I will prioritize the promotion of human rights and impress upon Algerian leaders the importance of these issues. The annual Human Rights Report regularly garners press attention and is studied carefully in Algeria. If confirmed, I commit to continuing my predecessors' tradition of meeting with human rights, civil society, and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and in Algeria to support their efforts on advancing human rights. Our embassy is in regular contact with human rights activists and journalists in Algeria and maintains an active dialogue with the Algerian Government on human rights issues.

Question. How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

Answer. If confirmed, I will direct my embassy to maintain contact with civil society organizations in Algeria to support civil society development. Funding for the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and other civil society assistance programs will empower nascent civil society in Algeria, building capacity to better represent citizens' interests and hold the Government accountable. If confirmed, I will also urge the Algerian Government to issue an updated NGO law to ease restrictions on registering and operating civil society organizations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. ELIZABETH MOORE AUBIN BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. During the last two years we have seen significant political events in Algeria. These include a mass leaderless protest movement, a contentious election resulting in a successor to the long serving former president and a new constitution. What are your thoughts about how the events of the past two years have affected the U.S.-Algeria partnership and what opportunities do you think it creates for the U.S.?

Answer. The U.S.-Algeria bilateral relationship has remained strong through the momentous events of the last two years. Algeria has taken steps towards political and economic reform and the United States will continue to support efforts that expand observance of human rights, including freedoms of expression and association. We will also work to facilitate U.S. investment opportunities to deliver economic benefits to the American and the Algerian people. If confirmed, I will also promote the embassy's entrepreneurship programs for youth and women as well as pursue a grant-funded project to expand English language instruction in Algeria to better prepare Algerians for professional and commercial opportunities at home and abroad.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO EUGENE S. YOUNG BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, Republic of the Congo was upgraded to Tier 2 due to increased efforts to eliminate trafficking, but the Government still lacks adequate resources to screen vulnerable populations and lacks a national action plan and clear understanding of anti-tracking laws. How will you work with the host government and local civil society organizations to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. As you note, the Congolese Government has shown the political will to address trafficking issues. The Government has drafted a national action plan against Trafficking in Persons but has yet to ratify it. The Congolese successfully prosecuted seven human traffickers and successfully repatriated eight victims in the past year. If confirmed, I will continue the positive work begun under my predecessor. My team and I will use the resources available from the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons to help train and equip the Congolese police, judiciary, and legislators, as well as support the NGOs on the ground doing the heroic day-to-day work of identifying trafficking victims and their traffickers.

Question. The U.S. Embassy is actively engaging with government officials and organizations on religious freedom issues, including supporting virtual events with religious leaders and youths. How will you, if confirmed, continue this work and bolster efforts already underway?

Answer. One of the major components of Congo's stability is the ability of different religious groups to coordinate and work together to promote civil society and meet the needs of the Congolese people. This collaboration dates all the way back to the 1960s at the formation of Congo as an independent country. If confirmed, I will continue our Embassy team's efforts to bring together religious organizations, international partners, private businesses, and members of the Government to ensure international religious freedom continues to be a priority of our bilateral relationship.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Human Rights Report, the Republic of the Congo was identified as having committed human rights abuses, notably that political activists and civil society members, including human rights defenders, continued to face intimidation, harassment and arbitrary detention by the Government or other state actors.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?
- How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

Answer. I share your concern about these developments and the treatment of journalists and human rights activists in the Republic of the Congo. This concern is something repeatedly conveyed by our staff at Embassy Brazzaville to the highest

levels of the Government. This focus on human rights is a practice that I will continue if confirmed.

While Congo's human rights record is far from clean, we have seen some progress. Congolese peacekeeping troops who were accused of human rights violations while in CAR in 2016 did face consequences, and our ongoing training with the Congo military educates troops about human rights protections. If confirmed I would work alongside civil society organizations to bring increased attention to human rights violations and abuses and to offer what we can in terms of training programs and other resources to promote respect for human rights.

Question. As U.S. Ambassador, how will you engage with the international financial institutions, including the IMF, in the Republic of Congo over their engagement with the Sassou Nguesso administration despite significant corruption and lack of transparency in finances and debts?

Answer. Across Africa our goal is to increase debt transparency. Debt transparency is vital for maintaining debt sustainability, facilitating resolutions when necessary, and minimizing corruption. The Republic of Congo is in debt distress in part due to non-transparent Chinese lending. We can't always stop governments from excessive and corrupt borrowing, but setting the standard of transparency makes it harder to borrow corruptly and unsustainably. In fora such as the IMF where we can better control the terms of loan and financial programs, if confirmed, I will seek to engage in the process to insist on the inclusion of transparency measures.

Question. The Congo River Basin is one of the major focuses of U.S. supported conservation and environment programming, including through the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE). How can the U.S. better engage with the Republic of Congo these efforts?

Answer. Our embassy in Brazzaville has been hard at work ramping up our environmental cooperation with the Congolese. Thanks to the team's efforts, Congo's Minister of Tourism and Environment was the first African to speak at the international round table discussion before the recent Leaders' Summit on Climate. Our embassy is also working with the Congolese to develop side events focusing on the Congo rainforest for the upcoming COP 26 conference. Finally, a new USAID position in Brazzaville is set to come online later this summer. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts to engage Congo on this important area of bilateral cooperation.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO EUGENE S. YOUNG BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. As you know, Congo's president is one of Africa's longest serving leaders with power vested in him and a network of family and associates. One result has been prolific corruption in the oil sector. I'm curious about your thoughts on what tools you think you would employ as U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Congo to encourage anti-corruption and democratic development in one of the most kleptocratic and closed political and civic environments in Africa?

Answer. Corruption inhibits economic and democratic development and runs counter to American values. It damages trade, guts institutions, and destroys citizens' confidence in their government. Recent calls for more American investment in Congo to counter malign influence show me the Congolese people want to address this problem as well. If confirmed, I will push hard for that investment, and the transparency and fair dealing it brings. In addition, I will work with international partners such as the World Bank and IMF to increase transparency in Congo's borrowing, procurement, and financial systems.

Question. Congo has seen a rapid accumulation of debt over the past decade—much of it owed to China. Given this increase in China's influence, what opportunities do you think there are for us to increase our engagement with the Republic of Congo, both to support development in line with American values and to counter China's role in the country?

Answer. China's investment in the Republic of Congo is considerable. Chinese debt of over \$4 billion risks permanent damage to Congo's future growth. However, there are important strengths in the U.S.-Congolese relationship that we can focus and build on to help counter Chinese influence. America's continued appeal as a country of ideas, future trends, and freedom resonates with the Congolese, especially the youth. Drawing a distinction with China by highlighting and dem-

onstrating America's strengths is our best way of countering China's influence over the long term. Our areas of collaboration with the Government of Congo include environmental protection, human rights, and health development, among many others. These are areas where we believe the United States can do the most good for the American and Congolese people.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Politics and Economy

Question. How do you intend to capitalize on the heightened attention Secretary Blinken and recent sanctions have brought to the Anglophone crisis, and how will you advance engagement with the French to work toward a peaceful resolution?

Answer. The Secretary's decision to impose visa restrictions on those involved in undermining peace in Cameroon reflects the U.S. commitment to advance dialogue to peacefully resolve the Anglophone crisis and support respect for human rights. This decision followed cuts in security assistance in recent years and the determination that Cameroon was ineligible for AGOA starting on January 1, 2020. These actions demonstrate the U.S. Government's resolve to back up words with actions. The United States will continue to consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions.

We continue to engage other UN member states, particularly the French, in bilateral and multilateral fora and at all levels on the importance of rule of law and ending impunity in Cameroon and to explore ways we can work together to move towards a resolution of the violence in the Northwest and Southwest Regions. If confirmed, I will make resolving the Anglophone crisis my top policy priority and will engage in discussions with France and other partners on the ground and look for tangible ways to advance peace in Cameroon.

Question. What have been the impacts on Cameroon's economy and U.S.-Cameroon commercial ties of the termination of Cameroon's AGOA eligibility, and how would you seek to expand and protect U.S. commercial interests there?

Answer. Cameroon was found ineligible for AGOA in 2019 and lost AGOA benefits starting on January 1, 2020 under the criterion that excludes countries that engage in gross violations of internationally recognized human rights. Cameroon can regain AGOA eligibility by preventing such violations, by strengthening human rights protections in the law, and by impartially and transparently investigating reports of such violations and holding accountable those responsible.

In 2018, Cameroon exported roughly \$220 million in goods and services to the United States; of that figure, \$63 million was exported under AGOA, over 90 percent of which was crude petroleum. The United States will continue to pursue robust and diverse commercial ties, deploying other tools at our disposal toward realizing the enormous potential of this relationship for our mutual prosperity and economic growth. More than any government program, however, the entrepreneurial initiative of Cameroonian and American businesses and a business climate that helps them flourish will be the key to stronger commercial ties between the United States and Cameroon. If confirmed, I will urge the Government to take tangible steps to improve the business climate, advocate on behalf of U.S. companies, and direct our embassy to continue to look for opportunities to expand commercial ties, using all the tools and resources that we have at our disposal.

Question. It was recently reported that most of a \$335 million loan to fight COVID-19 from the IMF could not be accounted for. How will you address endemic corruption and work to increase transparency and accountability of the Government of Cameroon?

Answer. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the challenges in the fight against corruption in Cameroon. The United States is concerned about allegations about misuse of funding aimed at helping Cameroon respond to the pandemic. The Embassy provides financial and technical support to the fight against corruption. The Department of Treasury's Office of Technical Assistance assists the Ministry of Finance, specifically the Taxation Directorate, to identify and manage compliance and institutional risks and facilitate the efficacy of internal audit and employee anti-corruption investigations. Another transparency and good governance activity is the Fiscal Transparency Innovation Fund (FTIF). In 2018, the Department of State, through the FTIF, granted \$276,500 to a financial auditing firm to train financial

practitioners in the public and public sector on modern financial reporting norms and develop a plan for the adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards.

If confirmed, I would continue to explore opportunities like these to address endemic corruption in Cameroon and engage other diplomatic and international missions with a view to leveraging our resources and voices to advocate for change. I would also urge the Government to take meaningful steps to hold those complicit in corrupt practices accountable, change institutional practices that facilitate corruption, and do so transparently to help restore public faith in governance practices.

COVID-19

Question. How has COVID-19 impacted our health programs, and how do you intend to leverage U.S. Government bilateral global health program platforms to help the people of Cameroon respond to and address the impacts?

Answer. Cameroon has made significant efforts in managing the COVID-19 outbreak, despite challenges around national coordination, resurgence of cases fueled by limited adherence by the general population to mitigation measures, and concerns about mismanagement of COVID-19 funds. The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted routine immunizations and service delivery across Cameroon's health sector, but we continue to support recovery of health systems and sustain gains made through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the Global Health Security Agenda, the President's Malaria Initiative, and other global health programs.

Across U.S. agencies present in the health sector, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of Defense (DOD), and Peace Corps, we have invested over \$600 million since 2010 to strengthen the health system and fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other diseases, including COVID-19. U.S. public health experts have worked hand-in-hand with Cameroonian officials on COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts, helping to build capacity for emergency management, surveillance, laboratory testing, case management, and infection prevention and control. If confirmed, I will ensure that health diplomacy remains a priority. I will encourage the Government of Cameroon to increase spending on health, support efforts to improve accountability in the provision of health care nationwide and continue to work towards reaching epidemic control of HIV/AIDS within the next two years.

Democracy & Human Rights

Question. What are the most important actions you have taken in your career to date to support democracy and human rights? What has been the impact of your actions?

Answer. I have spent most of my career as a consular officer, focused on the protection of U.S. citizens and the application and enforcement of U.S. immigration law. I also served as an election observer in both Cameroon (1992) and the Central African Republic (1993), and I worked to improve prison conditions in the Dominican Republic (2002-05). In Ghana, where I was Deputy Chief of Mission (2018-21), we dedicated significant effort to combatting child labor in the fishing and cocoa sectors, addressing trafficking in persons, and promoting respect for the human rights of all individuals in Ghana. Through our DOJ Resident Legal Adviser, we also worked with the Ghanaian Ministry of Justice and court system to implement reforms on pre-trial detention, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and strengthening the public defender corps, all of which gave Ghanaians greater and more equitable access to justice.

Question. What issues are the most pressing challenges to democracy or democratic development in Cameroon? These challenges might include obstacles to participatory and accountable governance and institutions, rule of law, authentic political competition, civil society, human rights and press freedom. Please be as specific as possible.

Answer. Many Cameroonians and outsiders perceive poor governance to be the root of most problems in the country. They view the bureaucracy as slow-moving and suffering from internal competition, cite corruption as an endemic problem, and point to the ongoing investigation into the alleged misused of funds aimed at helping Cameroon to combat the COVID-19 pandemic as a tangible example of the issue. There are also concerns about the lack of space for political opposition leaders, human rights defenders, journalists, and others to operate in if they espouse views that run counter to the Cameroonian Government's views and policies. Cameroonians are also frustrated with lapses or failure of delivery of public services, deteriorating infrastructure, poverty, and lack of progress on decentralization. They hope that the Government will address the root causes of extremism in the

Far North and those that led to the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest Regions, and address allegations of human rights violations and abuses by security forces.

Question. What steps will you take—if confirmed—to support democracy in Cameroon? What do you hope to accomplish through these actions? What are the potential impediments to addressing the specific obstacles you have identified?

Answer. Building the capacity of civil society to promote respect for human rights and democracy is a top priority for our mission in Cameroon. The United States provides funding to local organizations focused on supporting dialogue and peace initiatives related to the crisis in Anglophone regions, strengthening the rule of law, improving the legislative process, promoting access to justice, enhancing anti-trafficking efforts, monitoring elections, and promoting civil engagement and human rights.

Civil society actors focused on the protection of human rights and the promotion of democracy and good governance operate in a difficult political environment. They often face consistent harassment and arrests for exercising their oversight role and exposing human rights violations and abuses committed by the Government.

If confirmed, I will continue to advance opportunities to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations and amplify their voices, encourage the Government to collaborate with these organizations for the betterment of Cameroon, and ensure that we coordinate our efforts with diplomatic and international missions. Strengthening civil society will allow them to better advocate for change to improve the lives of ordinary Cameroonians.

Question. How will you utilize U.S. Government assistance resources at your disposal, including the Democracy Commission Small Grants program and other sources of State Department and USAID funding, to support democracy and governance, and what will you prioritize in processes to administer such assistance?

Answer. Supporting democracy and governance is a priority for our mission in Cameroon. Through a \$550,000 grant from the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, we conducted programming from August 2019 through December 2020 that sought to strengthen civil society's capacity to support dialogue and peace initiatives related to the crisis in Anglophone regions. Each year, we support organizations with an estimated \$400,000 through Africa Regional Democracy funding, with projects focused on strengthening the rule of law, improving the legislative process, promoting access to justice, enhancing anti-trafficking efforts, monitoring elections, and promoting civil engagement. We use Ambassador's Special Self-Help Funds, approximately \$75,000 each year, to support grassroots community organizations to find local solutions to basic problems.

In 2019, USAID launched for the first time the Civil Society Sustainability Index (CSO SI) in Cameroon. The CSO SI assesses the capacity of civil society to serve as both a short-term partner in implementing development solutions and a long-term actor in ensuring that development outcomes are sustained. To further bolster the capacity of the civil society sector, USAID designed a new Civil Society Strengthening and Community Resilience program. The anticipated program will primarily focus on strengthening civil society capacity to deliver services and promote citizen engagement.

If confirmed, I will continue these efforts to bolster Cameroon's civil society capacity, exploring all potential funding options that could help us achieve this objective. I will also assess what additional resources we can tap and programs we can undertake to advance democracy.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the U.S. and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Cameroon? What steps will you take to pro-actively address efforts to restrict or penalize NGOs and civil society via legal or regulatory measures?

Answer. The promotion of respect for human rights is a central pillar in our relations with Cameroon. If confirmed, I will continue and strengthen the relationships built by the mission and the Department of State more broadly with civil society members, human rights and other non-governmental organizations in the United States and with local human rights NGOs, and other members of civil society in Cameroon. I will continue to advance opportunities to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations and amplify their voices, encourage the Government to collaborate with these organizations for the betterment of Cameroon, and ensure that we coordinate our efforts with diplomatic and international missions.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to meet with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties? What steps will you take to encourage genuine

political competition? Will you advocate for access and inclusivity for women, minorities and youth within political parties?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to continue and strengthen the relationships our mission has built with democratically oriented political opposition figures and parties. I will strive to support the efforts of these figures and parties to develop a more inclusive political environment in Cameroon, including their efforts to advance electoral reform. I will urge the Government to ensure the freedoms of association and peaceful assembly for all political actors, even those who do not agree with the Government. Through public statements, small grants and other programming, and direct engagements, I will advocate for a political environment that is inclusive of women, youth, minorities, and Cameroonians who might otherwise be marginalized.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with Cameroon on freedom of the press and address any government efforts designed to control or undermine press freedom through legal, regulatory or other measures? Will you commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Cameroon?

Answer. If confirmed, I will actively engage with Cameroon on press freedom issues. I will call on the Government to prevent and stop the harassment and arrests of journalists whose reporting is critical of the Cameroonian Government's policies, which has a negative impact on press freedom. I will also underscore the need for the Government to be transparent as doing so would make independent media outlets better positioned to share accurate information with ordinary Cameroonians. We will also continue to prioritize providing training and other capacity building opportunities for journalists. If confirmed, I will commit to meeting regularly with independent, local press in Cameroon.

Question. Will you and your embassy team actively engage with civil society and government counterparts on countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue and, as appropriate, expand upon the Embassy's ongoing engagements with civil society and government counterparts to promote the importance of countering disinformation and propaganda disseminated by foreign state or non-state actors in the country.

Question. Will you and your embassy teams actively engage with Cameroon on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will commit to actively engage with Cameroon on the right of labor groups to organize, including for independent trade unions, and call out incidents when this right is restricted.

Question. Will you commit to using your position, if confirmed, to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Cameroon, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer. Promoting human rights and democracy is a priority for our mission in Cameroon. If confirmed, I will use all diplomatic tools at my disposal to defend the human rights and dignity of all people in Cameroon, no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Question. What challenges do the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people face in Cameroon?

Answer. Cameroonian society is conservative, with many Cameroonians vehemently opposed to the idea that basic civil, legal, and human rights extend to Cameroon's LGBTQI+ citizens. The constitution provides for equal rights for all citizens, but Cameroonian laws do not explicitly prohibit discrimination against LGBTQI+ persons in housing, employment, and access to government services such as health care. Since 2020, there has been an uptick in arrests of LGBTQI+ individuals. The overwhelming majority of these cases do not meet basic due process standards. Defendants have been accused and convicted based on their manner of walking or appearance, as well as unsubstantiated rumors. The recent sentencing of two transgender women to five years in prison for "attempted homosexuality" highlights the threats and stigma LGBTQI+ Cameroonians face.

Question. What specifically will you commit to do to help LGBTQ people in Cameroon?

Answer. Promoting the basic human rights of LGBTQI+ people is a challenging endeavor in a society as conservative as Cameroon. It is, however, a priority of the Biden-Harris administration, and, if confirmed, I commit to carrying out the President's mandate. It is critically important that we remain aware and take account of the local context in carrying out this mandate. As I saw most recently in Ghana,

the embassy's overriding principle must always be "First, Do No Harm." Even as we have the best intentions, we must not inadvertently make the situation worse. For instance, it may not always be appropriate to issue public statements in response to a given arrest, but to engage in quiet, closed-door diplomacy that minimizes additional risks to LGBTQI+ people. In gauging how, when, and whether to engage on this topic, it is invaluable to understand the local LGBTQI+ community, and I commit that, if confirmed, the Embassy team and I will engage with the LGBTQI+ Cameroonians and their allies.

Congressional Consultations

Question. Will you commit, if confirmed, to ensuring that you fully brief Members of Congress and/or their staff each time you are in Washington for visits or consultations during your tenure as Ambassador to Cameroon?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit, in coordination with the State Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs, to appropriately respond to requests for briefings and information by this committee. As a former Pearson Congressional Fellow, I firmly believe that Congress has an important role to play not only in foreign policy legislation but also during the implementation process. It cannot be a one-way street in which the State Department merely advises Congress after the fact of the actions we have undertaken. Our foreign policy is stronger when the two branches of government coordinate.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Anglophone Crisis Negotiations

Question. In January, the Senate passed a bipartisan resolution (S.Res.684), which calls on the State Department to engage other partners in helping end the Anglophone conflict, and specifically calls out the French, whom the Senate believes could get all the parties to the table. Secretary Blinken reportedly raised Cameroon with his French counterpart at a recent G7 meeting.

- How is the Department mobilizing other partners to assist Cameroon to find peace and justice, and how do you plan to lead such an effort once in-country?

Answer. The Secretary's decision to impose visa restrictions on those involved in undermining peace in Cameroon reflects the U.S. commitment to advance dialogue to peacefully resolve the Anglophone crisis and support respect for human rights. This decision followed cuts in security assistance in recent years and the removal of Cameroon's AGOA eligibility on January 1, 2020. These actions demonstrate the U.S. Government's resolve to back up words with actions. The United States will continue to consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions.

We continue to engage other U.N. member states, particularly the French, in bilateral and multilateral fora and at all levels on the importance of rule of law and ending impunity in Cameroon and to explore ways we can work together to move towards a resolution of the violence in the Northwest and Southwest Regions. If confirmed, I will make resolving the Anglophone crisis my top policy priority and will engage in discussions with France and other partners on the ground and look for tangible ways to advance peace in Cameroon.

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?

Answer. The United States has an important role to play in pushing for a resolution to the crisis in the Anglophone regions. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Swiss Government's efforts to advance dialogue with all sides and explore ways with the international community to move this effort forward. I will also support other meaningful initiatives that could advance peace on the ground, including local initiatives, and to amplify the voices of Anglophones who support peace. The United States stands ready to provide additional support if asked to do so and if appropriate.

Per the Geneva Conventions, which the United States has ratified, the International Committee of the Red Cross has the purview to designate a conflict as a non-international armed conflict. To date, they have not done so.

Question. Why do you think the Government of Cameroon has not heeded the U.S. calls for cessation of hostilities and a negotiated resolution of the conflict in the North West and South West regions?

Answer. The Cameroonian Government continues to focus on neutralizing the armed separatists through combat in the field and to advance disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts in both regions to put an end to the violence and insecurity. The Government also believes that implementation of the recommendations offered during the Grand National Dialogue held in 2019 will address the grievances held by many Anglophone Cameroonians. This includes advancing decentralization, such as by holding regional elections in December 2020. If confirmed, I will continue to call for an inclusive dialogue without preconditions and for all parties to end violence.

Question. Would you support mediation or accountability efforts by international organizations such as the U.N. Security Council or the African Union?

Answer. The United States regularly engages U.N. Security Council member states and other countries regarding the need to resolve the Anglophone crisis. We also regularly raise the Anglophone crisis with the Secretary General's Special Representative and Head of the U.N. Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) François Fall. The United States supports UNOCA's role in promoting inclusive political dialogue in Cameroon and the resolution of the Anglophone crisis. We will continue to encourage UNOCA to engage the Government of Cameroon and encourage other U.N. member states, specifically including our P3 partners France and the UK, to play a constructive role to resolve the crisis. The United States has engaged and will look to increase our engagement with the African Union on Cameroon. If confirmed, I will highlight the need for efforts by international actors to be complementary and not compete with one another.

Sanctions

Question. On June 7, 2021, Secretary Blinken announced that the United States would impose visa restrictions on individuals who are believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. While I did applaud this important first step, I believe additional accountability measures are needed.

- What is your view regarding the use of sanctions to bring those responsible to account for their abuses and undermining of peace in Cameroon?

Answer. The decision to impose visa restrictions on those involved in undermining peace in Cameroon reflects U.S. commitment to advance dialogue to peacefully resolve the Anglophone crisis and support respect for human rights. This decision followed cuts in security assistance in recent years and the removal of Cameroon's AGOA eligibility on January 1, 2020. These actions demonstrate the U.S. Government's resolve to back up words with actions. The United States will continue to consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions.

Trafficking in Persons

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report, the U.S. downgraded Cameroon to Tier 2 Watch List for recruiting child soldiers, a lack of standard operating procedures and convicting fewer trafficking crimes. Additionally, the Government has not passed anti-trafficking legislation to conform to international law. Yet, the Government did investigate more trafficking cases and identify more victims.

- If confirmed, how will you build on Cameroon's successes and strengthen their weaknesses, most notably, aiding in establishing a national framework for anti-trafficking?

Answer. The United States regularly engages with Cameroon on the issue of human trafficking. We have provided training to government and civil society stakeholders through the International Visitors Leadership Program and presented draft language for anti-trafficking legislation that would bring national law in line with international norms. We will continue to work with the Government of Cameroon to ensure that its security forces do not violate their internal regulations and recruit or use child soldiers. We will also encourage the Government to urge vigilance committees to refrain from doing so.

If confirmed, I will ensure that we will continue to engage constructively with the Inter-ministerial Committee on Trafficking in Persons and encourage the Government to make progress in the fight against human trafficking by focusing on mile-

stones that need to be achieved on key deficiencies and by engaging more robustly with civil society.

International Religious Freedom

Question. In the State Department's 2020 International Religious Freedom Report, the Department noted Cameroon as having poor religious tolerance, including threats of non-state actors like ISIS-WA and Boko Haram.

- What is your assessment of this particular issue, and if confirmed, how will you work with the Office of International Religious Freedom to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. Religious leaders wield significant influence and are potential allies in bringing peace to the Northwest, Southwest, and Far North Regions where persistent violence from non-state actors, armed separatists, and government actors infringes upon religious freedom and all aspects of life in the affected communities. The United States will continue to work with religious leaders and the Government to encourage greater cooperation and respect for the right to practice religion freely and unencumbered.

If confirmed, I will look for opportunities to resolve the ongoing conflict in the Anglophone regions through a framework that supports an inclusive peace process. Peaceful resolutions to the many ongoing conflicts in Cameroon will be pivotal in reducing the incidence of abuses against religious freedom. Under my direction, if confirmed, the embassy will also engage with the Office of International Religious Freedom and other key offices to determine how best we could assist religious leaders.

Human Rights

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Human Rights Report, the Department identified Cameroon as having committed severe human rights abuses. Amnesty International categorized the state-sanctioned behavior as "Security forces and armed groups continued to commit human rights violations and abuses. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced due to violence; and gender-based violence against women was widespread."

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the host government?

Answer. Promotion of human rights remains a key element of our bilateral relations with Cameroon. While we have seen some progress in this area with specific cases, we would like the Government of Cameroon to share information about what it is doing to address human rights violations by security forces and to take steps to address violations writ-large beyond training. If confirmed, I will continue to call for accountability and transparency related to allegations of human rights violations committed by the Government. I will direct the embassy to look for opportunities to work with the Government to reduce incidences of human rights violations and urge them to hold accountable those found responsible for these violations.

Question. How will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground?

Answer. Building the capacity of civil society is a top priority for our mission in Cameroon. We provide funding to local organizations focused on supporting dialogue and peace initiatives related to the crisis in Anglophone regions, strengthening the rule of law, improving the legislative process, promoting access to justice, enhancing anti-trafficking efforts, monitoring elections, and promoting civil engagement and human rights.

If confirmed, I will continue to advance such opportunities to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations and amplify their voices, encourage the Government to collaborate with these organizations for the betterment of Cameroon, and ensure that we coordinate our efforts with diplomatic and international missions.

Question. In December 2019, the Trump administration curtailed U.S. military assistance to Cameroon because of gross human rights violations, including women and children's extrajudicial killings. To date, has there been an improvement in the Cameroon military's human rights record? If confirmed, how do you intend to work with the Government of Cameroon and its military leadership to improve on this issue?

Answer. Since early 2019, the United States has significantly reduced security assistance due to the Government of Cameroon's unwillingness to share information in response to credible accusations of gross violations of human rights by its security forces. The Government has since taken some steps towards holding security forces

accountable, which we commend. These include the murder conviction in August 2020 of four soldiers for the 2015 killing of two women and two children in the Far North, the arrest and ongoing prosecution of soldiers believed to be responsible for the February 2020 extrajudicial killings in Ngarbuh, Northwest Region, and the arrest of soldiers involved in a case of alleged torture of a detainee in early 2021. However, the United States would like to receive more information from the Government of Cameroon on actions it has taken and plans to take to address allegations of human rights violations and to put measures in place that advance human rights that go beyond human rights training.

If confirmed, I will continue to encourage the Government to provide updates on investigations into allegations of human rights violations and continue to work with Cameroonian armed forces on areas of mutual interest. I will continue to review security assistance on a case-by-case basis so that assistance we provide aligns with U.S. interests, including promotion of human rights, and U.S. law requires those receiving our security assistance be vetted prior to receiving assistance.

Biya Succession

Question. If confirmed, you will arrive in Cameroon at a time when there is a lot of speculation about the wellbeing of the country's president, Paul Biya, who is 88 years old and has been in power for four decades. Does the State Department have a contingency plan in place should the country be thrust into a succession battle during your tenure?

Answer. President Biya's current term of office doesn't end until 2025, and Biya has not made clear whether he intends to run for reelection at that time. The State Department has a plethora of experience responding to various political transitions around the world, should such a scenario arise. We will draw on that experience, and our regularly updated emergency plans for all scenarios, including natural disasters or other major events. If confirmed, I will ensure that crisis management planning will remain a top priority for our Mission.

Question. In several Francophone African countries—Togo, Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo, and recently Chad—dying and long-serving presidents have manipulated fragile constitutions to pave the way for their sons to replace them should they pass away while in office. Is such a scenario likely in Cameroon, and if so, what should be the U.S. position if this occurred?

Answer. The United States supports peaceful, timely, and civilian-led transitions of power to a democratically elected government throughout the world. We advocate for free, fair, and secure elections that reflect the will of the people in all countries, including Cameroon. President Biya is serving a seven-year term, and the next elections are to be held in 2025. The Cameroonian constitution outlines a democratic process in the event of a succession. If confirmed, I will advocate for good governance, peace, prosperity, and the promotion of human rights in Cameroon, as well as for efforts by Cameroon to support stability in the region despite the ongoing conflicts within its borders.

Security

Question. Another crisis that confronts Cameroon is in the Far North region, where the country is part of the multinational Task Force battling Boko Haram and other violent extremists in the Lake Chad Basin. In the past year, Boko Haram attacks on civilian populations have increased. Some analysts believe that Cameroon may have moved military equipment and personnel initially assigned to this region of the country into the Anglophone areas of the North West and South West.

- To what extent is this divided focus undermining Cameroon's contribution to fight against Boko Haram and broader counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel?

Answer. Cameroon has always played a crucial role in regional stability. With the protracted crisis in the Central African Republic, instability in Nigeria, the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa and increasing incidents of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Cameroon's role as a partner in securing and maintaining stability in the region is even more important.

Cameroon has been a leader in both the efforts to address piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and the fight against terrorism and has contributed troops to the United Nation's peacekeeping mission in the Central Africa Republic since 2014. The ongoing violence in the Anglophone regions and the Far North, along with insecurity on its eastern border, could put at risk Cameroon's ability to continue to lead these efforts to ensure the security of Central African region.

If confirmed, I will continue to push for the Government to pursue dialogue with separatists armed groups in order to end the violence in the Northwest and South-

west. We will also continue to push the Government hold those found responsible for violations of human rights accountable for these violations.

Question. While restrictions currently exist, which security assistance, if any, should the U.S. prioritize to Cameroon in the future?

Answer. All U.S. security cooperation activities with Cameroon take place in full coordination with the Government of Cameroon. The United States works with Cameroonian armed forces on areas of mutual interest. If confirmed, I will ensure that our security assistance will continue to focus on assisting the Cameroonian military in its efforts against ISIS-West Africa and Boko Haram as part of the Multinational Joint Task Force, maritime security, training, and assistance to develop professional military forces, and health security through disease vector research and HIV/AIDS assistance.

Regional Impact

Question. Do you agree that a further escalation of the conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon contributes to greater instability in neighboring Nigeria and could soon jeopardize vital U.S. interests in the Gulf of Guinea and most of West and Central Africa?

Answer. Cameroon has always played a crucial role in regional stability. With the protracted crisis in the Central African Republic, instability in Nigeria, the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa and increasing incidents of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Cameroon's role as a partner in achieving and maintaining stability in the region is even more important, despite the continuing crises within the country's borders.

Cameroon has been a leader in both the efforts to address piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and the fight against terrorism. The country has also contributed troops to the United Nation's peacekeeping mission in the Central Africa Republic since 2014. The ongoing violence in the Anglophone regions of the country, combined with the need to address the continuing threats posed by Boko Haram and ISIS-WA in the Far North Region and insecurity on its eastern border, could put Cameroon's ability to continue to lead these efforts to ensure the security of the Central Africa region at risk.

If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Government to pursue dialogue with separatist armed groups in order to end the violence in the Northwest and Southwest Regions. We will also continue to call on the Government to hold those found responsible for violations of human rights accountable for these violations.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Anglophone Crisis

Question. The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon has killed thousands, displaced more than 800,000, and kept more than one million children out of school. In January, the Senate passed S.Res.684, which I introduced with Senator Risch, calling on the Government of Cameroon and separatist armed Anglophone groups to end all violence, respect the human rights of all Cameroonians, and pursue a genuinely inclusive dialogue toward resolving the ongoing conflict. The resolution also called on the U.S. Government to help bring about and support that dialogue.

- If confirmed as Ambassador to Cameroon, what steps would you take to help initiate the dialogue process, and how would you ensure that all relevant stakeholders are represented?

Answer. If confirmed, I would continue to urge all parties to end violence and to engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. I would make clear U.S. support for the Swiss Government's efforts to advance mediation between the Government and separatist armed group leaders and encourage the Government to take concrete steps to move this effort forward.

The United States regularly engages U.N. Security Council member states regarding the need to resolve the Anglophone crisis. We raise the Anglophone crisis regularly during briefings by the Secretary-General's Special Representative and Head of the U.N. Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) François Fall. We will continue our engagement with France and other key allies both bilaterally and in multilateral fora to find ways to work together to achieve tangible progress towards peace. The U.S. Government will continue to consider all the tools at our disposal aimed at pro-

moting a peaceful resolution of the ongoing violence, which has resulted in much suffering.

Question. I appreciate Secretary Blinken's recent decision to impose visa restrictions on some of those responsible for undermining peace in Cameroon. Are any financial measures, such as Global Magnitsky sanctions, also being considered?

Answer. The recent decision to impose visa restrictions on some of those responsible for undermining peace in Cameroon is one of many possible approaches we can take to push for peace and dialogue. It is yet another sign of our commitment to back up words with actions. The U.S. Government will continue to consider all the tools at our disposal to encourage a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest Regions.

Question. How could we be better engaging our international partners, especially France, to address this conflict?

Answer. The United States remains closely engaged with France and other international partners regarding the crisis in Cameroon, including at the highest levels. For example, Secretary Blinken discussed Cameroon in May with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, and Undersecretary for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland discussed Cameroon in high-level meetings with the French. We continue to support the efforts by the Swiss-led process to encourage dialogue between the Government and the armed separatist groups. We also support efforts by the U.N. Office in Central Africa (UNOCA) to advance peace in Cameroon.

If confirmed, I will engage with all of these actors and determine how best we can work together to make a positive difference on the ground. Advancing peace in Cameroon will be my top priority.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA BY SENATOR MIKE ROUNDS

Question. As you know, the U.S. has limited leverage with Cameroon regime, particularly since the suspension of security assistance. With these limitations, I am curious about your view on potential U.S. leadership in mediating an end to the crisis in the Anglophone regions?

- If this is even feasible, are there resources you think could help mediation?

Answer. The United States is deeply concerned about continued violence in Cameroon and condemn all attacks against civilians. There is no military solution to this crisis; dialogue is needed to restore peace and improve respect for human rights. The United States appeals to all parties to enter into a broad-based dialogue without pre-conditions.

The United States has an important role to play in pushing for a resolution to the crisis in the Anglophone regions. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Swiss Government's efforts to mediate dialogue and explore ways with the international community to advance this effort and other meaningful efforts. I will also review the different tools, including the implementation of appropriate measures under U.S. law such as the visa restrictions that the Secretary recently announced and coordinating with appropriate Department of Justice prosecutions of those inciting violence. We have to press for a resolution to this crisis, including through discussions with French Government officials and P3 counterparts. The United States has provided and will continue to provide strong support for peace, but the responsibility for the resolution of the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest Regions ultimately lies with the Cameroonian people.

Question. In the north of Cameroon, terrorism has accelerated. Meanwhile, in other regions, violence between security forces and armed separatists claiming to represent the Anglophone minority has spurred concerns over Cameroon's territorial unity.

- Do you think the U.S. is adequately leveraging diplomatic and assistance tools, both with Cameroonian stakeholders and our European and African allies, to address these challenges as well as challenges to democratic development?

Answer. I understand we continue to engage Cameroonian stakeholders and key international actors bilaterally and multilaterally on the importance of the rule of law and ending impunity in Cameroon and to explore ways we can work together towards a peaceful resolution of the violence in the Northwest and Southwest Regions, and advance good governance and promote respect for human rights nationwide.

Our diplomatic engagement is deployed at various levels, including at the most senior level of the U.S. Government. For example, Secretary Blinken discussed Cameroon in May with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, and Undersecretary for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland discussed Cameroon in high-level meetings with the French. We also engage regularly with U.N. Special Representative François Fall who heads the U.N. Office for Central Africa.

The United States regularly reviews our assistance to ensure that we do no harm, that we support civil society, human rights defenders, and humanitarian workers, and that we comply with Leahy laws. We have consistently said all those responsible for human rights violations and abuses must be held accountable, and we have taken actions to back up this principle. If confirmed, I will continue to consider what more can be done to address Cameroon's complex challenges, always with a view to benefit the Cameroonian people.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO CHRISTOPHER JOHN LAMORA BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Violence and Instability in Cameroon and Beyond

Question. U.S. relations with Cameroon have been mostly positive, although they have been adversely affected by concerns over human rights abuses, in particular in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions, and the pace of political and economic liberalization. Cameroon plays a key role in regional stability and remains a regional partner in countering terrorism in the Lake Chad Region.

- Last year, I joined with 19 of my Senate colleagues to sign a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Cameroon, and remain deeply concerned by the ongoing violence there. I am curious as to what you think it will take to conclude and uphold a ceasefire, guaranteed humanitarian access, and establish a process of political dialogue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make resolving the Anglophone crisis my top policy priority. Our position remains that all sides must end violence and engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. The Government is focused on countering armed separatists in the field and maintains that its convening of a Grand National Dialogue in 2019 and decentralization efforts thus far, including regional elections in late 2020 and the establishment of a special status for the two Anglophone regions, address the root causes of the crisis. I believe the Government must do more to resolve the crisis. Specifically, it must be willing to engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. The armed separatist groups, as well, must be willing to engage peacefully in such a dialogue and cease human rights abuses, as called for in the Senate resolution.

If confirmed, I will consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions. We will engage in discussions with other partners on the ground and look for tangible ways to advance peace in Cameroon.

Question. In 2019, the United States took the relatively rare step of terminating Cameroon's AGOA eligibility due to persistent gross violations of human rights. Unfortunately, this does not appear to have impacted the Government's behavior in the ongoing conflict. If confirmed, what other measures do you plan to take to hold state and non-state actors in Cameroon accountable for human rights abuses?

Answer. On June 7, 2021, Secretary Blinken announced that the United States was taking steps to impose visa restrictions on individuals who are believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the peaceful resolution of the crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. This decision reflects the continuing U.S. commitment to advance dialogue and promote respect for human rights. This decision followed cuts in security assistance in recent years, and, as you noted, the determination that Cameroon was ineligible for AGOA starting on January 1, 2020. These actions demonstrate the U.S. Government's resolve to back up words with actions.

If confirmed, I will consider all potential diplomatic tools to advance dialogue and end violence in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions. We will engage in discussions with other partners on the ground, as well as the Cameroonian Government and people, to identify tangible ways to advance peace in Cameroon.

Question. In addition to the internal violence related to the Anglophone Crisis, Cameroon is also facing threats from Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa. How do we square our support for Cameroon's efforts against Boko Haram and ISIS West

Africa with our concerns about human rights abuses and political abuses inside Cameroon? In other words, how can the State Department ensure that President Biya does not use foreign counterterrorism assistance to fund its efforts against Anglophone separatists in the Southwest and Northwest part of the country?

Answer. Cameroon has long played a crucial role in regional stability. With the protracted crisis in the Central African Republic, instability in Nigeria, the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa, and increasing incidents of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Cameroon's role as a partner in securing and maintaining stability in the region is even more important. Since early 2019, we have significantly reduced security assistance because the Government of Cameroon had not taken sufficient action to investigate credible accusations of gross violations of human rights by its security forces or hold the perpetrators accountable. The United States continues to review security assistance on a case-by-case basis so that assistance we provide aligns with U.S. interests, including promotion of respect for human rights. We vet potential recipients of security assistance, consistent with the Leahy laws, and do not provide assistance to Cameroonian security force units where there is credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. U.S.-granted assistance is explicitly prohibited from being used in the Anglophone regions. We have made this prohibition clear at all levels of the Cameroonian Government and we carefully monitor the use of U.S. assistance to ensure this commitment is followed. Risk of misuse or potential diversion to the Anglophone regions are key criteria in our security assistance decision-making.

Since our cuts, the Cameroonian Government has taken some limited steps towards holding security forces accountable, including the conviction of four soldiers for murder in August 2020 and the arrest of soldiers believed to be responsible for one case of extrajudicial killings and one case of alleged torture of a detainee. While we hope these steps indicate a willingness to address the problem, abuses by government forces continue.

Between FY 2019 (the last year for which there is full obligation data) and FY 2020 funding, the State Department has obligated approximately \$8.3 million in assistance to support the Cameroonian military. This funding supported professional military education; technical support for unarmed intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance platforms; small boat training; communications training; and air-to-ground integration training. If confirmed, I would work to ensure that U.S.-provided equipment is not misused by Cameroonian security forces, and would actively and fully address verified reports of such misuse.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, JUNE 15, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m. in Room SD-106, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Shaheen, Kaine, Schatz, Van Hollen, Risch, Johnson, Portman, Young, 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.

We are here today to consider nominees for three important positions, Ambassador Todd Robinson to be Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Ambassador Daniel Kritenbrink to be Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and Mr. Brett Holmgren to be Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research.

So congratulations to the three of you on your nominations. We appreciate your commitment and willingness to serve our country and your families as well.

Ambassador Robinson, it is nice to have you back before this committee for another confirmation hearing, this time as the nominee to lead the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, which we know as INL, one of the most important offices for strengthening democratic governance and the rule of law globally.

INL's work around the world is critical to countering narcotics trafficking, criminal syndicates, money laundering, and other financial crimes, addressing the criminal use of ransomware and malware, combating illegal mining and fishing, and supporting efforts to combat gender-based violence.

Over the last decade, authoritarian leaders have increasingly wielded criminality and kleptocracy as tools to debilitate democracy at home and foment instability beyond their borders.

I welcome President Biden's recent directorate establishing the fight against kleptocracy as a key national security priority and making it clear that we will tackle its corrosive impact.

INL has a central role to play in that fight. INL is also at the forefront of our international efforts to combat narcotics trafficking.

CDC data shows that over 70,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2019, including over 2,800 in my home state of New Jersey.

I am particularly concerned about the lethal impact of fentanyl as well as the illicit production and trafficking routes that extend through Mexico and back to China. While we must improve our public health responses to address drug abuse domestically, INL's work is essential to countering drug trafficking by transnational criminal organizations.

So I look forward to hearing from you about your vision for the Bureau and your plans for strengthening justice systems and law enforcement cooperation to advance our national security interests.

Ambassador Kritenbrink, I am also pleased to have you back before this committee for another confirmation hearing. I think the last time we saw each other was in China, and your post there—your career as a public servant and your extensive experience in the region will be critical as you take on this important role.

In recent years and under administrations and Congresses of both parties the United States has reassessed and rebalanced our approach to the Indo-Pacific to take into account the reality of our competitive relationship with China.

Although this new era of strategic competition may not be what many of us had hoped for in the U.S.-China relationship, it is our reality and we must deal with it with clear-eyed pragmatism, starting with rebuilding and replenishing the sources of our national strength here at home and our alliances and partnerships abroad.

The recently passed Senate China competition package, including the Strategic Competition Act that the ranking member and I and other members of this committee authored, marks our effort to contribute to that process.

Beyond China, the region you will be responsible for is rich with pressing challenges, from North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, which only grew stronger under President Trump's ill-conceived North Korea policy, to a coup plunging Burma back into chaos, to a roll back in human rights and democracy across the region.

I know that you are intimately familiar with these issues and we look forward to hearing your thoughts on how we can best position the United States for success there in the years ahead.

Mr. Holmgren, the independent analysis of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research has long been recognized as among the best, most reliable, and most careful of the intelligence community.

We have today a nominee for the Assistant Secretary of INR that brings a great breadth of experience to its mission.

Mr. Holmgren has held significant experience relevant to INR's mission, including serving as a senior director for intelligence and for counterterrorism at the National Security Council, as well as service at the Central Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon.

I have little doubt that such experience would be of immense benefit to the State Department Bureau.

INR is an invaluable resource for the Secretary of State, senior officials, and department overall. Indeed, the Bureau could also be of immense benefit to this committee.

Our oversight of U.S. foreign policy would be better served by more regular contact and briefings from INR, and I look forward to that engagement with you should you be confirmed, something that has been missing in the past and I hope, under your leadership, we can engage with the committee more robustly.

In closing, the three of you have an immense task ahead, but I have no doubt about your knowledge and experience will serve you well and the nation well as you take on these new responsibilities.

I look forward to each of your testimony. Let me turn to the ranking member for his opening remarks.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Certainly, these are important nominations we are hearing today. There is a broad swath of responsibility here and an important responsibility.

Personally, my top two foreign policy priorities are China and global health. Regarding China, my main concerns are the Chinese Communist Party's aggression and coercion in the Indo-Pacific and the urgency of the Taiwan issue.

To counter Chinese aggression, I believe we must ensure that the State Department is appropriately resourced in terms of funding and personnel in the Indo-Pacific.

I am interested to hear from you, if confirmed, plans to advocate for this critical region in this—in the State Department budgeting process.

Additionally, our network of alliances and partnerships is key to advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific. The U.S. security commitments, including extended deterrence and commitments to help allies and partners develop advanced capabilities, are crucial to this effort, and it is important to remember U.S. policy will only be successful if we work closely with our allies.

Also, I am particularly concerned about Chinese aggression against Taiwan. Taiwan is an important democratic partner, and how we support and work with Taiwan will have significant implications for our strategy in the region and our alliance system. Taiwan must be a main focus of the administration and the State Department.

Regarding global health, the Indo-Pacific region is in great need of more COVID-19 vaccines, especially given China's aggressive vaccine diplomacy.

Supporting our partners as well as countries in need during this global health crisis will be a mark of U.S. commitment to the region.

Finally, I believe it would be a mistake to use U.S. taxpayer dollars to buy and distribute Chinese vaccines.

Moving on to the nomination of Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, I am concerned about reports of directed energy attacks against State Department personnel, both abroad and here at home.

This has been widely written about, greatly discussed, but the amount of information available is pretty de minimis. The Bureau of Intelligence and Research will play an important role in helping to identify the perpetrator and the means of these attacks.

The Assistant Secretary also has a responsibility to provide our committee and the Intelligence Committee with up to date information on all investigations into these attacks.

If confirmed, I expect to be in regular contact on this important issue. In addition to supporting the intelligence needs of the Secretary of State, INR must also work closely with the intelligence community.

It is imperative that the Bureau maintain its analytical independence from policymakers within the State Department to ensure information is objective and accurate.

Finally, the nomination of Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Transnational criminal organizations, money laundering, and trafficking of people, narcotics, and weapons undermine international stability and pose complex threats to U.S. public health and security.

INR plays an important role in improving the capacity of our foreign partners to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal activity. But these efforts do not exist in a vacuum.

I am concerned about the negative impact the administration's decision to reduce our military presence in Afghanistan will have on narcotics production and associated criminal activities, including funding terrorism.

I am also concerned that the administration's open borders policy has incentivized record-breaking waves of illegal migrants and undermine U.S. efforts to improve governance, security, and economic prosperity in Mexico and in the North and Central America.

I look forward to hearing plans you have to overcome these and other international law enforcement challenges, should you be confirmed.

We have a lot to cover today, and with that, I yield back my time, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

With that, we will start with our nominees and their testimony. All of your full records will be included in the—I am sorry. Your full statements will be included in the record. We ask you to summarize in about five minutes or so so we can have a conversation with you.

We will start with Ambassador Robinson and work our way down. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF HON. TODD D. ROBINSON OF NEW JERSEY, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS), VICE KIRSTEN DAWN MADISON

Mr. ROBINSON. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the nominee to be the Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

I am honored by President Biden's nomination and the support of Secretary Blinken for the opportunity to continue to serve the American people.

I would like to take the opportunity to recognize the support of my friends, colleagues, and, most importantly, my family, my mother, Willetta BaCote, and my brothers, Mark Robinson and Jeffrey BaCote. Their encouragement has been invaluable to me.

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, INL, which I called home for three and a half years as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, is a key component in protecting the American people by countering crime and supporting the rule of law to maintain stability abroad.

I look forward to the possibility of leading my Foreign Service, civil service, contractor, and local staff INL colleagues working in Washington and more than 90 countries.

If confirmed, I commit to working with Congress to tackle the great challenges laid out in the president's national security agenda, including combating narcotics trafficking, addressing transnational organized criminal threats, corruption and cybercrime, countering Chinese malign influence, and tackling issues of bias and discrimination in criminal justice systems.

Stopping illegal drugs like synthetic opioids from reaching America will be among my highest priorities. We know some terrorist organizations traffic drugs to fund their illicit activities. Transnational criminal organizations have seemingly limitless appetites for illicit profits from synthetic drugs.

If confirmed, I will prioritize INL's critical engagement with partners and allies to combat this threat. Transnational criminal organizations are not static, so INL cannot be either.

Working with our interagency partners, such as the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, INL can lead the effort to ensure that our programs are better coordinated and show results.

Example—after the People's Republic of China scheduled fentanyl as a regulated chemical class in 2019, direct flows of fentanyl from the PRC to the United States dropped precipitously.

However, nonfentanyl opioids and precursor chemicals continue to flow from the PRC to Mexican criminals that manufacture the fentanyl and traffic it to the United States.

If confirmed, I will prioritize continued diplomatic engagement at all levels to decrease the shipment of these precursors from the PRC and to reinvigorate shared security cooperation between the United States and Mexico.

In fact, U.S.-Mexico cooperation must continue to address another high priority issue, the management of migration across the region and to the U.S. southern border.

Strategic thinking and data will help us address irregular migration and build a smarter border. INL is working closely within the administration to shape a central America—Central America root causes strategy to look at the drivers of this migration.

I know this topic is a high priority to members of the committee and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how we can make our foreign assistance dollars more effective on this issue.

If confirmed, I vow to respond to these complex challenges using the experience gained in relationships built over my 35-year Foreign Service career.

Another global challenge we confront today is corruption. Simply put, corruption kills. I saw its effects in Guatemala where political,

economic, and social elites, at times working with criminal organizations, buy judges and threaten independent and courageous judicial actors.

I saw it in Venezuela, where the Maduro regime reaps ill-gotten profits by selectively distributing food and pillages that nation's natural resources.

As President Biden and Secretary Blinken have noted, corruption undermines U.S. foreign policy and national security interests around the world, and damages the credibility of countries where U.S. businesses may want to invest.

INL, with our interagency partners, acts as a bulwark against global corruption, and if confirmed, I would seek to enhance this work by identifying like-minded crime fighters around the world, build their capacity to prevent, investigate, and prosecute corruption, and reinvigorating multilateral global anti-corruption networks.

INL can also use rewards and visa restrictions to promote accountability for corrupt actors globally. If confirmed, I commit to working with the Congress on advancing America's interests at home and abroad.

Thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Robinson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. TODD D. ROBINSON

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the nominee to be the Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. I am honored by the President's nomination and the support of Secretary Blinken for the opportunity to continue to serve the American people.

I would like to take the opportunity to recognize the support of my friends, colleagues and, most importantly, my family—my mother, Willetta BaCote, and my brothers Mark Robinson and Jeffrey BaCote. Their encouragement has been invaluable to me.

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs—INL—which I called home for three and a half years as a Deputy Assistant Secretary, is a key component in protecting the American people by countering crime and supporting the rule of law to maintain stability abroad. I look forward to the possibility of leading my foreign service, civil service, contractor, and local staff INL colleagues working in Washington and more than 90 countries.

If confirmed, I commit to working with Congress to tackle the great challenges laid out in the President's national security agenda including combating narcotics trafficking; addressing transnational organized criminal threats, corruption and cybercrime; countering PRC malign influence; and tackling issues of bias and discrimination, in criminal justice systems.

Stopping illegal drugs, like synthetic opioids, from reaching America will be among my highest priorities. We know some terrorist organizations traffic drugs and other commodities to fund their illicit activities. Transnational criminal organizations have seemingly limitless appetites for illicit profits from synthetic drugs. If confirmed, I will prioritize INL's critical engagement with partners and allies to combat this threat.

Transnational criminal organizations are not static, so INL cannot be either. Working with our interagency partners such as the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, INL can lead the effort to ensure that our programs are better coordinated and show results. Example: after the People's Republic of China (PRC) scheduled fentanyl as a regulated chemical class in 2019, direct flows of fentanyl from the PRC to the United States dropped precipitously. However, non-fentanyl opioids and precursor chemicals continue to flow from the PRC to Mexican criminals that manufacture the fentanyl and traffic it to the U.S. If confirmed, I will prioritize continued diplomatic engagement at all levels to decrease the shipment of these pre-

cursors from the PRC, and to reinvigorate shared security cooperation between the United States and Mexico.

In fact, U.S.-Mexico cooperation must continue to address another high priority issue—the management of migration across the region and to the U.S. southern border. Strategic thinking and data will help us address irregular migration and build a smarter border. INL is working closely within the Administration to shape a Central America Root Causes Strategy to look at the drivers of this migration. I know this topic is a high priority to many Committee Members and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how we can make our foreign assistance dollars more effective on this issue. If confirmed, I vow to respond to these complex challenges using the experience gained and relationships built over my 35-year Foreign Service career.

Another global challenge we confront today is corruption. Simply put, corruption kills. I saw its effects in Guatemala where political, economic, and social elites—at times working with criminal organizations—buy judges and threaten independent and courageous judicial actors. I saw it in Venezuela where the Maduro regime reaps ill-gotten profits by selectively distributing food rations and pillages that nation's natural resources. As President Biden and Secretary Blinken have noted, corruption undermines U.S. foreign policy and national security interests around the world and damages the credibility of countries where U.S. businesses may want to invest.

INL, with our interagency partners, acts as a bulwark against global corruption. If confirmed, I would seek to enhance this work by identifying like-minded crime fighters around the world; building their capacity to prevent, investigate, and prosecute corruption; and reinvigorating multilateral global anticorruption networks. INL can also use rewards and visa restrictions to promote accountability for corrupt actors globally.

Criminals and state-actors use technology to target the American people, our institutions, and critical infrastructure. The detrimental impact of cybercrime on America is clear, with one in four U.S. households affected, and annual losses reported to the FBI last year of \$4.2 billion. If confirmed, I will want INL to build the necessary know-how and cross-border cooperation to address 21st century transnational security challenges.

Finally, given its decades of criminal justice sector reform experience, INL has a unique responsibility to work with foreign partners to recognize, prevent, and counter bias and discrimination within their criminal justice systems. If confirmed, INL programs and partnerships will continue to reflect a respect for human rights and best practices in balancing individual rights with public safety.

If confirmed, I commit to working with the Congress on advancing America's interests at home and abroad. Thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Mr. Holmgren?

STATEMENT OF BRETT M. HOLMGREN OF MINNESOTA, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH), VICE ELLEN E. MCCARTHY

Mr. HOLMGREN. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

I am deeply grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me, and to Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines for supporting my nomination.

I would not be here today if it were not for the love and support of my family, my wife, Dana, my son, Teddy, my parents, Michael and Mary, and my siblings, Stacy, Christa and Ryan. Each of them has inspired me to live my life with a sense of purpose, love, and humility.

Like many Americans of my generation, the tragic events of 9/11 were a turning point in my life. I left my home state of Minnesota 18 years ago to pursue a career in public service, to defend the freedoms, values, and liberties we all cherish.

I came to Washington with a sense of optimism, and a deep and abiding belief in the ideals of this country, that America is a force for good in the world and that all men and women are created equal with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Those ideals derived from my upbringing in Minnesota, where I was surrounded by family who believed deeply in the role of public service.

Both of my grandfathers were World War II veterans, and my parents, both of whom were public school teachers for 40 years, instilled in my siblings and me the importance of service.

I still share that same sense of optimism and commitment to public service that I brought with me to Washington two decades ago.

While I may be a new face to members of this committee, I have a long track record of working on intelligence and foreign policy issues. As an analyst first at the Defense Intelligence Agency and later at the CIA, I authored all sorts of analytic products to inform policy decisions.

Through deployments overseas, including in war zones, I have seen firsthand the key role that intelligence plays in shaping national security and the tremendous sacrifices of our diplomats, intelligence officers, and warfighters.

Throughout my career, I have also served in policy roles in the Pentagon and on the National Security Council staff at the White House.

These experiences gave me a richer understanding of the vital role and the limitations of intelligence in shaping policy. Most significantly, I gained through these experiences a greater appreciation for the importance of analytic objectivity and the need for the intelligence community to tell the policymaker what they need to know, not what they want to hear.

I have been nominated for this position at a time when the United States and its allies are facing a diverse interconnected array of threats against the backdrop of a global pandemic that is straining governments and societies, fueling unrest, and accelerating global competition.

From China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, the continuing threat of terrorism, cyber, emerging technologies, these threats pose new challenges and opportunities.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that INR has a unique role to play in addressing these challenges. As the oldest civilian intelligence agency in the United States, the Bureau has a long and proud history of providing policymakers with valuable insights into America's most pressing national security issues, while empowering diplomats with the information and analysis needed to advance U.S. foreign policy.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading this remarkable institution. I understand the role comes with important responsibilities, including serving as the principal intelligence adviser to the Secretary of State and as the head of one of the nation's 18 intelligence agencies, providing timely objective all-source information to inform consideration of foreign and national security policies, and finally, assuring that intelligence and sensitive law enforce-

ment activities are conducted consistent with and supportive of U.S. foreign policy objectives.

If confirmed, four inter-related imperatives will shape my approach to leading INR.

First, I will ensure that INR's capabilities and resources are aligned and strategically prioritized to address the most pressing challenges and opportunities to include China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, as well as global health security, cyber, climate change, and how to capitalize on the revolution in open source intelligence.

Second, I will prioritize investments in INR's greatest assets, its people. We must continue to attract, train, and retain the best and brightest while placing much greater emphasis on diversity recruitment.

Third, I will focus on upgrading INR's technology to empower its analysts with the tools they need to improve the delivery of INR's products and services to better support its customers, especially U.S. diplomats overseas.

Finally, I will insist on strong cybersecurity practices throughout INR to safeguard the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of its data systems and networks.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to recognize the important role that I believe congressional oversight plays in ensuring that U.S. intelligence activities are lawful, ethical, and consistent with our values.

If confirmed, I look forward to partnering closely with Congress as we confront the many challenges ahead.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Holmgren follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BRETT M. HOLMGREN

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as the nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. I am deeply grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me, and to Director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines, for supporting my nomination.

I would not be here if it were not for the love and support of my family: my wife, Dana, our son Teddy, my parents, Michael and Mary, and my siblings Stacie, Krista and Ryan. Each of them has inspired me to live my life with a sense of purpose, love, and humility.

Like many Americans of my generation, the tragic events of 9/11 were a turning point in my life. I left my home state of Minnesota nearly 18 years ago to pursue a career in public service to defend the freedoms, values, and liberties we all cherish. I came to Washington with a sense of optimism and a deep and abiding belief in the ideals of this country—that America is a force for good in the world, and that all men and women are created equal with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Those ideals derive from my upbringing in Minnesota, where I was surrounded by family who believed deeply in the role of public service. Both of my grandfathers were World War II veterans. My parents, both of whom were public school teachers for 40 years, instilled in my siblings and me the importance of service. I still share the optimism and commitment to public service that I brought with me to Washington nearly two decades ago.

While I may be a new face to many of the members here today, I have a long track record of working in and with the Intelligence Community. As an analyst, first at the Defense Intelligence Agency and later at Central Intelligence Agency, I authored all-source intelligence products to inform policy decisions. Through deployments overseas, including in warzones, I have seen firsthand the key role that intelligence plays in shaping national security and the tremendous sacrifices of our diplomats, intelligence officers, and warfighters.

Throughout my career, I have also served in policy roles at the Pentagon and on the National Security Council staff at the White House. These experiences gave me a richer understanding of the vital role and the limitations of intelligence in shaping policy. Most importantly, I gained a greater appreciation for the importance of analytic objectivity and the need for the Intelligence Community to tell the policymaker what they need to know, not what they want to hear.

I have been nominated for this position at a time when the United States and its allies are facing a diverse, interconnected array of threats against the backdrop of a global pandemic that is straining governments and societies, fueling unrest, and accelerating global competition. From China, Russia, North Korea and Iran, to terrorism, cyber, climate change, and evolving technologies, these threats pose new challenges and opportunities for the Intelligence Community.

INR plays a unique role in addressing these challenges. As the oldest civilian intelligence agency in the United States, the Bureau has a long and proud history of providing policymakers valuable insights into America's most pressing national security issues, while empowering our diplomats with the information and analysis to advance U.S. foreign policy.

If confirmed, I look forward to leading this remarkable institution, serving as the principal intelligence advisor to the Secretary of State and the head of one of the Nation's 18 intelligence agencies. INR's responsibility to provide timely, objective, all-source analysis and to assure that intelligence and sensitive law enforcement activities are consistent with, and supportive of, our foreign policy objectives is more critical than ever.

If confirmed, four interrelated imperatives will shape my approach to leading INR. First, I will ensure that our capabilities and resources are aligned and strategically prioritized to address the most pressing challenges and opportunities, to include China, Russia, Iran and North Korea, as well as global health, cyber, climate change and how to capitalize on the revolution in open-source intelligence.

Second, I will prioritize investments in INR's greatest asset—its people. We must continue to attract, train, and retain top talent while placing greater emphasis on diversity recruitment.

Third, I will focus on upgrading INR's technology infrastructure to empower our analysts with the tools they need to improve the delivery of our products and support our customers, especially our diplomats overseas.

Finally, I will insist on strong cybersecurity practices throughout INR to safeguard the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of our data, networks, and systems.

In closing, I want to recognize the important role that Congressional oversight plays in ensuring that U.S. intelligence activities are lawful, ethical, and consistent with our values. If confirmed, I look forward to partnering with Congress as we confront the many challenges ahead.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Holmgren. Thank you.

Ambassador Kritenbrink?

Am I pronouncing your name correctly?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL J. KRITENBRINK OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS), VICE DAVID STILWELL

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am deeply grateful to President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me.

I want to thank my wife, Nami, children, Mia and Joe, my parents, Don and Joyce, and sisters, Kay and Nancy, for their love and support.

It would be the honor of a lifetime to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, a region in which I have been engaged for 24 out of my 27 years in the U.S. Foreign Service.

If confirmed, I look forward to consulting closely with the Senate and, of course, with this committee.

President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed diplomacy at the center of U.S. foreign policy and emphasize the centrality of a free and open Indo-Pacific to the security and prosperity of the American people.

If confirmed, I would focus on the following six priorities.

First, revitalizing ties with allies and partners. Our network of alliances and partnerships is our greatest strategic asset, enabling us to pool our strengths to advance shared interests, deter common threats, and promote universal values, to include our commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific that is rules based and unconstrained by coercion, the peaceful resolution of disputes, freedom of navigation and over flight, and respect for human rights.

If confirmed, strengthening these relationships will be my top priority. The priority placed on our treaty alliances was demonstrated by President Biden's hosting of his Japanese and Republic of Korea counterparts in April and May.

The president's hosting of the first ever Quad leaders summit in March showed the resolve of the Indo-Pacific democracies—Australia, India, Japan and the United States—to work together to support the region.

I support ASEAN's centrality and, if confirmed, will work to strengthen our partnership, our strategic partnership, with ASEAN, including treaty allies Thailand and the Philippines.

If confirmed, I will reinforce our partnership with friends in the Pacific Islands, including our unique relationship with the Freely Associated States. I will also further develop our robust ties with our democratic partner Taiwan.

Second, prevailing in our strategic competition with China. The People's Republic of China is our biggest geopolitical test.

I support approaching the PRC from a position of strength by working with allies and partners, engaging with international organizations, standing up for our values, and investing in our diplomatic and military capabilities and the American people.

Secretary Blinken has said our approach to China will have competitive, adversarial, and cooperative aspects. The United States will counter PRC attempts to erode the international rules-based order, push back on unfair PRC trade practices, secure critical supply chains, protect sensitive U.S. technology, and build our strength at home.

We will continue holding Chinese authorities responsible for the ongoing genocide in Xinjiang, the trampling of autonomy and civil liberties in Hong Kong, and systematic repression in Tibet.

We will bolster partners' capacity to resist PRC intimidation and oppose China's unlawful maritime claims. We will also cooperate with Beijing when in our interests, such as on the climate crisis, counter narcotics, and nonproliferation.

As President Biden has said, we are not looking for conflict, but welcome stiff competition and will defend U.S. interests across the board.

Third, reducing the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. President Biden has stated we remain committed to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and will work with allies to address that threat through diplomacy and deterrence.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure North Korea and others abide by U.N. Security Council resolutions while supporting a calibrated and practical diplomatic approach that prioritizes the security of the United States, our allies, and our deployed military forces.

Fourth, supporting inclusive economic policies that benefit all Americans. If confirmed, I will ensure that our diplomats in the region fight for every job in the interests of American workers by insisting on market access and fair treatment, stopping intellectual property theft and currency manipulation, and combating corruption.

Fifth, promoting democracy and human rights. Our values and our example are critical to successful diplomacy in Asia.

If confirmed, I would work with our allies and partners to support democracy, promote human rights, and stand against abuses wherever they occur.

In Burma, I would work with partners to press the military to reverse course following the February 1 coup, cease violence, release those unjustly detained, including American citizens, and return Burma to the democratic path chosen by its people.

I would work to support the people of Burma by holding accountable those responsible for violence. I would also promote accountability for PRC officials responsible for human rights violations across China.

Sixth, if confirmed, I pledge to address global priorities in the region, particularly combating COVID-19 and the climate crisis.

If confirmed, I will also prioritize the safety and well being of my team, maintain their focus on top goals, and ensure they represent the diverse talents of the American people.

Thank you for inviting me to testify here today. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kritenbrink follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DANIEL J. KRITENBRINK

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am deeply grateful to President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Secretary Blinken for their confidence in me. I want to thank my wife Nami, children Mia and Joe, my parents Don and Joyce, and sisters Kay and Nancy, for their love and support.

It would be the honor of a lifetime to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, a region in which I have been engaged for 24 out of my 27 years in the Foreign Service. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting closely with the Senate.

President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed diplomacy at the center of U.S. foreign policy, and emphasized the centrality of a free and open Indo-Pacific to the security and prosperity of the American people. If confirmed, I would focus on the following six priorities.

First, revitalizing ties with allies and partners. Our network of alliances and partnerships is our greatest strategic asset, enabling us to pool our strengths to advance shared interests, deter common threats, and promote universal values—including

our commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific that is rules-based and unconstrained by coercion; the peaceful resolution of disputes; freedom of navigation and overflight; and respect for human rights. If confirmed, strengthening these relationships will be my top priority. The priority placed on our treaty alliances was demonstrated by President Biden's hosting of his Japanese and Republic of Korea counterparts in April and May. The President's hosting of the first-ever Quad Leaders Summit in March showed the resolve of the Indo-Pacific democracies Australia, India, Japan, and the United States to work together to support the region. I support ASEAN centrality and, if confirmed, will work to strengthen our strategic partnership with ASEAN, including treaty allies Thailand and the Philippines. If confirmed, I will reinforce our partnership with friends in the Pacific Islands, including our unique relationship with the Freely Associated States. I will also further develop our robust ties with our democratic partner Taiwan.

Second, prevailing in our strategic competition with China. The People's Republic of China is our biggest geopolitical test. I support approaching the PRC from a position of strength, by working with allies and partners, engaging with international organizations, standing up for our values, and investing in our diplomatic and military capabilities—and the American people. Secretary Blinken has said our approach to China will have competitive, adversarial, and cooperative aspects. The United States will counter PRC attempts to erode the international rules-based order, push back on unfair PRC trade practices, secure critical supply chains, protect sensitive U.S. technology, and build our strength at home. We will continue holding Chinese authorities responsible for the ongoing genocide in Xinjiang, the trampling of autonomy and civil liberties in Hong Kong, and systematic repression in Tibet. We will bolster partners' capacity to resist PRC intimidation and oppose China's unlawful maritime claims. We will also cooperate with Beijing when in our interests, such as on the climate crisis, counternarcotics, and nonproliferation. As President Biden has said, we are not looking for conflict but welcome stiff competition and will defend U.S. interests across the board.

Third, reducing the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. President Biden has stated we remain committed to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and will work with allies to address that threat through diplomacy and deterrence. If confirmed, I will work to ensure North Korea and others abide by U.N. Security Council resolutions while supporting a calibrated and practical diplomatic approach that prioritizes the security of the United States, our allies, and our deployed military forces.

Fourth, supporting inclusive economic policies that benefit all Americans. If confirmed, I will ensure our diplomats in the region fight for every job and the interests of American workers by insisting on market access and fair treatment, and by stopping intellectual property theft and currency manipulation. We will also work with regional partners to foster economic development that is transparent and sustainable, including via APEC.

Fifth, promoting democracy and human rights. Our values and our example are critical to successful diplomacy in Asia. If confirmed, I would work with our allies and partners to support democracy, promote human rights, and stand against abuses wherever they occur. In Burma, I would work with partners to press the military to reverse course following the February 1 coup, cease violence, release those unjustly detained, including American citizens, and return Burma to the democratic path chosen by its people. I would work to support the people of Burma by holding accountable those responsible for violence. I would also promote accountability for PRC officials responsible for human rights violations across China. Throughout the region, we will champion transparency, the rule of law, civil society, and independent media.

Sixth, addressing global priorities, particularly combating COVID-19 and the climate crisis. On COVID-19, if confirmed, I pledge to support our work with regional partners and international initiatives such as COVAX and the Quad Vaccine Partnership to provide U.S. leadership in the fight to end the pandemic. On the climate crisis, I would work to advance climate solutions with countries in the region, which include some of the world's largest emitters as well as those most vulnerable to climate change.

If confirmed, I will also prioritize the safety and well-being of my team, maintain their focus on top goals, and ensure they represent the diverse talents of the American people.

Thank you for inviting me to testify. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you all. We will start a round with five minutes. I am going to ask, first, before that some perfunctory questions that we ask all of our nominees.

It is very brief questions that speak to the importance that this committee places on responsiveness by all officials in the executive branch and that we expect and will be seeking from you.

So I would just simply ask you each to provide a yes or no answer.

Do you agree to appear before this committee and make officials from your office available to the committee and designated staff when invited?

Mr. ROBINSON. Yes.

Mr. HOLMGREN. Yes.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to keep the committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

Mr. ROBINSON. Yes.

Mr. HOLMGREN. Yes.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?

Mr. ROBINSON. Yes.

Mr. HOLMGREN. Yes.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And finally, do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the committee and its designated staff?

Mr. ROBINSON. Yes.

Mr. HOLMGREN. Yes.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Thank you very much.

Now, Ambassador Kritenbrink, as you know, and I think the Senate has spoken with collectively and nearly one voice and that is not easy these days, we believe that China is our major geostrategic challenge in the world, and you address some of that in your remarks.

The Senate passed a sweeping China competitive bill. That includes the strategic competition that this committee put out led by the ranking member and myself and supported by the 19 members of the committee, a truly bipartisan effort.

What do you think of that legislation? What tools would you, if confirmed, want to see in your toolbox that Congress can provide? And can you elaborate on how you plan on approaching the China challenge?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me say again what an honor it is to be here today and I think, Mr. Chairman, you have identified, obviously, very correctly the major challenge that the United States faces today, and I would argue that our friends and partners around the world face today.

I do believe, Mr. Chairman, as I attempted to outline in my statement, for us to prevail in this strategic competition with China we need to do so from a position of strength.

I think we are stronger when we do that together with our like-minded partners around—our like-minded partners and allies around the world.

But, Mr. Chairman, I think we will do our best when we are fully united here at home as well. I am very grateful to you and members of this committee for the support and leadership that you have shown on these issues. I know when Secretary Blinken testified last week he stated his strong support for the bill that you described.

And I might say, as a career diplomat, the more tools and resources that the Senate and other members of Congress can give us as diplomats the more effective we can be.

Of course, to prevail in this long-term competition with China, I think it will be, largely, determined by how we do as a nation together and many of the investments we make here at home.

But I am very grateful for the leadership that the Senate has shown on these issues, and I can pledge to you that with the resources made available to us we will compete and we will prevail in this competition with China in every domain.

The CHAIRMAN. Let us talk about some of the elements of that competition. In Taiwan, given the increased muscle flexing and threatening rhetoric from Beijing, some policymakers and analysts have called for an end to the policy of strategic ambiguity with regard to Taiwan.

There is increasing concern that Beijing may seek to make the cross-straits an early test for this administration. How can the United States most effectively signal our resolve and deter Chinese aggression towards Taiwan?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

I do think showing strength and clarity and deterrence is key. What I think is crystal clear to me, Senator, is the United States commitment, rock-solid commitment, to meeting our obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act, to provide Taiwan with the means to maintain a credible self-defense.

If I were confirmed, I pledge to the committee that I will work very hard to support meeting those obligations and, further, to support further developing our very robust unofficial relationship with our Taiwanese democratic partners. It is one of our most important partners in—

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask you—I agree. Do you support strategic ambiguity or do you think we need additional clarity or a new framework for managing the cross-strait relations?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Mr. Chairman, my own view is that the framework outlined by our long-standing one-China policy based on the Taiwan Relations Act, the three joint communiqués, and the six assurances to Taiwan provides the framework that has ensured cross-strait stability and Taiwan security for these many decades.

I do think that maintenance of that status quo and of that security is a dynamic situation. As the threat from the PRC grows, as Beijing's aggressive and bullying behavior vis-à-vis Taiwan grows, I think that our response has to be calibrated as well.

But I am confident that the framework that we have and meeting those obligations in the Taiwan Relations Act gives us the tools to do so.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Holmgren, let me ask you, we rely on the Bureau of Intelligence and Research for insights and particular perspective that sometimes varies from the rest of the intelligence community, and when there is an opinion or assessment that is different for the IC, it is critical that we understand those differences.

Do you agree to be candid with the committee when those differences occur and to make sure we understand where and why INL comes to different conclusions?

Mr. HOLMGREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think that, as you know, INR has a long and proud history of speaking truth to power and telling it like it is, and if there are instances where INR reaches a conclusion that is different than the rest of the intelligence community, I believe, absolutely, that it would require informing and engaging with this committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

One other question. The Bureau of Intelligence and Research's analysis is going to be critical to our understanding as policy-makers and in response to a number of pressing issues, including the apparent attacks on U.S. personnel and the origins of COVID-19.

Do you commit to engaging proactively with the committee as INR's work on these matter advances and to keep us fully informed on your assessments both on these and other critical matters?

Mr. HOLMGREN. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to follow up, Mr. Kritenbrink, on the Taiwan issue that was raised by the chairman.

What—I had the same questions he had, and I think all of Congress does, really. But what—from your expertise and your experience in this area, what do you think the end game is here for the—for the Chinese Communist Party as far as Taiwan is concerned? And what do you think the end game is and how do you think they intend to achieve it?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Well, Mr. Ranking Member, I am reluctant to try to put myself in the shoes of the leadership in Beijing, but they have stated that their long-term goal is reunification.

I think where I believe that we should remain focused and, if confirmed, where I would remain focused as EAP Assistant Secretary would be on meeting our obligations and responsibilities under the Taiwan Relations Act. I am confident that we have the tools to do so.

For example, through the support of this committee and others in Congress, the United States has made available to the authorities on Taiwan more than \$30 billion in arms sales since 2009.

I think it is also incumbent upon us to further develop our robust relationship with Taiwan in every sector. They are a top 10 trading partner, which is vitally important. We have important cultural and other relations as well.

They play a very critical important role, we believe, in international health and, therefore, we should support growing Taiwan's international space as well to make sure that they fully participate

in organizations where sovereignty is not required and have a meaningful role in those that do.

So I believe, Mr. Ranking Member, that we have the tools to continue to grow this robust partnership with Taiwan and to meet our commitments to ensure that Taiwan can maintain a credible self-defense.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate your thoughts in that regard. All good thoughts. I guess what crosses my mind is that we all know that the Communist Party wants reunification.

We also know that that is not the same view that Taiwan has, and, obviously, where you have two different views that are very much opposed, at some point in time it is going to come to a cross-roads and that is what I am concerned about is what happens at that point.

What—how is that resolved?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Yes, sir, Mr. Ranking Member.

I think the best thing that we can do is to continue to demonstrate our resolve and our commitment to meeting our rock-solid obligations, and I think by doing so I am confident that we can continue to effect the stability across the strait that we have benefited from for many years.

But, Mr. Ranking Member, I would, again, reemphasize we are deeply concerned by the increase in aggression and harassment and coercion that we have seen directed at Taiwan, and we continue—we intend and if I were confirmed I would intend to continue to show our resolve to, again, meeting our obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act.

Senator RISCH. I appreciate that. There is no doubt that the coercion and harassing and everything else has ratcheted up tremendously to the point, for instance, where Taiwan is having trouble scrambling jets every time that there is an incursion into airspace.

And that is done intentionally, there is no doubt, and that is something that is going to be on our plate, I think, sooner rather than later.

Mr. Holmgren, the matter of the Havana syndrome issue, as you know, has been kicking around for some time and, obviously, we are in an open session and cannot talk about all the details of it.

But I am assuming that you have been involved in that in some fashion. Am I right on that or not?

Mr. HOLMGREN. Thank you, Ranking Chairman. I very much share the concerns about these incidents. I have spoken to some of the victims of these attacks, and I can tell you they are they are suffering and their families are suffering.

And, if confirmed, I would have no higher priority than ensuring the safety and security of U.S. citizens, their families, and U.S. personnel overseas and would commit to ensure that INR is continuing to support the department and the interagency, especially CIA and DOD, with information and analysis around the origins of these incidents. So I believe it is a serious increase.

As a testament, I have committed to asking for a classified briefing, if confirmed, on my first day in office.

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you. This is, certainly a vexing problem and I can tell you it is very high up on the priority of this committee and the Intelligence Committee, particularly since it affects

our hard-working people around the world and outside the United States.

Mr. Robinson, the—Afghanistan produced and, I guess, continues to produce about 90 percent of the world's opium, and with us downsizing in Afghanistan, this is going to be the problem that it was before we ratcheted up there. It is going to raise its ugly head again.

What are your thoughts on this?

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you, Senator, for that question.

I share your concerns, frankly, about the production and distribution of opioids from Afghanistan. We know that they are also interested in, perhaps, trying to get back into government and my—what I would say to the Taliban and to anybody there who is producing narcotics or opioids is that, you know, if you want to be seen as credible and you want to be treated as part of the international community, then you cannot do these things.

The other part of that, though, is while we may be drawing down in Afghanistan, there are programs that INL would wish to continue in that region. The hard part is figuring out how to—how to do that and keep our people safe.

So those are the two—sort of the two priorities we would have. One, you know, making sure that we are continuing programs that would go against, obviously, narcotics trafficking and sending very strong messages to those in government that they also have to commit to fighting against the narcotics trafficking.

But it is also very important if we are going to continue our programs there, and we want to continue our programs there, to make sure that we are taking care of our people and making sure that they can be there safely.

Senator RISCH. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I understand that Senator Cardin is with us virtually.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me start by thanking all three of our nominees for their prior service to our country and their willingness to serve in these critical positions that they have been appointed to.

I want to talk about the issue of fighting corruption, and, Ambassador Robinson, I must tell you, I think you said it very succinctly in your—in your statement—in your testimony when you said that corruption kills. It also is the fuel for autocrats in fighting democracies and trying to bring our democratic countries down.

Freedom House just recently issued their 2021 report that shows that we have the continuing trend of erosion of democratic states, and one of the principal reasons has been the growth of corruption that fuels this type of activity.

I enjoyed our conversation, but I just really want to drill down a little bit more on specifics. You laid out part of that in your comments to our committee. But I want to just get your assurance that you will work with Congress and leverage both branches of government in fighting corruption.

There is legislation pending in the United States Senate that I have introduced with Republican colleagues, bipartisan legislation that would establish a greater capacity within our missions and

State to understand the circumstances of corruption in each country, to use a rating system similar to what we do in trafficking in persons so that we can have consequences and international standards as to what we expect countries to do to fight corruption.

We have legislation that would establish specific funds so we can respond quickly to opportunities to help countries deal with corruption, and we have the Magnitsky sanctions to make them permanent.

So do I have your assurances that you will work with Congress to strengthen our tools to fight corruption globally?

Mr. ROBINSON. Absolutely, Senator. You have a firm commitment to work with Congress, to use all of the tools that we have in our toolbox to fight corruption, and I will further commit that you will not find a more stronger advocate to fight corruption than me.

It was to my—to my great joy to see the Biden/Harris administration raise corruption to the national security level. I think that that will—that will help us go after official corruption, unofficial corruption, in the region and around the world.

And further, it will give us greater tools to identify crime fighters around the world that we can partner with to fight this—to fight this scourge. There is no doubt corruption undermines democratic institutions around the world, and I know the bread and butter—INL's—one of INL's main jobs is going after those who would—who would take part in corrupt acts.

Senator CARDIN. I would just quote from my friend, Kara-Murza, who is one of the leading opposition leaders in Russia, who says that Putin steals from the Russians to spend it in the West.

So he uses the corrupt resources in order to try to undermine our system, and we have got to speak out against that. The Magnitsky sanctions are, of course, one area at some of these other tools that we are suggesting can help.

I just really want to underscore that we are all sincere about this. But we need the push of Congress to help prioritize within each of the missions countries that have significant problems of corruption to focus on this issue.

So I am going to hold you to your commitment to work with us to strengthen those tools so that we can all fight this a little bit more effectively.

Mr. Kritenbrink, Asia—China, of course, is the most significant country in that region from the point of view of concern about the United States on the erosion of governance.

Their One Road policy is, certainly, based upon using marketing—government-controlled economies and corruption to try to control the economics of the world. The Belt and Road Initiative really needs to be addressed.

Do you—are you committed to working with us to root out the way that it is based in corruption, stealing intellectual property, intimidating countries, so that we can take China on in a more aggressive way?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Yes, Senator, absolutely. I would—I would simply say that I agree with you wholeheartedly that we need to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative, as it is offered through means of coercion, corruption, lack of transparency, unsustainable debt loads, and the like.

Countries, I think, need to be very careful in signing on to the Belt and Road. But I think even more importantly, Senator, we need to have an affirmative agenda, affirmative programs that we can offer as an alternative, and I am very grateful to you and other members of Congress for giving us those tools, whether it is the BUILD Act or other resources we have at our disposal.

I would also note, Senator, that I was encouraged by the communiqué that came out of the G-7, and it is quite clear to me that our democratic partners around the world see eye to eye with us on this challenge.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you. I look forward to working with you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Hagerty?

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank each of you for your service.

I would like to start with you, Mr. Robinson, if I might. The issue that I have been deeply concerned about is fentanyl, and the impact on youth in my home state has been significant, particularly so since the borders have collapsed. In late January, we have seen an increase not only in overdoses but in deaths from fentanyl.

And I would like to read a definition to you, if I might, to see if we are on the same page. According to United States law, a weapon of mass destruction is defined as the following. One of these definitions is a weapon that is designed to cause death or serious injury through toxic or poisonous chemicals.

Would you define fentanyl as a weapon of mass destruction under these sort of circumstances?

Mr. ROBINSON. Senator, that is a great question. I do not know if I would define it as a weapon of mass destruction. But I absolutely am heartbroken by what fentanyl is doing to our communities across the United States.

I think—I think that we have a lot of work to do here at home on the demand side. But, more importantly, I think that there is very much we can do in terms of diplomatic engagement to work with our partners in Mexico, to work with our partners in—well, to work with China to stop the flow of precursors to Mexico and stop the distribution from Mexico by narcotic—

Senator HAGERTY. Yes. I was just in Mexico about two weeks ago meeting with their foreign minister and economic minister, and they are deeply concerned at the increase in inflow of fentanyl and its precursors from China coming into Mexico. It is being mixed there, shipped across the borders, and killing our children.

So as a parent, as an American, I very much appreciate your efforts here and I look forward to working with you, should you be confirmed, in pushing back against what I would call a weapon of mass destruction that is being unleashed against our population here.

Thank you.

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you, sir.

Senator HAGERTY. Ambassador Kritenbrink, it is wonderful to see you again. My regards to Nami and to your two children.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY. Again, thank you for your service at a most challenging time. I think you are the perfect person——

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY.—be brought forward for this position. I would like to talk with you about an area that you and I have had plenty of conversations before, and that is—that is the Quad and the Indo-Pacific.

I think that we have made great strides with our allies in the Quad. I think there is a lot more that we can do. I would love to get your perspective on how we might engage other nations in that effort.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you, Senator, very much for your comments.

I fully agree. I think the Quad is a vitally important mechanism. I was deeply impressed and grateful for the president's hosting of the first ever leaders level Quad summit, and I think it truly has shown that the four Quad democracies in the region have decided to stand together and advance these interests and these values that we share.

But they have also agreed, we have also agreed, to work in very practical areas, and I think, as a career diplomat, I am focused on the ways in which we, together with our partners, can move the needle in the region in practical ways.

So the Quad leaders summit issued a roadmap and a work plan for the rest of the year focused on public health, particularly, combating COVID-19, focusing on climate, but also issues related to technology, and I know you and I have discussed that in detail.

I think—I think we need to focus in those practical ways, but I do agree with you, Senator, it cannot be just the Quad. It has to be all of our like-minded partners, whether it is our treaty allies, whether it is our important friends and partners in ASEAN or across the region.

I think most of the region is united behind the vision of a region that is peaceful, stable, where countries large and small play by the rules, large countries do not bully small countries. I think that is where we need to focus our energy.

Senator HAGERTY. I appreciate your perspective on——

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Senator, the Quad is central.

Senator HAGERTY. Yeah, I appreciate your perspective on that.

I would just like to turn to one more thing and that is the movement of supply chains from China out—you know, companies that are trying to derisk their exposure to China.

Of course, I want every one of those companies to come back to American shores, to see those jobs back in America. But to the extent that those jobs do not come back here, what are the opportunities that we might have with some of our allies in the region to work together for joint economic prosperity, to work together to strengthen our economic ties, and that will bring our national security ties even closer?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you, Senator.

I fully agree. I think we need to focus on supply chain resiliency, security, to make sure that neither we nor the world are completely dependent upon and vulnerable to one country.

Again, as we do that, the preference, of course, would be to bring most of those home. Where that is not possible, I think ensuring that those supply chains are diversified and resilient and strong is key, particularly, working with like-minded democratic partners, I think, especially in the technology space, especially related to semiconductors, but also, as we discovered in COVID-19, even personal protective equipment and other medical equipment as key.

But I think—when I think about our competition with China, I do think these issues related to our economic competition, particularly related to technology and the resilience of our supply chains, will probably be central to that competition.

And I would be committed to doing everything possible, both within the State Department and across the U.S. Government, to advance—

Senator HAGERTY. Should you be confirmed, I look forward to working with you closely.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you, Senator.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you for your service, Ambassador Kritenbrink.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you, Senator.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator KAINE?

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to this panel of nominees. I think you are all very highly qualified for these positions. Look forward to supporting you.

Ambassador Kritenbrink, I think I am going to spend my five minutes with you talking about a topic that matters a lot to me, the Chinese persecution of Uighurs in the Xinjiang province.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Yes.

Senator KAINE. There is a sizable Uighur population in Virginia, and I have talked to many of my constituents as well as just following news about this.

The leadership of Xi Jinping has seen China not only become bolder and more effective in projecting malign influence and power worldwide, but the Government has become more ruthless in many ways—uses of technology, forced sterilization, separation of families, and attempting to reduce and disperse its Uighur Muslim population.

Both Secretaries of State Pompeo and Blinken have indicated that this is a genocide under the technical term, an intentional and very strategic effort, in the words of China's own officials, to, basically, carry out the elimination or reduction of the Uighur population and other Muslim populations in Xinjiang province.

Last week, we had a joint subcommittee hearing in this committee. It was the first joint subcommittee hearing we had had in seven years and it was about China's atrocities in the Xinjiang province.

The chair—the subcommittee I chair on Western Hemisphere, Global Democracy, and Human Rights worked together with the Subcommittee on East Asia, chaired by Senator Markey. Senators Rubio and Romney were very involved in this.

And we heard from a number of witnesses in very powerful ways. One was my constituent, Ms. Rushan Abbas. She spoke very mov-

ingly about her sister, Dr. Gulshan Abbas, who has been in detention for three years. Her birthday was last Saturday, her third birthday in prison.

They know she is in prison. They do not know where she is, but they did find out that she was secretly sentenced in a secret trial to a 20-year prison term. She is a physician who had made her career in the Xinjiang province just helping patients.

U.S. efforts, global efforts thus far to combat the terrible atrocity have not been effective. So what more can we do as a committee, as an administration, as a country, to increase pressure on China to end this grim persecution of the Uighur and other Muslim populations in Xinjiang?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Senator, thank you very much for your comments and your leadership on this issue.

I agree completely with your assessment of the challenge. I had the privilege of viewing most of your hearing last week and I, too, was moved by the testimony, particularly of Ms. Abbas.

The ongoing genocide in Xinjiang shocks the conscience. We estimate more than 1 million Uighurs have been forcibly detained, put into reeducation camps, forced to provide labor, and many other disturbing allegations about how they are being treated.

I think, Senator, working together with this committee, our obligation is to continue to shine a very bright light on this ongoing genocide, and I have been gratified to see that our other partners around the world, whether it is the G-7 or Japanese and Korean partners or our Quad partners as well have all spoken out against the abuses happening there.

But more importantly, Senator, I think we need to continue to take steps using all the tools that the U.S. Government has at its disposal to hold to account the leaders who are carrying out these atrocities.

And if I were confirmed, I would be committed to doing just that. I know that we have used a variety of tools, including Global Magnitsky tools, to sanction a number of the leaders, officials, and entities who are carrying out this repression in Xinjiang, including the Xinjiang party secretary, Chen Quanguo.

And if I were confirmed, Senator, I pledge that we will continue to work not just to shine a bright light on the abuses, but also to take steps to hold those responsible accountable.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Two additional items in my last 40 seconds is related to the same topic.

First, a lot of U.S. companies may be directly or indirectly, even unknowingly, facilitating this persecution in Xinjiang through their contacts in the region.

Human Rights Watch had witness before us last week, Dr. Sophie Richardson, who indicated that they have written U.S. companies to get information to try to make sure the companies are aware of the dangers and they, generally, have not gotten responses.

It is my hope that we might work together with you, should you be confirmed, so that a request by the U.S. Government might produce a response from some of these companies.

And then, in addition, we need to work with allies outside the region. China is engaged in a pretty aggressive practice of having Uighurs arrested——

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Yes.

Senator KAINE.—in countries like the UAE and Egypt and Saudi Arabia, allies in the United States, and then deported back to China, and we need to work with our allies to make sure that they do not facilitate the long arm of this gruesome persecution campaign all over the globe.

And I would look forward to working with you on that together as well.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Yes, sir.

Senator, again, I fully agree with your assessment and your recommendation on both points. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and members of the committee on both of those issues.

Senator KAINE. Great. Thank you so much.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

I understand Senator Young is with us virtually.

Senator YOUNG. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you so much.

Ambassador Robinson, in the midst of this global pandemic, Americans have continued to suffer under the scourge of narcotics trafficking, much of that being trafficked through our southern border.

Despite some public calls for the designation, the Trump administration notably refrained from designating the Mexican drug cartels as a foreign terrorist organization.

As the cartels use kidnapping, execution-style killings, the targeted killing of journalists and politicians, and with the flow of narcotics and violence into the United States continuing unabating it seems clear that the legal standard for this designation of foreign terrorist organization has been met.

But I understand that Mexico may oppose such a designation. If confirmed, Mr. Ambassador, would you consider such a designation?

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you, Senator, for that—for that question, and I absolutely share your concerns with—about the malign influence of narcotics traffickers and the threats they pose to communities throughout the region.

I think, you know, it is probably worth, you know, looking at. I am not a lawyer so I do not know what the legal definition is.

But there is no doubt that the influence of narcotic traffickers throughout the region is crushing to communities, not just in the United States but in Mexico, in Colombia, and throughout Central America.

And I will, certainly, commit to you that we will use all of the necessary tools to go after these criminal organizations and traffickers.

Senator YOUNG. Well, I thank you for that. Perhaps you could—I understand you are not being—you are not an attorney, and you will want to refer to others' analysis.

I am an attorney. I do not want to overstate my qualifications to make this assessment, and attorneys can disagree.

But it seems to me that the legal definition is, indeed, met as I look at the different pillars that need to be analyzed. Time does not permit me to get into those.

But I also understand that there will be diplomatic considerations that play into this. What secondary effects may undermine the effectiveness of such a designation? This would be diplomatic analysis on your part.

Mr. ROBINSON. I think that is—I think that is a great question. I would—you know, I would have to talk to—you know, should I be confirmed, I would make it my—one of my missions to talk to governments in the region to find out what secondary effects there may be.

I, certainly, do not see why there would be obstacles to using maximum efforts to go after the narcotics traffickers and criminal organizations, and if this is a tool that we could effectively use, I would, certainly, want to engage with the governments in the region and governments globally to see what further we could do to sanction these groups.

Senator YOUNG. Like I said, I will look forward to working with you on that. I am encouraged by what seems to be an aggressive bias for action on this. I expect the Mexicans may indicate a lack of motivation to work with us on other matters if we go this direction.

That can be a concern, and there may be some—an increased migration flow into this country of Mexican nationals fleeing terrorism if the terrorist designation is made.

But with that said, would you commit to working with my office in working through this matter should you be confirmed, sir?

Mr. ROBINSON. Should I be confirmed, absolutely, Senator. I will work with your office.

Senator YOUNG. Okay, thank you. I know our time is winding down. I just wanted to put one other matter, a stake sort of in the ground about my interest in it. Perhaps we can work together, should you be confirmed.

One of the missions of your bureau is to enforce maritime rights and practice law enforcement at sea in the Indo-Pacific region. Admittedly, Ambassador Robinson, this is a mission larger than any single federal agency.

It will involve collaboration and cooperation with the Navy and the Coast Guard and other entities and agencies and individuals.

And given China's predatory actions at sea throughout the Pacific, I would be interested in exploring your priorities for INL's practicing of maritime law enforcement throughout the Pacific, especially in Oceania, and seeing where INL might better coordinate with the Coast Guard, moving forward. I would like to help do anything I can to ensure that INL is successful in this mission.

So thank you for your desire to serve.

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you, Senator. And I agree, I think that that INL has a fairly good story to tell about cooperation in that region on maritime security.

I know when I was deputy assistant secretary we worked very closely with partner countries, allies in the region, on that issue. We did the same in West Africa.

And so I would be happy to, should I be confirmed, work with your office on this.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator YOUNG. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Shaheen?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to each of you for your willingness to be considered for these critical posts at this time.

I would like to begin with you, Ambassador Robinson, because I come from a state that has been very hard hit by the opioid epidemic, and fentanyl has been the killer.

We have one of—have had one of the highest overdose death rates in the country, and so I share the concerns that have been expressed on both sides of the aisle about how we respond to this and I appreciated your comments.

Senator Portman, who is also a member of this committee, and I recently introduced legislation to build the capacity of foreign law enforcement agencies to detect and interdict fentanyl and other synthetic drugs, and also to try and increase collaboration between the United States and foreign countries.

As someone who has worked in this arena in the past, can you tell me if you think there are particular best practices or areas where cooperation has really worked to make a difference to address this issue?

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you, Senator, and it is a very important point. I just want to emphasize how heartbreaking it is to know—to see the ravages of this drug on American communities and, particularly, communities like your state—in your state.

Actually, INL, working on the—with the interagency, working with our partners in DEA and the Department of Justice, we have been able to do lots of training and capacity building globally, working with like-minded police organizations in countries around the world on training, identifying strategies, you know, making sure they are looking at going after the money and going after governments that participate in these things.

So there is a—there is a whole range of tools that we can use to work with police organizations on these issues, and I would be happy to explore that with your office, should I be confirmed.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. Perhaps you could look at the legislation that we are introducing and see if there are ways that we can make it more effective and other authorizations or other needs that you might have at INL.

Mr. ROBINSON. Yeah, absolutely, Senator.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Mr. Holmgren, you have been asked about Havana syndrome, and this is something that my office heard about almost immediately after the attacks because I have some constituents who have been affected by it.

And I am still concerned that six months into this new administration that we are still hearing from some of those people who have been affected about the lack of coordination, about the inabil-

ity to meet with leadership, and particularly at State about the willingness of State to cooperate with the Department of Defense and the red tape that is still involved with getting treatment.

So can you commit to not just trying to get to the bottom of that but to finding out what is causing it and why there is not more, at this point, coordination around how we are responding to this serious concern that is affecting too many employees within the federal government?

Mr. HOLMGREN. Thank you, Senator, for that important question and for your leadership—excuse me—on this issue.

I absolutely commit to understanding if there are ways in how we can improve the interagency coordination process on this and, in particular, what role INR can and should be playing to both support the department but also, as you mentioned, the interagency.

I understand that the NSC has established a coordination cell. I think that is a good—a very good positive development to bring together the different parts of the interagency and that State has now—has a lead, a person responsible for coordinating the State Department's efforts.

And so, if confirmed, I am—I am eager to be involved in that. As I said up front, I have friends and former colleagues from CIA and other places that are affected by this, and so I think it is—I take it as a personal responsibility to address the issue.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. I really appreciate that.

And I will say to you what I have said to others, that I think one of the challenges with this issue is the classified nature of all of the information, and it makes it very difficult when there is an unwillingness of our State Departments and agencies to share with members of Congress what is going on and also to share with members of the public.

So I would urge you to look at ways in which we can unclassify information that is not going to be harmful so that people really understand what is going on.

Mr. HOLMGREN. Thank you, Senator. I hear your concern and I pledge to do that.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ambassador Schatz?

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Schatz. I was giving you—I do not know if it is a promotion.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Some would consider it a promotion.

Senator SCHATZ. We can ask Ambassador Hagerty if that is a promotion or not.

The CHAIRMAN. He is here, so I do not know. That may be the answer. I am sorry.

Senator Schatz?

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for your service.

Ambassador Kritenbrink, I want to start with Oceania. Secretary Blinken spoke at the Pacific Island Conference of Leaders a week ago.

These kinds of engagements are really meaningful. They underscore our commitment to the region, including helping them to confront COVID and the climate crisis.

Can you just talk about how you will engage in Oceania and your role to ensure that it will be elevated in our Indo-Pacific strategy?

And I think, you know, generally speaking, as we think on this committee, in the broader Senate, in the media, when we think about our Asia Pacific strategy, when we think our Indo-Pacific strategy, everyone is immediately thinking about China and China only.

And it occurs to me that there is a vast ocean full of nations—
Mr. KRITENBRINK. Yes, sir.

Senator SCHATZ.—that we need to reengage with that are our longtime partners and allies and friends, and for both moral reasons and strategic reasons, we need to reengage, and I am wondering if you can comment on that.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Senator, thank you very much for your comments and for your leadership on these issues.

I fully agree with your assessment. If confirmed, I would be committed to making sure we expand our robust engagement with the countries—with the Pacific Island countries.

I think, Senator, the first issue that you identified is one of the most important. First, we have to show up. We have to demonstrate our commitment by engaging and participating in meetings and organizations like the PIF.

Secondly, Senator, I believe that we need to engage across the board because we have a number of vital national interests that are implicated amongst our Pacific Island friends.

You mentioned climate, of course. Important security issues at play, issues related to illegal and unregulated fishing. Of course, climate change is an existential threat for many of these partners and, of course, COVID-19 is a great challenge across the region.

If I were confirmed, Senator, I would be committed to upping our engagement across the board to advance those interests and to ensure that our strategic competitors like China as well do not take advantage or use their malign influence to advance their interests at the expense of ours or our partners in the Pacific Islands.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

Ambassador Robinson, I want to stay on Oceania for the moment. I introduced a bill with Senator Murkowski to elevate all of Oceania in U.S. foreign policy.

One aspect of this bill is to increase our ability to counter the Chinese Government's foreign practices—foreign corrupt practices in Oceania, and much of that work runs through INL.

We have heard, though, that INL does not have the resources to be present in the Oceania region to the extent that you may wish and that they have had to make quote/unquote, “hard choices” about not prioritizing the Pacific Islands.

I was glad, however, to see that the president's budget carves out funding in INL to counter the Chinese Government's global malign influence campaign. But we need to make sure that Oceania is part of that effort.

Can you talk about what you see in Oceania and what we ought to do about it through INL?

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you, Senator. I think that is a—that is a very important question.

You know, as you have pointed out, most of our focus has been on focusing on the malign influence of China in the region. I suspect I would have to look more closely, but I suspect much of the work we are going to do INL would do in the region, if I am confirmed, would focus on China's malign influence.

But there are—you know, there are other issues in the region that we can—that we can and should focus on, and we spoke about it a little earlier. Working with like-minded partners on maritime safety, for instance, will be key.

And, you know, INL can take a look at issues a little bit outside of our area. We do work on wildlife trafficking. We do work on illegal mining. We do work on illegal fisheries.

And so all of those issues or many of those issues might get us closer to the region and closer to the issues that you are raising.

Senator SCHATZ. Final question. I will make it quick.

You know, I have been working on Lacey Act amendments. I know Senator Merkley and others have prioritized this over the many, many years.

The thing with the Lacey Act is it does not quite get to about half of all of the tropical deforestation, which is the result of illegal deforestation for commercial agriculture.

And so I am wondering if we can work with you and the other relevant federal agencies to get more supply chain transparency and also to dig into the root causes that result in deforestation, clear cutting for agriculture and for commodity development.

The Lacey Act was a very important start, but we are sort of stuck there, and even our partners in the business community who want to do the right thing have great difficulty in terms of the supply chain transparency.

So I think it is time for another round of collective thinking about what is the next iteration of the Lacey Act so that we can actually make sure that we do not just declare that we find illegal deforestation offensive to us and to the globe but that we are actually going to crack down on it, and I am wondering if I can have your commitment to work with us on that.

Mr. ROBINSON. Absolutely, Senator, you have my commitment.

Senator SCHATZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Van Hollen?

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. Congratulations to all of you on your nominations.

Let me start with you, Ambassador Kritenbrink.

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Yes, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I was pleased to see the statements made by President Biden and others at the recent NATO summit regarding a more coordinated coherent strategy with respect to China's efforts to use its centralized economic power to export its authoritarian model, and I was pleased to hear your response to Senator Hagerty with respect to the Quad and you also mentioned other allies in the area including, of course, South Korea and others.

One of the important issues that has come up with respect to the situation in the South China Sea is the importance of something

many of us have been in favor of for a long time, which is ratifying the Law of the Sea Treaty.

In your opinion, would that be an important step that the United States could take along with the international community to provide clear rules of the road that would benefit not just the United States but others in the region and around the world?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Senator, thank you very much for your question.

I know that when Secretary Blinken was asked that same question in testimony last week, he stated that he was not yet aware if there was an administrative—administration position, but that he personally supported the ratification and believed it would be helpful.

I think what I would say, Senator, is whatever we can do to reinforce the rules-based international order where countries large and small play by the rules the better.

The great irony, of course, is that even though the United States has not ratified UNCLOS we do abide by it because we believe it represents customary international law.

China, of course, has ratified it and violates it on a daily basis.

Nonetheless, Senator I am—I would be supportive of any action that strengthens our position on maritime issues, including our legal rates.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So would not it put the United States in a stronger position vis-à-vis China and its violations of the Law of the Sea Treaty if the United States were a party to the agreement?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Well, I would associate myself with Secretary Blinken's comments on that last week.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I will take that—I understand. He said he was personally in favor of it and I—

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Thank you, Senator.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. So—

Mr. KRITENBRINK. But can I just underscore? I think you have hit the nail right on the head that we have to advance our interests in supporting the rules-based international order.

Many other things we need to do in the maritime domain as well, but that is a key one. Thank you, sir.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

Let me ask you about a piece of legislation that we passed a couple years ago here. It was called the BRINK Act. I authored it together with Senator Toomey, and it was designed to close some of the loopholes in the sanctions that we have imposed on North Korea.

There was a recent U.N. panel of experts report on the implementation of international sanctions against North Korea, and they painted a picture of a very leaky sanctions regime, especially with respect to some goods flowing from China.

They also mentioned key imports, refined petroleum and coal, had surged into North Korea last year. So the BRINK Act establishes a secondary sanctions regime similar to the earlier Iran sanctions regime that helped bring Iran to the table for the JCPOA.

Could you commit to working with us and the Department of Treasury to make sure that we fully apply this law? And what is

your current assessment of, you know, the role sanctions can play in putting pressure on the North Korean regime?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Senator, thank you very much.

If confirmed, I can assure you that I would look forward to working with you and your team on these issues.

As I noted at the outset, the Biden ministration—Biden/Harris administration is committed to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and, if confirmed, I would support an approach that relies both on sanctions enforcement and deterrence as well as a practical calibrated approach open to democracy.

If confirmed, I would be delighted to learn more about the BRINK Act and how we can strengthen the sanctions regime.

But, Senator, I do agree, enforcing the sanctions regime with tools that we have, together with U.N. tools, I think is vitally important to the denuclearization goals that we have.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you. And again, thank all of you for your service.

And Mr. Holmgren, let me just say I think INR is one of those great agencies in the federal government that punches way above its weight.

So I hope you will hold your own within the IC because, in my experience, INR has called it right more than the other agencies, on average.

Mr. HOLMGREN. Thank you, Senator. It is an honor to be nominated to lead INR.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator Cruz?

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Congratulations to each of the three of you.

Mr. Holmgren, let us start with you. If confirmed, you would be the principal intelligence adviser to the secretary and other State Department principals.

You would be charged with driving the intelligence apparatus advising the secretary of state on the risks and the benefits of reentering any nuclear deal with Iran.

I want to ask you about that. One of the most troubling aspects of the catastrophic Obama Iran nuclear deal were the enormous holes in verifying Iranian compliance.

Some of those holes were obvious, such as giving Iran weeks to clean up sites before inspections and functionally prohibiting inspection of military facilities.

Others were less obvious but even more damaging. One side deal forced the IAEA, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, to prematurely close investigations into past Iranian nuclear weapons work, leaving the scope and the nature of Iran's weapons program unknown.

According to Bloomberg, the Obama administration provided Congress with a classified annex, saying that the deal could still be verified if Iran fully complied and did not cheat.

Today, we know, of course, the deal failed to detect vast portions of Iran's nuclear weapons program. We know it because of daring raids and revelations by our Israeli allies.

We know that between the implementation of the deal in January 26 to May 2018 the IAEA was not aware that Iran was concealing a nuclear weapons archive, nor was the IAEA aware that Iran was contained—had containers at a warehouse called Turqazabad where the IAEA later reportedly discovered traces of man-altered uranium.

The agency subsequently visited three other undisclosed sites and found nuclear material at two of them. The IAEA has never inspected any facility run by the SPND, a military organization employing nuclear weapons scientists, which, until last year, was run by the founder of Iran's nuclear weapons program. That is unknown sites and zero military facilities inspected.

Despite all of this, the Biden administration is rushing to reenter the Iran deal.

Mr. Holmgren, do you support reentering the deal in light of those failures?

Mr. HOLMGREN. Senator Cruz, thank you for that question.

As a former intelligence analyst who focused on the Middle East, I very much appreciate the multi-dimensional threat that Iran poses—their state sponsorship of terrorism, their nuclear ambitions, cyber, human rights violations, and their ballistic missile capabilities.

So I very much appreciate the threat. If confirmed to lead INR, which is part of the intelligence community, my commitment to you and to this entire committee is that we will supply objective information and analysis regarding all of Iran's malign activities to include its compliance with the—with the nuclear requirements as part of the JCPOA even if those conclusions diverge from your policy interests, but especially, because I think it is even more important, if the intelligence community has a different view based on all sorts of information of where policymakers are that we would absolutely provide that information to support the secretary but also other policymakers as well as this committee.

Senator CRUZ. In your assessment, what additional measures would be required to close the loopholes that allowed these failures in the prior deal?

Mr. HOLMGREN. Senator, I am not—I am not privy to—I have not been in government the last few years so I am not privy to the—any classified details and additional measures.

But what I could tell you is that, from an intelligence perspective, I think having an incredibly strong collection and analytic regime focused on Iran's compliance would be—certainly, would be a top priority.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, I view Iran as one of the top big four threats we face, and so making sure that INR has the resources and the expertise to provide objective analysis would absolutely be a priority for me, sir.

Senator CRUZ. Okay.

And, Mr. Kritenbrink, the Obama administration implemented a policy that forbade our Taiwanese allies from displaying symbols of their sovereignty, whether flags or medals or uniforms, on U.S. soil.

During the Trump administration, I pressed the Trump administration to change that policy to reverse the ban, and they did so.

Unfortunately, after Secretary Blinken came through his confirmation hearing where I asked him about it and he committed to maintaining the policy of allowing Taiwan to display its symbols of sovereignty, subsequently, the Biden State Department reversed that policy and now prohibits our Taiwanese allies from displaying their symbols of sovereignty.

This committee just a few weeks ago took up legislation I had to reverse the new Biden ban and to return to the preexisting policy that allowed Taiwan, like our other allies, to display their symbols of sovereignty.

This committee passed that overwhelmingly. The Senate passed it overwhelmingly in a bipartisan manner. If confirmed, will you restore the previous policy allowing our Taiwanese allies to display their symbols of sovereignty, and if not, why not?

Mr. KRITENBRINK. Senator, thank you very much for the question.

I want to emphasize at the outset, Senator, if confirmed, I would be absolutely committed to growing our robust and vitally important partnership with democratic Taiwan.

I would argue that our partnership with Taiwan is perhaps stronger than it has ever been, from our commitments demonstrated under the Taiwan Relations Act, including \$30 billion in arm sales since 2009, to the provision of vaccines, to our close health cooperation to the visit by three members of the Senate in just the last few weeks.

I think we have made clear our commitment to growing that partnership with Taiwan.

Senator, since 1979, for decades now, the United States has followed a set of contact guidelines for our engagement with Taiwan, and my understanding, Senator, is for decades now those guidelines have outlined that during our important engagements with our unofficial—our Taiwan counterparts to advance our unofficial relationship that symbols of sovereignty are not allowed on U.S. Government property.

And those guidelines, as I understand them, Senator, have been in place for decades and were in place for the vast majority of the previous administration as well.

Based on the briefings and discussions that I have had, Senator, the new guidelines that have been enacted under the Biden administration are significantly liberalized. They are explicitly designed to further develop our relationships and our partnership with Taiwan, and they have been welcomed by the Taiwan leadership, including President Tsai herself.

So I can assure you, Senator, that I am committed in every way to growing our partnership with Taiwan and I will hasten to add that, of course, I will always enforce U.S. law.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you.

Ambassador Robinson, I am going to close up with you, I think, because this will be the last set of questions. I do not want you to think I—you have no—none of my attention. So let me just, briefly, make a statement about Mexico.

I had some deep concerns about Mexico over the last year. In the fall, the United States arrested Mexico's former defense minister on

drug trafficking charges. Very literally this case highlighted that Mexican drug trafficking organizations are capable of co-opting individuals at the highest levels of Mexico's Government.

When we released General Cienfuegos, albeit under some rather murky circumstances, the López Obrador government responded by publishing U.S. law enforcement documents, in violation of our mutual legal assistance treaty and then pushing a law to the Mexican Congress that seemed intent on constraining bilateral law enforcement cooperation.

I understand how important the U.S. trade, economic, political, and security relationship is with Mexico and I am fully supportive of efforts to strengthen it.

However, we have to be clear eyed. We cannot ignore evidence about the links between certain members of Mexico security forces and drug traffickers.

So, if confirmed, I trust you will give these issues your full attention?

Mr. ROBINSON. Absolutely, Mr. Chairman.

I share your concerns and look forward, should I be confirmed, to working with the interagency and working with the Congress to addressing and focusing on these issues.

The CHAIRMAN. And one last question for you. We had a very good in-depth discussion so a lot of the issues have been raised.

As I thought, fentanyl and others have been raised. I am increasingly concerned by reports that the Assad regime is earning hard currency in the face of international sanctions and cratering currency and economy by manufacturing and exporting Captagon, a potent and addictive amphetamine, often with the cooperation of Hezbollah.

This drug is being smuggled, often by Hezbollah, across Lebanon's border with Syria and through Lebanon's weak import and export controls to be distributed throughout Europe and the Middle East, prompting bans on Lebanese exports recently that the Lebanese economy can ill afford.

What steps can we take to counter such drug smuggling, including assistance to strengthen the Lebanese border and customs enforcement?

Mr. ROBINSON. Mr. Chairman, that is a great question.

INL has a great track record on working with the government of Lebanon on training and capacity building, and we will continue. Should I be confirmed, I would make sure that we would continue to do that.

I would also say that we can work with the interagency—we have been working with the interagency to track these shipments, particularly with DEA, and working with like-minded partners in the region.

We know Saudi Arabia is particularly concerned about this, the trafficking of this drug, and we can continue to work with like-minded partners on this issue.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I just want to highlight it because, of course, we often hear about fentanyl, as we should because it is causing deaths in America. But in this case of this Captagon, you have got a lot of bad players.

You have Hezbollah, you have Assad, and undermining what little is left of the Lebanese economy. That is a bad trifecta, at the end of the day.

So I hope that you will make it one of your priorities upon confirmation.

Mr. ROBINSON. I share your concern, Chairman, and should I be confirmed, we will absolutely track it.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator? All right.

With that, with the thanks of the committee, this record will remain open until tomorrow at the close of business.

There may be questions for the record. We would urge the nominees to answer those questions expeditiously so you can be considered for a business meeting.

And with that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:37 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. TODD D. ROBINSON BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Central America/Illegal Migration

Question. Given your previous experience in Central America and at INL, can you describe the nexus between transnational criminal organizations and human smuggling/trafficking across Central America and Mexico? What financial benefits would you estimate drug trafficking groups are reaping from the increased flows of illegal migrants arriving at our Southwest border?

Answer. Systemic corruption and impunity contribute to the permissive environments that enable the illicit activities of transnational criminal organizations across Central America and Mexico, some of which are involved in smuggling migrants across countries' borders or are profiting from the exploitation of individuals in sex trafficking or forced labor, including forced criminal activity. I understand corruption, insecurity, and low levels of trust in institutions are among the root causes driving irregular migration in the region, including to the United States, and undermine economic growth and development, weaken the rule of law, and lead to a loss of hope. If confirmed, I will continue to press these governments to take concrete actions to combat corruption and impunity, improve democratic governance, and strengthen the rule of law. Reliable estimates of the ill-gotten financial gains of drug trafficking groups or transnational criminal organizations are hard to confirm, but remain a concern.

Mexico/Illicit Narcotics

Question. What specific actions would you encourage Mexico take to meaningfully tackle transitional criminal activities through its territory, including trafficking of fentanyl and other illicit narcotics?

Answer. INL strengthens Mexico's capacity to reduce the production and trafficking of fentanyl and other illicit drugs. I understand that INL supports Mexico's recent steps to regulate fentanyl precursor chemicals and encourages Mexico to increase and better integrate its investigations into precursor chemical diversion, drug production, and trafficking. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department works to strengthen cooperation on this vital issue through the cabinet-level security dialogue committed to during Vice President Harris' June 8 meeting with Mexican President López Obrador.

Venezuela

Question. Can you describe how the Maduro regime's involvement in transnational criminal activities impacts peace and stability in Colombia?

Answer. Colombia has worked hard to extend effective state presence throughout its national territory, but the Maduro regime's mismanagement and its tolerance of

illicit activities and evident lack of interest in controlling such activities within its own borders has made Colombia's task vastly more difficult. The Maduro regime's profit-seeking ties with dissident members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the Colombian-origin National Liberation Army, and Venezuelan paramilitary groups facilitate illicit activity, public corruption, and graft schemes. These relationships, combined with historically weak government presence at the border between Colombia and Venezuela, have allowed Colombian terrorist groups and narcotraffickers to operate with impunity. Venezuelans and Colombians are the victims of the Maduro regime's inability or unwillingness to provide security within Venezuela and of the predatory behavior of these criminal groups.

Cuba/State Sponsor of Terrorism

Question. Should Cuba be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism (SST) while they continue to harbor U.S. fugitives and U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations?

Answer. I understand 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.

If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the administration's review of Cuba policy. Our priority in Cuba, as the rest of the Hemisphere, needs to be democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Afghanistan

Question. Given the Biden administration's decision to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, how can INL realistically and effectively counter Afghanistan's opium problem or provide oversight of existing counternarcotic programs?

Answer. I understand that most cultivation and production of poppy in Afghanistan occurs in areas under Taliban influence or control, compounding the challenge of implementing effective counternarcotics projects. INL has a constructive working relationship with the Afghan Government and supports specialized counter-drug enforcement units in Afghanistan, such as the National Interdiction Unit and the polygraphed Sensitive Investigative Unit, with enablers including a modern wiretap system and a team of U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration mentors. These units have mounted successful operations in insurgent-held areas. Additionally, INL funds border and customs police to effectively search and profile passengers and cargo at ports of entry, treatment for Afghans suffering from substance use disorders, licit alternatives to poppy for farmers, and capacity building for the Afghan Government. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to utilize a tiered approach to monitoring existing projects, including third party monitors for end-use monitoring and implementation activities, and multiple organizations to provide assessments and evaluations on INL activities.

Lebanon-Internal Security Forces (ISF)

Question. As Lebanon faces a potential state collapse, please comment on continued assistance to the ISF in Lebanon.

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize our support to the ISF, a key partner in maintaining peace in Lebanon. Following the August 2020 Port of Beirut explosion, I understand INL increased efforts to provide basic equipment support to the ISF, including PPE as it dealt with the COVID crisis, address internal corruption, and improve internal and external cooperation through cross functional collaboration. This includes human resource automation efforts, which can reduce administrative demands, increase productivity, reduce costs, and provide more transparency and accountability within the ISF. Continued support to the ISF can help mitigate further instability in Lebanon.

West Bank-Palestinian Security Forces (PASF)

Question. Is this an appropriate focus for the PASF without securing concessions on pay to slay? How have Israeli attitudes towards the PASF evolved following recent violence with Hamas and Gaza? USSC has also suggested that PASF should be allowed to attend US military training and schools. Is this an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars given the PASF's non-state status?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure INL delivers its assistance consistent with its authorities and other U.S. laws. The shift in focus reflects improved performance and maturity by the PASF since we began providing assistance in 2007. I understand that INL believes taking this new focus will sustain that trend. The PASF units INL assisted performed well in their daily missions as well as during crises, especially including the latest round of violence, when they had to coordinate with

Israeli security forces. The PASF will receive their operational training at their own training centers in Jericho. If confirmed, I will ensure that any decision to send a small selection of well-vetted senior officers to U.S. military institutions is based solely on a commitment to provide them the best leadership training available that will make them better officers and further improve the performance of the PASF.

Libya

Question. How does INL plan to work with the MOI in Libya to re-establish a governmental monopoly on the use of force and reduce the presence of non-state militias and mercenaries?

Answer. A move away from the informal and hybrid relationships that have developed over the past war-torn years will require a combination of different strengths across the Department to address these challenges, particularly with disarmament, demobilization, and deradicalization, and to facilitate the movement towards re legitimization of criminal justice institutions and law enforcement.

To that end, I understand INL aims to help build the capabilities of legitimate institutions that can provide for civilian security focused on their needs, incorporate the rule of law, and include greater emphasis on appropriate use of force that is compliant with international standards on human rights. INL is developing opportunities with the Ministries of Interior and Justice to return criminal justice facilities previously damaged by the hostilities witnessed in Libya back to Ministry of Justice control and out of the hands of militias.

Tunisia

Question. How does INL plan to work to ensure allegations of police violence and credibility and transparently investigated, and those found responsible held to account? Are there ways in which INL can tailor programming to ensure police officers and unit commanders are held accountable for instances of excessive use of force? What role should Tunisia's police unions play moving forward?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure INL continues to work across the Tunisian criminal justice sector to foster and institutionalize transparency and accountability. INL's law enforcement programming incorporates international best practices, including the use of modern policing techniques, methods of internal accountability, transparency to the public, and citizen-oriented approaches. INL complies with statutory provisions to vet units and individuals for potential gross violations of human rights and encourages the Government to investigate and hold accountable those responsible. The 2014 Tunisian constitution permits internal security forces to unionize; however, it does not define the unions' role beyond the prohibition to strike, and INL does not work with the unions.

Question. Are there specific steps that INL can take to advance security sector reform in Tunisia? What does INL consider to be the most pressing priorities in terms of advancing a wider security sector reform agenda?

Answer. Given security challenges, the need for broad reform, and limited resources, security sector reform in Tunisia has not been linear. Within this dynamic environment, INL designs its programming in Tunisia to address civilian criminal justice sector reform holistically across law enforcement, justice, and corrections. INL prioritizes assistance to the Government of Tunisia to improve core operational capacities and competencies in support of fair, transparent, and independent criminal justice organizations responsive to citizens' needs.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. TODD D. ROBINSON BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Addressing Corruption and Kleptocracy

Question. The Combating Global Corruption Act obliges the Executive to identify corruption in countries and rank them; establishes minimum standards for combating corruption; and evaluates foreign persons engaged in grand corruption for consideration under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act.

- If confirmed, in what ways will you strengthen efforts at the State Department to focus on combating corruption abroad?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work across the department to combat corruption as a top foreignpolicy priority of the Biden-Harris Administration. The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs plays a key role in the promotion of internationally recognized standards and commitments to prevent and combat

corruption, provides targeted foreign assistance to strengthen criminal justice systems and institutions to both resist and root out corruption abroad, and implements visa restrictions to promote accountability for corrupt actors. I will work to expand these efforts and our partnerships and coordination across the interagency to ensure the range of foreign assistance and diplomatic tools are brought to bear in cultivating strong, transparent institutions to prevent and combat corruption abroad.

Question. Do you see opportunities to improve our whole-of-government approach towards fighting corruption?

Answer. The United States enforces one of the most robust anticorruption frameworks in the world. The President's National Security Study Memorandum on the fight against corruption presents a unique opportunity to further integrate the expertise of U.S. federal agencies into these efforts and create a more expansive and effective whole-of-government response to this complex threat. The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs maintains deep partnerships across the interagency in support of our shared mission to disrupt and deter transnational organized crime and corruption, both at home and abroad. If confirmed, I will continue to support these vital partnerships, and the State Department's commitment to this Administration priority.

Strengthening the Global Magnitsky Act

Question. The Global Magnitsky Act has proven valuable as a tool that can penalize human rights abusers and corrupt actors without rupturing bilateral relations. The Global Magnitsky Act sunset was removed in the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act of 2021.

- Do you agree that “Magnitsky-like” sanctions are an effective tool for countering human rights abusers and corruption around the world?

Answer. The Global Magnitsky sanctions program is an effective and impactful tool as part of our broader efforts to combat corruption and promote human rights globally. The Global Magnitsky sanctions program, along with other similar tools, such as Section 7031(c) visa restrictions, promotes accountability of corrupt actors and human rights abusers and deters future corruption and human rights abuse abroad.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to robustly implementing the Global Magnitsky Act through high-impact sanctions designations, including by appropriately staffing relevant State Department offices and bureaus?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work across the Department and interagency to use all available tools, including the Global Magnitsky sanctions program, to combat corruption globally. The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has a dedicated team focused on implementing a range of deterrence tools, including supporting implementation of the corruption prong of Global Magnitsky. If confirmed, I will continue to support robust implementation of these tools in conjunction with INL's foreign assistance and diplomatic efforts to disrupt and deter corruption abroad.

Question. If confirmed, would you support the permanent authorization of Global Magnitsky sanctions?

Answer. If confirmed, I would support the permanent authorization of the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. This sanctions program has demonstrated its impact and supports our broader efforts to prevent and combat corruption and protect human rights abroad.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. TODD D. ROBINSON BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Guatemala

Question. Given your extensive background and experience in Central America, most recently as United States Ambassador to Guatemala, you understand the threats these nations are facing—not just from violent transnational criminal organizations, but also from external malign actors like China and Russia, which are trying to gain a foothold in our hemisphere.

- Do you believe that the United States' approach should be to disengage from these governments and cut our assistance to them?

Answer. It is in the U.S. national interest for Central American countries to have strengthened democratic governance, expanded economic opportunity for their citizens, and the capacity to address the security challenges that cause many to flee the region and present direct harms to the United States. U.S. foreign assistance is an essential element of our regional strategy that includes strengthening civil society, promoting transparency and rule of law, combating corruption, and improving respect for human rights. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our foreign assistance is accompanied by robust U.S. diplomatic engagement and appropriate oversight. President Biden is clear-eyed about the challenge and has insisted governments step up as true partners in creating the conditions for economic opportunity and security, which includes fighting corruption and impunity.

Question. During your time as United States Ambassador to Guatemala, please describe your knowledge, if any, of Russia's involvement in Guatemala's mining sector.

Answer. During my tenure, our embassy kept track of various issues affecting Guatemala's economy, including in the area of energy and mines. If confirmed, I will prioritize countering the malign influence of Russia and other actors in Guatemala and elsewhere as part of our efforts to bolster good governance and combat corruption.

Question. What is your knowledge of the legal issues related to the EXIMBAL nickel mine, owned by Russian interests, and the (then) Canadian-U.S.-owned San Rafael mine?

Answer. According to news reports, the Constitutional Court (CC) initially suspended operations of the EXIMBAL nickel mine in July 2019 for failure to conduct consultations with affected indigenous communities under International Labor Organization convention 169 (ILO 169), confirming the decision again in June 2020. However, the mine, owned by Switzerland-based Solway Investment Group, continued production until February, when the Ministry of Energy and Mining (MEM) suspended the mine's exploitation license to conform with the CC's July 2019 ruling, confirmed again by the CC on March 1.

Operations of the San Rafael mine have been suspended since 2017, also for failure to conduct community consultations in accordance with ILO 169. In 2018, the CC ordered the Guatemalan Government to conduct community consultations prior to reopening the mine.

Question. Can you provide the most recent update on the cases mentioned above?

Answer. I understand that in June, deputies from the political party Unidad Nacional de la Esperanza alleged to the MEM that Fenix mine continues to conduct some operations illegally, despite its ordered suspension. Pre-consultations with local indigenous groups under ILO 169 are scheduled to begin July 15 in Izabal. The pre-consultation process for the San Rafael mine began on May 21 in Santa Rosa. The next meeting is scheduled for June 20.

Question. Can you describe the role played by Gazprombank and VTB Bank, two entities sanctioned by Treasury, in the mining sector in Guatemala?

Answer. I do not have current information about the role played by Gazprombank and VTB in Guatemala's mining sector. On the issue of sanctions, if confirmed, I will prioritize working with colleagues across the interagency to pursue appropriate measures, including visa revocations and sanctions, to promote accountability for corruption.

Question. Are you aware of any evidence that Guatemalan authorities worked with VTB Bank through CICIG?

Answer. No. To my knowledge, CICIG was an independent, U.N.-backed commission that helped Guatemala build capacity and make progress in the fight against corruption during its tenure.

Assistance with Law Enforcement Agencies

Question. If confirmed, will you ensure strict oversight of U.S. support for security forces under the control of the Palestinian Authority and ensure any assistance complies with all U.S. legislative restrictions on these funds?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I will ensure strict oversight of U.S. support for security forces under the control of the Palestinian Authority (PA). I will ensure any assistance complies with all U.S. legislative restrictions on these funds. I understand INL provides its assistance through letters of agreement that ensure strict oversight, and conducts end-use monitoring of the materials it supplies to ensure it is accounted for and being used for the purposes it was provided. I understand INL

will implement a robust vetting process, including Leahy vetting and vetting through the Department's Risk Analysis and Management Office, to mitigate the risk that U.S. Government resources could benefit terrorist groups or their supporters. If confirmed, I will ensure INL also vets all recipients of PA assistance, including students enrolled in training programs, for suspected terrorist organization affiliation and human rights violations. If the vetting results show any level of doubt, INL will exclude them from the program.

Question. If confirmed, what actions do you intend to take in order to combat Hezbollah?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to continuing our support to Lebanon and exploring ways to adapt our support to address the pressing needs of key partners in the security and judicial sectors such as targeted interventions to improve criminal information collection, analysis, and sharing; build on efforts to eliminate security vacuums that criminals and terrorists exploit by expanding police professionalization efforts; and solidify and sustain anti-crime gains through the delivery of specialized skills. Such support bolsters legitimate institutions in Lebanon and can help counter Hezbollah's malign influence.

Question. What is your position on reports of Hezbollah financing itself with networks involved in the drug trade in Latin America?

Answer. I am concerned about Hezbollah's purported role as a facilitator of the narcotics trade. Financial supporters, facilitators, and sympathizers of Hezbollah operate in the Western Hemisphere, raising funds in support of the organization through a variety of illicit activities, including narcotics trafficking and trade-based money laundering. As a part of INL's broader efforts to combat transnational crime, I understand INL will continue to prioritize anti-money laundering and counter-narcotics programming globally.

Question. What is your view on U.S. cooperation with law enforcement authorities in Ukraine?

Answer. I understand the United States has worked closely with Ukraine's Ministry of Internal Affairs to advance sweeping law enforcement reforms since 2014, starting with the creation of the Patrol Police. The Ministry continues to be a constructive partner on law enforcement reform, to include providing support and development of the Patrol Police in the major cities and rolling out the newly established Territorial Community Police Officer initiative in rural communities throughout Ukraine. The foundation of both reform efforts incorporates the respect for human rights and adopts international best policing practices to ensure officers are trained to be accountable, service-oriented, and transparent. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing this cooperation on advancing meaningful law enforcement reform in Ukraine.

Question. What actions will you take to work with the law enforcement agencies of our partners and allies to prevent the export of products produced with the forced labor of Uyghurs in China?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to working with partners and allies to address the People's Republic of China (PRC) Government's ongoing atrocities in Xinjiang and will consider and support the use of all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those involved, including import restrictions for goods made with forced labor. If confirmed, I will support Secretary Blinken's call on other governments to take "concrete actions" to ensure no companies or governments provide the PRC with products or services that facilitate repression in Xinjiang or purchase goods from Xinjiang made with forced labor. If confirmed, I will also strengthen our law enforcement partnerships and coordination with allies to ensure we are taking a multilateral approach to stopping the genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, including by working with the interagency in its efforts to identify and block the import to the United States of goods produced through forced labor.

Question. Please elaborate with specificity on the issues you kept track of with respect to energy and mines during your tenure.

- For example, did you discuss litigation involving the U.S.-based Tahoe Resources' El Esocabal silver mine (Minera San Rafael), owned by Canadian-U.S. interests, with anyone, and if so, with whom? Please detail what was discussed.
- Did you discuss the nickel mine owned by the Russian concern CGN, located in Izabal, known variously as EXIMBAL?

Answer. I had several discussions on this issue with various persons during my time in Guatemala. In fact, for the purposes of advocacy for U.S. business, Tahoe Resources was treated as an American company despite its ownership being largely

Canadian. I believe we made this determination after consultation with the Department of Commerce. I know I had at least two (maybe more) meetings with representatives of Tahoe Resources in Guatemala and one in Washington, DC. I discussed the issue with Guatemalan congressional representatives. I discussed the issue with members of Guatemala's court system (both Supreme Court and Constitutional Court). I also discussed the issue with members of Guatemala's executive branch (both the President, the Vice President, and cabinet members). In addition, I discussed the issue with visiting U.S. congressional delegations.

Among the issues discussed were:

1. The possibility of clearing a path for the mine to open or reopen successfully;
2. The value of the mine to the community around the mine and the value of the mine to Guatemala to show it was open for foreign direct investment;
3. The obstacles to full functionality of the mine and the role of a consultative process between the mining company and the local community;
4. The mining company's journey through Guatemala's judicial process.

I do not recall that I ever discussed EXIMBAL. However, that is not to say it was not discussed by other U.S. officials at the embassy. These issues—San Rafael and/or EXIMBAL—would have been largely handled by the Economic Section and/or the Commercial office.

Question. Did you ever meet with any legal representative of either Gazprombank or VTB Bank?

- If so, what dates and how many times?
- Did you discuss Russia's involvement in the mining sector with them, or litigation involving EXIMBAL or Minera San Rafael? If so, please provide details.

Answer. I do not recall that I ever met with any representative of Gazprombank or VTB Bank.

Question. How frequently did you meet with the attorney general of Guatemala?

- In your meetings and conversations, did you discuss Russia's involvement in the mining sector with the attorney general?
- Did you discuss litigation involving Minera San Rafael? If so, when?

Answer. I met formally and informally with the attorney general of Guatemala on a fairly regular basis between 2014-2017. I do not believe the attorney general and I ever discussed Russia's involvement in the mining sector. I also do not believe we discussed litigation involving Minera San Rafael.

Question. How frequently did you meet with members of Guatemala's Constitutional Court?

- In your meetings and conversations, did you discuss Russia's involvement in the mining sector with them?
- Did you discuss litigation involving Minera San Rafael?

Answer. Over the course of my three years in Guatemala, I met with members of the Constitutional Court both formally and informally on a regular basis. Other embassy representatives did as well. Apart from the political upheaval that occurred during that time, we had technical programs with the supreme and constitutional courts involving case tracking systems and equipment to expand the ability of the courts to reach beyond the capital.

I do not believe I discussed Russia's involvement in the mining sector with any court members. The Minera San Rafael issue was discussed as the case wound its way through the Supreme and Constitutional Courts.

Question. Did you meet with any non-governmental organizations involved in court-ordered consultations with respect to the Minera San Rafael to discuss issues related to the mining sector?

Answer. Since I met with several NGOs on numerous topics during my time as Ambassador over four years ago, I do not recall specific conversations with respect to the Minera San Rafael issue. If this issue was discussed, it would have been to understand Tahoe Resources' concerns to see if any agreement could be brokered between the two sides.

Question. What past information did you have with regard to the role played by Gazprombank and VTB in Guatemala's mining sector dating back to your tenure as U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala or as Senior Advisor for Central America in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs?

Answer. I do not recall that I had any prior knowledge of either Gazprombank or VTB in Guatemala's mining sector. It was not something I was tracking during my time in Guatemala or later in Washington.

Question. Did you meet with any agents of either Gazprombank or VTB bank? If so, how many times? Was CICIG discussed?

Answer. To the best of my recollection, I have never met with any representatives of either bank.

Question. According to testimony from Bill Browder before the CSCE in 2018, VTB Bank—an entity sanctioned by the U.S. Department of Treasury—gained legal status as an “interested party” in a legal case against the Bitkov family. In 2015, a criminal case was opened against the Bitkovs at CICIG's direction. Immediately after, officers raided the Bitkov's home and detained the family.

During your time as Ambassador to Guatemala, were you ever briefed on this issue? If so, when? If so, what was your takeaway when you were in this post?

Answer. To the best of my recollection, I was never briefed on this issue. Any knowledge I had of this issue came from open sources. There were some local newspaper articles on the Bitkovs and I also remember a long in-depth article about their case in either the Atlantic Monthly, Vanity Fair, or the New Yorker magazine. To my knowledge, while I was in Guatemala (2014-17), the State Department was not tracking the Bitkov case beyond the fact that they had been swept up in a larger probe of corruption within the Guatemalan Government.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. TODD D. ROBINSON BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Question. In recent months the Mexican Government has shifted to a confrontational and in some senses even adversarial approach to the United States, including by undermining the Drug Enforcement Agency's (DEA) capability to operate in Mexico, publishing sensitive information that had been shared by the Department of Justice (DOJ), and maneuvering to ensure the freedom of former Defense Minister Salvador Cienfuegos Zepeda from drug charges. To what degree are you concerned about the status of the U.S.-Mexican relationship in these dimensions?

Answer. U.S.-Mexico security cooperation remains a top national security priority. If confirmed, I look forward to comprehensive conversations with the Mexican Government to deepen our security cooperation and ensure it works for the benefit of the United States and Mexico. I look forward to working to strengthen collaboration through the cabinet-level security dialogue committed to during Vice President Harris' June 8 meeting with Mexican President López Obrador.

Question. What steps will you take to ensure that the Mexican Government understands their recent actions against the DEA are unacceptable and returns to a posture of cooperation?

Answer. Law enforcement cooperation between the United States and Mexico is vital to countering the shared threat of transnational crime. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Mexican Government to strengthen this cooperation, including through the cabinet-level security dialogue committed to during Vice President Harris' June 8 meeting with Mexican President López Obrador.

Nicaragua

Question. What role, if any, should INL play in regards to the situation in Nicaragua?

Answer. I condemn the Ortega regime's repression of its own people and the clear erosion of democratic norms in Nicaragua. Civil society must be supported to promote accountability for human rights abuses and corruption. INL engages with relevant elements of civil society in Nicaragua—including independent media, human rights, and anticorruption organizations—to address narcotics and criminal threats, improve civic education, and strengthen the rule of law through discreet programs aimed at minimizing the risk to individuals from government persecution. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing these efforts.

Bolivia

Question. How do you plan to engage with the Government of Bolivia on drug production, trafficking, and interdiction?

Answer. I am concerned about drug production and trafficking in Bolivia. Should the Arce administration be interested in partnering with the United States to combat narcotics trafficking and associated criminality, if confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to enhance coordination with Bolivia.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO BRETT M. HOLMGREN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Directed Energy Attacks/Havana Syndrome

Question. INR plays a role in supporting the U.S. Government's efforts to identify the perpetrator and means of the directed energy attacks against State Department personnel, as well as a key role in providing SFRC with up to date information on all USG investigations into these attacks.

- How is INR contributing to the investigation into these nefarious sonic attacks on our US diplomats?

Answer. My understanding is that INR has provided intelligence support to the Department on the anomalous health incidents since January 2017, and is facilitating the passage of available information and material between relevant elements of the Intelligence Community and the Department. If confirmed, I am committed to getting up to speed quickly on this matter, and I will have no higher priority than supporting the Department and the IC in ensuring the safety of U.S. personnel, their family members, and U.S. citizens overseas.

Question. Will you commit to keeping this committee fully informed as this investigation progresses?

Answer. Yes. Secretary Blinken has committed to working with Congress on this matter. If confirmed, I will also commit to working closely with Congress on this issue and will keep this committee fully informed of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research's assessment of these incidents.

Question. Will you commit to redoubling efforts to identify the culprit? And will you do a survey of the policy issues/regional focus the victims were working on?

Answer. My understanding is that INR is coordinating with multiple agencies to identify the cause and culprit of these incidents, to include understanding where the various incidents occurred. If confirmed, I will make sure INR continues to leverage its deep expertise to assist the Department, the Intelligence Community, and the interagency in protecting all U.S. personnel overseas.

State Department and Membership in the Intelligence Community

Question. INR also plays an important role in supporting the intelligence needs of the Secretary of State, but it also plays a role in the intelligence community (IC). It is imperative that INR maintain its analytical independence from policymakers within the State Department while also best supporting those same policymakers.

- How do you propose to ensure that INR remains in-step with the intelligence community while maintaining an autonomous analytical State Department point of view?

Answer. I believe that constant training and adherence to the Intelligence Community's analytic tradecraft standards, as well as a willingness of leadership to support analysts in speaking truth to power, are at the core of protecting the independence and integrity of INR analysts and Intelligence Community products. INR has a well-earned reputation for deep expertise and analytic independence while still supporting State Department policymakers. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that INR maintains both its analytic objectivity and quality and timely support to policymakers.

Question. Do you feel that detailees from other IC components would be beneficial for INR? Will you commit to increasing the number of detailees at INR from other IC components to better plug into IC capabilities and improve the connection of intelligence to policy?

Answer. Having served as a detailee when I was in the Intelligence Community (IC), I believe strongly in the value of exposing IC analysts to other departments and agencies and believe that the receiving agencies receive an extraordinary benefit from bringing in outside expertise and perspectives. Such detail assignments can build bridges across the IC and provide useful points of view to both agencies. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing the status of detailees to INR and will

look for ways to strengthen joint duty assignments to benefit both INR and the broader IC.

Question. If confirmed, will you make more resources available to ensure the Department employees have more access to the classified email systems used by other agencies to share and discuss intelligence relevant to policy makers?

Answer. I understand that INR allows appropriately cleared Department personnel to access intelligence reporting and analysis directly through a classified system, which includes an e-mail capability. I believe that we can balance the need to protect sensitive information with the need for access for appropriately cleared Department personnel. If I become aware of sensitive intelligence that Departmental personnel need to see in order to do their jobs, I would advocate for and seek to facilitate that access, consistent with appropriate clearances and the need to protect sensitive sources and methods.

Question. How do you propose to better distribute timely intelligence to regional bureaus? Is there more INR can do to improve communication between INR and the regional bureaus to improve collection guidance?

Answer. I believe INR has a responsibility to help facilitate access to intelligence and analysis by regional bureaus for appropriately cleared personnel. Customer feedback (including from regional bureaus) into collection guidance is also key to improving intelligence support to policy. If confirmed, I will review INR's existing processes for providing intelligence to regional bureaus and for receiving collection requirements and will make improvements, if necessary.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO BRETT M. HOLMGREN BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. If confirmed, what steps will you take to fully uncover the origin of SARS-CoV-2? Do you commit to make this a priority?

Answer. It is vital that we understand the origins of SARS-CoV-2 in order to prevent or minimize the risk of another global pandemic in the future. On May 26, 2021, the President asked the Intelligence Community (IC) to redouble its efforts to collect and analyze information that could bring us closer to a definitive conclusion, and to report back to him in 90 days on the origins of SARS-CoV-2. If confirmed, I am committed to prioritizing INR's efforts to support the IC's work to understand the origins of SARS-CoV-2.

Question. What actions do you believe are important to take to prevent the next pandemic?

Answer. I believe the Intelligence Community, of which INR is a component, has an important warning function to play in evaluating all sources of information and providing assessments that could shed light on an emerging pandemic in the future. If confirmed, I commit to reviewing INR's analytic resources and expertise related to global health security and will ensure that INR provides accurate and timely intelligence to policymakers on such matters moving forward.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO BRETT M. HOLMGREN BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

JCPOA Verification

Question. Under a plan aimed at facilitating the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) prematurely closed its file on the Possible Military Dimensions (PMDs) of Iran's nuclear program. The decision rendered permanently opaque the scope and nature of Iran's weapons program, and was broadly criticized for foreclosing the possibility of baselining that program—a critical prerequisite to robust monitoring and verification. According to Bloomberg, the Obama administration provided Congress with a classified annex saying that the deal could still be verified if Iran fully complied and didn't cheat.

It has now been confirmed that under the deal, the IAEA failed to detect vast portions of Iran's nuclear weapons program. Between the implementation of the deal in January 2016 to May 2018, the IAEA was not aware that Iran was concealing a nuclear weapons archive. Nor was the IAEA aware that Iran was storing containers at an alleged nuclear warehouse reportedly called Turqzabad, where the

IAEA later reportedly discovered traces of man-altered uranium. The agency subsequently visited three other undisclosed sites and found nuclear material at two of them. According to public reports, the IAEA has never inspected any facility run by SPND, a military organization employing nuclear weapon scientists, which until last year was run by the founder of Iran's nuclear weapons program

- Do you support reentering the deal, in light of these failures?

Answer. I believe it is critically important that the Intelligence Community (IC) and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) focus on the range of threats posed by Iran—from its state sponsorship of terrorism and nuclear ambitions to its development of ballistic missiles. If confirmed in my role as the Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research, I will ensure that INR, which is a component of the IC, provides the Secretary of State and other policymakers with the best available intelligence and analysis on Iran to inform policymakers as they assess the best possible options to address Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Question. In your assessment what additional measures would be required to close the loopholes that allowed these failures?

Answer. If confirmed in my role as the Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research, I will ensure that the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), which is a component of the Intelligence Community, provides the Secretary of State and other policymakers with the best available intelligence and analysis on Iran to inform policymakers as they assess the best possible options to address Iran's nuclear ambitions. I would also ensure that INR has the resources and expertise to address this threat.

Iran/NPT

Question. As traditionally understood, Article IV of the NPT entitles member states to the benefits of peaceful civil-nuclear technology to the extent that they are members in good standing with the NPT. In the last administration, Special Representative of the President for Nuclear Nonproliferation Jeffrey L. Eberhardt confirmed to the SFRC in writing that "Iran's standing as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the NPT cannot be described as 'good.'"

- Do you consider Iran's past possession of the Nuclear Archive seized by Israel, including the materials in the Archive relevant to the development of nuclear weapons, to constitute non-compliance by Iran of its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why.

Answer. nuclear activities and will ensure that INR provides the best available intelligence and analysis that describes the actions and intentions of Iran to help inform treaty compliance verification.

Question. Do you consider Iran's past concealment of the Nuclear Archive seized by Israel, including the materials in the Archive relevant to the development of nuclear weapons, to constitute non-compliance by Iran of its obligations under the NPT. If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why.

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) prioritizes analysis focused on Iran's nuclear activities and will ensure that INR provides the best available intelligence and analysis that describes the actions and intentions of Iran to help inform treaty compliance verification.

Question. Do you consider Iran a member in good standing of the NPT? If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why.

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) prioritizes analysis focused on Iran's nuclear activities and will ensure that INR provides the best available intelligence and analysis that describes the actions and intentions of Iran to help inform treaty compliance verification.

Question. Do you consider Iran to be entitled to benefit from nuclear technology pursuant to Article IV the NPT? If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why.

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) prioritizes analysis focused on Iran's nuclear activities and will ensure that INR provides the best available intelligence and analysis that describes the actions and intentions of Iran to help inform treaty compliance verification.

Question. Do you consider Iran to be entitled to benefit from nuclear technology for any reason? If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why.

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) prioritizes analysis focused on Iran's nuclear activities and will ensure that INR provides the best available intelligence and analysis with respect to its use of nuclear technologies.

Iran / UNSCR 2231 snapback

Question. UNSCR 2231 ended a long-standing international arms embargo against Iran, described across the previous six resolutions terminated by paragraph 7(a) of the resolution. After an effort to extend that embargo, the Trump administration took two measures. First, it invoked the "snapback mechanism" described in paragraphs 10-15 of UNSCR 2231, reversing the termination of those resolutions. You and others have publicly suggested that the U.S. was not entitled to invoke that mechanism. Second, the Trump administration implemented EO 13949, "Blocking Property of Certain Persons with Respect to Conventional Arms Activities of Iran," which authorizes sanctions for transfers to and from Iran of arms or related material or military equipment. As a result, the U.S. established a baseline deterrent against major arms sales to Iran. Multi-billion dollar arms agreements publicly described and anticipated by Russia, China, and Iran did not occur.

However, in February 2021, the Biden administration rescinded that decision. In June, it was revealed that Iran had dispatched two warships believed to be carrying arms intended for transfer to Caracas. The Biden administration declared it would take "appropriate measures" to counter this "threat."

- What measures does the administration believe it has to counter the reported shipment of arms to Venezuela by Iranian warships?

Answer. I have never publicly suggested that the United States was not entitled to invoke the "snapback mechanism." If confirmed in my role as the Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research, I will ensure that the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), which is a component of the Intelligence Community, provides the Secretary of State and other policymakers with the best available intelligence and analysis on Iran to inform policymakers as they assess the best possible options to address Iran's nuclear ambitions. I would also ensure that INR has the resources and expertise to address this threat.

According to press reports on June 17, 2021, the Iranian ships believed to be headed towards Venezuela recently changed course and are currently headed towards the coast of Africa.

Question. Do you agree with the decision to rescind invoking the snapback mechanism?

Answer. If confirmed in my role as the Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research, I will ensure that the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), which is a component of the Intelligence Community, provides the Secretary of State and other policymakers with the best available intelligence and analysis on Iran to inform policymakers as they assess the best possible options to address Iran's nuclear ambitions. I would also ensure that INR has the resources and expertise to address this threat.

Question. Do you believe that Russia would be in violation of any UNSCR if Russia sold advanced weapons to Iran? If so, which ones?

Answer. I believe it is vitally important for the Intelligence Community and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) to focus on destabilizing activities and cooperation between Iran and Russia. If confirmed, I will ensure that INR prioritizes analysis focused on Iran's destabilizing activities and cooperation with Russia and will ensure that INR provides the best available intelligence and analysis that describes the actions and intentions of Iran and Russia to help inform treaty compliance verification.

Question. Do you believe that Russia would be in violation of any UNSCR if Russia purchased advanced weapons from Iran? If so, which ones?

Answer. I believe it is vitally important for the Intelligence Community and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) to focus on destabilizing activities and cooperation between Iran and Russia. If confirmed, I will ensure that INR prioritizes analysis focused on Iran's destabilizing activities and will ensure that INR provides the best available intelligence and analysis that describes the actions and intentions of Iran and Russia to help inform treaty compliance verification.

Question. Do you believe that China would be in violation of any UNSCR if China sold advanced weapons to Iran? If so, which ones?

Answer. I believe it is vitally important for the Intelligence Community and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) to focus on destabilizing activities and cooperation between Iran and China. If confirmed, I will ensure that INR prioritizes analysis focused on Iran's destabilizing activities and will ensure that INR provides the best available intelligence and analysis that describes the actions and intentions of Iran and China to help inform treaty compliance verification.

Question. Do you believe that China would be in violation of any UNSCR if China purchased advanced weapons from Iran? If so, which ones?

Answer. I believe it is vitally important for the Intelligence Community and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) to focus on destabilizing activities and cooperation between Iran and China. If confirmed, I will ensure that INR prioritizes analysis focused on Iran's destabilizing activities and will ensure that INR provides the best available intelligence and analysis that describes the actions and intentions of Iran and China to help inform treaty compliance verification.

Question. Do you believe that Iran would be in violation of any UNSCR if Iran conducted any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology?

Answer. I believe it is critically important for the Intelligence Community and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) to focus on Iran's ballistic missile program and nuclear ambitions. If confirmed, I will ensure that INR prioritizes analysis focused on Iran's ballistic missile program and nuclear ambitions and will ensure that INR provides the best available intelligence and analysis that describes the actions and intentions of Iran to help inform treaty compliance verification.

Question. Do you believe that Iran would be in violation of any UNSCR if Iran conducted any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology?

Answer. I believe it is critically important for the Intelligence Community and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) to focus on Iran's ballistic missile program and nuclear ambitions. If confirmed, I will ensure that INR prioritizes analysis focused on Iran's ballistic missile program and nuclear ambitions and will ensure that INR provides the best available intelligence and analysis that describes the actions and intentions of Iran to help inform treaty compliance verification.

EO 14034

Question. On June 11, the Biden Administration published in the Federal Register Executive Order 14034, which revoked Executive Order 13942 of August 6, 2020 (Addressing the Threat Posed by TikTok, and Taking Additional Steps To Address the National Emergency With Respect to the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain), Executive Order 13943 of August 6, 2020 (Addressing the Threat Posed by WeChat, and Taking Additional Steps To Address the National Emergency With Respect to the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain), and Executive Order 13971 of January 5, 2021 (Addressing the Threat Posed by Applications and Other Software Developed or Controlled by Chinese Companies). Those three EOs had restricted applications controlled by Chinese companies. According to EO 13971, "[b]y accessing personal electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, Chinese connected software applications can access and capture vast swaths of information from users, including sensitive personally identifiable information and private information. This data collection threatens to provide the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) with access to Americans' personal and proprietary information—which would permit China to track the locations of Federal employees and contractors, and build dossiers of personal information."

- Please assess the potential intelligence risks associated with these applications including the risk to State Department personnel and their families overseas.

Answer. Since I have not been in government for the last five years, I am not privy to any classified assessments or intelligence that has informed this administration's or the last administration's executive orders. However, I take seriously the threat posed by the use of Chinese-developed software, hardware, firmware or Chinese-operated communication networks, and I believe it is vitally important that U.S. departments and agencies conduct threat and risk assessments of any and all foreign-owned—especially Chinese—software, firmware and hardware to minimize the risk posed to U.S. government employees and their family members.

If confirmed, I will ensure that INR provides the best available intelligence and analysis to help inform policy decisions about what steps to take to minimize the Chinese counterintelligence risk to State Department personnel and their families.

State Department

Question. The Obama administration was broadly criticized, especially in the context of its Middle East policy, for co-mingling unclassified documents with classified documents. This practice requires that documents be placed in a secure location, unnecessarily limiting access to unclassified documents and stifling public debate. The Biden administration already seems to be repeating such practices: according to an exchange during the State Department press briefing on February 11, a notification describing the lifting of terrorism sanctions on Iran-controlled terrorists in Yemen was unnecessarily transmitted to a Congressional SCIF.

- Can you commit to ensuring that unclassified information is not unnecessarily comingled with classified information in notifications provided by the State Department to Congress? If not, why not?

Answer. I have a deep and sincere commitment to transparency and Congressional oversight of intelligence activities. If confirmed, I am committed to working to ensure that information provided to Congress is, to the fullest extent possible, in a format that facilitates its access by authorized personnel, while complying with Executive Order 13526, the Department of State classification guide, and the executive branch rules on the handling and storage of classified information.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. DANIEL J. KRITENBRINK BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

North Korea

Question. If confirmed, how would you recommend that the Biden administration approach North Korea?

Answer. Our goal remains the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Our policy toward the DPRK will not focus on achieving a grand bargain, nor will it rely on strategic patience. Instead, the United States will take a calibrated, practical approach that is open to, and seeks to establish diplomacy with, the DPRK to make progress that increases the security of the United States, our allies, and our deployed forces. At the same time, the United States will continue to implement sanctions and work with our partners and allies to promote the full implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. The United States will continue to consult closely with the Republic of Korea, Japan, and other allies and partners at every step of the way. If confirmed, I will work to support the administration's approach as we work toward this goal.

Question. What is the pathway to denuclearization and a stable, peaceful and prosperous Korean Peninsula?

Answer. The United States will pursue diplomacy and dialogue, based on previous commitments such as those in the 2018 Panmunjom Declaration and Singapore Joint Statement, while continuing to implement U.S. sanctions and working with partners and allies to promote implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. This will be essential to achieve the complete denuclearization of and a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. The United States will take a calibrated, practical approach to make progress that increases the security of the United States, our allies and our deployed forces. The United States has and will continue to consult closely with the Republic of Korea, Japan, and other partners as we pursue complete denuclearization and a stable, peaceful and prosperous Korean Peninsula. If confirmed, I will work to support that objective and advance our diplomacy to that end.

Question. What does success with North Korea look like?

Answer. Our goal remains the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The United States will take a calibrated, practical approach that is open to and seeks to establish diplomacy with the DPRK to make progress that increases the security of the United States, our allies and our deployed forces. This will be essential to achieve the complete denuclearization of and a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. If confirmed, I will work to achieve that goal.

Burma

Question. If confirmed, what are the first three steps that you would recommend to the Secretary to reset our policy towards Burma?

Answer. If confirmed, first, I will continue to use all tools available to exert pressure on the junta and deny the regime international credibility. I will encourage the international community to do the same in order to restrict the junta's access to financial institutions and enhance scrutiny of any financial ties to or transactions with the military. I will further strengthen our robust engagement within the U.S. interagency to identify ways to exert pressure on the military regime, including financial pressure applied both bilaterally and multilaterally. Second, if confirmed, I would work to continue to support Burma's pro-democracy movement, including the "National Unity Government" (NUG), various ethnic and religious groups, and others working peacefully to restore Burma's democratic transition. The United States will continue to encourage our partners, allies, and other members of the international community to engage representatives of the pro-democracy movement, including in international organizations and major international events. Third, if confirmed, I will continue to promote human rights, justice, and protections for members of Burmese civil society and all people from Burma, and encourage other countries to adopt programs similar to the Temporary Protective Status (TPS) extended to people from Burma in the United States in March for 18 months. In sum, if confirmed, I will utilize every tool and opportunity available to the United States and the international community to expose the junta's horrific brutality, deny the junta credibility, promote accountability, and support the human rights and aspirations of the people of Burma, who yearn for democracy and do not want to live another day under military rule.

South China Sea

Question. I welcomed the Trump administration's clarification of our legal position on China's unlawful claims in the South China Sea. But, as you know, international law is not self-enforcing, and having now taken this position, it is critical that we make our legal position a reality, not just rhetoric.

- What does the Biden administration intend to do to implement this new approach? What consultations are you planning with partners and allies on how to forge a unified approach to the South China Sea?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has reaffirmed the July 2020 policy statement on the U.S. position on maritime claims in the South China Sea and regularly consults with partners and allies to support international law in this crucial waterway. The United States has made clear that we stand with Southeast Asian claimant states in resisting Chinese intimidation. The administration is committed to using all of the tools at its disposal—diplomatic, military, economic, and informational—to uphold a free and open South China Sea. If confirmed, I would support U.S. efforts across each of these domains.

Freedom of navigation and adherence to international law in the South China Sea are vital interests for the entire international community. As a result of U.S. diplomatic efforts with allies and partners in Asia and beyond, we have seen a greater willingness by countries to underscore the importance of making and pursuing maritime claims in accordance with international law. Ten nations, including the United States, have formally protested China's unlawful maritime claims through the United Nations. An increasing number of countries are also demonstrating their commitment to freedom of navigation through transits, presence operations, and working with Southeast Asian claimants to strengthen their maritime domain awareness and law enforcement capacity. If confirmed, I would support the many U.S. programs designed to build our partners' maritime capacity. Moreover, if confirmed, I would also support the activities of the U.S. military, including freedom of navigation operations and presence operations, designed to demonstrate that U.S. forces will fly, sail, and operate anywhere that international law allows.

Hong Kong

Question. How can the United States—working with our partners in the international community—be effective in exercising leverage to support the people of Hong Kong?

Answer. If confirmed, I will stand united with our allies and partners in speaking out for human rights and fundamental freedoms, promoting accountability for the PRC's assault on Hong Kong's autonomy, and seeking to support people in Hong Kong. I will strengthen coordination with allies and partners on joint actions and messaging, recognizing that a multilateral approach will have the greatest effect in promoting accountability and stopping Beijing's erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy.

Together with partners and allies, I will continue to demonstrate the depth of international concern about Hong Kong and the strength of international support for Hong Kongers.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. DANIEL J. KRITENBRINK BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Indo-Pacific Strategy

Question. What should our main goals be in the short-, medium-, and long-term be in the Indo-Pacific? What are the areas in which the State Department can strengthen its role in pursuing these goals?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to a free and open Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, to achieve this, I will work to revitalize ties with our allies and partners; prevail in our strategic competition with China; reduce the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear and missile programs; support inclusive economic policies that benefit all Americans; promote democratic resilience and respect for human rights; and address global priorities, particularly combating COVID-19 and the climate crisis. Investing in our capabilities and working with allies and partners, including in regional organizations, will be critically important to prevailing in our strategic competition with China and in defending the international rules-based order, its foundational values, and international law. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with Congress in advancing these priorities.

Question. In terms of specific regional initiatives, what aspects of the Trump administration's Indo-Pacific strategy will be retained; what will be changed; and what will be discarded?

Answer. The Trump administration recognized that the United States has deep and enduring interests in the Indo-Pacific. The Indo-Pacific region accounts for half the world's population and two-thirds of global economic growth, and it sits on the front lines of our strategic competition with China. To protect U.S. interests in this important region, if confirmed, I will deepen ties with our allies and partners, including regional organizations, and promote the values we share, including the rules-based international order and freedom of the seas and skies, prosperity, good governance, and human rights. I will work to prevail in our strategic competition with China while countering PRC attempts to erode the international rules-based order. The United States will remain focused on enhancing U.S. economic engagement in the region, including on infrastructure, clean energy, and the digital economy. If confirmed, I will also work together with partners to address shared challenges such as transnational crime, climate change, pandemic recovery, global health security, and the threat posed by the DPRK's nuclear program.

Vaccines for the Indo-Pacific

Question. Several Indo-Pacific countries, such as the Philippines—a U.S. treaty ally—have purchased U.S. vaccines directly from U.S. companies. Do you believe the United States should lift export controls on its vaccines so that these countries can secure the supplies they have purchased? Do you believe U.S. allies and partners should receive priority for delivery of vaccines purchased?

Answer. The administration's top priority is saving lives and ending the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is a global challenge that requires a global response, and we have not imposed any bans on the export of vaccines or vaccine inputs. If confirmed, I will work with the rest of the U.S. Government to facilitate access to vaccines to countries in need. We are working with partners to increase vaccine manufacturing and distribution, as well as to respond to country requests. Our principles for sharing U.S. vaccines include achieving broad global coverage and responding to surges and other urgent situations and public health needs, while being responsive to country requests. The administration considered public health criteria, including the potential impact of the donated doses in reducing the global burden, incidence, and severity of COVID-19 and limiting the emergence and spread of SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern. We also considered factors such as the effect on U.S. national and economic security and recipient countries' access to other sources of vaccines.

Question. Which countries would you consider to be priority countries for U.S. vaccines in the Indo-Pacific? What is the country-by-country breakdown of the vaccine donations that the Biden administration has already announced in the Indo-Pacific, whether through COVAX or through bilateral donations?

Answer. On June 3, the administration announced that the United States will share at least three-quarters of its first 25 million donated vaccine doses (approximately 19 million) through COVAX. Of these doses, approximately seven million will go to the Indo-Pacific: India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Maldives, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, Papua New Guinea, Taiwan, and the Pacific Islands. Of the remaining 25 percent of the 25 million vaccine doses (approximately six million) to be shared directly, the Republic of Korea has received one million Johnson & Johnson doses. Our principles for sharing U.S. vaccines include achieving broad global coverage and responding to surges and other urgent situations and public health needs, while responding to country requests. We also considered factors such as the effect on U.S. national and economic security and recipient countries' access to other sources of vaccines. If confirmed, I commit to making combating the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthening global health security in the region a top priority.

Question. With regard to U.S.-purchased vaccines: Your answer indicates that the United States has not imposed any sort of export restrictions with respect to U.S. manufactured COVID-19 vaccines. Does this mean the administration has no restrictions—including de facto restrictions—on U.S. companies delivering vaccines purchased via a commercial contract? Please explain.

Answer. The United States has not imposed any bans on the export of vaccines or vaccine inputs. The United States is committed to using all available tools, including the Defense Production Act (DPA), to expand domestic vaccine manufacturing and ensure that all Americans can be vaccinated quickly, effectively, and equitably. But these actions are not export prohibitions, and manufacturers in the United States are free to export such products so long as they first fulfill the terms of their contracts with the U.S. Government. What we're all dealing with here is a global shortage of materials—that's a very different issue and separate from the DPA. Pfizer and Moderna are now exporting doses abroad and we have already lifted the DPA priority ratings for AstraZeneca, Novavax, and Sanofi.

Question. With regard to U.S.-donated vaccines: The United States is also buying up vaccine stocks and donating them to other nations. Are our donations being prioritized over commercial orders? If so, how are we prioritizing those donations (including for countries seeking vaccines commercially and through COVAX simultaneously)?

Answer. On the 500 million Pfizer doses, thanks to our work scaling up Pfizer's manufacturing, they will be able to deliver on these 500 million doses without relying on the Defense Production Act. The world is embarking on an unprecedented vaccine production effort and there is more production demand than can be supplied at this time. At the same time, the United States Government orders make up a small part of the demand on supply, and the manufacturing companies are making the allocation decisions.

Our work on a vaccine supply strategy is guided by a three-part approach. First, having successfully secured enough vaccine supply for Americans, we are donating surplus U.S. vaccine supply and encouraging other countries with surplus supplies to do the same. We will continue to donate additional vaccine doses across the coming months as supply becomes available—but we know that won't be sufficient. So, second, we are working with U.S. vaccine manufacturers to significantly increase vaccine supply for the rest of the world. And third, we are working with our partners, investment entities, pharmaceutical companies and other manufacturers to create the kind of global vaccine production and manufacturing capacity and capabilities that can not only help the world beat this pandemic, but also help prepare the world to respond to potential future threats.

Question. Please provide a country-by-country breakdown of vaccine donations to the Indo-Pacific as stated in the question. Of all the donations announced, how many doses will each country receive (and when)?

Answer. On June 4, 1.1 million doses of the J&J vaccine arrived in the Republic of Korea. On June 20, 2.5 million doses of the Moderna vaccine arrived in Taiwan. We are in active conversations with potential recipient countries about needs, absorptive capacity, and national vaccine plans, as well as logistics and legal considerations, and that will in part determine allocation and distribution plans. As we do so, we will work through logistics like coordinating with country health ministries and organizations like UNICEF and the World Health Organization, as appropriate. Our immediate goal is to get doses on the ground as quickly as possible—but again, this is a complex logistics operation. We will continue to work to keep you all updated as these doses land in country.

On June 21, the Biden-Harris administration announced plans to allocate the remaining 55 million doses towards the commitment to donate 80 million doses by the end of June, including: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Pacific Islands. We continue to work with the White House and the interagency to facilitate access to these doses.

COVID Origins

Question. Do you support a thorough investigation by the U.S. Government into the origins of COVID-19? Do you commit, if confirmed, that EAP will prioritize this issue and contribute to any State Department or interagency processes? Will you commit that EAP will not prevent the release of findings or outcomes of the investigation that could potentially strain our relationship with China?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration has made clear it supports a robust and transparent investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. The administration has called for a second phase of the World Health Organization's investigation into COVID-19 that must take place in China and have full access to all information on the origins of the virus. An impartial public health investigation into the origins and early spread of any novel outbreak is vital to protecting against future health security threats. It is imperative to have transparency on the early events of the pandemic and determine how COVID-19 spread so future emergence events with pandemic potential can be averted. The Biden-Harris administration has committed to continuing to review all available information about the origins of COVID-19, and President Biden has requested the U.S. intelligence community redouble their efforts to collect and analyze information relevant to the origins of the virus, report back on their analysis and their recommendations for areas of further inquiry that may be required, including specific questions for the PRC. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring EAP continues supporting these efforts to identify the origins of the pandemic and will share relevant information with Congress as appropriate.

Biosecurity Issues

Question. Do you believe that the U.S. Department of State has a role to play in determining whether the United States conducts, funds, or engages in research and development or other cooperation on gain-of-function research or other potentially high-risk research related to pathogens, viruses, or toxins? From your perspective, what role should EAP play in cases where these concerns relate to Indo-Pacific countries within EAP's purview?

Answer. The Department of State participates in the interagency processes, led by the National Security Council and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, that address oversight policies for research that might pose particular concerns. These policies require careful consideration of risks and benefits, and where appropriate, measures to mitigate risks. Subject to these policies, decisions about the funding of specific research proposals are made by the responsible funding agency. If confirmed, I will work with other State Department bureaus and the interagency to make sure that EAP provides any necessary information in a timely manner to make informed decisions in the best interest of the United States.

Question. Should the United States conduct, fund, or engage in research and development or other cooperation on gain-of-function research or other potentially risky research related to pathogens, viruses, or toxins with countries where we have concerns about any or all of the following: (1) biosecurity standards, (2) violations of the International Health Regulations, (3) intellectual property theft of vaccines or health-related technology, or (4) compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention?

Answer. Factors that bear on the risk of accident, misuse, or misappropriation should be taken fully into consideration in considering whether to conduct, fund, or engage in such research. Federal funding and oversight policies help guide these decisions for research that might pose particular concerns. These policies require careful consideration of risks and benefits, and where appropriate, measures to mitigate risks. If confirmed, I will work with other State Department bureaus and the interagency to make sure that EAP provides any necessary information in a timely manner to make informed decisions in the best interest of the United States.

Question. What is the benefit to the United States and to global health more broadly of providing to China innovative intellectual property related to vaccines?

Answer. Incentives for innovation, including the protection of intellectual property (IP), are crucial to support innovative new treatments against COVID-19 and other devastating diseases. The United States supports voluntary licensing agreements on

mutually agreed terms and opposes forced technology transfer. The administration believes strongly in IP protections and the importance of safeguarding U.S. innovation from illicit acquisition. The decision to support a waiver of IP protections for COVID-19 vaccines reflects the extraordinary circumstances of this pandemic. We are committed to working with other WTO members and will be clear-eyed about potential risks as we enter text-based negotiations. These negotiations will take time given the consensus-based nature of the WTO and the complexity of the issues involved. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to support efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen global health security in the region.

Defense Issues

Question. Do you believe that extended deterrence is foundational to U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific region? Will you commit that you will advocate against policies, whether declaratory policy or otherwise, that erode or dilute U.S. extended deterrence commitments?

Answer. Yes. Extended deterrence is foundational to U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, I commit to advance policies that strengthen our extended deterrence commitments to our allies and partners.

Question. In your experience, how would U.S. treaty allies react to major change in U.S. declaratory policy with respect to nuclear weapons, such as the declaration of a sole purpose doctrine? What impact would declaration of a sole-purpose doctrine have on U.S. extended deterrence commitments in the region, and therefore overall stability and security in the region?

Answer. The United States is committed to maintaining a strong, credible deterrent to defend the United States and our allies, while also taking steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons. Extended deterrence in the Indo-Pacific region plays a critical role in advancing U.S. national security interests, including providing assurance to allies and promoting nonproliferation. If confirmed, I commit to advance policies that strengthen our extended deterrence commitments to our allies and partners. If confirmed, I will also consult closely with our allies and with Congress as we review the vital role the U.S. nuclear arsenal plays in extended deterrence.

Question. Will you prioritize the issue of overseas basing by the People's Liberation Army, as raised by Deputy Secretary Sherman on her recent trip to Cambodia?

Answer. I have serious concerns about the PRC's military presence and construction of facilities at Ream Naval Base on the Gulf of Thailand. During her recent trip to Cambodia, Deputy Secretary Sherman sought clarifications on the demolition of two U.S.-funded buildings at Ream without notification or explanation and observed that a PRC military base in Cambodia would undermine its sovereignty, threaten regional security, and negatively impact U.S.-Cambodia relations. Maintaining an independent and balanced foreign policy is in the best interests of the Cambodian people. If confirmed, I will make this a priority issue.

Question. Is the status of the Philippines and Thailand as States Parties to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons consistent with their treaty alliances with the United States?

Answer. U.S. alliances with the Philippines and Thailand are forged in common experiences and shared values, and they serve as an anchor for peace and security across the Indo-Pacific region. The United States remains fully committed to these deep and abiding alliances. If confirmed, I will consistently convey current U.S. policy to oppose the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which does nothing to address pressing proliferation and security challenges.

Question. How can the United States expedite providing advanced and critical capabilities to Indo-Pacific treaty allies and other key partners? Do you commit to prioritizing expediting such capabilities to regional allies and partners?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and Congress to ensure Indo-Pacific treaty allies and key partners are receiving the advanced and critical defense and security capabilities necessary for their national security and to advance the U.S. national interest in peace and stability of the region.

Each year, the United States provides hundreds of millions of dollars in security assistance and cooperation to critical allies and partners to advance our foreign and national security goals for the region. This assistance provides training, equipment, and assets to security partners across the Indo-Pacific region.

The United States arms export regime ensures close allies and partners have access to advanced capabilities, provided they have a track record of protecting the technology, respecting human rights, and using the equipment for its intended pur-

pose. The State Department Bureau of Political-Military Affairs continually reviews exports available for important Indo-Pacific allies.

Economic Engagement

Question. What role can the State Department play in expanding U.S. economic engagement in Southeast Asia? What are the current obstacles to U.S. commercial activity in that part of the region?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with partners and allies to address Southeast Asia's most pressing economic needs: access to expertise and capital to help build the infrastructure, energy, and digital foundation to allow these countries to grow their economies. Through major economic initiatives like the Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network, Asia Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy, and the Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership, the State Department and our interagency partners are providing technical assistance, commercial advocacy, and financing for projects. We will also continue to engage through APEC, ASEAN's economic track, and further deepen our commercial engagement through events like the annual Indo-Pacific Business Forum to underscore the U.S. commitment to the region's economic growth. If confirmed, I will also ensure that our diplomats in the region fight for every job and the interests of American workers by insisting on market access and fair treatment, stopping intellectual property theft and currency manipulation, and combating corruption.

Question. Do you commit to robust support of the Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network? Will you prioritize coordination and cooperation with the interagency on deployment of U.S. Government tools to support infrastructure abroad?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to prioritizing coordination and cooperation with the interagency to promote quality infrastructure development in the Indo-Pacific region. The Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network plays a key role in providing the technical assistance, advocacy, and financing tools necessary for the region's growth. I commit to continuing the program's efforts to promote transparent, private-sector infrastructure investments in the region.

Energy Policy

Question. The Biden administration has taken multiple steps to prevent the United States from engaging with other countries on coal, oil, and natural gas. This includes disallowing the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation from financing fossil fuel development projects. In the Indo-Pacific, nations like Vietnam and Indonesia are still heavily reliant on coal and gas and are not in an economic position to switch to other alternative fuels quickly. In the absence of U.S. engagement or engagement from other partners like Japan, what alternatives will Southeast Asian countries have in satisfying growing energy demands? Is it in the U.S. interest, for example, for these countries to become reliant on coal from China, which is building and financing coal plants all over the world?

Answer. The Indo-Pacific presents concurrent challenges of rapidly growing energy demand coupled with reliance on unsustainable fossil fuels, aging infrastructure, and outdated market mechanisms to deliver energy requirements. U.S. engagement to address these challenges, while simultaneously reducing greenhouse gas emissions, will focus on bolstering partners' energy security, supporting sustainable development goals, and implementing decarbonization strategies.

If confirmed, I will work with other State Department bureaus as well as with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation—and through the Asia Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy (EDGE) program and the Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network (ITAN)—to support countries' improved energy efficiency, the deployment of renewable energy infrastructure and technologies, and financing for projects in the Indo-Pacific region.

Counter PRC Malign Influence Fund

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to conduct oversight of how funds are appropriated to the Countering PRC Malign Influence Fund (originally called the Countering Chinese Influence Fund) and how they are used by the Department? Do you commit that these funds will only be directed to projects and initiatives that have a direct nexus to malign influence from China? Do you commit that you will take steps to ensure this fund will not be pulled from to support efforts unrelated or tangentially related to China that the Department wants to fund for advancing other priorities?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Deputy Secretary and other senior leaders in the Department and at USAID to engage in a full review

of the 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. The PRC's use of coercive and corrupting tools of influence to undermine and interfere in countries are a major concern for the United States and our partners around the world. I support the CCIF's overall goals and objectives, including efforts to increase transparency and accountability associated with the Belt and Road Initiative.

International Organizations and Human Rights

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to ensure that the Government of Thailand respects freedom of expression and internet freedom?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize human rights in our relationship with Thailand, including on freedom of expression and Internet freedom. I believe that free and open access to, and the free exchange of, information and ideas, including through the Internet, is fundamental to democracy and important to all people. I will urge the Royal Thai Government to respect the rights of those who exercise their freedom of expression and to protect human rights across the board, consistent with Thailand's international obligations and commitments.

China Human Rights

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to pressure the Government of China to respect the rights of minority groups, in particular the Uyghurs, Turkic Muslims, Tibetans?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to putting democratic values at the center of our foreign policy and to standing up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity. If confirmed, I will work with partner and allies to address our shared concerns regarding the human rights situation in the People's Republic of China, and will consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible for abuses.

Hong Kong

Question. As the Chinese Communist Party has increased its repression of the people of Hong Kong, how will you work to promote freedom of speech and expression?

Answer. The State Department will consider all available tools to promote freedom of speech and expression, including public diplomacy and statements, joint messaging with like-minded partners, the imposition of sanctions and visa restrictions, and the use of the Hong Kong Policy Act to underscore that Hong Kong is no longer autonomous. If confirmed, I will proactively support these efforts.

Trafficking in Persons

Question. In last year's State Department Trafficking in Persons Report, Singapore was ranked as a Tier 1 country after spending 10 years on Tier 2. Singapore has made significant strides in identification and protection of victims, partnering with NGOs and foreign governments to develop trainings for police and civil society, as well as building trafficking shelters.

In last year's State Department Trafficking in Persons Report, Singapore was ranked as a Tier 1 country after spending 10 years on Tier 2. Singapore has made significant strides in identification and protection of victims, partnering with NGOs and foreign governments to develop trainings for police and civil society, as well as building trafficking shelters.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to work with Singapore and like-minded stakeholders to capitalize on this success?

Answer. Singapore has taken steps to curb human trafficking, including through adoption of the 2014 Prevention of Human Trafficking Act, which criminalizes all forms of human trafficking. The State Department works closely with the Singapore Interagency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons and Singaporean civil society to address this challenge. If confirmed, I pledge to continue working closely with Singapore on anti-trafficking efforts.

Question. How can we use Singapore as a model for the region to support victims and eventually eradicate human trafficking?

Answer. The State Department believes Singapore's efforts can offer a positive example in combating trafficking in persons for other countries in the region. After spending ten years as a Tier 2 country, Singapore ranked Tier 1 in the 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report for the first time since 2006. Singapore has demonstrated serious efforts in prosecuting labor trafficking, as well as with the identification and

protection of victims. Singapore has also partnered with foreign governments to offer victim identification trainings for its officials. The Government is also taking steps to prevent trafficking within its large migrant worker population by introducing new measures to decrease the risk of indebtedness for foreign workers. If confirmed, I will make combating trafficking in persons a priority, and will look for ways to use the Singapore experience as an example for other countries to study in making progress on these issues.

Human Rights Regionally

Question. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated an already precarious human rights situation across Southeast Asia. Authoritarian governments have used COVID-19 restrictions as a facade to further squash dissent, protestors, online expression and discussion, as well as other practices of human rights. If confirmed, what are your priorities for protection of human rights regionally?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work across the interagency to promote human rights in the region and hold accountable perpetrators of violations and abuse. At the center of our whole-of-government efforts for a free and open Indo-Pacific is building the capacity of our partners to promote civil society, rule of law, transparency, and good governance across the region. I will prioritize addressing systemic challenges that enable malign influence, including the atrocities against Uyghurs and other minority groups in Xinjiang, as well as repression in Tibet; a further crackdown on freedom online; attacks against Burmese protesters; the assault on freedoms in Hong Kong; and the targeting of activists and journalists in places like Cambodia and Malaysia.

Question. How will you work with other stakeholders at the department, interagency, and on the ground regionally to combat the growing encroachment on human rights by authoritarian governments?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with our partners within the State Department, including the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, as well as interagency partners such as USAID, Treasury, and DoJ, to promote anti-corruption and fiscal transparency, democracy assistance, youth and emerging leader development, media and internet freedom, and to protect fundamental freedoms and human rights for all in the region. I will also work with likeminded governments, civil society, and private sector partners to support and empower human rights defenders and civil society organizations.

Burma

Question. It has been roughly four and a half months since the violent military coup in Burma, endangering thousands and threatening ending democracy in country. Since the coup, we have seen thousands of arbitrary arrests, detentions, and a severe crackdown on human rights. If confirmed, how will you engage with the relevant stakeholders to support human rights defenders in country and work to return Burma to a civilian-led rule?

Answer. If confirmed, I will utilize every tool and opportunity to expose the junta's horrific brutality, promote accountability, and support the aspirations of the people of Burma, including ethnic and religious communities, who yearn for democracy and do not want to live another day under military rule. The United States will continue to support Burma's pro-democracy movement, including the "National Unity Government" (NUG), various ethnic and religious communities, and others working peacefully to restore Burma's democratic transition. In addition, the United States will continue to encourage our partners, allies, and other members of the international community to engage representatives of the pro-democracy movement, including in international organizations and major international events.

The United States has also engaged the pro-democracy movement, including the NUG, at high levels, and has encouraged other countries to do so as well, which has served to further empower and support human rights defenders in the country. If confirmed, I will make it a top priority to support the Burmese people and work to return Burma to the democratic path chosen by its people.

Question. The plight of the Rohingya must also not be forgotten. I am deeply concerned about the potential forced return of Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh to Burma, which constitutes a violation of international law. What steps will you take alongside the bureaus of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), and alongside our international partners to support the already robust United States Government (USG) response to the Rohingya refugee crisis?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to promote justice and accountability for the atrocities and other abuses the military has committed against the people of Burma, and humanitarian assistance for all vulnerable communities in and from Burma, including Rohingya. The United States will continue providing this life-saving humanitarian assistance, including through ongoing coordination with international partners.

In addition to urging the military to restore the democratically elected government, release all those unjustly detained, and end violence, I will ensure achieving justice and accountability for atrocities against Rohingya remains pivotal to our policy. The United States continues to support the voluntary, safe, dignified, and sustainable return of Rohingya refugees and internally displaced persons, when conditions allow.

During his confirmation hearing, Secretary Blinken promised a comprehensive review of military atrocities against Rohingya. If confirmed, I intend to support that process and secure international support for any determination made by the Secretary.

Vietnam

Question. The Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) bore witness or committed significant human rights abuses during the reporting period for the State Department's 2020 Human Rights Report, including torture, arbitrary killings, serious restrictions on free expression, the press, and the internet, significant corruption, trafficking in persons, as well as substantial interference with the freedom of assembly and association. If confirmed, please describe your action plan for engaging with the CPV regarding the improvement of human rights in country.

Answer. I am concerned about the human rights situation in Vietnam, and if confirmed, I would be committed to pushing for improvements. Despite progress in some areas, including labor rights, the trend of escalating harassment, unjust arrests and convictions, and increasingly harsh prison sentences of journalists and activists for peacefully exercising their right to express their opinions is deeply troubling. Vietnam is an extremely important partner in the Indo-Pacific region, but that partnership will reach its fullest potential only when the Vietnamese Government improves its human rights record.

If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Vietnam to improve its implementation of its human rights obligations and commitments. I will urge the Government of Vietnam to encourage law enforcement and the judicial system to effectively and fairly enforce existing constitutional guarantees and laws protecting human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. I will continue to raise our concerns with the Government of Vietnam, including during the annual U.S.-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue, and call on Vietnam to respect and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, consistent with its international obligations and commitments.

Repatriation of Foreign Terrorist Fighters

Question. There are around 10,000 ISIS fighters housed at various detention facilities around the world. This includes at least 2,000 Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) that U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) characterizes as "hardcore foreign terrorist fighters." Many of these FTFs are housed at Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, like al Hol in northeastern Syria. The al-Hol IDP camp has become fertile ground for ISIS recruitment of vulnerable populations, posing a serious risk to global security. Despite this risk, countries with foreign terrorist fighters have failed to make any progress to date towards repatriating their nationals.

- Can you commit to working with countries in the East Asia Pacific region to help mitigate the threat posed by FTFs including through increased support to humanitarian agencies providing assistance to vulnerable IDP populations?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with countries in the East Asia Pacific region to help mitigate the threat posed by FTFs, including through encouraging increased support to humanitarian agencies providing assistance to vulnerable IDP populations. I will also urge partners to provide additional support to vulnerable IDP populations within Syria. The U.S. Government strongly believes that repatriations—followed by appropriate prosecution of the FTFs in domestic courts of law—is the best way to keep these fighters off the battlefield and hold them accountable for their crimes. The United States regularly engages in diplomatic discussions with our local partners (including the Syrian Democratic Forces) and foreign allies on this dire issue. We have and will continue to work through ASEAN fora to address FTF issues and capacity building for the ASEAN Humanitarian Centre for disaster management.

Question. How do you plan to engage with EAP countries to advance repatriation efforts of their nationals, which remains a critical to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS?

Answer. The U.N. has expressed serious concern at the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation at al-Hol and Roj camps in northeast Syria, and is urging all member states to repatriate their citizens without delay. If confirmed, I will urge partner nations to repatriate their citizens without delay. We continue to strongly encourage countries to take back their citizens from Syria and Iraq. The United States believes that repatriations, followed by a.) prosecution of FTFs would be the best way to keep fighters off the battlefield and address security threats; and b.) rehabilitation and reintegration of associated family members are the best ways to end the humanitarian crisis in al-Hol and Roj IDP camps.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. DANIEL J. KRITENBRINK BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. In your engagements with Beijing, will you require meaningful progress as a precondition for further rounds of dialogue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the administration's approach to work with China when it is in our national interest to do, conducting practical, results-oriented diplomacy that will require meaningful progress from Beijing.

Question. Do you commit to raise issues that Beijing deems "sensitive"—such as human rights, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet, and the Uyghurs—regardless of whether doing so may affect the CCP's willingness to engage in further dialogue?

Answer. Yes. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to putting democratic values at the center of our foreign policy and to standing up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity. If confirmed, I will always be willing to speak out on behalf of our values.

Question. As you know, the CCP has failed to uphold many of its agreements with the United States. Xi Jinping told President Obama that Beijing would not use its intelligence services to steal intellectual property for commercial gain. Xi made the same promise to President Trump in 2017 and 2018, but this theft has not stopped. Xi promised President Obama that China would not militarize the South China Sea. And in Hong Kong, Beijing has violated its commitments under the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.

- Can you name a single bilateral agreement between the United States and the PRC that Beijing has honored in full and without later reneging?

Answer. China's failure to uphold past international commitments is a significant factor in how we will develop our approach to China. If confirmed, I will support the administration's approach of remaining clear-eyed and keeping these past shortcomings in mind as we deal with Beijing.

Question. Do you believe that the CCP can be trusted to uphold any of its commitments, including those pertaining to climate change?

Answer. I believe the United States must judge Beijing by its actions, not its words, and work with allies and partners to impose costs on China when it violates international norms and agreements. We know that addressing the climate crisis will require significant additional action by China. As such, we will continue to press Beijing to raise its climate ambition significantly during this critical decade. At the end of the day, we will consider what Beijing actually does—not what it says it will or won't do—to determine whether the PRC is serious about climate action.

Question. How will you ensure that Beijing fulfills its climate change commitments given its record of broken promises?

Answer. We know the climate crisis will not get addressed successfully without significant additional action by China. The Paris Agreement sets forth a robust transparency framework, under which Parties, including China, will need to report and be reviewed with respect to their greenhouse gas emissions and the extent to which they implement and achieve their respective nationally determined contributions. The United States will continue to press Beijing to raise its climate ambition significantly, including to update and implement existing Paris Agreement targets as ambitiously as possible. If confirmed, I would consider what Beijing actually does—not what it says it will or won't do—to determine whether the PRC is serious about climate action.

Question. Do you believe that the Chinese Communist Party's united front and intelligence activities inside the borders of the United States, and those of our allies and partners, challenge the integrity of our policymaking? Why and how should we address this problem?

Answer. It is important that we bring greater transparency to bear on PRC influence activities in the United States and abroad. China's use of information operations and other coercive and corrupting efforts to undermine and interfere in democracies poses a threat to the United States and our allies and partners. If confirmed, I will push back on Beijing's attempts to write the rules of the information age by working with allies and likeminded partners to support an affirmative, democratic vision for the global information space, while building resilience against these threats and exposing China's influence activity. I would also work to educate important U.S. constituencies, including state and local governments, on these threats.

Question. If confirmed, will you maintain the requirements that PRC diplomats report certain categories of meetings to the U.S. Government, including meetings with educational institutions and Chinese community groups?

Answer. It is important that there is transparency in China's influence activities in the United States. If confirmed, I commit to review this policy carefully.

Question. If confirmed, will you maintain the prior administration's designation of multiple Chinese media outlets as foreign missions, as well as its visa restrictions on PRC reporters (who frequently act as intelligence gatherers as much as reporters)? Are you prepared to explain and defend the difference between these PRC media outlets and a genuine free press?

Answer. It is important that there is transparency in China's influence activities in the United States. If confirmed, I will always be prepared to explain and defend the difference between China's state-run media outlets and a genuine free press.

Question. If confirmed, will you maintain the prior administration's policy of denying visas to certain classes of PRC-national researchers, including those who have concealed their affiliation with the People's Liberation Army?

Answer. National security is the State Department's top priority when adjudicating visa applications. It is a critical U.S. interest to make sure that we protect the technology and intellectual property that is produced in this country and that, if used to advance the PRC's military modernization, could undermine our security. We must likewise guard against efforts by visa applicants to unlawfully conceal information in the course of the visa application process and, where appropriate, take legal action. If confirmed, I will review the tools available to address these challenges, including visa policy.

Chinese Influence Operations

Question. If confirmed, how do you plan to support Australia, and other victims of PRC economic coercion and United Front activities, to build resistance to the CCP's political influence inside their countries?

Answer. If confirmed, I would not leave Australia and other allies and partners alone in the face of PRC economic coercion and United Front activities. We will face down these threats from a position of collective strength. I will work with the Global Engagement Center (GEC) to counter PRC propaganda and disinformation, including through programs that identify and expose the PRC's malign influence tactics and techniques and puncture Beijing's false narratives. I will also support continued coordination and cooperation through the counter disinformation working group with Australia, announced at Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) last year. U.S. and other foreign firms have also faced economic coercion such as boycotts and other pressure tactics for challenging PRC preferred narratives. If confirmed, I will work to align our actions with those of democratic and like-minded partners to counter these threats and to advance bilateral and multilateral efforts that build resilience abroad to PRC covert, coercive, and corrupt activities. Efforts to diversify supply chains, support increased trade between like-minded partners, and encourage best practices to screen potentially threatening investments will help to build resilience and reduce the impact of PRC coercion.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that human rights concerns are integrated into every senior bilateral engagement, and that specific prisoner cases are raised at the highest levels, both publicly and privately?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to putting democratic values at the center of our foreign policy and to standing up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that human rights

issues are integrated into bilateral engagements with the People's Republic of China at all levels. This requires not only general statements but also raising specific cases, both publicly and privately, as appropriate.

Question. Do you see the link between China's pervasive, egregious human rights abuses, and its failure on so many other fronts to be a responsible global actor?

Answer. I am alarmed by human rights violations and abuses in China and call on PRC authorities to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms to which their citizens are entitled, consistent with China's international obligations and commitments. If confirmed, I will work to continue holding accountable PRC authorities responsible for abuse, while also countering PRC attempts to erode the international rules-based order.

Question. What are the appropriate tools for holding the PRC and its officials accountable for its atrocities against Uyghurs and other Muslims in Xinjiang? If confirmed, do you commit to using such tools in a timely fashion?

Answer. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is committing crimes against humanity and genocide in Xinjiang against Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups. If confirmed, I will consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for those responsible and deter future abuses, to include but not limited to, actions already implemented by the U.S. Government: visa restrictions, import restrictions, export restrictions, and financial sanctions.

Question. What actions can the U.S. take to address the issue of forced labor in Xinjiang, including to protect against retaliatory actions from China?

Answer. The U.S. Government has condemned the People's Republic of China (PRC) Government's retaliatory actions against individuals, businesses, and organizations that stand up for human rights. If confirmed, I will consider all appropriate tools to promote accountability for PRC Government actors and entities responsible for the atrocities and human rights abuses in Xinjiang, including forced labor, and work with interagency partners to address PRC actions. I also commit to working with the like-minded countries and the private sector to counter economic retaliation against companies when they take actions to avoid complicity in PRC human rights and forced labor abuses.

Question. How can the U.S. best provide support to civil society actors in Muslim-majority countries who are conducting advocacy on this issue?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to working with partners and allies, civil society, advocates, and other groups around the world to address our shared concerns over the PRC Government's atrocities in Xinjiang.

Question. Will you work to ensure that discussions over arbitrary mass detention and forced labor in Xinjiang are integrated into trade discussions?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to putting democratic values at the center of our foreign policy and to standing up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity. If confirmed, I will work to ensure we continue integrating our Xinjiang concerns into bilateral engagements with the People's Republic of China at all levels.

Question. If confirmed, what actions will you take to work with countries hosting Uyghur communities to ensure they do not summarily deport Uyghurs to China?

Answer. The PRC Government's atrocities in Xinjiang raise serious refoulement concerns. If confirmed, I will work with other governments to ensure that Uyghurs, who are predominantly Muslim, and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups that have escaped repression in Xinjiang are not forcibly returned to China.

Question. Do you believe the United States can and should use its diplomatic and economic leverage to protect Uyghurs from unjust deportation from other countries back to China?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consider all available tools to ensure that Uyghurs and other vulnerable individuals are not forcibly returned to China.

Question. Do you believe that the CCP is engaged in a deliberate campaign of cultural erasure against Tibetans, whose civilization is distinct from that of China and boasts its own rich language, literature, religion, and culture?

Answer. The PRC Government has deliberately suppressed the distinct cultural, linguistic, and religious identity of Tibetans. If confirmed, I will make addressing these abuses a priority.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to convey clearly to Beijing the United States position that we will not accept a Chinese-controlled process to select the next Dalai Lama?

Answer. The PRC Government should have no role in the succession process of the Dalai Lama or any other Tibetan Buddhist lama. If confirmed, I will call on the PRC to respect the religious freedom of Tibetans, including by ending its interference in the selection, education, and veneration of Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders.

Question. If the Chinese authorities attempt to force a politically chosen successor on the Tibetan people, will you commit to impose serious sanctions in response?

Answer. If confirmed, I will consider the use of all appropriate tools, including financial sanctions and visa restrictions, to promote accountability for PRC officials responsible for abusing the religious freedom of Tibetans, including by interfering in the succession process of the Dalai Lama, consistent with the Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020.

Question. Would you, if confirmed, personally commit to pressing the PRC leadership to address Tibetan concerns through the resumption of dialogue with the Dalai Lama, or his representatives, without preconditions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with our allies and partners to press Beijing to return to direct dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives, without preconditions, to achieve meaningful autonomy for Tibetans.

Question. Will you commit to regularly raise the case of the Panchen Lama and press for his release?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to engaging the PRC Government on the case of the Panchen Lama.

Question. Will you ensure that no U.S. official meets with, or provides a public platform to, the individual that Beijing appointed in his place?

Answer. The PRC Government should have absolutely no role in the succession process of the Dalai Lama. If confirmed, I will work to ensure all U.S. engagements reflect this position.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to direct our diplomatic missions in the region, including in Hong Kong, to do their utmost to assist Hong Kongers who fear political persecution under the National Security Law, and use all consular options, including Special Public Benefit Parole, to provide safe harbor?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that our diplomatic missions in the region, including Hong Kong, will continue to do their utmost to assist Hong Kongers who fear persecution, to include working to pursue all options, as appropriate, to provide avenues for those who seek to depart.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that the State Department maintains a high degree of pressure on Beijing for its violations of Hong Kong's autonomy and prioritizes this issue above all other competing interests in Hong Kong?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the State Department will continue to put pressure on PRC and Hong Kong officials responsible for undermining Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy as promised in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and Basic Law. Maintaining Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy is a central focus of our policy toward Hong Kong.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to appoint only senior officers as Consul General who are strongly committed to the democratization of Hong Kong?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with State Department leadership and human resources to identify suitable candidates for Consul General who will carry out the Department's policy of advocating for Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy, promote fundamental freedoms and human rights, and build support for international pressure on the PRC to meet its obligations under the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to advocate on behalf of Hong Kong protesters who are imprisoned for violations of the so-called National Security Law, or for similar politically motivated charges, both in your private conversations with Hong Kong and PRC central government officials, as well as in public diplomacy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will advocate by any available means on behalf of Hong Kong people imprisoned on politically motivated charges. We continue to stand with the people of Hong Kong and for their human rights, and fundamental freedoms.

I will ensure that we continue to support the aspirations of people in Hong Kong and for the system and rights that the PRC promised them.

Question. Did you agree with former Secretary Pompeo's decision to decertify Hong Kong as sufficiently autonomous to warrant special treatment under U.S. law?

Answer. On March 31, in conjunction with the Hong Kong Policy Act Report, Secretary Blinken again certified to Congress that Hong Kong does not warrant differential treatment under U.S. law in the same manner as U.S. laws were applied to Hong Kong before July 1, 1997. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing to work with Congress and our allies and partners around the world to stand with people in Hong Kong against the PRC's egregious policies and actions that undermine the autonomy and freedoms promised in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and Hong Kong's own Basic Law.

Question. If confirmed, will you use decertification and all other available means to deny legitimacy to the government of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region until the fundamental freedoms guaranteed under Basic Law are restored?

Answer. The State Department has a variety of policy tools available to deny credibility to the government of Hong Kong, including the Hong Kong Policy Act, under which we certified again this year that Hong Kong is no longer autonomous. In addition, under Executive Order 13936, the Department has authority to impose sanctions on Hong Kong and People's Republic of China (PRC) officials in connection with efforts to undermine Hong Kong's autonomy. The Hong Kong Autonomy Act also authorizes sanctions on foreign persons that materially contribute to the failure of the PRC to meet its obligations under the Sino-British Joint Declaration or Hong Kong's Basic Law, as well as on foreign financial institutions that knowingly engage in significant transactions with such persons. If confirmed, I will continue to evaluate all available tools and use them as necessary to pressure the Government.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to robust efforts to increase Taiwan's international space and to counter Beijing's attempts to isolate Taiwan in international organizations and beyond?

Answer. Yes. The Biden-Harris administration's support for Taiwan is rock-solid. If confirmed, I plan to continue to deepen our ties with Taiwan in the face of PRC efforts to constrain its international space and to support Taiwan's membership or meaningful participation in international organizations.

Question. If President Biden follows through with his campaign promise to assemble a summit of democracies, will you ensure that Taiwan is invited to participate and at the same level as other participants?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support President Biden's commitment to host a Summit for Democracy. I believe the global community of democracies would benefit from Taiwan's participation in such events and could learn from Taiwan's experience of democracy under pressure due to foreign malign influence, including disinformation campaigns that seek to undermine its democratic processes.

Question. Do you agree with former Vice President Pence's statement that "America will always believe that Taiwan's embrace of democracy shows a better path for all the Chinese people?"

Answer. Yes. Taiwan is a leading democracy and a critical economic and security partner. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen U.S. ties with Taiwan as an important priority.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to use your position as Assistant Secretary to promote Taiwan as a model of democratic success that China and others should emulate?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will continue to work with allies and partners to highlight the positive role that Taiwan plays in addressing global challenges and encourage them to stand with Taiwan in defending against threats to its democratic values.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to do your utmost to ensure that Taiwan's requests for the sale of military equipment will be processed as quickly as possible?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will support making available to Taiwan the defense articles and services necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and our "one China" policy.

Question. Will maintaining Taiwan's defense capabilities be a top priority for EAP under your leadership?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, in response to the growing PRC threat, I will continue deepening our unofficial security relationship with Taiwan to ensure it has sufficient capabilities to defend itself, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act.

The United States notified more than \$32 billion worth of arms to Taiwan since 2009, but arms sales alone cannot ensure Taiwan's ability to defend itself, nor should the impact of arms sales be judged on total value alone. Our expanding security cooperation seeks to encourage Taiwan to prioritize cost-effective, resilient, distributed, and sufficient capabilities. We are also encouraging Taiwan to prioritize reserve force reform, civilian defense capabilities, and cybersecurity and critical infrastructure resilience.

U.S. security cooperation with Taiwan is calibrated to meet the threat from the PRC and is consistent with the U.S. "one China" policy, which is guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, the Three Communiques, and the Six Assurances. If confirmed, as part of that cooperation, I also will encourage Taiwan to spend on defense an amount commensurate with the growing threat it faces.

Question. Do you commit to wholeheartedly support the full scope of bilateral defense cooperation, including joint trainings and exercises and any other substantive exchanges that will enhance Taiwan's security posture?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will support engagement that would advance U.S. interests and foreign policy objectives. The United States has long maintained our abiding interest in peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

In response to the growing PRC threat, we will continue deepening our unofficial security relationship with Taiwan to ensure it has sufficient capabilities to defend itself.

Question. If confirmed, will you work with our U.N. Ambassador to look for bold and creative ways to promote Japan's candidacy for permanent membership on the U.N. Security Council?

Answer. A reformed Security Council that is representative, effective, and relevant is in the best interest of the United States and all U.N. member states. If confirmed, I would support a modest enlargement of the Security Council for both permanent and non-permanent members, provided doing so does not diminish its effectiveness or its efficiency, and does not alter or expand the veto. Regarding member state suitability, we remain principally focused on a country's ability and willingness to contribute to international peace and security.

Question. If confirmed, will you work with your counterpart in Tokyo, and at the Department of Defense, to ensure that U.S. forces and Japanese forces are planning for possible Taiwan contingencies?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the United States and our allies and partners pool our collective strength to advance shared interests and deter common threats. We will underscore the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

Question. Will you encourage Tokyo to engage in security cooperation with Taiwan to complement existing U.S. cooperation with Taiwan?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will encourage our allies and partners to continue to work together to advance our shared prosperity, security, and values in the Indo-Pacific region. Japan is a capable, thoughtful, and dynamic ally that has helped us to secure our interests and values in Asia more effectively than we could have done alone.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to strengthen U.S. relations with Mongolia and protect its sovereignty against potential encroachment by the People's Republic of China?

Answer. Yes. Mongolia is a democracy and our strategic partner, and if confirmed, I will work to continue strengthening our bilateral relationship and supporting Mongolia's sovereignty.

Question. If President Biden follows through with his campaign promise to assemble a summit of democracies, will you ensure that Mongolia is invited to participate?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support President Biden's commitment to host a Summit for Democracy. Participating governments will be expected to deliver on both domestic and international commitments that advance democracy, fight corruption, and protect human rights. As a vibrant democracy, I expect Mongolia will be favorably considered for participation.

- Will you, as a matter of policy, seek to increase U.S. investment in Mongolia and bilateral trade ties?

Answer. Yes. As Mongolia's strategic partner and proud "third neighbor," the United States will continue to seek opportunities to increase both bilateral trade and U.S. investment in Mongolia.

Question. If confirmed, will you work with your counterpart in Ulaanbaatar to promote programs to protect the Mongolian language, culture, and Buddhism, and wherever possible, to extend such promotion to Mongolians in the PRC?

Answer. Yes. Mongolia holds a unique place in world history and possesses a rich culture stretching back centuries. If confirmed, I will work to promote programs that protect Mongolian language, script, culture, and Buddhism, wherever they are found.

Question. Mongolia's presidential election on June 9, 2021 was conducted in a manner that was free and fair, but the incumbent president was blocked from running for reelection in a manner that many Mongolians found troubling. The Mongolian People's Party (MPP) now controls the presidency in addition to holding a supermajority in the parliament and yielding significant influence over the judiciary. If confirmed, do you commit to efforts to guard against democratic backsliding in Mongolia and to ensure that the MPP does not revert to its authoritarian past under the influence of its authoritarian neighbor?

Answer. Mongolia recently conducted a free and fair presidential election, its eighth since the country's peaceful transition to democracy in 1990. As strategic partners, Mongolia and the United States share a common commitment to democratic values and the strengthening of democratic institutions. The U.S. has a strong strategic interest in ensuring Mongolia remains a stable and viable democracy. If confirmed, I will continue the U.S. tradition of working closely with our Mongolian counterparts to deepen their democracy and to strengthen good governance and civil society in Mongolia.

Korea

Question. If confirmed, what will you do to expand U.S.-ROK trade and investment ties, and encourage Seoul to diversify its trade and investment away from China in order to reduce its vulnerability to Chinese economic coercion?

Answer. The U.S.-ROK Alliance is bolstered by our strong and growing economic relationship and grounded in our shared democratic values. If confirmed, I will support the full and faithful implementation of the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement, which remains the foundation of our bilateral trade and investment relationship and an important pillar of our bilateral relationship. I will work, in cooperation with my U.S. Government colleagues, to continue to expand robust U.S.-ROK economic ties, promote Korean investment in the United States, and enhance our mutual prosperity and security through close collaboration on supply chain diversification, regular coordination on economic security matters, and enhanced cooperation between our two countries to advance our common vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific and world.

Question. What is your opinion of the South Korean Government's decision to ban the distribution of leaflets and other materials into North Korea by North Korean human rights organizations?

Answer. As a global policy, the United States advocates for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms around the world. With regards to the DPRK, if confirmed, I will continue to promote the free flow of information into, out of, and within the DPRK. It is critical for the North Korean people to have access to fact-based information not controlled by the North Korean regime. The United States promotes and supports freedom of expression around the world, including with valued allies like the Republic of Korea.

The United States has been in close contact with the ROKG to express our strong views about the importance of the free flow of information into the DPRK and freedom of expression.

We respect the fact that the ROK, as a democracy with an independent and strong judiciary, has tools in place to allow for review of the law.

If confirmed, I will continue to work with our partners in the NGO and North Korean escapee community to promote human rights in North Korea and North Koreans' access to information.

Question. If confirmed, how would you respond to a resurgence of the protest movement in Thailand?

Answer. The United States supports freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly as essential to Thailand's democracy. The United States does not support any political party or position in Thailand; we support the democratic process,

human rights, and the rule of law. If confirmed, I will continue to urge the Royal Thai Government to respect the human rights of those who exercise their freedom of expression. I will also call on the Royal Thai Government to respect the human rights of those who have been arrested or detained, including adequate access to medical care and the legal counsel of their choosing. Thailand is a valued U.S. ally and partner, and the strong relations we have built up over time allow the United States to engage constructively with the Royal Thai Government.

Our shared history, shared interests, and the common values that unite our peoples make me confident that we can continue to navigate these challenges for the good of both countries.

Question. How will U.S. policy promote human rights and democracy in Thailand going forward?

Answer. The United States strongly supports human rights and democracy in Thailand, the Indo-Pacific, and around the world. We are committed to a long-term partnership with Thailand, and the promotion of democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms has been a major part of U.S. engagement with Thailand for many years. If confirmed, I will continue to support our robust diplomatic engagement to advance democracy and the protection of human rights in Thailand. I will call on the Royal Thai Government to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and to act in a manner consistent with its international obligations and commitments.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work to counter PRC influence in Thailand and increase awareness of the risks of dependency on trade and investment from China?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen our alliance with Thailand and our partnerships in Southeast Asia, while also working to counter the PRC's malign influence in the region. I will review our approach to enhancing economic engagement with Thailand and regional partners. I will encourage internationally accepted best practices in trade and investment and an open and inclusive approach to economic development. Furthermore, if confirmed, I am committed to working with Thailand to combat COVID-19 and climate change; to strengthen our defenses, including in cyberspace; and to produce and secure the technologies of the future. Additionally, I will support Thailand as a regional leader in the Mekong region and key partner in the Mekong-U.S. Partnership.

Question. If confirmed, what would you do to deny legitimacy to the junta that seized power in February?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to use all tools available to exert pressure on the junta and deny the regime international credibility. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, we worked quickly to impose sanctions on those responsible for the coup, as well as state-owned enterprises and military-affiliated companies that are providing financial resources to the military regime. The United States has worked with our international partners to deny the regime access to hundreds of millions of dollars in resources in international financial institutions, as well as pushed for an arms embargo and restriction on the export of dual use technology. We have encouraged the international community to use all levers available to restrict the junta's access to financial institutions and enhance scrutiny of any financial ties to the military.

In addition, the United States has engaged the pro-democracy movement, including the "National Unity Government" (NUG), at high levels, which has served to further deny international credibility to the regime. If confirmed, I will utilize every tool and opportunity to expose the junta's horrific brutality, promote accountability, and support the democratic aspirations of the people of Burma, including ethnic and religious communities, who yearn for true democracy and do not want to live another day under military rule.

Question. Do you commit to block the junta's efforts to replace the legitimate representatives of Myanmar at international organizations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make it a top priority to support the Burmese people and work to return Burma to the democratic path chosen by its people. The United States has strongly condemned the military's actions to overturn the will of the people of Burma as freely expressed in elections in November 2020. The United States has also engaged the pro-democracy movement, including the "National Unity Government" (NUG), at high levels, which has helped deny international credibility to the regime. The United States will continue to support Burma's pro-democracy movement, including the NUG, various ethnic and religious groups, and others working peacefully to restore Burma's democratic transition. If confirmed, I will

support U.S. efforts to continue encouraging our partners, allies, and other members of the international community to engage representatives of the pro-democracy movement, including in international organizations and major international events, and push for dialogue among all relevant stakeholders to secure a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Burma.

Question. If confirmed, will you work with the Treasury Department to impose punishing sanctions on all industries that fund the Tatmadaw, including the oil and gas industry and the mining industry?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue our robust engagement within the U.S. inter-agency, including the Treasury Department, to identify ways to exert additional pressure on the military regime, including financial pressure. The United States has already sanctioned over 30 military leaders, adult family members, commanders, and military units responsible for the coup and the horrific violence. We have sanctioned top revenue generators for the military, including the largest military conglomerates, the Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC) and Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL). We have designated the largest state-owned enterprises in the gems, timber, and other sectors that the military has used to enrich itself at the expense of the people of Burma. In addition, we have successfully led an international effort with partners and allies, including the UK, Canada, and EU, to sanction the same individuals and entities, further denying the military international credibility and access to revenue.

While we have sought to impose significant sanctions on the regime, the United States has also been careful to avoid steps that could hurt the interests of the people of Burma and deepen the humanitarian suffering caused by the coup, and negatively impact our partners in the region. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that, in identifying potential additional targets designed to exert pressure on the military regime, including the oil and gas industry and the mining industry, we also continue to study and take into account the impact on the people of Burma.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. DANIEL J. KRITENBRINK BY SENATOR TED CRUZ

Taiwan

Question. If confirmed, will you restore the Trump administration's policy allowing our Taiwanese allies to display symbols of their sovereignty? If not, why not?

Answer. In keeping with longstanding U.S. policy across Democratic and Republican administrations, the United States Government does not permit displays of Taiwan sovereignty, including flags, on United States Government premises. Though the United States does not maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan, U.S. support for Taiwan has never been stronger, as demonstrated by, for example, ongoing arms sales designed to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability, the provision of vaccines announced by three U.S. Senators during their visit to Taipei on June 6, and the repeated and unprecedented public mentions of Taiwan in the recent U.S.-Japan joint statement, U.S.-ROK joint statement, U.S.-EU joint statement, and G7 leaders' communiqué.

To deepen and broaden our unofficial relationship with Taiwan, the Biden-Harris administration also issued new Guidelines for Interacting with Taiwan ("contact guidance"), which are more permissive than any previous iterations. Taiwan has welcomed the new contact guidance, including through statements by President Tsai, Foreign Minister Wu, and TECRO Representative Hsiao. If confirmed, I will work to further develop our robust ties with our democratic partner Taiwan and ensure we fulfill our commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act.

EO 14034

Question. On June 11, the Biden administration published in the Federal Register Executive Order 14034, which revoked Executive Order 13942 of August 6, 2020 (Addressing the Threat Posed by TikTok, and Taking Additional Steps To Address the National Emergency With Respect to the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain), Executive Order 13943 of August 6, 2020 (Addressing the Threat Posed by WeChat, and Taking Additional Steps To Address the National Emergency With Respect to the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain), and Executive Order 13971 of January 5, 2021 (Addressing the Threat Posed by Applications and Other Software Developed or Controlled by Chinese Companies). Those three EOs had restricted applications controlled by Chinese companies. According to EO 13971, "[b]y accessing personal

electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers, Chinese connected software applications can access and capture vast swaths of information from users, including sensitive personally identifiable information and private information. This data collection threatens to provide the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) with access to Americans' personal and proprietary information—which would permit China to track the locations of Federal employees and contractors, and build dossiers of personal information.”

- Please assess the potential intelligence risks associated with these applications including the risk to State Department personnel and their families overseas.

Answer. Under Executive Order (E.O.) 13873, Securing the Information and Communications Technology and Services Supply Chain, the Secretary of Commerce evaluates potential threats to the United States presented by information and communications technology or services designed, developed, manufactured, or supplied by persons owned or controlled by, or subject to the jurisdiction or direction of the People's Republic of China and other designated foreign adversaries.

To enhance this effort, on June 9 President Biden issued E.O. 14034, which instructs the Secretary of Commerce to evaluate transactions involving foreign adversary-connected software applications that may pose a risk to Americans' data, utilizing clear criteria that may indicate a heightened risk, including software applications that are owned, controlled, or managed by persons that support foreign adversary military or intelligence activities, or are involved in malicious cyber activities, or involve applications that collect sensitive personal data. If confirmed, I will work with colleagues at the Department of Commerce in assessing these risks, as well as the risk to State Department personnel and their families overseas.

State Department

Question. The Obama administration was broadly criticized, especially in the context of its Middle East policy, for co-mingling unclassified documents with classified documents. This practice requires that documents be placed in a secure location, unnecessarily limiting access to unclassified documents and stifling public debate. The Biden administration already seems to be repeating such practices: according to an exchange during the State Department press briefing on February 11, a notification describing the lifting of terrorism sanctions on Iran-controlled terrorists in Yemen was unnecessarily transmitted to a Congressional SCIF. Can you commit to ensuring that unclassified information is not unnecessarily comingled with classified information in notifications provided by the State Department to Congress? If not, why not?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to working to ensure that information provided to Congress is, to the fullest extent possible, in a format that facilitates its access by authorized personnel, while complying with Executive Order 13526, the Department of State classification guide, and the executive branch rules on the handling and storage of classified information.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO HON. DANIEL J. KRITENBRINK BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

Question. Ambassador Kritenbrink, I would like to bring to your attention the case of Greg Kelly, a Tennessee constituent who, in my view, has been wrongly detained for nearly three years in Japan. I'm deeply concerned about Mr. Kelly's treatment by the Japanese legal system.

After being taken into custody in November 2018, Mr. Kelly—who maintains his innocence—was forced to wait for nearly two years for his trial in Japan even to begin in September 2020. News media now report that it has been proven at trial that the entire case against Greg Kelly was fabricated for the sole purpose of preventing Renault from taking over Nissan. There is no deadline by which the court in Japan must deliver a verdict in Mr. Kelly's case, and he likely faces the prospect of no decision until well into next year.

- If confirmed, do you commit to working with me and to using every tool at your disposal to get Greg Kelly back to the United States and home with his family?

Answer. One of the most important tasks of the Department of State and U.S. embassies and consulates is to provide assistance to U.S. citizens who are incarcerated or detained abroad. We take this obligation to assist U.S. citizens arrested or detained abroad seriously. Mr. Kelly's case is a high priority for the Bureau of Con-

sular Affairs and the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. The Department is actively monitoring Mr. Kelly's case and Embassy Tokyo's American Citizens Services unit has been in frequent, regular contact with Mr. Kelly and his legal teams. While the Department cannot intercede on the merits of his case, the Department monitors developments in his case very closely. The Department continue to urge the Japanese authorities to ensure Mr. Kelly's trial and verdict are concluded as expeditiously as possible. If confirmed, I will make Mr. Kelly's case a priority, and I look forward to working closely with you and your office on his case.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, JULY 13, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Cardin, Kaine, Markey, Booker, Van Hollen, Risch, Johnson, and Hagerty.

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

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning. This hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee shall come to order. We are here to consider nominees for four important positions: Ambassador Gentry Smith to the Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security, Ambassador Rena Bitter to be Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, Ms. Monica Medina to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, and Mr. Marc Knapper to be the Ambassador to Vietnam.

Congratulations to the four of you on your nominations, our thanks for your willingness to serve our country in this capacity, and the members of your family because this is a family sacrifice as well. So we appreciate their sacrifices.

I see that our distinguished colleague and member of this committee, the senator from Massachusetts, is going to be introducing Ms. Medina this morning.

So we will turn to him first before any opening statements.
Senator Markey?

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

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much and Ranking Member Risch, thank you so much as well.

It is my pleasure this morning to introduce President Biden's nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environment and Scientific Affairs, and my friend for 38 years, Monica Medina.

It is impossible to think of anyone more qualified for this job.

The CHAIRMAN. You knew her in your infancy then?

Senator MARKEY. And, again, I am now in the infancy of my second adulthood, as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee makes it possible for us to enjoy extended political life expectancy.

It is impossible to think of anyone more qualified for this job. Monica has been working for decades and across multiple administrations on environmental law and policy.

She understands the interconnected world we live in and knows that the 21st century U.S. foreign policy goes not simply beyond the water's edge, but to the seas and the skies and the sands of the world where universal threats and their solutions lie.

Monica won a Reserve Officers Training Corps scholarship while at Georgetown University, and while working at the Defense Department in the Obama administration, she worked to end discrimination against women in the military, to provide them with opportunities that were previously closed to them simply because of their gender.

Monica has always been a fierce fighter for justice and never backs down from a tough challenge, and she has confronted some of the world's toughest global challenges.

Ms. Medina has called out the connection between illegal wildlife trafficking and organized criminal networks. She has fought against illegal fishing, which is tied to global piracy and human rights violations.

Just like the climate crisis, these are global spanning threats to our national security, and Monica's expertise in these areas is why former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta and the Center for Strategic and International Studies have turned to her as an expert and advisor.

Monica knows that we cannot protect ourselves at home without a robust strategy abroad, and diplomacy is not just something that she has practiced in international work. She has worked across the aisle with stakeholders from different states and industries in the United States to protect our oceans and our ocean economy.

After the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, she worked with the five Republican governors of affected states to get \$1 billion in restoration funds from oil company BP so that states could quickly start rebounding from the disaster.

Her work at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration was praised by groups like the Seafood Harvesters of America, who support her experience and legacy of protecting our oceans, and the workers and communities that depend upon them.

Louis Pasteur once said that science knows no country because knowledge belongs to humanity, and is the torch which illuminates the world.

Science is the highest personification of the nation because that nation will remain the first which carries the furthest the works of thought and intelligence.

Monica Medina has dedicated her career to promoting America's excellence in these two realms, the tools of science and the values of humanity, because it is there where America's excellence and promise to the world is to be found.

She knows that, and throughout her distinguished career, she has become supremely prepared for the role of Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans, Environment, and Science.

She has been training for it in every position in which she has served, every mission that she has fulfilled, every discussion she has held with key stakeholders.

I am so grateful for her continued commitment to our country and planet, as well as for our years of friendship, and I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting her for this important position.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Markey. A rather glowing introduction—

Senator MARKEY. Well deserved.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. And we know that you have, I am sure, well earned. I know that you may have other committee business to do, and so at your leisure you are welcome to depart from us, and thank you for your introduction.

Let me turn to our panel, speak briefly about each of them, turn to Senator Risch, and then we will listen to your testimony.

Ambassador Smith has served the United States and the State Department during his entire professional career with two and a half decades, ensuring the security of U.S. diplomatic personnel and U.S. citizens here and abroad.

He has been a special agent protecting the secretary of state, the regional security officer in multiple foreign posts, a deputy assistant secretary and senior advisor in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

He has served as director for the Office of Foreign Missions for which he was previously confirmed by the Senate. There is no question in my mind that he is fully qualified and deeply experienced for this position.

Ambassador Smith's experience and commitment will be needed, as the State Department faces multiple challenges in keeping its personnel safe, including a relatively new one.

Indeed, U.S. personnel have recently faced the prospect of silent stealthy assaults from what may be some sort of directed energy weapons, first employed in Cuba and now showing up in other parts of the world.

These incidents deserve the full attention of the United States in order to ensure accountability and that the parties responsible are brought to justice, but most of all, to protect personnel.

So, Ambassador Smith, I trust that, if confirmed, you will be devoted in your efforts to meet this and all threats against U.S. diplomatic and other personnel.

Ms. Medina, as our colleague, Senator Markey has said, your knowledge and experience, including as Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Oceans and Atmosphere at the Department of Commerce and in various leadership roles focused on ocean conservation and environmental policy, suits you well for this position.

If confirmed as Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Oceans, International, Environmental and Scientific Affairs, you will be responsible for maintaining U.S. leadership on cooperative efforts to maintain the health and sustainability of the world we all share.

If confirmed, you will also be responsible for managing U.S. diplomacy on addressing global plastic pollution, protecting endangered species, and combating wildlife trafficking, representing the U.S., the Montreal Protocol, and the Arctic Council, among others.

I know you are up to that challenge. As you may know, I co-authored the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act, and I look forward to working

with you on the next steps to combating plastic pollution and other global environmental problems.

Ambassador Bitter, I am pleased to see you back before the committee. Your service in Laos these past several years, apparently, may not have made headlines in Washington, but it has been with distinction.

The position you are nominated for as Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs is perhaps one of the most challenging positions in the department today.

The effects of the COVID pandemic have been particularly felt in the CA on the massive repatriation of American citizens abroad carried out by the department last year, to the financial challenges resulting from the consular office fee-for-service model at a time when fees have dried up as a result of decreased international travel.

That is something that has changed dramatically. We have now a huge demand and a big backlog on passports, which several colleagues on the committee have raised with me. I am sure that may be raised with you as to how we deal with it.

The mismanagement of the department, broadly speaking, and the Consular Affairs in particular over the past four years leaves the next Assistant Secretary with no shortage of challenges.

As Consular Affairs is also the part of the department that has the most engagement with American citizens processing passports and visas, supporting overseas travelers in need, and the like, it is also a bureau that receives a high level of congressional scrutiny.

While the challenges in the bureau are evident, I am confident in your abilities and capacity to serve capably in this position.

Finally, I am pleased to see Marc Knapper before the committee for consideration as our next ambassador to Vietnam.

We look to develop a genuine strategic partnership with Hanoi, one animated by our shared interests and our values, and I can think of few more qualified Foreign Service professionals than Mr. Knapper to be entrusted with this important task.

In closing, while the four of you have a series of challenges ahead, I am confident that your knowledge and experience will serve you well as you take on your new responsibilities upon confirmation. I look forward to each of your testimonies.

And with that, let me turn to the distinguished ranking member for his opening comments.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank the witnesses for being here today and being willing to serve in these positions, and your families, who we know share the sacrifices that you make.

I want to start with the nomination of Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environment and Scientific Affairs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed what I believe to be serious gaps in U.S. international pandemic prevention, preparedness, and, importantly, response efforts. This includes the failure of the Department of State over multiple administrations of both parties

to adequately prioritize global health policy and diplomatic engagement beyond the PEPFAR program.

We now realize how important that is. PEPFAR, of course, was an exception to that. It was very successful, and it is important that we duplicate the success that we had in PEPFAR in what will undoubtedly be future challenges of a global health nature.

Ms. Medina, if confirmed, you will lead the bureau responsible for ensuring foreign policy coherence and program integrity for global health and biosecurity.

I look forward to hearing from you how you plan to improve State's leadership in these vital areas, which, as I said, I think suffer some shortcomings, which have become painfully obvious as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, COVID-19 has brought to light the risks of collaboration on life sciences research with countries that do not share our interests like China.

If confirmed, you will have a role in overseeing international scientific cooperation and global health security, and it is critical that you work across the department to prevent the misuse of such research.

Lastly, as we discussed when we met last month, the Columbia River Treaty remains an important issue to myself and the rest of the Northwest delegation. I look forward to hearing more about how you plan to make Columbia River Treaty negotiations a priority.

Next, we have the nomination of Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security. For decades, the State Department has struggled with what has been dubbed colloquially a bunker mentality, which greatly over-prioritizes security to the detriment of our diplomatic effectiveness.

Security is undoubtedly very important, but as with all things, it must be put in its proper place. This severe risk aversion often keeps our diplomats cooped up behind embassy walls instead of engaging with the local community and conducting traditional diplomacy.

America's adversaries do not place similar burdens on their diplomats, putting the United States at a strategic disadvantage.

Earlier this year, I introduced legislation to improve the process for investigating security incidents abroad so that the department's diplomats can safely do their jobs, promote U.S. interests with host countries, and engage local populations with appropriate protection.

If confirmed, it will be vitally important to ensure the department learns to manage risk more effectively.

Ambassador Smith, I look forward to hearing your thoughts on these issues.

Moving on to the nomination of Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, the Bureau of Consular Affairs has a unique opportunity to demonstrate how the State Department assists U.S. citizens every day while also advancing our national interests.

Whether it is helping Americans who lost a passport on vacation get home or visiting U.S. citizens who have been incarcerated abroad, Consular Affairs often directly serves the American people.

However, last year's travel restrictions and resulting loss of visa fee revenue greatly hurt the Bureau's finances, potentially affecting its ability to provide these important services.

As vaccination rates climb, there will be more people seeking to travel. Demand for passports and visas are rapidly increasing, leading to significant delays in processing times.

Ambassador Bitter, I look forward to hearing your plan to get Consular Affairs fully operational and to reduce these extremely irregular passport processing times.

Finally, we have the nomination of Ambassador to Vietnam. Vietnam is an important U.S. partner and an ASEAN member. I am very glad to see the recent U.S. donation of 2 million Moderna vaccine through COVAX to Vietnam in addition to separate donations to Indonesia and Malaysia.

Southeast Asian countries need vaccines. Given the importance of this region to the United States and the pressure some countries are facing from China to accept its clearly substandard vaccines, it is crucial that the United States continue to prioritize deliveries to our partners there.

We need to redouble our efforts following the nontransparent COVAX procurement deal announced earlier this week that will allow China to profit mightily from the distribution of its substandard vaccines, all of this very erotic.

Beyond vaccines, I think it is crucial that we advance collaboration with Vietnam in important areas such as the South China Sea and the Mekong region, and the crisis in Myanmar.

We should also continue to prioritize all forms of energy engagement, including liquefied natural gas.

Finally, in closing, I continue to support engagement with Vietnam to promote freedom of speech and religion.

Mr. Knapper, I look forward to hearing how you will tackle all these issues if you are confirmed.

We have a lot to cover today, and I will yield back.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

All right. We will start our testimony from our nominees. We would ask you to summarize your statement at about five minutes.

All of your full statements will be included in the record, without objection, and we will start with Ambassador Smith and then move down the aisle.

Ambassador Smith?

STATEMENT OF GENTRY O. SMITH, OF VIRGINIA, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (DIPLOMATIC SECURITY)

Mr. SMITH. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

I am grateful for the confidence that the president and Secretary Blinken have placed in me and I am humbled by the opportunity to lead such an outstanding organization.

In the 105-year history of diplomatic security, I am just the third DS agent to be nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary.

In my 30-year career with the Foreign Service, I am proud to have served as a DS agent for 27 years prior to my appointment as the director for the Office of Foreign Missions, a position that I held into my retirement in 2017.

I would like to thank you for your continued and unwavering support for both the department and for diplomatic security. I am very proud to be associated with the outstanding women and men who labor tirelessly to protect America's diplomatic facilities, critical information, and, most importantly, American lives.

They also conduct extensive important law enforcement investigations necessary to keep our country safe.

I want to thank my wife, Georgette, our adult children and their spouses, and our six adorable grandchildren for the love and support and for allowing me to return to rejoin an institution that I love.

It is, indeed, an honor to lead the dedicated special agents, security engineers, diplomatic couriers, security technicians, and other specialized personnel in providing a secure environment in which to conduct U.S. foreign policy.

I first joined Diplomatic Security in 1987 after proudly serving as a police officer in Raleigh, North Carolina. These were the early days of building the Diplomatic Security Service.

I grew up in the organization as it grew to meet increasing global security challenges as well as domestic challenges and U.S. national security interests.

Having served in Cairo during both Gulf wars and Rangoon during a period of unrest and uncertainty that rivals the current situation, I am familiar with the importance of strong leadership and requisite security operations.

Upon returning to the U.S. and serving in senior positions in Diplomatic Security, I am proud to have collaborated closely with other department colleagues, the intelligence community, DOD, and members of Congress to construct and improve diplomatic facilities here and abroad while enabling our personnel to project U.S. Government interests around the world.

I am also proud and honored to have received Senate approval to lead the Office of Foreign Missions during my last tenure with the department.

My body of work within the department and subsequent experiences as an independent consultant in the private sector is what has prepared me to assume leadership as the assistant secretary for Diplomatic Security.

I am aware that there will always be challenges as we seek to advance U.S. interests around the world. With support and continued guidance from members of this committee and Congress as a whole, my top priority, if confirmed, will be to help to ensure that the department effectively protects its physical assets, information, and, most importantly, lives.

At the same time, however, I recognize that effective diplomacy is virtually impossible without the ability to take considered risk in service of strategic goals and objectives.

It will be my responsibility to evaluate various threat-mitigating strategies and help the department make the best possible calculations in support of American diplomacy.

Risk management is particularly critical in high-threat countries, most notably at the moment in Afghanistan as American troop levels are drawn down.

Closer to home, we need to do more to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within our ranks, while empowering diplomatic security agents to conduct effective investigations in support of protective details, as well as passport and visa fraud.

The recent SolarWinds intrusion has underlined the importance of DS' role in maintaining a 24/7 watch on the department's global cyber infrastructure, a challenge which promises to intensify over the coming years.

I also look forward to overseeing further improvements in our law enforcement and other security training at the department's new Foreign Affair Security Training Center in Blackstone, Virginia.

Finally, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this body to ensure your interests and concerns are properly address and that we work together to protect our personnel, facilities, and national interests abroad and domestically.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I am happy to entertain any of your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. GENTRY O. SMITH

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee. I am honored to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. I am grateful for the confidence that the President and Secretary Blinken have placed in me, and I am humbled by the opportunity to lead such an outstanding organization. In the 105-year history of Diplomatic Security, I am just the third DS agent to be nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary.

In my 30-year career with the Foreign Service, I am proud to have served as a DS Agent for 27 years prior to my appointment as Director of the Office of Foreign Missions—a position I held until my retirement in 2017. I would like to thank you for your continued unwavering support for both the Department and Diplomatic Security. I am very proud to be associated with the outstanding women and men who labor tirelessly to protect America's diplomatic facilities, critical information, and, most importantly, American lives. They also conduct extensive, important law enforcement investigations necessary to keep our country safe.

I want to thank my wife Georgette, our adult children and their spouses, and our six adorable grandchildren for their love and support, and for allowing me to rejoin an institution that I love. It is indeed an honor to lead the dedicated Special Agents, Security Engineers, Diplomatic Couriers, Security Technicians, and other specialized personnel in providing a secure environment in which to conduct U.S. foreign policy.

I first joined Diplomatic Security in 1987, after proudly serving as a Police Officer in Raleigh, North Carolina. These were the early days of building the Diplomatic Security Service. I grew up in the organization as it grew to meet increasing global security challenges, as well as domestic challenges to U.S. national security interests. Having served in Cairo during both Gulf Wars and in Rangoon during a period of unrest and uncertainty that rivals the current situation, I am familiar with the importance of strong leadership and requisite security operations. Upon returning to the U.S. and serving in senior positions in Diplomatic Security, I am proud to have collaborated closely with other Department colleagues, the Intelligence Community, DoD and Members of Congress to construct and improve diplomatic facilities here and abroad while enabling our personnel to project U.S. Government interests around the world. I am also proud and honored to have received Senate approval to lead the Office of Foreign Missions during my last tenure with the Department.

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Closer to home, we need to do more to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within our ranks while empowering Diplomatic Security agents to conduct more effective investigations in support of protective details, as well as passport and visa fraud.

The recent SolarWinds intrusion has underlined the importance of DS's role in maintaining a 24/7 watch on the Department's global cyber infrastructure—a challenge which promises to intensify in the years to come.

I also look forward to overseeing further improvements in our law enforcement and other security training at the Department's new Foreign Affairs Security Training Center in Blackstone, Virginia.

Finally, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this body to ensure your interests and concerns are properly addressed, and that we work together to protect our personnel, facilities, and national interests abroad and domestically.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.
Ambassador Bitter?

STATEMENT OF THE HON. RENA BITTER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLOMBIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (CONSULAR AFFAIRS)

Ms. BITTER. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today and grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the trust they have placed in me.

It is with no small measure of humility that I approach the responsibility before me, if confirmed. I believe there is no part of the Department of State more directly responsible for the security and well-being of Americans at home and abroad than the Bureau of Consular Affairs.

In fact, diplomats have been serving their fellow citizens abroad in consular missions since before the Constitution was written.

These are the oldest and most vital functions of the Department of State. Consular work is not glamorous and it can often be heart-breaking. But colleagues in the bureau do not do this work for recognition. They are the truest of public servants, working under sometimes very difficult conditions on behalf of the American people.

For a recent example, the men and women of the Bureau of Consular Affairs led the repatriation of nearly 100,000 Americans at the beginning of the pandemic, often risking their own health and safety.

The Senate recognized this effort with Senate Resolution 567 commending the department for its efforts on behalf of our fellow citizens.

I would also like to add my thanks to the Bureau for all it does on behalf of the American people, much of which takes place below their notice.

If confirmed, it would be the honor of a lifetime to lead this extraordinary team. I have had many jobs and many proud moments during the span of my 27-year career, but the proudest have revolved around Consular Services.

In Amman, my team issued the very first Special Immigrant Visas for Iraqi translators at the start of that program in 2006. I understand on a very personal level the U.S. Government's commitment to the men and women who serve beside us.

Another proud moment was more recent as ambassador when I received a letter from two grieving New England families whose newlywed children were tragically killed while on their honeymoon in Laos.

The families wrote to thank me for the compassionate support they received from our embassy team during their time of immeasurable grief. They enclosed their children's joint obituary from their hometown paper, in which the families thanked our consular officer by name.

As I said, the work can often be heartbreaking, but it is vital and never more so than now. President Biden promised to craft a foreign policy for the middle class. A strong healthy Bureau of Consular Affairs will be critical to this effort.

But the global pandemic has taken a toll on the bureau. I know the department is very grateful to Congress for its support for consular services over the last several months.

I am aware that the bureau has had to make some difficult decisions due to pandemic-related constraints on space and resources. More difficult decisions lie ahead. But prior to the pandemic, international visitors contributed more than \$260 billion to the U.S. economy and directly supported millions of jobs, and we must get back there again.

If confirmed, my top priority will be that we do, to see that the bureau is able to meet the need for consular services even in this constrained resource environment and with the continued uncertainty of the global pandemic.

A related priority, if confirmed, I will work with department stakeholders and our partners in Congress to develop a more resilient funding model so the bureau will always have a stable platform from which to carry out its mission.

Finally, I believe the Bureau of Consular Affairs has no more important partner than Congress. The Department of State is charged with representing the interests of U.S. citizens around the world with reminding foreign governments that the United States has no higher priority than the welfare of its citizens, and with ensuring that our foreign policy reflects that goal.

I believe executing these responsibilities are at the heart of the mission that the president and secretary have entrusted me with and to which I am prepared to dedicate all my energy.

If confirmed, I will advocate for your constituents. On a personal note, I would like to thank my family and my family of friends, who have put up with long absences over the course of my career,

and then generously welcomed me home as if I had never been gone. Many of them are here today or watching.

When I last had the honor to appear before this committee, my nephew, Josh, was among them sitting behind me. He died in December, and today, as every day, we mourn his absence.

But I think he would be pleased to know that our love for him would be memorialized in the Congressional Record, and I thank the committee for indulging me in doing so.

With that, I thank you and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Bitter follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. RENA BITTER

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today and grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the trust they have placed in me. It is with no small measure of humility that I approach the responsibility before me if confirmed. I believe there is no part of the Department of State more directly responsible for the security and well-being of Americans at home and abroad than the Bureau of Consular Affairs. In fact, diplomats have been serving their fellow citizens abroad in consular missions since before the constitution was written. These are the oldest and most vital functions of the Department of State.

Consular work is not glamorous and can often be heartbreaking. But colleagues in the Bureau do not do this work for recognition. They are the truest of public servants, working under sometimes very difficult conditions on behalf of the American people. For a recent example, the men and women of the Bureau of Consular Affairs led the repatriation of 100,000 Americans at the beginning of the pandemic, often risking their own health and safety. The Senate recognized this effort with Senate Resolution 567, commending the Department for its efforts on behalf of our fellow citizens. I, too, would like to add my thanks to the Bureau for all it does on behalf of the American people, much of which takes place well below their notice. If confirmed, it would be the honor of a lifetime to lead this extraordinary team.

I have had many jobs and many proud moments during the span of my 27-year career. But the proudest have revolved around Consular services. In Amman my team issued the first Special Immigrant Visas for Iraqi translators at the very start of that program in 2006. I understand on a very personal level the U.S. Government's commitment to the men and women who serve beside us. More recently, as Ambassador, I received a letter from two grieving New England families whose newlywed children were tragically killed while on their honeymoon in Laos. The families thanked me for the compassionate support they received from our Embassy during their time of immeasurable grief, and they enclosed their children's joint obituary from their hometown paper, in which they thanked our consular officer by name. As I said, the work can be heartbreaking.

But its vital and never more so than now. President Biden promised to craft a foreign policy for the middle class -- a strong, healthy Bureau of Consular Affairs will be critical to this effort. But the global pandemic has taken a toll on the Bureau. I know the Department is grateful to Congress for its support for Consular Services over the last several months. I am aware that the Bureau has had to make some difficult decisions due to pandemic-related constraints on space and resources. More difficult decisions lie ahead. But prior to the pandemic international visitors contributed more than \$260b to the U.S. economy and directly supported millions of jobs. We must get back there again. If confirmed, my top priority will be to ensure that we do—that the Bureau is able to meet the need for Consular services, even in this constrained resource environment and with the continued uncertainty of the global pandemic.

A related priority—If confirmed I will work with Department stakeholders and our partners in Congress to develop a more resilient funding model so the Bureau will always have a stable platform from which to carry out its mission.

Finally, I believe that Bureau has no more important partner than Congress. The Department of State is charged with representing the interests of U.S. citizens around the world, reminding foreign governments that the United States has no higher priority than the welfare of its citizens, and ensuring that our foreign policy reflects that goal. I believe executing that responsibility is at the heart of the mission that the president and secretary have entrusted me with, and one to which I

am prepared to dedicate all my energy. If confirmed, I will advocate for your constituents.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my family and my family of friends who have put up with long absences over the course of my career, then generously welcomed me home as if I'd never been gone. Many of them are here today or watching. When I last had the honor to appear before this committee, my nephew Josh was among them, sitting behind me. He died in December and today, as every day, we mourn his absence. I think he would be pleased to know that our love for him would be reflected in the congressional record and I thank the committee for indulging me to do so.

I welcome your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ambassador, and our sympathies to you and your family for the loss of your nephew.

Ms. Medina, the floor is yours.

STATEMENT OF MONICA P. MEDINA, OF MARYLAND, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (OCEANS AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS)

Ms. MEDINA. I want to begin by thanking Senator Markey.

Make sure my microphone is on. There. Can you hear me now?

Thank you, Chairman Menendez. I want to begin by thanking Senator Markey for that very kind introduction and for decades of friendship.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, it is a tremendous honor to appear before you today as the president's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans, International, Environmental, and Scientific Affairs, or OES.

I am deeply honored to be nominated by President Biden and for the trust that he and Secretary Blinken have placed in me. I am also thrilled to have the chance to serve my country again.

I would like to begin by thanking my family. I am eternally grateful to my husband, Ron, and our grown children, Hannah, Michael, and Daniel, for their constant support and encouragement as I pursued a career in environmental conservation, even when it took me far from home.

I also must thank my mother, Jeanne, a retired middle school teacher, who, through her passion for elephants and other wildlife, taught me the importance of biodiversity to life on Earth.

If confirmed, I am eager to consult, engage, and collaborate with members of this committee and to build on your great work on ocean conservation, ending wildlife trafficking and illegal fishing, stemming the rise of future pandemics, fighting plastic pollution, and other OES issues of interest to you.

I would not be here today if it were not for the opportunity the U.S. Army gave me to attend Georgetown University on an Army ROTC scholarship at a time when there were not many women who received them.

Both my parents were teachers, and I could not have afforded a private university like Georgetown otherwise, and my dream was for a career in government and law.

I could not have imagined then that my scholarship would lead me to where I sit today, that I would serve twice in the Pentagon, once in uniform, work in positions of responsibility on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee staff, at the Depart-

ment of Justice, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Department of Commerce twice, and now, with your approval, at the State Department.

OES is at the forefront of our responses to the global challenge of the present and also the global challenge of the future. Clearly, our nation must continue to work to defeat COVID-19 globally and better prepare for and prevent future pandemics.

Likewise, there is no greater long-term threat to our safety and security than climate change. I look forward to supporting the administration's work on both these fundamental threats to our health, security, and prosperity.

I would, additionally, raise three areas of particular concern to me. My decades of experience attending and representing the U.S. at international meetings leads me to believe that there will be increasing global tensions over limited natural resources.

If confirmed, I would dedicate special attention to the following.

First, the loss of biodiversity is a crisis and it is often overlooked. But there is great bipartisan work being done here in Congress to conserve species globally and to assist countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas in their efforts to do the same.

I greatly admire the International Conservation Caucus' efforts to work collaboratively with legislative counterparts from around the world to ensure that we do not lose elephants or rhinos or tigers or penguins or pangolins to extinction.

Second, the ocean needs our attention. There is too much tension, damage, and lawless behavior in the seas due to deep disagreements over a plethora of hot-button issues, such as excessive maritime claims, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, the dramatic changes and rapid development in the polar regions, and the disregard by bad actors of global shipping, safety, and security rules as well as pervasive plastic pollution and ocean chemistry changes.

I am very impressed by the work of the Ocean Caucus on these issues, and if confirmed, implementing the recently passed Save Our Seas 2.0 Act will be a priority of mine.

Finally, given the rapid growth and competition in space exploration and commercialization, space policy is at a key inflection point.

A new space race could escalate global tensions among superpowers and create problems for future generations if we do not work to ensure today that space actors are complying with their obligations under international law and space activities are pursued in a manner that is safe, responsible, and sustainable.

All of these issues also merit special attention by OES, in my view, because they are central to addressing our nation's strategic competition with China. Moreover, each of these challenges must be handled in a way that ensures the equitable inclusion of diverse stakeholders and the private sector in our solutions.

In tackling these and other challenges, I want to assure the committee that I will work every day on behalf of the American people with the goal of ensuring that our efforts around the world support Americans at home and make their lives better.

Thank you for considering me for this position, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Medina follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MONICA P. MEDINA

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, it is a tremendous honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, or OES.

I am deeply honored to be nominated by President Biden, and for the trust he and Secretary Blinken have placed in me. I am also thrilled to have the chance to serve my country again.

I would like to begin by thanking my family. I am eternally grateful to my husband Ron, and our children, Hannah, Michael and Daniel, for their constant support and encouragement as I pursued a career in environmental conservation even when it took me far from home. I also must thank my mother, Jeanne, a retired middle school teacher, who through her passion for elephants and other wildlife, taught me the importance of biodiversity to life on Earth.

If confirmed, I am eager to engage, consult, and collaborate with members of this committee and to build on your great work on ocean conservation, ending wildlife trafficking and illegal fishing, stemming the rise of future pandemics, fighting plastic pollution, and other OES issues of interest to you.

I would not be here today if it were not for the opportunity the U.S. Army gave me to attend Georgetown University on an R.O.T.C. scholarship at a time when there were not many women who received them. Both my parents were teachers and I could not have afforded a private university like Georgetown otherwise—and my dream was for a career in government and law. I could not have imagined then that my scholarship would lead me to where I sit today—that I would meet my husband, attend Ivy League law schools, serve twice in the Pentagon, work in positions of responsibility on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee staff, at the Department of Justice, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the Department of Commerce twice, and now, with your approval, at the State Department.

OES is at the forefront of our responses to the global challenge of the present and the global challenge of the future. Clearly, our nation must continue to work to defeat COVID-19 globally and better prepare for and prevent future pandemics. Likewise, there is no greater long-term threat to our safety and security than climate change. I look forward to supporting the administration's work on both of these fundamental threats to our health, security and prosperity.

I would additionally raise three areas of particular concern to me, and ones that, if confirmed, I would dedicate special attention to:

- The loss of biodiversity globally is a crisis and it is often overlooked. But there is great bi-partisan work being done here in Congress to conserve species globally and to assist countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas in their efforts to do the same. I greatly admire the International Conservation Caucus' efforts to work collaboratively with legislative counterparts from around the world to ensure we don't lose elephants or rhinos or tigers or penguins or pangolins to extinction.
- The ocean also needs our attention. There is too much tension, damage and lawless behavior in the seas due to deep disagreements over a plethora of hot button issues such as excessive maritime claims, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, the dramatic changes and rapid development in the polar regions, and disregard by bad actors of global shipping safety and security rules, as well as pervasive plastic pollution and ocean chemistry changes. I am very impressed by the work of the Ocean Caucus on these issues. If confirmed, implementing the recently passed Save Our Seas 2.0 Act will be a priority of mine.
- Finally, given the rapid growth and competition in space exploration and commercialization, space policy is at a key inflection point. A new space race could escalate global tensions among superpowers and create problems for future generations if we don't work to ensure today that space actors are complying with their obligations under international law and space activities are pursued in a safe, responsible, and sustainable manner.

All these issues also merit special attention by OES, in my view, because they are central to addressing our nation's strategic competition with China. Moreover, each of these challenges must be handled in a way that recognizes the disparity between developed and developing nations, and ensures the equitable inclusion of diverse stakeholders and the private sector in our solutions. In tackling these and

other challenges, I want to assure the committee that I will work every day on behalf of the American people, with the goal of ensuring that our efforts around the world support Americans at home and make their lives better. Diplomacy, cooperation, and compassion for our fellow residents of the planet we call home have never been more important.

Thank you again for considering me for this position, and I look forward to answering your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Mr. Knapper?

STATEMENT OF MARC EVANS KNAPPER, OF CALIFORNIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Mr. KNAPPER. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of this committee, for the opportunity today to appear before you. I am honored in the faith that President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed in me.

I also want to express my deep love and gratitude to my wife, Suzuko, and our son, Alex, for their support and their sacrifice. They have repeatedly changed homes and schools and have been distant from family and friends so that we could serve the United States overseas. Without them, as well as my parents, Jay and Yolanda Saltsman, I would not be here today.

The United States-Vietnam relationship has undergone a profound transformation since the normalization of diplomatic relations 26 years ago, and my own family history tracks the arc of our relationship with Vietnam.

My late father, Marine Colonel Roger Knapper, was a decorated Vietnam combat veteran who often recounted difficult memories from his time at war. Yet, he also talked many times of his earnest wish to return to Vietnam and see that beautiful country at peace and thriving.

This wish was fulfilled three times during my previous service at our embassy in Hanoi, and although he will not make it back for a fourth visit, we will always be grateful for the efforts and sacrifices he and millions of other Americans have made during our long journey with Vietnam.

Our two countries have moved from a history of conflict to a comprehensive partnership that spans political, security, economic, and people-to-people ties.

If confirmed, I will work to continue developing the U.S.-Vietnam relationship across a wide range of shared interests in four key areas.

First, security. Our two countries have significantly expanded our security cooperation, including through U.S. support to strengthen Vietnam's maritime capabilities.

The U.S. and Vietnam share an interest in upholding international law and resisting China's provocative behavior in the South China Sea and Mekong region, and, if confirmed, I will make every effort to deepen our cooperation in this area.

Second, trade and investment. Bilateral trade with Vietnam has grown significantly, increasing from nearly nothing in 1995 to more

than \$90 billion in 2020, benefiting American manufacturers, farmers, and ranchers as well as consumers.

But despite this growth, challenges remain, and if confirmed, I will advocate for a level playing field for U.S. companies and investors, including by urging Vietnam to maintain equitable market access for U.S. digital services and agricultural products.

Third, war legacy and humanitarian issues. If confirmed, providing the fullest possible accounting for U.S. personnel missing from the Vietnam War era will be my solemn duty. Furthermore, for decades, Vietnam has provided critical assistance to those efforts and we are grateful.

Since 1993, the U.S. has also contributed more than \$160 million to mitigate lingering threats posed by unexploded ordnance, and together with Vietnam, we have successfully completed the remediation of dioxin contamination in Danang, and in 2019, we broke ground on another project to remediate dioxin at the Bien Hoa airbase.

Our cooperation on these issues as well as providing \$125 million since 1989 in humanitarian assistance, supporting over a million persons with disabilities regardless of the cause, has been an important foundation for our bilateral relationship.

Fourth, and finally, people-to-people ties. The bonds between the American and Vietnamese people are strong and growing.

Prior to the pandemic, nearly 700,000 Americans traveled to Vietnam annually, including more than 1,200 American students, and here in the U.S., we welcome 30,000 Vietnamese students each year. These people-to-people ties are an important bridge between our two countries.

All that said, our thriving relationship is not without its challenges. We remain deeply concerned about Vietnam's human rights record, in particular, reports of the troubling trend of harassment, arbitrary or unlawful arrests, unjust convictions, and harsh sentences of journalists and activists.

If confirmed, I will press the government of Vietnam to respect the freedoms of expression, association, peaceful assembly, and religion and belief.

Only when we see significant progress on human rights can our two countries' partnership reach its full potential, and as always, my number-one priority will be protecting the safety and welfare of all United States citizens in Vietnam and I will also make the safety and welfare of Mission Vietnam personnel a top priority.

The thriving U.S.-Vietnam partnership is a result of the courage, goodwill, and painstaking work of dedicated people in both countries who believed in the possibility of peace and reconciliation between two former enemies.

Our overarching goal remains to advance American interests and support the development of a strong, prosperous, and independent Vietnam that contributes to international security and respects human rights and the rule of law.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Knapper follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MARC E. KNAPPER

Thank you Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch and distinguished members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored in the faith that President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed in me.

I also want to express my deep love and gratitude to my wife, Suzuko, and our son, Alex, for their support and their sacrifice. They have repeatedly changed homes and schools and been distant from family and friends so that we could serve the United States overseas. Without them, as well as my parents Jay and Yolanda Saltsman, I would not be here today.

The U.S.-Vietnam relationship has undergone a profound transformation since the normalization of diplomatic relations 26 years ago. My own family history tracks the arc of the United States' relationship with Vietnam. My late father, Marine Colonel Roger Knapper, was a decorated Vietnam combat veteran, who often recounted difficult memories from his time at war. Yet, he also talked many times of his earnest wish to return to Vietnam and see that beautiful country at peace and thriving. This wish was fulfilled three times during my previous service at our Embassy in Hanoi. Although he will not make it back for a fourth visit, we will always be grateful for the efforts and sacrifices he and millions of other Americans have made during our long journey with Vietnam.

Our two countries have moved from a history of conflict to a Comprehensive Partnership that spans political, security, economic, and people-to-people ties. If confirmed, I will work to continue developing the U.S.-Vietnam relationship across a wide range of shared interests in four key areas.

First, security. Our two countries have significantly expanded security cooperation, including through U.S. support to strengthen Vietnam's maritime capabilities. Last year, Vietnam welcomed the USS Theodore Roosevelt, the second U.S. aircraft carrier to visit since we established diplomatic relations. The United States and Vietnam share an interest in upholding international law and resisting provocative behavior in the South China Sea and Mekong region, and if confirmed I will make every effort deepen our cooperation in this area.

Second, trade and investment. Bilateral trade with Vietnam has grown significantly, increasing from nearly nothing in 1995 to more than \$90 billion in 2020, benefiting American manufacturers, farmers and ranchers, and consumers. Despite the growth, challenges remain. If confirmed, I will advocate for a level playing field for U.S. companies and investors, including by urging Vietnam to maintain equitable market access for U.S. digital services and agricultural products.

Third, war legacy and humanitarian issues. Providing the fullest possible accounting for U.S. personnel missing from the Vietnam War era remains our most solemn duty. For decades, Vietnam has provided critical assistance to those efforts. Since 1993, the United States has contributed more than \$160 million to mitigate lingering threats posed by unexploded ordnance. Together with Vietnam, we successfully completed the remediation of dioxin contamination in Danang in 2018, and in 2019 we broke ground on the 10-year dioxin remediation project at the Bien Hoa airbase area. We have provided more than \$125 million since 1989 in humanitarian assistance, directly and indirectly supporting over a million persons with disabilities, regardless of the cause. Our cooperation on these issues continues to build a foundation of trust to expand our relationship.

Fourth, people-to-people ties. The bonds between the American and Vietnamese people are strong and growing. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 700,000 Americans traveled to Vietnam annually, including more than 1,200 American students. Here in the United States, we welcome 30,000 Vietnamese students each year. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of U.S.-Vietnam relations last year, we signed an agreement to bring Peace Corps volunteers for the first time ever, a significant and symbolic milestone.

Our thriving relationship is not without its challenges. We remain deeply concerned about Vietnam's human rights record, in particular reports of the troubling trend of harassment, arbitrary or unlawful arrests, unjust convictions, and harsh sentences of journalists and activists. If confirmed, I will press the Government of Vietnam to respect the freedoms of expression, association, peaceful assembly, and religion or belief. Only when we see significant progress on human rights can our partnership reach its fullest potential.

As always, my number one priority will be protecting the safety and welfare of all United States citizens in Vietnam. I will also make the safety and welfare of Mission personnel a top priority.

The thriving U.S.-Vietnam partnership is the result of the courage, goodwill, and painstaking work of dedicated people in both countries, who believed in the possibility of peace and reconciliation between two former enemies. Our overarching goal

remains to advance American interests and support the development of a strong, prosperous, and independent Vietnam that contributes to international security, and respects human rights and the rule of law.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

We will start a round of five-minute questions, and before I start my own line of questions, I have some overarching questions for the committee.

First, I have a few questions that speak to the importance that this committee places on responsiveness by all officials in the executive branch and that we expect and will be seeking from all of you.

So I would like to ask each of you to provide a simple yes or no answer to the following questions.

Do you agree to appear before this committee and make officials from your office available to the committee and designated staff when invited?

Ms. BITTER. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Mr. KNAPPER. Yes.

Ms. MEDINA. Yes. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Do you commit to keep the committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

Ms. MEDINA. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Mr. KNAPPER. Yes.

Ms. BITTER. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation when policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?

Ms. BITTER. Yes.

Ms. MEDINA. Yes.

Mr. KNAPPER. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And finally, do you commit to promptly responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the committee and its designated staff?

Ms. BITTER. Yes.

Ms. MEDINA. Yes.

Mr. KNAPPER. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Bitter, let me ask you, there is a lot of issues under what will be your portfolio. From the question of COVID vaccines for American citizens abroad, which will not be only within the responsibility of the Bureau of Consular Affairs but I cannot imagine that you will not be engaged in it, what do you think are the primary challenges for CA and the department, more broadly, on administering such a vaccine program in the face of a global pandemic for American citizens abroad?

Ms. BITTER. Thank you, Senator, I am aware of the concern that members of Congress have and also this issue, I know, is of great concern to many Americans. You know, the way that the depart-

ment has approached this is that it has worked in the interagency to try to make sure that vaccines are available to countries who have yet to acquire them.

And then within the department, we have tried to make available consular information to Americans abroad to ensure that they are aware of how they can get access to vaccines where they are available and make sure that they have information about local medical providers in healthcare, and that is the general form of consular services to those abroad.

And if there are particular needs, of course, the embassies abroad are always prepared to address consular services and whatever needs American citizens have.

The department has not typically provided medical care to private citizens. So I think there would be many challenges attendant upon that, not least of which would simply be the issues involved in just administering the vaccines. It would be quite challenging.

The CHAIRMAN. I hope we will think about—and I understand that the department has not been involved in delivering health care services to citizens abroad, but in the global pandemic, I hope we will think about how we help an American citizen living abroad, maybe because of work or some other reason, to find access to a vaccine, because when a country has its own vaccination program, of course, it is focused on its own citizens and so that leaves an American citizen in limbo, potentially.

So I hope we will give a little thought to how we can create a greater connection for American citizens abroad in that context.

Let me turn to the question of passports. As you may know, an artifact of the COVID crisis is the department remains considerably backed up on passport processing at the National Passport Center.

I was listening to several of our colleagues on the committee and my own experience back in New Jersey of citizens for months who have applied for their passport and cannot get a response and, of course, with the opening of the world and the surge in demand, there is a greater demand.

Do you have a sense—I know you are not there, but in your briefings do you have a sense of the current backlog and what is your thoughts about working to clear it up?

Ms. BITTER. Thank you, Senator.

I am very aware of this issue and I know it is very important to you and to your constituents. It is important to the department as well, and just I share your concern about the length of time that it is currently taking, and the department takes very seriously its responsibility in this area.

It is a very visible part of the work that the department does and it is important to get secure and efficiently issued visa—passports, rather, out to American citizens as quickly as possible.

You know, like many organizations, the bureau and its partners have been faced with ramping up in a situation where COVID restrictions are lifting more slowly than demand is rising. So it is a pretty fast-moving situation.

The department is reviewing each passport agency according to the science and deciding when they can fully reopen. So it is an evolving situation.

I know, again, that this is something of great concern to you and I would be very happy to work with my colleagues in Congressional Affairs to make sure that members and your staff can get up to the minute briefings and the most recent information.

But right now, I think it is taking, between the passport office and its partners, up to 18 weeks for passports that are not expedited to be processed.

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah. Well, I will say that briefings are great. Actions are more important. What we really need is some type of surge capacity for a period of time to deal with the backlog.

I do not think that we can—many Americans, it is not just a question of travel for leisure, but it is travel for business again. It is travel to see family members who they may not have seen for well over a year and a half, two years, because of COVID. So it is about a family reunification issue as well.

I will tell the secretary as well, but I really urge you all to think about a surge capacity for a period of time to get us into a more reasonable period of time in which people have to wait.

Finally, not because there are not many more issues, but I appreciate the important work the department does to vet visas to assure there is no fraud and abuse.

But I can tell you I have a regular stream of complaints about the department's transparency and communication and sometimes its agility and responsiveness when it comes to processing visas for non-American family of U.S. citizens to visit the United States, student visas and work and business visas.

I am interested in your thoughts about where and how we can improve the visa application and processing system so that applicants, even if they are turned down, face an open, transparent, and rapid process that speaks to our best values as a nation.

I cannot tell you how many times—I know that an applicant has to overcome the hurdle of showing that they have roots in their country, that they are likely to return, that they are not likely to stay in the United States. I am very familiar with the immigration law in that respect. So that is a hurdle they must meet.

But I cannot tell you how many times I have had individuals who have properties in their country, businesses in their country, deep family ties in their country, and no reasonable expectation that they would stay in the United States, and many of them feel they get arbitrarily and capriciously just rejected.

So there is the feeling, you know, we want people in the world to think of the United States as a place that is welcoming and follows rules of law.

Yet, they feel that they have not had, so to speak, their day in court. I understand the incredible crush on consular officers. But we have to think of how we can process in a better way.

Do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms. BITTER. Thank you, Senator. I would not be telling the truth if I had not said to you that I have not heard those comments as well. I have. And I think they speak to issues of respect and issues of making sure that our consular officers are able to have what are sometimes quite quick interactions in a respectful and clear way. It can be a very challenging job.

But I am very conscious of the fact and we all are, in the department, and I know the Bureau of Consular Affairs is as well, that these officers are often the first or sometimes the only Americans that these host country nationals will meet, and it is enormously important that that interaction does reflect our values and does reflect the best that we have to offer.

So I take your point, and I share it and I share your concern, and if confirmed it would be my goal to make sure that every consular officer in every embassy and every interaction that they have with host country nationals reflects the diplomats that they are and reflects the best values of America.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Thank you.

Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I want to associate myself with the remarks regarding a surge to get caught up on the visas and passports.

Certainly, one of the great freedoms Americans have is the freedom to travel and also to welcome their non-American family members here to the United States and it is important we get caught up on that, as we go forward.

I want to focus, however, on another area that the chairman and I are working together on and that is global health. We are here where we are on the pandemic and we are really focused on vaccines today, and that is important. It is very important.

I think the only way we are going to get past this is a good vaccine program not only in the United States but around the world.

But, more importantly, I think we need to look to the future, and I think one of the most important things that this committee can do is to work on a protocol for the future and establishing protocols and infrastructure that will get all of the countries pulling the wagon together to address a global pandemic.

That did not happen this time. We all know that. There were major flaws, major holes in various countries attempted to get through this.

And so the chairman and I have been working on global health policy and a global health bill, and I hope, Ms. Medina, that you will familiarize yourself with that and commit to helping us get in place an infrastructure protocol for dealing with these things when they happen immediately.

There is no substitute for being able to address the challenge immediately, and that is primarily what our legislation is designed to do.

We all know, and the stories are legion, as far as the failures right at the beginning of this pandemic that caused no end of problems for the world, including the number of deaths. And so I would like to hear your thoughts on that.

Ms. MEDINA. Senator Risch, thank you very much for that question. And as you know, when we discussed it in your office and with your staff, there is no higher priority for the Bureau of Oceans, Environment, and Science than dealing with the current crisis and preventing and preparing for future crises, and I look forward to working with you, if confirmed, to try and build up, bulk up, the ability of the bureau to be that repository of expertise and

to prepare the U.S. for what is likely to be additional challenges like the one we faced in the future.

And I look forward to working with you on your legislation and to hearing your thoughts, if confirmed, about how we could do that together.

Senator RISCH. Well, thanks. And I will tell you that we all know the United States Government is big, it is complex, it has got many agencies, and there is an important function that Congress can play and, hopefully, we will play with legislation that the chairman and I have been working on as far as resolving who is in charge and who makes those decisions because, again, sometimes you get people of equal stature in the Government making conflicting decisions, and somebody has got to straighten that out, and this legislation attempts to address that and, hopefully, will address that.

In addition to that, of course, it is the same thing internationally, and that is establishing some type of structure internationally where these kind of questions can be answered and answered clearly.

We had a lot of gray areas particularly during the early parts of the pandemic, and these, in the best interest of the American people, in the best interest of the world, need to be straightened out and that responsibility is right here with the Foreign Relations Committee.

So we are attempting to discharge that responsibility. We will, certainly, look to you for your assistance and help, and we believe that the State Department is the appropriate place as a clearinghouse for making these kind of decisions.

And, again, I fully appreciate that we are focused on vaccine right now. But it is really important that we walk and chew gum at the same time and prepare for the next pandemic.

So with that, my time is up. Thank you.

Senator CARDIN [presiding]. I understand we have Senator Booker by WebEx who is next.

[Pause.]

Senator CARDIN. I understand he is not available. We will go to Senator Kaine.

Senator KAINE. Thank you to my colleagues and congratulation to the nominees for your appointments. I have questions. I have a million questions for all of you. But in five minutes, I am going to ask questions of Mr. Smith and Mr. Knapper.

Mr. Smith, Virginia is the home for training of security professionals who work not only for the State Department in the capacity center that you referenced in your opening statement at Fort Pickett in Blackstone, Virginia, but also the Marine security guards that protect our embassies around the world are trained at a wonderful facility at Quantico.

I have worked very hard as a member of this committee over the nine years I have served on it to advance the security training of our State Department professionals.

The siting of the training center at Fort Pickett was something I was very involved in in the early part of my time on the committee.

It has come a long way and I think there is even more that can be done there, and I would hope at some point, should you be con-

firmed, to possibly visit with you so we could assess together its current status and what more might be done to enhance the security training of State Department personnel.

Mr. SMITH. If confirmed, Senator, I look forward to that, and thank you for your support.

Senator KAINE. Right. Thank you so much.

And, Mr. Knapper, with respect to Vietnam, I traveled on a bipartisan CODEL to Vietnam in April of 2019. It was a tremendous visit, and we found so much interest in deeper partnerships with the United States on military cooperation.

There was appreciation for the U.S. role, led by Senator Leahy for decades now, to work on cleanup of dioxins and other contaminants at military bases in Vietnam, and the warm welcome we received from Vietnamese officials and the Vietnamese public was very heartwarming.

But of the number of concerns I have about Vietnam, one that is most significant is the deplorable absence of press freedom. The organizations that rank countries in the world for press freedom put Vietnam very low on the list of recent ranking. Had them 175th out of 180.

One of the things that seemed pretty vibrant in 2019 was, while the press was being cracked down on, there was still a pretty vibrant and open internet culture. But that has also been significantly constrained in the last two years.

What can the United States do? What would you do as ambassador, should you be confirmed, to try to promote broader notions of press and freedom and freedom of speech in Vietnam?

Mr. KNAPPER. Well, thank you, Senator, and thank you to you and your colleagues for the great support that Congress has provided our bilateral relationship over the years.

As for press freedoms and other freedoms in Vietnam, I fully agree. We have serious, serious concerns. This is something that, if confirmed, I will make a focus of mine.

I think one way we can seek to improve the situation is just to never miss an opportunity to raise with senior Vietnamese officials our deep concerns and to underline the point that our relationship will never reach its full potential unless we are able to see improvements in some of these areas, whether it is freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly.

As you noted, the internet is increasingly a contested area for these basic freedoms and, you know, among the messages we can deliver to the Government of Vietnam is that they have signed on to a number of international treaties in which they have committed to support universal rights, such as those of freedom and assembly.

And so I think a point we can strongly make is that should Vietnam seek to earn its place in the international community as a leader it is going to have to abide by some of the commitments it has made internationally.

Senator KAINE. The last thing I will say about the U.S.-Vietnam relationship is one of the powerful, I think, attraction of the U.S. relationship to the Vietnamese people: Their deep concern about China and the historic animosity that they have had because of Chinese incursions into Vietnam.

Shortly before our visit, there were massive protests all around Vietnam that were a little bit unusual, street protests, and they were fomented by the Communist Party leadership of Vietnam prepping to do sort of a sweetheart deal where China and Chinese companies would be able to come into an economic zone without really any competition from anyone else.

And it was notable to see that the Vietnamese Government wanted to do it, that the Vietnamese people took to the streets to stop them from doing it, and that at least in some temporary way it caused the Communist Party leadership of Vietnam to step back.

There is a deep desire for deeper relationship with the United States to be a counterpoint to a China that has been so often an aggressor against Vietnam, and that is important for us to know and it is important for us to contemplate as we seek to build a deeper relationship with Vietnam.

I look forward to working with all of you should you be confirmed. Very high qualified panel.

Thank you. I yield back.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY?

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Senator Cardin, and congratulations to each of you for being nominated today.

I take particular interest in one of our nominees. That is Ambassador-to-be Marc Knapper.

Marc, I am delighted to see that Suzuko and Alex have joined you today. I would say this—that I am certain Colonel Roger Knapper is smiling today, too. I am sure he takes a great deal of pride in your career.

It has been my great honor to have served with you for the past four years working with you, and I also take a great deal of pride in the fact that you are sitting here today.

I am also very optimistic. I think that you will be confirmed and I think that you are going to work with a great team—my former DCM, Joe Young, Dan Kritenbrink, I think, at EAP. We are going to be very well represented in an area that presents great strategic challenges for America today.

So I am very, very pleased to see you here. You know, America is challenged in the South China Sea like never before. The world is challenged in the South China Sea like never before, because of the claims that China continues to maintain, I think, without foundation to sovereignty over much of that region.

You have had unique experience, Marc. You have had experience in Japan. You have had experience in Hanoi. You have had experience dealing with India on the India desk, with China and Mongolia, and, certainly, you did a wonderful job as DCM and charge d'affaires in South Korea.

You understand this region. I see great opportunity between Vietnam and the United States from an economic standpoint that has been manifest. We have seen great trajectory there. I think economic ties support strategic ties.

But what I would really like to talk about for a moment is the strategic opportunity that Vietnam presents for the United States, for our Quad partners, and for the safety and security of that re-

gion. I would love to get your thoughts on the role that you would play and help lead as our Ambassador to Vietnam.

Mr. KNAPPER. Thank you very much, Senator, and thank you very much for your kind words about my family.

I mean, you are absolutely right. Right now, I think our shared view with Vietnam is that there is no greater challenge we face right now than that of China, China's aggressive and provocative behavior, particularly some of its sweeping and unlawful maritime claims in the South China Sea, what it is doing along the Mekong River, damming and releasing water, causing deep, deep problems for 66 million people who live along that river and rely upon it for their livelihoods.

If confirmed, Senator, I will make a priority deepening our strategic relationship with Vietnam. Right now, we have what we call a comprehensive partnership. We hope to raise it to a strategic partnership, and I will take steps to do that by strengthening even further our security relationship with Vietnam.

This is something that you mentioned, Ambassador Kritenbrink. He did a great job over three years in bringing us to the next level.

I would like to take us further. I think deepening our economic partnership by opening the market there further to American agricultural goods, digital services.

As you said, strengthening our trade and economic ties can only benefit our strategic sort of interactions and our strategic sort of interdependence. And so this, if confirmed, will be a priority of mine, as well as deepening our people-to-people ties.

The shoulders upon which all of our efforts with Vietnam stand are the ties between our two peoples, whether it is young people going back and forth, students studying in each other's countries. And so that will also be, sir, a priority of mine, if confirmed.

Senator HAGERTY. Well, thank you very much. I look forward to working with you along all of those lines and know that you have a strong ally in the United States Senate, only with me but with the members of this committee, in achieving these goals.

Could I turn to you, Ambassador Bitter?

There is an area, again related to China, which is a deep concern of mine. I am certain that you are aware of this concern, and that is overseas students coming from China that pose a security threat to the nation.

I would just like to ask you in very specific terms if you are familiar with the Executive Order 10043. That executive order suspends the entry of certain students and researchers from the People's Republic of China.

Ms. BITTER. Yes, Senator.

Senator HAGERTY. And if you are confirmed, do you agree to notify me and this committee if there are any changes made to that executive order?

Ms. BITTER. Yes, Senator.

Senator HAGERTY. And in the meantime, do you agree to uphold the tenets of that executive order?

Ms. BITTER. Yes, Senator.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you very much, Ambassador. I appreciate it.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. [presiding]. Thank you. Senator Cardin?

Senator CARDIN. Well, first, let me thank all four of our nominees for their service to our country and our willingness to continue to serve our nation. We thank you. We thank your families. We know that this is very much a family commitment.

Ambassador Bitter, I would like to start with you. I just want to concur with Senator Menendez's comments in regards to the passport issues. And as Senator Menendez said, you are not responsible for the current backlog. Eighteen weeks is unacceptable. Unacceptable.

We have constituents who, in good faith, have made travel plans, expecting that if they requested a passport document that it would be done in a matter of a few months, not four months.

And some are suffering now extreme economic hardships as well as personal hardships not being able to get those documents and they do not fall into the narrow definition of a life's emergency that would require more immediate action.

We are also concerned that some have requested passport support months ago, may not even be at the front of the line in regards to people who are now requesting help. And again, we recognize that you are not responsible for the current circumstances.

I thought Senator Menendez made an excellent point about the need for surge. I would like to get your commitment that this will receive your priority, if confirmed, and that we cannot allow an 18-week backlog in passport applications.

Ms. BITTER. Yes, Senator, you have my commitment. I share your concern and it will be my top priority, if confirmed.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Knapper, I want to follow up on the questions that were asked by Senator Kaine in regards to Vietnam. I have been to Vietnam. Vietnam, certainly, is a much different country than it was when we were at war with Vietnam.

We have made significant progress in improving our relationship between our two countries. We were on the path towards the Trans-Pacific Partnership on a good governance section that was important to deal with the corruption in the country and good governance.

Vietnam was making progress, I would suggest, on basic human rights even though it is an authoritarian government, and now we have seen a backsliding, as Senator Kaine said, on freedom of the media.

I could also add the right of their citizens to peacefully protest their government has been very much infringed upon. And they have now changed their cyber laws in regards to comments about history can be now challenged by the Government and infringing upon the use of the internet.

These are trends that are very disturbing, and I would like to drill down a little bit more about your strategies for dealing with the human rights issues in Vietnam, and how you will keep us informed and work with us as we look at the tools that we have given the administration to advance human rights and making sure that they are used fully in Vietnam.

Mr. KNAPPER. Well, thank you, Senator.

I think one area in which we have seen progress over the past few years have been in the expansion of rights afforded to women, minorities, people with disabilities, members of the LGBT community, and I think one of the ways we were able to secure and see these advances was thanks to sort of increased cooperation with and assistance to the NGOs and activists within Vietnam who work within these specific areas and with these groups.

And so, if confirmed, I would seek to not only continue the great work that the U.S. Government has done, not just with activist groups and NGOs within Vietnam but also groups in the United States—the Vietnamese-American community, for example—to identify problematic areas, to try and identify potential strategies and tactics, going forward, because this is absolutely a priority area for me personally.

I worked on these issues 15 years ago when I previously served in Vietnam, and it will continue to be an area of focus for me and for Mission Vietnam. And you absolutely have my commitment to work with you and your colleagues, sir, in the Congress to look for opportunities and tools to further seek to improve the situation there in Vietnam.

Thank you.

Senator CARDIN. I would just add that it is very important that our mission in Vietnam support the NGOs and civil society groups that are working to advance these priorities so that our embassy is always a home for those who have roles to improve the governance in Vietnam and sometimes need the support of our embassy.

And I see you are shaking your head yes and I will just put your shaking of the head yes into the record.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. I prefer an oral answer when I ask you a question, but I do not want to interpret your headshaking as a yes and then maybe you tell me later on it was a no. So——

Mr. KNAPPER. Well, it was actually a head nodding, Senator.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

I understand there are no other members.

Oh, I am sorry. Senator Van Hollen just walked in.

Senator Van Hollen?

Senator Van Hollen: All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, and to all of you, congratulations on your nomination.

And let me start, if I could, with you, Ambassador Bitter, and I know Chairman Menendez asked you some questions about the current backlog in passport processing.

You know, obviously, we have been through a very difficult time with COVID. I recognize that, and the State Department has had to deal with all of the pressures that that brings.

In our state office, we have gone from things like small business access to PPP loans being the top priority and other issues to now number one relates to getting passports, where my understanding is we now have about a four-and-a-half-month average backlog.

And the other big issue, of course, is as families now have the opportunity to reunite and visit with friends, the issue of visas for people coming just to visit family and friends in the United States.

Can you talk about what we can do right now to address these issues and what, if confirmed, you would do?

Ms. BITTER. Thank you, Senator.

I am very aware of these issues, and I should take this opportunity, of course, to thank Congress for the support that it has given to the bureau over the last several months.

As all of you know, the bureau is under tremendous financial pressure since the start of the pandemic, and Congress has been enormously responsive in filling some of those gaps and allowing the bureau to continue to deliver consular services.

But so I know that the bureau is very grateful and that it will be continuing to engage with Congress on future budgets.

I just want to point out that these issues are not just money related. So while the U.S. is experiencing a return to what feels a little like normal, our posts overseas are still working under some pandemic space constraints, which means that they cannot offer the same number of appointments that they used to because they cannot have the same number of people in their waiting room.

So these restrictions are very important. They protect our staff, they protect the customers, they protect the community, but they do limit possibility to provide services.

And as a result, what has happened is my colleagues overseas have had to make some difficult prioritization decisions about how to use the space that is available to them.

If confirmed, this is very much job one. I recognize that visas also impact your community with respect to small businesses maybe relying on workers overseas that are unable to get back, family reunification, all of those issues. Right now it is a very difficult time.

Senator Van Hollen: Well, thank you for that statement. You know, this is the area where our constituents most frequently interact with the State Department, right, and so that is where they are really feeling the presence or lack of responsiveness and services.

So our office is working very closely with the team at the State Department. We are grateful for the relationship we have. But this is a big, big issue, the visa part but also just getting a passport for U.S. citizens who is here.

Ms. Medina, thank you for your testimony, and I appreciate your mentioning the issue of biodiversity, as you mentioned, and we are seeing a disappearance of biodiversity at alarming rates around the world and look forward to working with you on those issues, going forward.

Mr. Smith, thank you for taking on this assignment. As you well know, you know, Foreign Service officers go into the Foreign Service to really get to know and interact with the countries where they are serving.

And so while it is absolutely true that we have to provide security, I hope, as you think this through, you will also find ways to make sure that our Foreign Service officers overseas can interact with the rest of the population. Otherwise, they might as well just be in D.C.

In Kabul, we have, of course, a particularly immediate situation, and I know you will be monitoring that very carefully with respect to the situation there.

Finally, if I could, Mr. Knapper, congratulations on your nomination to Vietnam. Lots of issues to cover.

But let me just ask you about one, because over the past several years we have seen Vietnamese authorities increase their scrutiny over Vietnamese citizens' activities on the internet and social media, cracking down on any kind of free expression, requiring U.S. and other internet-based companies and social media companies to force them to comply with laws that can crack down on people's speech or try to force them.

Can you just talk briefly about how we are dealing with that situation?

Mr. KNAPPER. Well, thank you, Senator.

The one specific case right now that is attracting the most attention, of course, is that of Facebook, and the Vietnamese Government, in some instances, demanding that Facebook removed certain posts that it finds offensive or contrary to political order, so to speak.

And right now, the U.S. embassy in Hanoi, we are working very closely with Facebook folks on the ground there as well as the Vietnamese Government to try and find a way forward that, again, preserves the space on Facebook and other social networking sites to allow for free speech and to allow for the free expression of political and other views, and also just allowing an American company to be able to operate without a threat of its data being cut off or throttled, is the term that they use.

But, if confirmed, Senator, I will absolutely focus on this as a human rights issue, but also as a press freedom issue.

Thank you.

Senator Van Hollen: I appreciate that. As you say, it is really part of the larger, I think, growing challenge in Vietnam with respect to human rights. But thank you all for your testimony.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Some final questions.

Ambassador Smith, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, I am deeply concerned about what seems to be an emerging threat of directed energy attacks targeting U.S. personnel and our ability to pivot and adequately protect them and their families in the face of these attacks.

I hope that will be a major focus for you upon your confirmation?

Mr. SMITH. Yes, it will, Senator, and I look forward to engaging as we progress on this issue.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, that is incredibly important to us because, you know, we ask our people to do incredible work for the United States. We put them, sometimes, in harm's way. We need to do everything possible to protect them.

And this is something that seems to be challenging and escaping us. So I hope this will become one of your highest priorities upon taking office.

One of the most significant challenges I can see on the horizon is the security at Embassy Kabul. What is your current assessment—I know you are not there yet but from your experience of

our ability to ensure the safety and security of the embassy compound?

And will you commit to keeping the committee updated on the steps that Diplomatic Security has taken to ensure the safety of U.S. personnel?

Mr. SMITH. If confirmed, Senator, yes, I will commit to that. Afghanistan will continue to garner a lot of attention, particularly as U.S. forces continue to withdraw, and it is going to be important for Diplomatic Security to remain very much engaged both with our colleagues and contacts here and also with the Afghan forces on the ground to see how they can help to enhance our security operations.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, if you, when you get confirmed, I hope you will give us an assessment of what is needed, if anything is needed beyond what we have.

And also Port-au-Prince—we, obviously, have an ongoing difficult situation in Port-au-Prince. I know you will pay attention globally. But these are some hotspots that I think we need to pay attention to.

Do you have any sense of that, our embassy at Port-au-Prince?

Mr. SMITH. Again, I agree with you that Port-au-Prince is definitely a point of concern at this moment. I have not received any additional briefings on the activities there beyond what is in the open source.

But look forward, if confirmed, to focusing very, very clearly and specifically on that activity as well.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. We will look forward to hearing from you once you are confirmed.

Mr. Knapper, finally, as you contemplate the possibilities of taking the relationship that we have with Vietnam to the next level and inaugurating a genuine strategic partnership, an aspiration I certainly support, how will you balance our very real shared strategic interests with Vietnam with our ongoing human rights concern?

A couple years back we had the president of Vietnam here. It was a very interesting exchange. First time in my 30 years of doing foreign policy and sitting with foreign dignitaries that he did not take any questions.

And it is not our process in the committee when we are meeting with a head of state to allow them to ramble along and eventually never take a question.

That was emblematic, in my mind, of what is going on in Vietnam. What sort of linkages or conditioning do you think is appropriate and constructive as we consider additional military security, economic or diplomatic engagement, with Vietnam?

Mr. KNAPPER. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

I think you really have nailed the challenge that we face. It is, you know, how do we address our shared strategic interests in the region with Vietnam while staying true to our values regarding human rights, religious freedom, other areas.

And I think, if confirmed, I would like to build upon the good progress we have made so far. We have been able to keep that balance, I believe, between ensuring that our values related to universal human rights are upheld and asserted in our high-level con-

versations with the Vietnamese Government, but at the same time recognizing that in Vietnam we have no stronger or more vocal partner within ASEAN when it comes to speaking out against the challenge that China poses in the South China Sea and elsewhere in the region.

So as I mentioned earlier, Mr. Chairman, I think there are ways to point out to our Vietnamese Government and Communist Party of Vietnam interlocutors that there will be limitations to how much our relationship can grow under the circumstances in which we have concerns about human rights and religious freedom.

And I think we have to make clear that as we do consider ways to expand the relationship that we will let them know that there are potential breaks on progress that we will have to consider.

The CHAIRMAN. All right.

Ms. Medina, I do not want you to think that I—you have no object of my affection or interest. So but between your statement—your answers with Senator Risch and Senator Markey’s incredible description of your history, I think you have answered the issues I am concerned about.

So we look forward to working with you upon your confirmation. Global health for myself and for the ranking member is a critical issue, and while it may not seem in the title of your position to be the focal point, it is a focal point for this committee. So we will look forward to working with you on that.

With no other member, as I understand it, either virtually or present, to come before the committee, the record will remain open until the close of business on Wednesday, July the 14th for questions.

I would urge the nominees if you get questions for the record to answer them fully expeditiously so we can consider your nominations at a business meeting.

And with the thanks of the committee for your willingness to serve, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:27 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. GENTRY O. SMITH BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Risk Tolerance for Diplomats Abroad

Question. Diplomacy is an inherently dangerous business, and effective diplomacy cannot be conducted without accepting some degree of risk.

- How do you think the culture should change at the State Department to accommodate more risk management as opposed to risk avoidance?

Answer. I agree that the Department must balance the essential need to protect our people with the need to engage our partners around the world to advance U.S. interests. Department leadership acknowledges that our national security mission entails diverse types of risk and is committed to managing it appropriately. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) goes to great lengths to facilitate our nation’s diplomacy in challenging places, including high-threat locations, and welcomes further efforts, including with Congress, to ensure that the Department is able to meet mission objectives while protecting our personnel.

To quote Secretary Blinken, “The safety and security of our personnel abroad should not be politicized, nor should we assume negligence if, and when, prudent, calculated risk decisions play out with negative consequences.”

Question. How do you view your role in promoting that cultural shift in the department? What specifically could you do as assistant secretary—if confirmed—that would better enable our diplomats to get outside our posts abroad and advance America's interests?

Answer. This is an issue that, if confirmed, I intend to examine closely, in concert with senior Department leadership, especially with regard to what the Department can do to further enable diplomacy in High Threat/High Risk locations. Department leadership acknowledges that our national security mission entails diverse types of risk and is committed to managing these risks appropriately. My experience has been that the Bureau of Diplomatic Security goes to great lengths to facilitate our nation's diplomacy in challenging places, including high-threat locations, and welcomes further efforts, including with Congress, to ensure that the Department is able to meet mission objectives while protecting our personnel.

Talent Retention

Question. The Bureau for Diplomatic Security (DS) loses a lot of mid-level officers at the senior-two and senior-three levels for many reasons, but two frequent ones are lack of jobs at their level that reflect interest/ability and lack of promotion opportunities due to the limited number of positions available.

- If confirmed, what can you do as Assistant Secretary to address the loss of mid-level officers?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with senior Department leadership to look at ways to retain existing staff and expand opportunities for mid-level officers. We will continue to engage with Global Talent Management to assess the availability of positions at all levels and ensure that we provide all officers ample opportunities to compete for promotion.

Question. What policies or internal measures can you pursue to help address the loss of mid-level officers who leave due to the lack of promotion potential?

Answer. DS recognizes that mid-level officers have expressed concerns regarding assignments and the slow pace of promotions. In the past we sought to address concerns by reclassifying some positions to provide more opportunities for advancement. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Global Talent Management's leadership to explore additional ways to address these concerns.

Resources

Question. DS has multiple responsibilities that sometimes lead to a competition for resources. How do you feel DS should prioritize resources to the various missions?

Answer. The safety of our personnel and security of our information and facilities are among the Department's highest priorities. Congress has been very supportive to DS in providing the resources it has requested. If confirmed, I intend to work with Department leadership and this committee to prioritize resources to its various missions.

Key Personnel Skills

Question. The State Department faces a shortage of speakers of critical languages. Many of our pool of qualified speakers have close family ties to countries where the language is needed. Do you feel the current DS system of issuing preclusions adequately mitigates CI vulnerabilities that are identified during the background investigation?

Answer. The State Department is committed to a diverse, skilled workforce. Some assignment limitations are preclusions that reflect the Department's inability to accredit diplomats to foreign countries of which they are citizens or to foreign countries that consider them citizens. In adjudicating security clearances, the Department utilizes the whole person concept to determine whether facts and circumstances indicate that eligibility is clearly consistent with the national security interests of the United States. Any doubt is resolved in favor of national security. Part of this process identifies potential CI vulnerabilities and considers whether they are mitigated under the National Security Adjudicative Guidelines. The Department is committed to protecting its employees and national security information.

Programming

Question. Where does DS programming fit within the broader Department of State and interagency security sector capacity building structure and related planning processes?

Answer. Diplomatic Security is an important contributor to security capacity building in partner nations around the globe. DS serves as the primary implementer of the Department's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program, which provides selected foreign governments with counterterrorism training, equipment, and technical assistance in coordination with policy guidance and funding provided by the Bureau of Counterterrorism. Regional Security Officers (RSOs) frequently work with host country governments, local organizations, and other diplomatic missions to provide advisory security opinions to schools, hospitals, and similar institutions.

Question. What are DS's comparative advantages in the U.S. Government's security sector capacity building framework and tool set?

Answer. Numerous U.S. Government agencies have resources and skills that can contribute to assisting foreign development beneficial to the national interest. While Diplomatic Security possess its own impressive cadre of security professionals and world class training and assistance programs, DS' greatest asset is in the organization's status as a security and law enforcement agency and integral part of the Foreign Service. DS personnel are trained investigators, cyber experts, security engineers, analysts, and diplomats. That broad functionality allows DS to soundly evaluate and deploy needed security and training assistance, whether those efforts ultimately originate from within DS or from another agency.

Question. How can DS better leverage these advantages to further political goals?

Answer. Diplomatic Security should continue its role as the lead law enforcement representative on an embassy's Country Team. A Regional Security Officer's ability to advise a Chief of Mission on both diplomatic and security consequences assures that U.S. foreign policy goals are examined from both a political and security dimension.

Havana Syndrome

Question. Between late 2016 and May 2018, the State Department found that certain Embassy Havana community members suffered a series of unexplained injuries, including hearing loss and cognitive issues. Many other U.S. Government officials in other countries have experienced similar incidents.

- If confirmed, will you commit to continuing the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the sonic attacks?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to continue to prioritize the application of DS' technical and investigative talent to support the investigation to identify the source and cause of these unexplained health incidents. I look forward to working with Congress on this very important issue.

Question. Will you seek to ensure the safety and security of U.S. diplomatic personnel in Havana and other posts where personnel were injured?

Answer. There is no higher priority for the Department or for me than the safety and security of our personnel and this certainly includes mitigating against unexplained health incidents. I know that this issue is a top priority for Secretary Blinken. If confirmed I will work closely with the interagency to fully apply DS technical and investigation resources to ensure that our efforts to determine cause and attribution remain a priority.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to work constructively with other government agencies on finding the cause of the attacks as well as on how best to support those U.S. Government employees who have been injured?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to continue coordinating with multiple agencies to identify the source and cause of these reported injuries. In addition, I intend to focus on ways to strengthen the already robust mitigation efforts that are taking place to further enhance the safety and security of all USG personnel and family members overseas under our security responsibility.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to regularly sharing new information, including updates on any live investigations, to Congress?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work through the Bureau of Legislative Affairs to ensure that Congress promptly has the information it needs to perform its Constitutional obligations, consistent with obligations involving interagency information and existing practices for the protection of law enforcement activities.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. GENTRY O. SMITH BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Risk Management

Question. Some former State Department officials, Members of Congress, and other stakeholders have expressed concern with what they view as a growing level of risk intolerance at U.S. missions abroad, especially at high-risk posts, which they maintain inhibits U.S. diplomats from effectively fulfilling their mandates. I am considering a hearing on this topic in my subcommittee.

- What is your view on the State Department's current diplomatic security risk management approach? In your view, how, if at all, should the current approach be adjusted more towards risk tolerance or, alternatively, more towards mitigating risks facing U.S. diplomats and other personnel under Chief of Mission Authority?

Answer. I agree that the Department must balance the essential need to protect our people with the need to engage our partners around the world to advance U.S. interests. Department leadership acknowledges that our national security mission entails diverse types of risk and is committed to managing it appropriately. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) goes to great lengths to facilitate our nation's diplomacy in challenging places, including high-threat locations, and welcomes further efforts, including with Congress, to ensure that the Department is able to meet mission objectives while protecting our personnel.

To quote Secretary Blinken, "The safety and security of our personnel abroad should not be politicized, nor should we assume negligence if, and when, prudent, calculated risk decisions play out with negative consequences."

Question. What is your view of the Accountability Review Board (ARB) process? Do you believe the ARB process is excessively tilted toward finding someone to blame in the case of a security incident, or alternatively, does action need to be taken to ensure accountability? What kinds of adjustments, if any, would you suggest Congress make to the ARB process?

Answer. The Department recognizes that the advancement of foreign policy inherently involves diverse types of risk, and that taking considered risks can be essential to advancing U.S. interests. If confirmed, I would welcome working with Congress to look at ways to improve the ARB process.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. GENTRY O. SMITH BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. Since 2016, U.S. personnel posted to the Embassy in Havana, Cuba have reported a common set of symptoms now referred to as "Havana Syndrome." Since then, these symptoms have been reported in many other countries hosting U.S. diplomats, including China and Russia. These often debilitating injuries present a major risk to U.S. diplomatic personnel there.

- What is your assessment of the risks present to U.S. diplomatic personnel assigned to Havana?

Answer. If confirmed, I will closely assess the situation in coordination with Department of State stakeholders and interagency partners.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. RENA BITTER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Last year's travel restrictions and the resulting loss of visa fee revenue negatively impacted Consular Affairs' finances. Now, as vaccinations rates climb and more people seek to travel, demand for passports and visas are rapidly increasing, leading to significant delays in processing times for passports and visas. Some of these delays take extra months. If confirmed, what is your plan to reduce lengthy passport processing times?

Answer. If confirmed, my number one priority will be the reduction of service backlogs impacting both our domestic passport agencies and our overseas posts. Prior to COVID-19, our domestic passport service standards were up to three weeks for expedited applications, and up to eight weeks for routine applications. It is my goal to return to these timelines as quickly as possible, not only through the use

of overtime and increased hiring, but also by exploring how we might utilize Department staff to surge domestic passport processing capacity. Addressing visa backlogs overseas will require solutions tailored to the unique needs of each post, but I will devote myself and the CA team to identifying and implementing these solutions as quickly as possible.

Question. It appears that the Biden administration is not currently prioritizing visas for seasonal workers and other business-related needs. How are you going to better balance the needs of our small and medium-sized businesses, who often rely on seasonal workers to survive?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue efforts to sustain the long-standing program of temporary workers coming to the United States, which is vital to maintaining supply chains for food and other critical items. In addition, I will seek to continue existing policies to waive the in-person interview requirement for certain first-time H-2 applicants and those renewing within 48 months. These provisions will continue to permit the processing of many H-2 applications without the need for an in-person appearance, which creates efficiencies in processing while still adhering to COVID health protocols.

Question. Upon a determination by the Secretary of State that the detention of a United States national abroad is unlawful or wrongful, how will you work to efficiently transfer such cases from the Bureau of Consular Affairs to the Special Envoy for Hostage Affairs?

Answer. The Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) works closely with the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs (S/SPEHA) and other Department offices to implement the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act. CA works hand in hand with S/SPEHA, the relevant regional bureau, post, and the Department's Office of the Legal Adviser to develop recommendations on individual cases. When a detention is determined to be wrongful, the transfer of the case to S/SPEHA is a smooth and efficient process. If confirmed, I pledge to help facilitate continued close collaboration.

Question. How do you plan to ensure that all families with relatives held abroad are given timely access to information?

Answer. The U.S. Department of State has no greater responsibility than the protection of U.S. citizens overseas. Some of our most vulnerable U.S. citizens abroad are those who are arrested or detained in a foreign country. Consular officers stand ready to provide all appropriate consular services in cases where U.S. citizens are detained and arrested abroad. We will continue to work with local authorities to ensure our embassies or consulates are notified of a U.S. citizen arrest, and our consular officers will seek access to the citizen without delay. Consistent with the decision of the detained citizen and in line with the Privacy Act, consular officers provide status updates to family members as soon as possible. I pledge, if confirmed, that CA will continue to prioritize service to these U.S. citizens including providing as much information as possible to their families.

Question. What steps will you take to improve the Bureau of Consular Affairs with regards to United States nationals held abroad?

Answer. With all detentions, consular officers seek prompt access to ensure detained U.S. citizen prisoners are:

- receiving adequate food and necessary medical care;
- not being mistreated;
- able to access legal counsel;
- having communications facilitated with their families consistent with their preferences under the Privacy Act, and
- receiving all substantive and procedural protections under local law and fair trial guarantees consistent with international obligations, including human rights law.

If confirmed, I will seek to ensure individuals have access to any medication or medical attention they may need and highlight our concerns to local authorities, that officers also assist with the transfer of funds from family and friends in the United States to pay for attorneys' fees, food, and medicine while incarcerated, and that they raise concerns and protests regarding credible allegations of mistreatment. In cases where potential indications of a wrongful detention exist, I will ensure CA consults with S/SPEHA and other relevant Department offices on whether a wrong-

ful detention determination by the Secretary as called for under the Levinson Act might be appropriate.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. RENA BITTER BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

Question. State Department statistics released this month show fewer children are being successfully returned to the U.S. following parental abduction than before—See <https://bit.ly/3nExd6J>

The percentage of children returned to the U.S. as share of all reported outgoing abductions has steadily dropped from 2011 to 2020.) While recognizing that not all returns to the U.S. are for cases that happened in previous years, we are nonetheless concerned by the apparent decreases in proportion of children returned to the U.S.

- To what do you attribute this decline?

Answer. Each child's case, and each country, is unique. If confirmed, I will ensure the Bureau of Consular Affairs continues to assist parents seeking the return of their abducted children and to engage with countries to promote procedures to achieve better outcomes for children and families in child abduction cases. I will direct our focus to those countries cited for demonstrating a "pattern of noncompliance" in our Annual Report to Congress on International Child Abduction, and those countries that are not party to the Hague Abduction Convention, as these are the countries from which it may be the most challenging to resolve cases.

In referring to the data publicly shared by the Department, I am also encouraged to observe that from 2010 to 2019, there was more than a 50 percent drop in the number of international parental child abductions reported to the Department. If confirmed, I will ensure the Bureau of Consular Affairs continues its robust efforts in collaboration with U.S. Customs and Border Protection to prevent these abductions from occurring in the first place.

Question. What would you do as Assistant Secretary to more forcefully and effectively advocate for the return of abducted children to the U.S.?

Answer. Consular Affairs has no more important role than the protection of U.S. citizens abroad, especially children wrongly removed or retained abroad by a parent from their U.S. homes. If confirmed, I will prioritize our engagement on international parental child abductions with both our Hague Convention partners and non-partner countries, with special focus on the 11 countries cited for demonstrating a "pattern of noncompliance" in our 2021 Annual Report to Congress on International Child Abduction. I will ensure we use every effective means to get these countries to work with the United States to quickly resolve these cases and help parents bring their abducted children home.

Question. If confirmed, would you support efforts to routinely inform parents applying for passports for minor children about the potential for international child abduction?

Answer. If confirmed, I will maintain the Bureau of Consular Affairs' priority focus on the prevention of international parental child abduction. All recipients of a U.S. passport currently receive a flyer advising them of the risks of international parental child abduction and providing contact information for the Office of Children's Issues. I am also encouraged that close to 55,000 children are actively enrolled in the Children's Passport Issuance Alert program, and I will continue the Department's work to strengthen this important child abduction prevention program.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. RENA BITTER BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. The COVID-19 pandemic has placed an incredible strain on the State Department's ability to process visas. This is, in part, due to the need to protect the safety and health of our diplomats in countries where the pandemic is still uncontrolled. However, as countries increase the vaccination of their citizens and the spread of the pandemic decreases, the U.S. should resume regular consular services in many countries.

- If confirmed, how do you plan to address the consular services backlog?

Answer. If confirmed, my number one priority will be the reduction of service backlogs at both our domestic passport agencies and our overseas posts. Prior to COVID-19, our domestic passport service standards were up to three weeks for expedited applications, and up to eight weeks for routine applications. It is my goal to return to these timelines as quickly as possible, not only through the use of overtime and increased hiring, but also by exploring how we might utilize Department staff to surge domestic passport processing capacity. Addressing visa backlogs overseas will require solutions tailored to the unique needs of each post, but I will devote myself and the CA team to identifying and implementing these solutions as quickly as possible.

Question. One consequence of the shutdown of consular services in most embassies has been the practice of referring citizens in one country to have their interviews conducted in another country. For example, ordinary Cubans have had to travel to Guyana.

- In your opinion, what message does it send to ordinary Cubans when they have to travel to Guyana to process their visas, but the Cuban baseball team was able to get visas in Havana to play a game in the U.S. earlier this year?

Answer. I am sympathetic to the financial and other difficulties Cuban citizens face in applying for visas and recognize there are humanitarian reasons that individuals may want to seek an appointment with the consular section in Havana. The U.S. Embassy suspended routine visa services following the ordered departure of non-emergency personnel in September 2017. The consular section must also comply with Cuban COVID-19 restrictions. Embassy Havana continues to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens in Cuba, and to provide limited non-immigrant visa services including for medical emergencies and official and diplomatic travelers. I am hopeful future conditions may permit a reevaluation of what services can be provided by the Embassy.

Question. During the Trump administration, the State Department decided to allow Americans born in Jerusalem to list "Israel" as their place of birth in their passports. This is a policy and is reflective of U.S. law that recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

- If confirmed, do you commit to upholding this policy decision?

Answer. If confirmed, I have no plans to seek to change the Department's current policy regarding the place of birth listed on U.S. passports for U.S. citizens born in Jerusalem.

Question. The Visa Waiver program is an initiative that allows citizens of participating countries to travel to the U.S. for 90 days without a Visa. Many of the participating countries are among our strongest allies and partners, such as the United Kingdom, Ireland, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. For several years, the State Department has worked to include Israel in the Visa Waiver program.

- If confirmed, do you commit to working with Israel on these efforts?

Answer. The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, may designate countries for participation in the Visa Waiver Program when and if the country meets established statutory and policy criteria. I commit to continuing the efforts to work with Israel on its progress to qualify for designation into the program.

Question. In 2014 the Obama administration agreed to afford multi-entry, non-immigrant visas (B1/B2) with ten years' validity to qualified PRC nationals. Now that two subsequent administrations have determined that the PRC is a strategic competitor, and have sought to calibrate U.S. policy accordingly, it is time to revisit the risks associated with visa policy.

- If confirmed, do you commit to evaluate the security risks of providing multi-entry visas of such long duration to PRC nationals, particularly Chinese Communist Party members and military personnel?

Answer. Yes, I will work with the administration and the Department to evaluate all security risks posed by the People's Republic of China. We maintain robust vetting of all non-immigrant visa applications, including for B1/B2 visas, under our longstanding Security Advisory Opinion process. In addition, the Department and its partners continuously vet all visa holders and may revoke a visa at any time if we identify potential security concerns. Currently, B1, B2, and B1/B2 non-immigrant visas are limited to one-month, single-entry for members of the Chinese Communist Party, as well as their spouses and unmarried children under the age of 21. This change went into effect in December 2020 and is being applied at all visa units worldwide. We will continue to assess how to update and adapt visa vetting proc-

essing to best address threats to U.S. national security. Presidential Proclamation 10043, which went into effect on June 1, 2020, has also suspended the entry of PRC students and researchers with ties to China's Military-Civil Fusion.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO HON. RENA BITTER BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Question. COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on the State Department's ability to meet passport and visa demand. Right now, wait times for a new U.S. passport are 18 weeks for routine services and 12 weeks for expedited services.

Relatedly, many U.S. embassies and consulates around the world are still only processing non-immigrant visas in emergency situations. For those that are issuing visas, the estimated wait time to receive an interview appointment can range from a couple of weeks for a student visa to months for a tourist visa.

As you can imagine, I have received a great deal of correspondence from constituents who are exasperated for themselves and family members as they seek to travel around the world.

- What plans do you have in mind to address these severe backlogs? What do you intend to do on Day 1 to help get Consular Affairs back on track?

Answer. If confirmed, my number one priority will be the reduction of service backlogs impacting both our domestic passport agencies and our overseas posts. Prior to COVID-19, our passport service standards were two to three weeks for expedited applications, and six to eight weeks for regular applications. It is my goal to return to these timelines as quickly as possible, not only through the use of overtime and increased hiring, but also by exploring how we might utilize Department staff to surge domestic passport processing capacity. Addressing visa backlogs overseas will require solutions tailored to the unique needs of each post, but I will devote myself and the CA team to identifying and implementing these solutions as quickly as possible.

Question. Through nearly two decades of U.S. assistance programming in Afghanistan, the United States has funded, through cooperative agreements and grants, multiple programs on human rights, democracy assistance, support for independent media, and the empowerment of women and marginalized groups.

Thousands of Afghan nationals directly implemented U.S.-funded civilian aid and development programs across the country, alongside U.S. and international personnel. They demonstrated a commitment and dedication to this important work for their country despite the fact that the association with the United States placed their lives at risk.

I visited Afghanistan in 2018, and have seen firsthand the dedication and sacrifice that Afghan nationals have given to support our efforts. These brave men and women are now under threat as the Taliban has stated in no uncertain terms that it plans to target those who helped the United States as translators, interpreters, and in other ways over the years. Many of these nationals have applied for Special Issuance Visas to come to the United States with their families, but the backlog for processing their applications runs into the thousands.

- What is your plan for addressing this backlog and potentially saving the lives of thousands of Afghans who helped us in our war efforts over the past two decades?

Answer. I take seriously our commitment to the Afghan men and women who have assumed enormous risks to support our military and civilian personnel. I am very cognizant of the threats they face and fully agree that assisting them is a top priority. The Department has increased resources and undertaken steps to streamline the process at every application stage. If confirmed, I will ensure my team completes processing of SIV applications to the fullest extent possible. We will also keep working with Congress to identify where we can make the SIV application process more efficient and adjust requirements that do not impact national security.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MONICA P. MEDINA BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed serious gaps in U.S. international pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response efforts, including the failure of the Department of State—over multiple administrations—to prioritize global health

policy and diplomatic engagement beyond the PEPFAR program. What is your plan to improve State Department leadership on global health security?

Answer. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates how global health security is essential to U.S. national and economic security. The State Department is strongly positioned to lead the global effort to beat COVID-19 and increase the global capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to future outbreaks, and the Secretary has appointed a Coordinator who reports directly to him to work across the Department and with other agencies to elevate global health policy in the Department's diplomatic efforts. If confirmed, I will immediately look closely at the bureau's structure and resources and come back to you to discuss this issue further, with a view to working with the committee as it considers how to strengthen health security at the Department. If confirmed, I am committed to work with Coordinator Gayle Smith of the Secretary's Office of Global COVID-19 Response and Health Security, other offices across the interagency, and with partners to improve global health security capabilities, as well as to increase transparency and accountability. This includes modernizing and strengthening international institutions including the World Health Organization, and International Health Regulations.

Question. Do you agree that the Department needs to play a more active role in the interagency on global health security, including by ensuring foreign policy and program coherence among the U.S. agencies implementing global health programs overseas (CDC and USAID) as well as with other international partners?

Answer. Yes. The Department is playing an active and robust role on global health security within the interagency process. But the Bureau needs to build up greater capacity to deal with this and other health crises in the future. If confirmed, I am committed to working with Coordinator Gayle Smith of the Secretary's Office of Global COVID-19 Response and Health Security on these issues, as well as other offices in the Department and across the interagency. The Biden-Harris administration recognizes that COVID-19 and health security are global challenges that require global responses, and I will engage with international partners and allies on this important issue. The United States will continue to engage multilaterally to respond to and recover from COVID-19 as well as to prepare for, detect, and rapidly respond to emerging biological threats.

Question. Is there currently a review process within the United States Government for approving or disapproving life sciences or biological research collaboration with other countries that could pose dual-use concerns, including research on pathogens, viruses, and toxins? What role, if any, does the Department of State play in this review process? Within the Department of State, what role does OES play in this process?

Answer. Because I am not currently an employee of the State Department, and I understand that much of this work is outside the purview of OES, I have not taken a hard look at this process. It is my understanding that there are a variety of review processes that may apply to international life science collaboration, depending on the nature of that collaboration and the pathogens or other materials involved. These include reviews undertaken by agencies before funding certain types of research deemed to pose particular risks, and, where applicable, export licensing and visa vetting. The Department of State is in general not involved in the decisions of funding agencies to support specific research activities. I understand that much of this work is outside of the purview of OES. If confirmed, I will work colleagues in other bureaus at the State Department and across the interagency to learn more about these issues, and will work with you to assist any committee oversight over such activities.

Question. If such a process exists, what type of evidentiary information must be included to determine whether such research collaboration is appropriate?

Answer. Because I am not yet in the Department, I have not looked into this question or been specifically briefed on it. I have been advised that the types of information required depend on the nature of the research collaboration and the pathogens or other materials involved. However, it is my understanding that they would typically include the pathogens, if any, to be worked with, the nature of the activity, the identities of the individuals involved, and the purposes for which the activity would be conducted. Information regarding the location of the work and the applicable biosafety standards may also be required. If confirmed, I will look further into this issue and will work with you and your staff on it.

Question. What steps has the Department of State taken to act on or implement the recommendations of the following guidance documents? Please be specific with respect to each document listed below:

- UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT POLICY FOR OVERSIGHT OF LIFE SCIENCES DUAL USE RESEARCH OF CONCERN, available at <https://bit.ly/2YYcFvs>
- NATIONAL SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD FOR BIOSECURITY, PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR THE OVERSIGHT OF DUAL USE LIFE SCIENCES RESEARCH: STRATEGIES FOR MINIMIZING THE POTENTIAL MISUSE OF RESEARCH INFORMATION (2007), available at <https://bit.ly/3AfOqGZ>
- RECOMMENDED POLICY GUIDANCE FOR DEPARTMENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF REVIEW MECHANISMS FOR POTENTIAL PANDEMIC PATHOGEN CARE AND OVERSIGHT (P3CO) (2017), available at <https://bit.ly/3u2cMSt>
- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, FRAMEWORK FOR GUIDING FUNDING DECISIONS ABOUT PROPOSED RESEARCH INVOLVING ENHANCED POTENTIAL PANDEMIC PATHOGENS (2017), available at <https://bit.ly/3CmAQ5o>
- NATIONAL SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD FOR BIOSECURITY, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EVALUATION AND OVERSIGHT OF PROPOSED GAIN-OF-FUNCTION RESEARCH (2016), <https://bit.ly/3zkTRTQ>.

Answer. As I understand it, these policy documents primarily provide guidance for other Federal agencies considering funding of certain types of research or work with potential pandemic pathogens. I am advised that the Department of State does not fund such research. However, the Department of State has been involved in actively promoting the development and adoption of such oversight systems abroad, including through presentations and discussions at international meetings. If confirmed, I will look further into how these documents are being used and implemented by agencies with such research funding and will work with you and your staff to understand how each is being implemented.

Question. As we discussed when we met last month, the Columbia River Treaty remains an important issue to myself and the rest of the northwest delegation. This treaty has been in the process of being renegotiated for years and will determine energy production and costs as well as water flows. If confirmed, you will lead the bureau responsible for overseeing some of the technical inputs that negotiators will consider.

Answer. The Columbia River is the lifeblood of the region. I am generally familiar with the complicated issues regarding this key shared resource from my time at NOAA. If confirmed, I will give a close look into the whole range of negotiating issues as they stand now and determine how OES can best provide greater support to the U.S. negotiating team. Canada and the United States have a shared interest in building back the regional economy and being good stewards of the region's water resources.

Question. If confirmed, will you make Columbia River Treaty negotiations a priority?

Answer. I understand the importance of reaching agreement with Canada on the modernization of the Columbia River Treaty regime. Canada and the United States have a shared interest in building back the regional economy and being good stewards of the region's water resources. If confirmed, I will look into the whole range of negotiating issues and determine how OES can best support the U.S. negotiating team.

Question. What was the total amount of appropriations in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 used by the Department of State on global climate change programs? From which accounts did the funding come? Please provide specific details about all global climate change programs funded, including the objectives, results, and amounts of FY 2019 appropriations spent. If confirmed, how would you adjust this spending, if at all?

Answer. The Department of State used \$13,500,000 of FY 2019 Economic Support Funds on global climate change programs. These programs protect the environment while promoting economic growth and enhancing sustainable landscapes, clean energy, and adaptation. In FY19, allocated funds went to the following programs:

- SilvaCarbon—U.S. Forest Service
- Climate Fellows—U.S. Forest Service
- Clean and Advanced Technology for Sustainable Landscapes—U.S. Department of Energy
- Caribbean Natural Infrastructure Partnership for Resilience—U.S. Forest Service
- Offset National Emissions through Sustainable Landscapes—U.S. Aviation Industry Groups

- Carbon Accounting and Reporting for Wetlands—Environmental Protection Agency
- Avoiding Deforestation through a Commodities Jurisdiction Approach—Competitively Awarded Program
- Private Investment for Enhanced Resilience—Competitively Awarded Program
- Clean Energy Ministerial—U.S. Department of Energy

Question. In your March 31, 2020, opinion piece in the Washington Post, you wrote about the environmental “unexpected bright side” of the pandemic and point out the economic tradeoffs of doing with less. How will you measure and report on economic and social tradeoffs of climate programs at the State Department?

Answer. The pandemic has been an immense tragedy. It is clear that it and the climate crisis impact our economies and societies in complex and challenging ways. It is imperative that we learn from this experience and use that knowledge to build back better. If confirmed, I hope to work within the E family, and with the Department and the interagency, to address these issues holistically.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MONICA P. MEDINA BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Authorities

Question. The position of Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs has not been held by a Senate-confirmed official since 2014.

- Secretary Blinken has noted that the State Department likely requires additional hiring authorities to bring in more personnel to address emerging, complex foreign policy challenges that fall within the remit of OES, including climate change, global health, and technology. Do you share this view? Could you elaborate on the kinds of skill sets you think need to be added to the Bureau's work?

Answer. Yes, I agree. The Bureau has in its purview two of the major crises facing our country and the world today—climate and health—and they are likely to be difficult challenges for the foreseeable future, requiring more resources for the Bureau. OES needs the right mix of people, fresh and diverse perspectives, and people who understand how to apply the latest scientific understanding and technologies to these problems.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MONICA P. MEDINA BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with our allies and partners in the region to counter the Chinese Communist Party's illegal territorial claims?

Answer. This matter is an important problem, and if I am confirmed, it will be a priority for me. I have been to China and Japan with the Secretary of Defense, and I understand the issue well. The United States can and should push back on the PRC's coercive behavior, unlawful maritime claims in the South China Sea, and disregard for the marine environment. Countering the PRC's tactics requires a government-wide effort that leads with diplomacy, development, and economic engagement. Secretary Blinken recently affirmed in his statement on the 5th anniversary of the Arbitral Ruling on the South China Sea that freedom of the seas is an enduring interest of all nations and is vital to global peace and prosperity. If confirmed, I will look forward to working with our ASEAN partners along with other partners and allies including Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, and the European Union to preserve the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region including the East and South China Seas.

Question. If confirmed, how do you intend to work with other federal agencies and international partners to crack down on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing practices in the South China Sea?

Answer. Ending IUU fishing is a top priority of mine because of the detrimental food security impacts it has in the regions where it is occurring, as well as because of the human rights and environmental harms it is causing. Nowhere is this security and environmental challenge more urgent than in the South China Sea. When

I worked for Secretary Panetta at the Department of Defense, I witnessed the growing tensions in this region and the national security concerns it creates first-hand.

I understand that the State Department and OES work with interagency partners to monitor and address IUU fishing by PRC vessels, support capacity building for coastal states threatened by it, and implement multilateral fisheries enforcement and management schemes. OES and its interagency partners also engage directly with the PRC on broader fisheries conservation and management issues to push for Beijing's responsible oversight of its fleet. I understand the State Department and other agencies have also done work with Southeast Asian coastal States to strengthen fisheries law enforcement and maritime domain awareness in the region. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the Department's leading role in the recently formed Maritime SAFE Act Interagency IUU Fishing Working Group, where we are working with our interagency partners, as well as with key stakeholders, to coordinate and strengthen U.S. efforts to combat IUU fishing wherever it occurs. It is imperative, in my view, that we step up our efforts in international fora and at international meetings to confront China on its aggressive actions that undermine the rule of law on the seas.

Question. Is there currently a review process within the United States Government for approving or disapproving life sciences or biological research collaboration with other countries that could pose dual-use concerns, including research on pathogens, viruses, and toxins? What role, if any, does the Department of State play in this review process? Within the Department of State, what role does OES play in this process?

Answer. Because I am not currently an employee of the State Department, and I understand that much of this work is outside the purview of OES, I have not yet taken a hard look at this process. It is my understanding that there are a variety of review processes that may apply to international life science collaboration, depending on the nature of that collaboration and the pathogens or other materials involved. These include reviews undertaken by agencies before funding certain types of research deemed to pose particular risks, and, where applicable, export licensing and visa vetting. The Department of State is in general not involved in the decisions of funding agencies to support specific research activities. I understand that much of this work is outside of the purview of OES. If confirmed, I will work colleagues in other bureaus at the State Department and across the interagency to learn more about these issues, and will work with you to assist any committee oversight over such activities.

Question. If confirmed, what actions will you take to work with our allies and partners in Africa and Latin America to combat Chinese illegal fishing?

Answer. Department's continued close work with the U.S. Coast Guard, NOAA, and other agencies and partner governments around the world to strengthen the rules and improve enforcement processes and capabilities for international fisheries. The Bureau plays a role in 16 bilateral cooperative fisheries law enforcement agreements between the U.S. Coast Guard and partner countries in the Pacific and West Africa, and I fully support its efforts to pursue additional agreements throughout the world, including in Latin America and Africa. These agreements allow for the United States to assist coastal and flag States to enforce their domestic laws, strengthening and supporting development of partner nations' capabilities. In addition, I understand that the Maritime SAFE Act IUU Fishing Working Group has recently determined that a number of regions in Africa and Latin America are "priority regions," as described by the Act. OES will continue to collaborate with its interagency partners through that Working Group to determine the best approaches to strengthening the capabilities of countries in those regions to address IUU fishing individually and through regional cooperation.

Question. If confirmed, what actions will you take to work with other agencies in investigating the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer. Like many, I very much want to know the origins of COVID-19. It is imperative that we learn what caused this tragedy and act to do everything we can to prevent it from happening again. President Biden recently requested a deeper review of the origins of COVID-19 by the U.S. intelligence community, with support from the National Labs and other agencies of the U.S. Government. As part of this review, President Biden has asked for investigation into all areas that may be relevant. I look forward to the results of this report and, if confirmed, identifying next steps for follow-up and assisting in whatever capacity I can. Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO) is currently working on developing Phase 2 of its study of the origins of COVID-19, including in China.

Question. If confirmed, and absent passage of my bill, what actions will you take to combat the deplorable action of finning sharks in foreign nations?

Answer. Shark populations are declining globally and in my view we need to do more to conserve them. The United States, through the Department of State and the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, has spearheaded a series of agreed shark finning prohibitions in RFMOs in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The United States works through RFMOs to strengthen enforcement of current fishing prohibitions—and strengthen the measures themselves when needed—as part of our work to support the conservation and sustainable management of key shark species. If confirmed, I will press for continued and expanded U.S. leadership in these and other international organizations to ensure the sustainability of these vital species, as well as continuing to work with other countries to develop and enforce national conservation and management measures, including species-specific data collection programs for sharks.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MARC EVANS KNAPPER BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. As you contemplate the possibilities of taking this relationship to the next level and inaugurating a genuine strategic partnership what is your vision of what such a partnership should look like and encompass?

Answer. Twenty-six years since the normalization of diplomatic relations, the U.S.-Vietnam partnership has never been better. We have moved from a history of conflict and division to a Comprehensive Partnership that spans political, security, economic, and people-to-people ties.

I am confident that the positive momentum in our relationship will continue. The United States and Vietnam have a common sense of purpose and a common vision for a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific. We seek to deepen our cooperation that spans our close collaboration on war legacy and humanitarian issues to regional security and shared prosperity. We also seek to deepen cooperation on climate change, pandemic disease, wildlife and drug trafficking, maritime security, and transnational crime..

Our interests include maintaining the peace and stability that has allowed regional and bilateral trade to flourish over the last quarter century.

If confirmed, I commit to consulting closely with Congress as the administration considers next steps in the relationship.

Question. If confirmed, how will you balance our very real shared strategic interests with Vietnam with our on-going human rights concerns? What sort of linkages or conditioning do you think is appropriate and constructive as we consider additional military-security, economic or diplomatic engagement with Vietnam?

Answer. Twenty-six years since the normalization of diplomatic relations, the U.S.-Vietnam partnership has never been better. We have moved from a history of conflict and division to a Comprehensive Partnership that spans political, security, economic, and people-to-people ties.

The United States and Vietnam have a common sense of purpose and a common vision for a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific. We must continue to build on the progress in the bilateral relationship, but as the Biden-Harris administration has committed to putting human rights back at the center of American foreign policy, we must also bring all the tools of our diplomacy to defend human rights, including freedom of expression, and religion or belief. If confirmed, I will continue to press Vietnam to improve its implementation of human rights obligations and commitments.

Question. As Beijing continues to pursue its aggressive and expansionist tactics in the South China Sea, where are the opportunities—and necessity—for greater US-Vietnam maritime partnership?

Answer. We will continue to support Vietnam's enhancement of its maritime security and law enforcement capabilities to better monitor its maritime domain and resist coercion in the South China Sea.

In 2017 and 2020, the U.S. Government officially transferred to Vietnam through the State Department's Excess Defense Articles (EDA) program two 378-foot Hamilton-class cutters, with the second arriving in Vietnam earlier this summer. These vessels are the largest in Vietnam's fleet and significantly enhance Vietnam's maritime security capabilities. The United States has also transferred to Vietnam 24 Metal Shark patrol boats and six Scan Eagle UAV, as part of our effort to work

with Vietnam to make it better able to protect its sovereignty and rights in the South China Sea. Through the State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement program, we are developing four training facilities for Vietnam's Coast Guard. We are bringing U.S. Coast Guard personnel to Vietnam to train Vietnamese Coast Guard and DFIRES Fisheries Enforcement counterparts on key maritime law enforcement skills to ensure that maritime law enforcement capabilities forces are modern, resilient, and capable. If confirmed, I will continue to seek opportunities for maritime capacity building.

Vietnam sent its first cadet to the U.S. Air Force Academy in August 2020, and we are hopeful to have more Vietnamese cadets attend U.S. service academies in the coming years.

Question. How and where can the United States work with Vietnam to assure continued ASEAN centrality as a strategic counterweight and to develop functional problem-solving regional architecture?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to deepening our engagement with ASEAN as part of reinvigorating our multilateral partnerships. ASEAN plays a central role in the U.S. vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific. Secretary of State Blinken has publicly reaffirmed the United States' steadfast support for ASEAN centrality and to expanding our work together.

Vietnam, as Chair of ASEAN in 2020, helped the organization respond to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and we applauded them for their leadership.

We will continue to seek opportunities to partner with Vietnam and other ASEAN partners to advance U.S. priorities and interests on pressing regional issues. This extends beyond our meetings with ASEAN to ASEAN-related fora such as the East Asia Summit, ASEAN Regional Forum, and Mekong-U.S. Partnership. As part of the non-traditional security pillar of this partnership, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement is developing a program to combat Transnational Organized Crime in the region, building Vietnam's capacity to investigate and prosecute crime in cooperation with its neighbors.

We will also continue our work to build the capacity of the ASEAN Secretariat on political, economic, and socio-cultural issues, and broader efforts to develop human capital and support the next generation of ASEAN leaders, including through capacity building seminars at the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) Academy at Fulbright University Vietnam (FUV).

Question. What would be your priorities—resilience, zero-carbon energy resources—to work with Vietnam on climate change?

Answer. The 2020s will be the decade for climate action, and no region of the world has a more pivotal role in realizing the global goal of net-zero emissions by 2050 than the economies in the Indo-Pacific region. We will continue to work with Indo-Pacific countries to increase regional ambition, implement 2030 targets and net-zero goals, enhance the impact of climate financing, and increase adaptation and resiliency through regional frameworks such as the Quad as well as bilateral engagements.

I was pleased that Vietnam was invited to the Leaders' Summit on Climate and appreciated hearing from President Nguyen Xuan Phuc about the challenges Vietnam faces from climate change. Vietnam is increasingly vulnerable to the threats associated with climate change, evidenced by record floods that caused horrible devastation last year. Vietnam is also a significant greenhouse gas emitter.

If confirmed, I will prioritize elevating climate change in my discussions with Vietnamese Government and business leaders and urging Vietnam to transition to a cleaner energy environment and to commit to setting a net-zero emissions date.

Question. Cyber and Human Rights: in recent years Vietnam has cracked down on numerous bloggers and journalists, and adopted troubling new laws and regulations, that have closed down freedom of expression in cyberspace. How and where can we work with Vietnam to assure that civil society actors and journalists have space and freedom to operate in the cyber realm—and to convince Vietnam that China's model of digital authoritarianism is contrary to Vietnam's interests.

Answer. I am concerned about the shrinking environment for the exercise of freedoms of expression and association online and offline. The trend of harassment, arbitrary or unlawful arrests, unjust convictions, and harsh sentences of journalists and activists for exercising their human rights is deeply troubling.

If confirmed, I will advocate with the Government of Vietnam to respect freedom of expression, both offline and online, and engage with social media companies to promote approaches that preserve freedom of expression online and an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet.

Question. Fulbright Vietnam University: The establishment of FVU, with congressional support, has been a really success story for the bilateral relationship in recent years. Where do you see opportunities for FVU to continue to grow and contribute to Vietnam's development? For example, is there a role for FVU to serve as a hub for cyber-security education and training for Vietnam and for the region?

Answer. Fulbright University Vietnam (FUV) is an incredible symbol of the strength of our partnership with the people of Vietnam and Southeast Asia. It is the first private, independent, non-profit Vietnamese university, and is based on American higher education traditions of open inquiry, research, and critical analysis.

The U.S. Government has helped FUV develop into a center of academic independence that models core principles, including academic freedom, meritocracy, transparency, and equal access. FUV has brought world-class university standards to Vietnam and helped unlock tremendous potential in Vietnam's education sector.

We are proud to partner with FUV to create the YSEALI Academy at FUV, which offers executive-level capacity-building seminars for entry- to mid-level professionals from ASEAN countries and Timor-Leste around the themes of technology and innovation, public policy, and entrepreneurship.

If confirmed, I look forward to exploring all possible avenues to use FUV as a platform, including for cybersecurity training and educational programs on the Mekong Delta, for increased engagement with the Vietnamese people and with leaders across Southeast Asia.

Question. Even though we are many decades from the end of the war, legacy issues including cleaning up of UXO and addressing the use of Agent Orange continue to be important to both the Vietnamese and American people. What priorities would you have in addressing these or other war legacy issues, if confirmed?

Answer. Addressing humanitarian and war legacy issues is a foundational element of the strong relationship between the United States and Vietnam. Providing the fullest possible accounting for U.S. personnel missing from the Vietnam War era remains our most solemn duty. I acknowledge the Senate's longstanding support of U.S. initiatives in this regard.

Since 1993, the United States has contributed more than \$160 million to conventional weapons destruction (CWD) efforts to clear unexploded ordnance (UXO), risk education, victims' assistance, and capacity building. The U.S.-funded UXO clearance program targets high-priority sites in the most UXO-contaminated provinces of central Vietnam: Quang Tri, Quang Binh, and Tha Thien Hue. Our progress with UXO authorities in these areas is a prime example of how provincial level success can be replicated at the national level going forward. If confirmed, I will advocate for these successes to be adopted at the national level for effective implementation of U.S. taxpayer funding, and to make real progress for the people of Vietnam.

Separately, the United States and Vietnam successfully completed the remediation of dioxin contamination in Danang in 2018, and in 2019 we broke ground on the 10-year dioxin remediation project at the Bien Hoa airbase area. The United States has provided more than \$125 million since 1989 in humanitarian assistance, directly and indirectly supporting over a million persons with disabilities, regardless of the cause.

Our cooperation on these issues continues to build a foundation of trust to expand our relationship and, if confirmed, I will prioritize deepening our cooperation in these efforts.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MARC EVANS KNAPPER BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. What should our main goals for the Indo-Pacific region be in the short-term, medium-term, and long-term?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration is committed to advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific region. To achieve this, I will work to revitalize ties with our allies and partners, advance inclusive economic policies that support all Americans, and promote democratic resilience and respect for human rights. I will invest in capabilities and work with allies and partners, including in regional organizations, to defend the international rules-based order, its foundational values, and international law. I will also work closely with Congress and partners in the region to address pressing challenges, including the threat posed by the DPRK nuclear program, transnational crime, recovery from COVID-19, and climate change.

Question. What are realistic goals for the U.S.-Vietnam strategic partnership in the next decade? Please be specific.

Answer. Twenty-six years since the normalization of diplomatic relations, the U.S.-Vietnam partnership has never been better. We have moved from a history of conflict and division to a Comprehensive Partnership that spans political, security, economic, and people-to-people ties.

I am confident that the positive momentum in our relationship will continue. The United States and Vietnam have a common sense of purpose and a common vision for a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific. Over the next decade, we seek to deepen our cooperation that spans our close collaboration on war legacy and humanitarian issues to regional security and shared prosperity. We also seek to deepen cooperation on climate change, pandemic disease, wildlife and drug trafficking, maritime security, and transnational crime..

Our interests include maintaining the peace and stability that has allowed regional and bilateral trade to flourish over the last quarter century..

Question. If confirmed, what are the three main things you will seek to accomplish in your first 100 days as U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam?

Answer. The U.S.-Vietnam relationship has undergone a profound transformation since normalization of diplomatic relations in 1995, and our ties are thriving. President Biden's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance noted that the United States will deepen our partnership with Vietnam to advance shared objectives. I look forward to leading those efforts.

If confirmed, I will seek to deepen our security ties with the conclusion of a General Security of Military Information Agreement with Vietnam, which would enhance information sharing and expand defense trade. I will also press Vietnam to take bold steps to commit to a cleaner energy future, using the November COP 26 Conference in Glasgow as a catalyst for action. Finally, I will seek to expand on the progress that ethnic and religious minorities, the disabled, and LGBTQI+ citizens in Vietnam have made, but will express serious concern to Vietnam's leadership to underscore our commitment to supporting universal human rights—and stress that improvements in this area can only strengthen our overall relationship.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to continuing economic cooperation with Vietnam on cultivating liquefied natural gas in addition to other renewable resources? In light of recent policy changes by the Biden administration, what tools will you have at your disposal to advance such energy cooperation with Vietnam?

Answer. Vietnam is projected to be one of the fastest growing energy demand markets in the region. The State Department is committed to supporting Vietnam's economic aspirations, energy security and sustainable development, and to support U.S. companies seeking opportunities to invest and trade in this dynamic market.

At the same time, the United States is committed to working with key partners around the world, like Vietnam, to encourage them to select policies, measures, and investments that direct their economic growth toward a climate-aligned pathway. Those decisions will be critical to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and a global net zero future by 2050. The science is unequivocal: we have no alternative. We must keep the Earth's warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius to avoid catastrophe. To get there, the science says the world needs to get to a state of net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by around mid-century.

As we head further into the 2020s, we must grow more discerning of the future role for natural gas in achieving the world's climate goals. If we are to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, the world must be especially judicious about new gas infrastructure. That said, Vietnam has an opportunity to eliminate coal projects and continue the impressive growth of solar and wind power over the past two years.

If confirmed, I will work with U.S. companies and U.S. agencies to plan their energy investments in a way that ensures access to cleaner and affordable energy and advances our climate goals.

Question. What else do you think the U.S. should provide to Vietnam in terms of security assistance, especially with respect to South China Sea issues?

Answer. We will continue to support Vietnam's enhancement of its maritime security and law enforcement capabilities to better monitor its maritime domain and resist coercion in the South China Sea.

In 2017 and 2020, the U.S. Government officially transferred to Vietnam through the State Department's Excess Defense Articles (EDA) program two 378-foot Hamilton-class cutters, with the second arriving in Vietnam earlier this summer. These vessels are the largest in Vietnam's fleet and significantly enhance Vietnam's maritime security capabilities. The United States has also transferred to Vietnam

24 Metal Shark patrol boats and six Scan Eagle UAV, as part of our effort to work with Vietnam to make it better able to protect its sovereignty and rights in the South China Sea. Through the State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement program, we are developing four training facilities for Vietnam's Coast Guard. We are bringing U.S. Coast Guard personnel to Vietnam to train Vietnamese Coast Guard and DFIRE Fisheries Enforcement counterparts on key maritime law enforcement skills to ensure that maritime law enforcement capabilities forces are modern, resilient, and capable. If confirmed, I will continue to seek opportunities for maritime capacity building.

Vietnam sent its first cadet to the U.S. Air Force Academy in August 2020, and we are hopeful to have more Vietnamese cadets attend U.S. service academies in the coming years. We are also providing Vietnam with T-6 trainers, so that Vietnam's future Air Force pilots will learn on state-of the art, American-model aircraft.

Question. What are your views on Vietnam's use of a maritime militia in the South China Sea? What are your views on the new unit Vietnam just stood up in this maritime militia?

Answer. The United States supports maritime law enforcement within the bounds of international law and has consistently opposed the threat or use of force to settle maritime and territorial disputes.

The United States opposes the use of coercion and intimidation by any claimant seeking to assert its maritime claims in the South China Sea and calls for all states to ensure that all of its maritime forces and other vessels act in accordance with international law, avoid provocative behavior, and behave in a professional manner.

Question. Apart from maritime cooperation, what do you see as the major opportunities for growth in the U.S.-Vietnam security relationship?

Answer. Our defense relationship has become one of the strongest pillars of the overall relationship. While much of our current or future planned security assistance to Vietnam aims to enhance the country's ability to enforce international maritime law and police its EEZ, we hope to expand upon peacekeeping efforts, search-and-rescue abilities, humanitarian/disaster relief capacity, military medicine, and the development of Vietnam's Coast Guard and Air Force.

Question. What challenges does Vietnam's reliance on Russian defense technology and weapons present to the growth of the U.S.-Vietnam security relationship?

Answer. Vietnam is working to diversify defense partners and suppliers, and is evaluating and exploring future procurement opportunities with the United States. In this context, the United States is focusing support on strengthening maritime law enforcement and domain awareness capabilities, peacekeeping efforts, search-and-rescue abilities, humanitarian/disaster relief capacity, military medicine, and the development of Vietnam's Coast Guard and Air Force.

Question. If confirmed, what will be your top three priorities for working with Vietnam on Mekong issues?

Answer. The United States has long been a presence in the Mekong subregion and has long been a partner of Vietnam. The Mekong subregion matters to America. Not only is the subregion home to Vietnam, one of the fastest growing economies in the world, it is also home to a growing and incredibly dynamic population. Helping the subregion's economy thrive and innovate, including by ensuring opportunities for marginalized populations and helping talented young people realize their full potential, benefits us all and also helps fulfill President Biden's foreign policy for the middle class. The subregion is also the front line for strategic competition with PRC, and we want to ensure the Mekong states are secure, independent, and prosperous. Vietnam supports our efforts through the Mekong-U.S. Partnership to ensure the subregion is prosperous, resilient, and that the people of the region enjoy good governance and security.

If confirmed, I will prioritize support of a sustainable Mekong basin development plan, work with Vietnam on its efforts to combat climate change, and press for greater economic connectivity across the sub-region.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working with Congress on matters related to the financial sustainability of Fulbright University Vietnam?

Answer. Fulbright University Vietnam (FUV) is an incredible symbol of the strength of our partnership with the people of Vietnam and Southeast Asia. It is the first private, independent, non-profit Vietnamese university, and is based on American higher education traditions of open inquiry, research, and critical analysis.

The U.S. Government has helped FUV develop into a center of academic independence that models core principles, including academic freedom, meritocracy, transparency, and equal access. FUV has brought world-class university standards to Vietnam and helped unlock tremendous potential in Vietnam's education sector..

If confirmed, I will work with Congress to continue our work to help FUV continue to flourish and achieve financial sustainability.

Question. Vietnam has signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and was among the original 50 states parties to the treaty when it entered into force on January 22, 2021. Will you commit to raising U.S. concerns about TPNW with counterparts in Vietnam?

Answer. Yes, as appropriate. While the United States understands and shares the desire to advance nuclear disarmament goals, we do not support the TPNW. The TPNW is incompatible with U.S. extended deterrence relationships that are still necessary for international peace and security and may reinforce divisions that hinder the international community's ability to work together to address pressing proliferation and security challenges. The U.S. position on this issue has spanned administrations. Seeking to ban nuclear weapons through a treaty that does not include any State Parties that possess nuclear weapons will not reduce nuclear arsenals.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to raise with the Vietnamese Government its alleged use of extraterritorial tactics against dissidents and others? For example: Vietnam's hacking of its own dissidents' accounts overseas; the alleged abduction of a Vietnamese oil executive from Berlin; and the alleged abduction of a Radio Free Asia journalist from Bangkok?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by report of such tactics against individuals for exercising their fundamental human rights. These activities run counter to Vietnam's international human rights obligations and commitments. If confirmed, I commit to engage with the Government of Vietnam to underscore our strong objection to these tactics and ensure Vietnam adheres to its international human rights commitments.

Question. According to Freedom House's Freedom of the Net report, internet freedom in Vietnam dropped to an all-time low in 2020. What will you do to ensure that the internet in Vietnam remains free and open?

Answer. I am concerned about the shrinking environment for the exercise of freedoms of expression and association online and offline. The trend of harassment, arbitrary or unlawful arrests, unjust convictions, and harsh sentences of journalists and activists for exercising their human rights is deeply troubling.

If confirmed, I will advocate with the Government of Vietnam to respect freedom of expression, including online, and engage with social media companies to promote approaches that preserve freedom of expression online and an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet.

Question. In the State Department's 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, Vietnam was identified as a Tier 2 Watch List country for the third consecutive year. Because Vietnam was listed for three years on the Watch List, it was subject to a downgrade to Tier 3, but was provided a waiver for its general efforts to eliminate trafficking. It is clear the Vietnamese Government must improve its protection, prevention, and prosecutorial efforts in this coming reporting period in order to improve its ranking. How will you work with the host government to address these issues if you are confirmed as Ambassador?

Answer. In recent years, the Vietnamese Government has demonstrated significant efforts by providing trafficking victims the affirmative right to legal representation, increasing TIP funding for law enforcement and victim support, passing new legislation that better protects workers migrating overseas and prohibits brokerage fees for overseas migrant workers, continuing large-scale awareness campaigns in communities vulnerable to trafficking, and training law enforcement officials.

Significant challenges remain, however, including insufficient victim screening, cumbersome and ineffective victim identification and assistance procedures, limited interagency coordination, and the need to better address predatory recruitment practices that charge workers seeking overseas employment higher fees than the law allows.

If confirmed, I will encourage the Government of Vietnam to vigorously prosecute all forms of trafficking and convict and punish traffickers, especially in cases involving forced labor or complicit officials. I will also encourage the Government to expand victim screening amongst vulnerable groups such as migrant workers, individ-

uals in commercial sex, and child laborers, and improve victim identification and referral mechanisms.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Report on International Religious Freedom, Vietnam was depicted as a country which is not particularly tolerant of religious freedoms. In one example, Vietnam continues to enforce a Law on Belief and Religion (LBR), which requires religious groups to register with the State and allows government entities to harass unregistered groups. What is your assessment of this particular issue and, if confirmed, how will you work with the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom to bolster religious freedom in-country?

Answer. Vietnam's Law on Belief and Religion, while imperfect and inconsistent with international standards, reduces registration times and grants legal status to some religious groups. Some groups who remain unregistered in remote areas continue to face harassment from local authorities.

The United States remains concerned that the law maintains significant government control over religious practices and exacerbates uneven implementation of the law at the subnational level. The State Department's annual international religious freedom report to Congress detailed these concerns, and if confirmed, I will continue to raise them with Hanoi.

If confirmed, I will also continue to work closely with the Ambassador-at-Large to emphasize the importance of religious freedom with Vietnam's leaders, including cases of individuals harassed or imprisoned for their beliefs.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Human Rights Report, Vietnam was identified as continuing to undermine fundamental human rights like speech, assembly, press, religion, and association. If confirmed, what steps will you take to address these instances with the Vietnamese Government?

Answer. I am very concerned about the human rights situation in Vietnam and committed to pushing for improvements. Despite progress in some areas, the trend of escalating harassment, unjust arrests and convictions, and increasingly harsh sentences of journalists and activists for peacefully exercising their right to express their opinions is deeply troubling. Vietnam is an important partner in the Indo-Pacific region, but that partnership can only reach its fullest potential if the Vietnamese Government improves its human rights record.

If confirmed, I will work with the Government of Vietnam to improve its implementation of its human rights obligations and commitments. I will urge the Government of Vietnam to ensure law enforcement and the judicial system effectively and fairly enforce existing constitutional guarantees and laws protecting human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. I will continue to raise our concerns with the Government of Vietnam, including during the annual U.S.-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue, and call on Vietnam to respect and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, consistent with its international obligations and commitments.

Question. In the State Department's 2020 Human Rights Report, Vietnam was identified as continuing to undermine fundamental human rights like speech, assembly, press, religion, and association. If confirmed, how will you direct your embassy to work with civil society organizations to improve the human rights situation on the ground in Vietnam?

Answer. If confirmed, I will encourage my team to continue its longstanding work with civil society organizations who are trying to make space for positive progress in Vietnam. I will also continue the strong engagement with human rights and civil society organizations in the United States, including the Vietnamese-American community and local human rights NGOs in Vietnam, as previous Ambassadors have done.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO MARC EVANS KNAPPER BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Cybersecurity

Question. Over the past several years, Vietnamese authorities have increased their scrutiny over Vietnamese citizens' activities on the Internet and in social media. Vietnam's new cybersecurity law, which went into effect in recent months, criminalizes the "distortion of history, denial of revolutionary achievements, undermining national solidarity, taking advantage of cybersecurity protection activities to violate national security, national interests or sovereignty, or disrupt public order."

What has been the impact of measures such as these on Vietnamese citizens' online activities?

Answer. I am concerned about the shrinking environment for the exercise of freedoms of expression and association online. The trend of harassment, arbitrary or unlawful arrests, unjust convictions, and harsh sentences of journalists and activists for exercising their rights, both offline and online, is deeply troubling.

If confirmed, I will advocate with the Government of Vietnam to respect freedom of expression, including online, and engage with social media companies to promote approaches that preserve freedom of expression online and an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED TO MARC EVANS KNAPPER BY SENATOR MARCO RUBIO

Question. If confirmed, how will you support the Vietnamese Government's efforts to counter the Chinese claims in the South China Sea?

Answer. The U.S. position on the South China Sea is principled and longstanding. In keeping with its global policy, the United States does not take a position on the territorial disputes over land features among the many South China Sea claimants, while at the same time taking a strong principled position on compliance with the international law of the sea. Like Vietnam, the United States has a national interest in upholding international law, including freedom of navigation and overflight, and opposing the use of coercion to resolve disputes.

The United States will continue to support Vietnam's enhancement of its maritime security and law enforcement capabilities to better monitor its maritime domain and resist coercion in the South China Sea. In 2017 and 2020, the U.S. Government officially transferred to Vietnam through the State Department's Excess Defense Articles (EDA) program two 378-foot Hamilton-class cutters, with the second arriving in Vietnam earlier this summer. These vessels are the largest in Vietnam's fleet and significantly enhance Vietnam's maritime security capabilities. Through the State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement program, we are developing four training facilities for Vietnam's Coast Guard. We are bringing U.S. Coast Guard personnel to Vietnam to train Vietnamese Coast Guard and DFIRE Fisheries Enforcement counterparts on key maritime law enforcement skills to ensure that maritime law enforcement capabilities forces are modern, resilient, and capable.

If confirmed, I will continue to support the development of a strong and independent Vietnam through its maritime capacity building, and will remain united in our support for peaceful resolution of disputes, including through international dispute resolution mechanisms.

Question. Since the Vietnam War, the United States and Vietnam have repaired their relationship. Vietnam is now a key strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific. However, it is my sincere belief that that relationship cannot reach its full potential unless Vietnam commits to respecting the human rights of its people. For example, in April, journalist Tran Thi Tuyet Dieu was sentenced to eight years in prison for reporting news on Vietnamese political figures. If confirmed, what steps will you take to press for the release of Dieu and other Vietnamese people who are unjustly targeted by Vietnamese security services?

Answer. I am deeply concerned by the convictions of individuals for exercising their freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. These convictions run counter to Vietnam's international human rights obligations and commitments. Vietnam should ensure its laws and actions are consistent with those obligations and commitments.

If confirmed, I will engage with activists, their family members, and lawyers to determine the facts in specific cases and urge authorities to release all persons detained for exercising their rights in Vietnam.

I will stress, above all, the need to follow through on the commitment that the Vietnamese Government has made to fundamentally reform the laws under which activists have been targeted in the past, to bring the country's laws into full compliance with its constitution and with its international obligations.

Question. How will you promote U.S. cooperation with Vietnam, which is important, while simultaneously encouraging Hanoi to embrace meaningful political reforms and protect the basic rights of its citizens?

Answer. Twenty-six years since the normalization of diplomatic relations, the U.S.-Vietnam partnership has never been better. We have moved from a history of conflict and division to a Comprehensive Partnership that spans political, security, economic, and people-to-people ties.

The United States and Vietnam have a common sense of purpose and a common vision for a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific. We must continue to build on the progress in the bilateral relationship, but as the Biden-Harris administration has committed to putting human rights back at the center of American foreign policy, we must also bring all the tools of our diplomacy to defend human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. If confirmed, I will continue to press Vietnam to improve its implementation of human rights obligations and commitments.

NOMINATIONS

TUESDAY, JULY 20, 2021

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m. in Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Robert Menendez, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Menendez [presiding], Shaheen, Coons, Booker, Van Hollen, Risch, Johnson, and Young.

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

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

We are here today to consider four important nominations, Ms. Paloma Adams-Allen, to be a Deputy Administrator for Management and Resources at the Agency for International Development, Dr. Karen Donfried to be Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasian Affairs, Ambassador Mary Catherine Phee to be Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and Ms. Anne A. Witkowsky to be Assistant Secretary of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations.

Congratulations to the four of you on your nominations. We appreciate your willingness to serve our country in these capacities, as well as those members of your family, because we recognize that this is a family sacrifice as well. So we thank them as well.

Ms. Adams-Allen, your lifelong dedication to international development and distinguished career of government service, including as Deputy Assistant Administrator at the Latin American Caribbean Bureau of the United States Agency for International Development, I believe makes you eminently qualified for this position.

If confirmed, your knowledge and experience as a development professional and your distinguished tenure as the President and CEO of the Inter-American Foundation will be needed as you take the role of Deputy Administrator for Management and Resources at USAID.

I am pleased to see that President Biden's budget aims to restore the value and use of international development and foreign assistance as part of the overall goal of achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives. I know Administrator Power is entirely committed to this vital task, and I appreciated her testimony in the budget last week. I have no doubt you will share that commitment.

Dr. Donfried, your nomination is a testament to the Biden administration's efforts to rebuild the trans-Atlantic relationship, which, I believe was significantly damaged during the last administration. If confirmed, I believe your knowledge and experience, including as Senior Director for European Affairs at the National Security Council will serve you and the country well, as the Biden administration works to advance a renewed trans-Atlantic relationship.

It is imperative that this position be filled as soon as possible as we need to see forward movement on critical issues including those related to Russia, Turkey, Belarus, and our support for Ukraine, among others. I look forward to hearing from you about these and other issues.

Ambassador Phee, I am pleased to see you back before the committee, the position you are nominated for to be the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs comes at a critical time for Africa, a Continent with enormous promise and challenges. However, the impacts of the third wave of COVID-19 on top of political and security challenges could roll back years of democratic progress and economic growth.

Indeed, the Biden administration faces a series of challenges in Africa, from China and Russia, which continue to pursue actions that are inimical to U.S. interest to conflict, to instability, and a flawed electoral exercise in Ethiopia, to a fragile transition in Sudan, which could be destabilizing to the entire Horn of Africa.

These are just a few among the many challenges facing Africa and U.S. interests there. In short, the challenges in the region are pressing and vast, I know that you are well equipped, based on your experience, to carry on and meet those challenges, and trust that if confirmed you will do so with skill and commitment.

Ms. Witkowsky, your knowledge and experience, including as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability and Humanitarian Affairs will be critical, if you are confirmed, to be the next Assistant Secretary of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations. Indeed, your commitment and expertise with many of today's complex conflicts from Burma, Venezuela, Ethiopia, the Sahel, Yemen, to Afghanistan will be needed as CSO develops long-range, strategic policies and plans in order to address ongoing conflicts, as well as to prevent future ones. I will look forward to hearing from you about how you will approach this task.

In closing, while the four of you have a series of challenges ahead, I am confident that your commitment and experience will serve you well, as you take on these new responsibilities upon confirmation. I look forward to your testimonies.

And now I turn to the ranking member for his opening remarks.

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

Senator RISCH. Thank you Mr. Chairman. And I certainly embrace a number of the issues that are going to be facing these people.

And thank you, each of you, for your willingness to serve, and your families, because they always share the sacrifice.

I want to start with the nomination of Assistant Secretary of State for European Eurasian Affairs. For starters, I am concerned the administration has refused to use visa sanctions to shut down the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline, this is a continued aggravation for us, and I would like to see that resolved.

Putin has boasted that its completion will be a victory for Russian power. I would also note that any deal with the Russians would be in violation of U.S. law. And I expect to hear more from you on this topic, Dr. Donfried.

On Chinese maligned influence, Europe is a key partner, I have been encouraged to see the increased U.S.-European discussions on working together to combat China's actions.

In Georgia, I am increasingly worried by steps backward. The past weeks more than 50 journalists were beaten. One of them died from his injuries, and several judges were pushed onto the Supreme Court in contravention of the April 19th Agreement.

I know Senator Shaheen shares my concerns in that regard, and we had a number of discussions on that. I hope you will work to address the issues with Georgia's Government.

Ukraine remains a big focus on The Hill. We are disappointed to see the administration refusal to send additional help to Ukraine this spring in order that they might defend from their belligerent neighbor. I hope you will address this today.

On to the nomination of Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, the Biden administration has stated that Africa is a priority, but it is unclear where Africa fits in that priority list. First, I am troubled by the conflict and humanitarian situation in Tigray, however, I am concerned that the U.S. is so focused on the Tigray crisis, that it is ignoring the significant challenges to peace, democracy that we face across Ethiopia.

This is a complex challenge. I get that. I look forward to hearing how we navigate Ethiopia's challenges, and the other crises across the Horn of Africa, which is becoming more and more of a focus and a crisis.

Aside from Ethiopia, I remain deeply concerned about the lack of initiative the international community has shown, including our European, French, and African partners, in pushing for a resolution to the crisis in Cameroon, as well as corruption challenges by the regimes in Zimbabwe and South Sudan.

African countries are crucial partners in our fight to combat malign Chinese influence. The United States remains the top contributor of health and humanitarian assistance to Africa, but we must do more to commit ourselves to building strong economic and security partnerships with our African allies.

Next we have the nomination of Assistant Secretary of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations. Like many, I am concerned by this administration's response to the crisis unfolding in Afghanistan. It is clear that the administration had no plans in place to manage the withdrawal and provide for the people that worked side by side with our troops.

President Biden publicly stated that his administration was, "Working closely with Congress to change the authorization legislation in order to expedite the processing of Afghan special immi-

grant visas.” But I have yet to see such outreach on the specific legislative fixes they are seeking.

Finally, we have the nomination of a Deputy Administrator of the USAID for Management and Resources. U.S. foreign assistance can help advance the national security, economic and humanitarian interests of the United States, but it must be thoughtfully targeted and designed to ensure the greatest possible impact. The responsibility for aligning roughly two-thirds of the U.S. foreign assistance budget, with the strategic objectives of the United States overseas falls here.

I am eager to hear about the modernization of USAID’s workforce, and operations to stretch the aid dollars further so we can save lives and advance U.S. interests. We have a lot to cover today.

I will yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Risch.

Okay. So we will turn to our nominees. All of your statements will be included in the record without objection.

We will start with Ms. Adams-Allen, and move down the aisle as I introduce you.

So the floor is yours, Ms. Adams-Allen.

STATEMENT OF PALOMA ADAMS-ALLEN OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, NOMINATED TO BE A DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES)

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden’s nominee to be Deputy Administrator for Management and Resources of the United States Agency for International Development.

I would like to thank the President and Administrator Power for their trust in me. I am grateful for the opportunity to return to USAID, an agency dear to my heart, at a moment when its leadership and development expertise are so urgently needed.

I am here today before you because of the love and support of so many. My mother, Emilie Adams, a proud Minnesotan who instilled in me a deep sense of fairness and justice; my father, Llewelyn Adams, who I credit for my strong Jamaican work ethic; my husband, Travis Allen, still the best human I know; my daughters, Priya and Emilie, whose creativity and empathy inspire me every day; and a network of extended family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors spanning the globe. Thank you all.

My international development and diplomacy experience started early, informed by the duality of my upbringing: summers spent in the relative wealth and safety of my mother’s community in the United States, and the school year spent in the beauty and vulnerability of my father’s home country in Jamaica. It was in the jarring journey back and forth between these worlds that I settled on what I wanted to do with my life: pay forward the incredible privilege I have as an American, by working to fuel hope and opportunity in communities like the one that helped raise me.

This early decision informed my 20-plus years working in the foreign assistance arena, primarily Latin America and the Caribbean.

During a decade in policy and programming roles at the Organization of American States, I saw the potential of multilateralism to calm tensions between neighboring countries, and mobilize regional support for humanitarian crises like the 2010 earthquake.

But it has been my experience in the federal government, serving in leadership and management positions at USAID, and now as Head of the Inter-American Foundation, where I have been able to effect the change I dreamed of as a child. During a decade of public service, I have had the honor of investing in and learning from young people bravely building peace in El Salvador; smallholder farmers in Colombia selling their coffee to global corporations, and proud grandmothers in Haiti financing businesses through their savings and loans associations.

Throughout my career, I have demonstrated an ability to successfully manage complex operations, effectively steward resources, create and lead diverse purpose-driven teams, and advance reforms designed to enhance the impact and sustainability of development investments.

And I have done so in a bipartisan manner, recognizing and respecting Congress' role as an equal partner in U.S. foreign assistance. If confirmed, I will draw upon this experience to effectively oversee USAID's management and resources needs.

As the U.S. Government's lead the global development agency, USAID needs to be nimble enough to respond to an ever-evolving set of geopolitical challenges and crises, and to do so with the management and oversight commensurate with the responsibilities given to it by the American people through the Congress.

If confirmed, my top priority will be positioning USAID to further maximize its development impact, by [1] better aligning strategy and resources to deliver results; and [2] expanding the Agency's partner base to include more nontraditional U.S. and local implementing partners with strong in-country knowledge, expertise, and a commitment to sustainability.

In order to maximize impact, we must support and invest in USAID's greatest strength, its people. If confirmed, my focus will be on making sure the Agency has a staff equipped with the right tools, and bolstered by a supportive culture, one that recognizes and responds to the outsized demands placed on USAID, and embraces the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

And finally, if confirmed, I will prioritize enhancing USAID's ability to rapidly respond and take advantage of emerging opportunities as conditions change on the ground. There are multiple layers to this goal, but perhaps most important is building on prior efforts to enhance the Agency's procurement capabilities so that it programs resources in a faster, more responsive manner.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Adams-Allen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PALOMA ADAMS-ALLEN

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be Deputy Administrator for Management and Resources of the United States Agency for International Development.

I would like to thank the President and Administrator Power for their trust in me. I'm grateful for the opportunity to return to USAID, an Agency dear to my heart, at a moment when its leadership and development expertise are so urgently needed.

I am here before you today because of the love and support of so many—my mother, Emilie Adams, a proud Minnesotan who instilled in me a deep sense of fairness and justice; my father, Llewelyn Adams, who I credit for my strong Jamaican work ethic; my husband, Travis Allen, still the best human I know; my daughters, Priya and Emilie, whose creativity and empathy inspire me every day; and a network of extended family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors spanning the globe. Thank you all.

My international development and diplomacy experience started early, informed by the duality of my upbringing: summers spent in the relative wealth and safety of my mother's community in the United States, and the school year spent in the riotous beauty and vulnerability of my father's home country of Jamaica. It was in the jarring journey back and forth between these worlds that I settled on what I wanted to do with my life: pay forward the incredible privilege I have as an American, by working to fuel hope and opportunity in communities like the one that helped raise me.

This early decision informed my 20+ years working in the foreign assistance arena, primarily focused on Latin America and the Caribbean. During a decade in policy and programming roles at the Organization of American States, I saw the potential of multilateralism to calm tensions between neighboring countries and mobilize regional support for humanitarian crises like the 2010 Haiti earthquake. But it has been my experience in the federal government, serving in

leadership and management positions at USAID and now as head of the Inter-American Foundation, where I have been able to affect the change I dreamed of as a child. During a decade of public service, I have had the honor of investing in and learning from young people bravely building peace in El Salvador; small holder farmers in Colombia selling their coffee to global retailers; and proud grandmothers in Haiti financing micro and small businesses through their savings and loans associations.

Throughout my career, I have demonstrated an ability to successfully manage complex operations, effectively steward resources, create and lead diverse purpose-driven teams, and advance reforms designed to enhance the impact and sustainability of development investments. And I have done so in a bipartisan manner, recognizing and respecting Congress' role as an equal partner in US foreign assistance. If confirmed, I will draw upon this experience to effectively oversee USAID's management and resources needs.

As the U.S. Government's lead global development agency, USAID needs to be nimble enough to respond to an ever-evolving set of geopolitical challenges and crises—and to do so with the management and oversight commensurate with the responsibilities given to it by the American people through the Congress.

If confirmed, my top priority will be positioning USAID to further maximize its development impact, by (1) better aligning strategy and resources to deliver results; and (2) expanding the Agency's partner base to include more non-traditional U.S. implementing partners and local organizations, with strong in-country knowledge, expertise, and a commitment to sustainability.

In order to maximize our impact, we must support and invest in USAID's greatest strength and resource: its people. If confirmed, my focus will be on making sure the Agency has enough staff, equipped with the right tools, and bolstered by a supportive culture—one that recognizes and responds to the outsized demands placed on USAID, and embraces the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

And finally, if confirmed, I will prioritize enhancing USAID's ability to rapidly respond and take advantage of emerging opportunities as conditions change on the ground. There are multiple layers to this goal, but perhaps most important is building on prior efforts to enhance the

Agency's procurement capabilities—so that it programs resources in a faster, more responsive manner.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Dr. Donfried?

STATEMENT OF DR. KAREN DONFRIED OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (EUROPEAN AFFAIRS AND EURASIAN AFFAIRS)

Dr. DONFRIED. Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today.

I have long valued my bipartisan collaboration with this committee, dating back to 1991, when I began a decade of work on Europe at the Congressional Research Service. If confirmed, it would be a pleasure to work with you from the State Department on issues I care passionately about and on which the United States is and shall remain a force for good.

It is an honor to be nominated by President Biden to serve under Secretary Blinken as the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. If confirmed, I will work enthusiastically to serve the American people, and advance the interests of the United States, to reinvigorate our alliances and partnerships, to strengthen democracy in Europe and Eurasia, and to address the challenges we face around the world.

My greatest support, if confirmed for this position, will come from my husband, Alan Untereiner, our daughter, Hannah, and our son, Michael. They are an endless source of love and inspiration. Although born in New York City, I spent my early childhood in Heidelberg, where my father, a theologian, did his doctoral work, and my mother worked as a nurse at U.S. Army Headquarters.

That experience gave me the gift of speaking German fluently, which, in turn, allowed me, two decades later, to complete a Master's degree in Munich, where I met Alan, a fellow American studying abroad. Trans-Atlantic relations have been an integral part of my life story.

Professionally, I served in the George W. Bush administration as a member of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, and in the Obama administration both as the National Intelligence Officer for Europe, and as the Senior Director for European Affairs at the National Security Council. For the past seven years, I have led the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

If confirmed, I will have the responsibility, and the honor and joy of leading EUR, covering 50 countries, with 79 posts and 12,000 hard-working, dedicated public servants. I will treat each and every one of them with the care and respect they deserve, as well as work energetically to recruit and develop more diverse talent for the Bureau.

President Biden defines his number one job as ensuring that America's foreign policy benefits the American people and the American middle class. I am eager to support him in achieving this goal, including by revitalizing our alliances and partnerships. The strength of America's alliances is one of our greatest assets. Whether we are confronting the COVID-19 pandemic, economic or social inequality, climate change, corruption, threats to energy security, an aggressive Russia, an increasingly assertive China, cyber threats, or technological competition, the United States is most effective when we cooperate with our allies.

Europe is home to many of our closest allies and partners. Together, we must stand firm against Russia's broad range of desta-

bilizing actions while recognizing there are areas of mutual interest on which we might cooperate. Allies and partners must work together to blunt the Kremlin's attempts to undermine democracies and democratic institutions.

We must confront Russian aggression against its neighbors by standing with the people of Ukraine, Georgia, and Belarus. And we must stand up for universal human rights, including in Russia. The Kremlin's persecution of political opponents, such as Aleksey Navalny, remains deeply disturbing.

Additionally, we must work with our allies to counter an assertive China in the political, diplomatic, economic, military, and technological domains. How we manage our relationship with China is the biggest geopolitical test of the 21st century.

We must work to preserve the free and open rules-based order we built together with our allies seven decades ago in the wake of World War II. The Marshall Plan remains one of the most compelling examples of the United States exercising enlightened leadership.

But 2021 is not 1947. We must modernize our alliances to meet new challenges. Secretary Blinken has made clear that while we applaud the significant progress many NATO allies have made in improving defense investments, we need to do more. The common threats we face demand it.

Allies share values and interests, but we will not always agree. To manage those differences requires trust; if confirmed, I will work to deepen that trust to achieve policy successes that advance U.S. interests. If confirmed, I will seek to deepen cooperation between EUR and this committee to ensure that our diplomacy delivers for the American people.

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

[The prepared statement of Dr. Donfried follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. KAREN E. DONFRIED

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I have long valued my bipartisan collaboration with this committee, dating back to 1991, when I began a decade of work on Europe at the Congressional Research Service. If confirmed, it would be a pleasure to work with you from the State Department on issues I care passionately about and on which the United States is and shall remain a force for good.

It is an honor to be nominated by President Biden to serve under Secretary Blinken as the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR). If confirmed, I will work enthusiastically to serve the American people and advance the interests of the United States, to reinvigorate our alliances and partnerships, to strengthen democracy in Europe and Eurasia, and to address the challenges we face around the world.

My greatest support, if confirmed for this position, will come from my husband, Alan Untereiner, our daughter, Hannah, and our son, Michael. They are an endless source of love and inspiration. Although born in New York City, I spent my early childhood in Heidelberg, where my father, a theologian, did his doctoral work and my mother worked as a nurse at U.S. Army Headquarters. That experience gave me the gift of speaking German fluently, which, in turn, allowed me, two decades later, to complete a Masters degree in Munich, where I met Alan, a fellow American studying abroad. Transatlantic relations have been an integral part of my life story.

Professionally, I served in the George W. Bush administration as a Member of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff and in the Obama administration both as the National Intelligence Officer for Europe and as the Senior Director for European

Affairs at the National Security Council. For the past seven years, I have led the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

If confirmed, I will have the responsibility—and the honor and joy—of leading EUR, covering 50 countries, with 79 posts and 12,000 hard-working, dedicated public servants. I will treat each and every one of them with the care and respect they deserve, as well as work energetically to recruit and develop more diverse talent for the bureau.

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Europe is home to many of our closest allies and partners. Together, we must stand firm against Russia's broad range of destabilizing actions while recognizing there are areas of mutual interest on which we might cooperate. Allies and partners must work together to blunt the Kremlin's attempts to undermine democracies and democratic institutions. We must confront Russian aggression against its neighbors by standing with the people of Ukraine, Georgia, and Belarus. And we must stand up for universal human rights, including in Russia; the Kremlin's persecution of political opponents, such as Aleksey Navalny, remains deeply disturbing. Additionally, we must work with our allies to counter an assertive China in the political, diplomatic, economic, military, and technological domains. How we manage our relationship with China is the biggest geopolitical test of the 21st century.

Most importantly, we must work to preserve the free and open rules-based order we built together with our allies seven decades ago in the wake of World War II. The Marshall Plan remains one of the most compelling examples of the United States exercising enlightened leadership. But 2021 is not 1947. We must modernize our alliances to meet new challenges. Secretary Blinken has made clear that while we applaud the significant progress many NATO allies have made in improving defense investments, we need to do more. The common threats we face demand it.

Allies share values and interests, but we will not always agree. To manage those differences requires trust. If confirmed, I will work to deepen the trust our partners in Europe have in the United States so we can achieve policy successes that advance U.S. interests.

If confirmed, I will seek to deepen cooperation between EUR and this committee to ensure that our diplomacy delivers for the American people. I look forward to your questions and thank you for your consideration.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.
Ambassador Phee?

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARY CATHERINE PHEE OF ILLINOIS, A
CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE,
CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, NOMINATED TO BE AN
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE [AFRICAN AFFAIRS] AND
A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AFRICAN
DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION**

Ambassador PHEE. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the committee; I am honored to be President Biden's nominee for the post of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and grateful to the President and to Secretary Blinken for their confidence.

I began my career as a public servant in these halls in the office of Senator Pat Moynihan. Senator Moynihan kept only two documents on his desk: the U.S. Constitution, and the U.N. Charter. He inspired my career in the Foreign Service, and taught me an abiding respect for this institution, and this committee.

My career in foreign policy began in Nairobi, Kenya, at the United Nations Environment Program. In Kenya I was introduced to the talent and generosity of the African people. Kenyan politics

were also my first exposure to the enduring challenges of governance, security, and sustainable development. Applying U.S. diplomacy to effectively meet such challenges has been the dominant theme of my career.

I thank this committee for its bipartisan recognition of the growing political, economic and cultural power of the diverse countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It is up to the State Department to translate this recognition into respectful partnerships that advance our shared interests, values, and aspirations.

If confirmed, I will work to support President Biden's agenda to expand the quantity and quality of our engagement with African Governments, institutions such as the African Union, and critically, African publics.

To stand up to the threat of autocracy, the President has charged us with demonstrating that democracy is the best system to meet the challenges of our interconnected world. Africans agree and are raising their voices to set new destinies for their countries, as we see in Nigeria. The bravery of the Sudanese people in demanding a civilian-led government is another extraordinary example.

Across the Continent we will reinvigorate our focus on human rights, accountability, and good governance. President Biden has declared the fight against corruption, especially the theft of public assets for private gain, to be a core national security interest.

We see a direct correlation between African Governments that are authoritarian and the incidence of internal conflict, displacement, and migration. Many are contending with an active threat from the Islamic State, and other violent extremists like al-Shabaab in Somalia.

Diverse societies struggle to uphold inclusive and equitable power-sharing arrangements, and collaboration with regional and international partners, tailored U.S. diplomatic, development and security assistance can play a critical role to support peace and security.

This imperative is driving our current intensive effort to urge all parties to the conflict in Ethiopia to implement an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to put a halt to atrocities against civilians.

Climate change also threatens stability. Desertification in the Sahel disrupts farming and has displaced hundreds of thousands, and reckless exploitation threatens the rainforest in the Congo Basin, and the Continent's biological diversity. It is in our mutual interests to work together on environmental sustainability.

Africa is the fastest-growing and the youngest continent. By 2050, one in four persons in the world will be African. Workforce development and job creation will be necessary to tap the ambitions of the youth bulge. We are committed to expanding two-way trade and investment, and

to advancing the regional goals of the African Continental Free Trade Area. Among other strengths, the U.S. private sector offers innovative American options for green energy, and digital economies, as well as a commitment to social responsibility.

All these priorities are now threatened by the devastating human toll of COVID-19. Consistent with America's generous tradition of investment in Africa's health systems, exemplified by the landmark PEPFAR program, the White House has just announced the dona-

tion of 25 million COVID-19 vaccines for Africa. The Development Finance Corporation is also investing in vaccine production in South Africa and Senegal.

Mindful of the challenges at home and humble about the challenges in Africa, our best asset will be a dynamic and affirmative U.S. policy agenda that enlists African partners in building free-market democracies that offer liberty and prosperity and realize the Continent's full potential.

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, with the Strategic Competition Act, you have given us our marching orders and new tools. If confirmed, I commit that U.S. embassies in Sub-Saharan Africa will act to confront the Chinese challenge to the international rules-based order.

Finally, and not least, if confirmed I promise to be a champion of the people of the State Department's Africa Bureau, to unleash their full potential with a vigorous commitment to diversity and inclusion, and to cultivate the special esprit de corps that has traditionally defined the Bureau. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ambassador Phee follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MARY CATHERINE PHEE

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Minority Member, distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to be President Biden's nominee for the post of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and grateful to the President and to Secretary Blinken for their confidence.

I began my career as a public servant here in the office of Senator Pat Moynihan. To guide his work, Senator Moynihan kept only two documents on his desk: the U.S. constitution and the U.N. Charter. He inspired my career in the Foreign Service, and taught me an abiding respect for this institution, and this committee.

My career in foreign policy began in Nairobi, Kenya, at the United Nations Environment Program. In Kenya I was introduced to the talent and generosity of the African people, and the beauty and richness of the African landscape. Kenyan politics were also my first exposure to the enduring challenges of governance, security and sustainable development. Applying U.S. diplomacy to effectively meet such challenges has been the dominant theme of my career.

I thank this committee for its bipartisan recognition of the growing political, economic and cultural power of the diverse countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It is up to the State Department to translate this recognition into respectful partnerships that advance our shared interests, values and aspirations. If confirmed, I will work to support President Biden's agenda to expand the quantity and quality of our engagement with African Governments, institutions such as the African Union, and, critically, African publics.

To stand up to the threat of autocracy, the President has charged us with demonstrating that democracy is the best system to meet the challenges of our interconnected world. We know that the majority of Africans agree and are raising their voices to set new destinies for their countries, as we see in Nigeria. The bravery of the Sudanese people in demanding a civilian-led government is another extraordinary example. Across the continent we will reinvigorate our focus on human rights, accountability, and good governance. President Biden has declared the fight against corruption, especially the theft of public assets for private gain, to be a core national security interest.

We see a direct correlation between African Governments that are authoritarian and the incidence of internal conflict, displacement, and migration. Many are contending with an active threat from the Islamic State and other violent extremists like al-Shabaab in Somalia. Diverse societies struggle to uphold inclusive and equitable power-sharing arrangements. In collaboration with regional and international partners, tailored U.S. diplomatic, development and security assistance can play a critical role to support peace and security. This imperative is driving our current intensive effort to urge all parties to the conflict in Ethiopia to implement an immediate and unconditional ceasefire that puts a halt to atrocities against civilians, to permit the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and to restore stability through political dialogue.

Climate change also threatens stability. Desertification in the Sahel disrupts farming and has displaced hundreds of thousands, and reckless exploitation threatens the world's second largest rainforest in the Congo Basin and the continent's wonderland of biological diversity. It is in our mutual interests to work together on environmental sustainability.

Africa is the fastest growing and the youngest continent. By 2050, one in four persons in the world will be African. Workforce development and job creation will be necessary to tap the ambitions of the youth bulge. We are committed to expanding two-way trade and investment and to advancing the regional goals of the African Continental Free Trade Area. Among other strengths, the U.S. private sector offers innovative American options for green energy and digital economies, as well as a commitment to social responsibility.

All these priorities are now threatened by the devastating human toll of COVID-19. Consistent with America's generous tradition of investment in Africa's health systems, exemplified by the landmark PEPFAR program, the White House has just announced the donation of 25 million COVID-19 vaccines for Africa. Earlier the President committed the United States to providing 500 million Pfizer vaccine doses to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, for distribution by COVAX to 92 low- and lower middle-income countries and economies, and the African Union. The Development Finance Corporation is also investing in vaccine production in South Africa and Senegal. This pandemic highlights how our fates are intertwined.

Mindful of the challenges at home and humble about the challenges in Africa, our best asset will be a dynamic and affirmative U.S. policy agenda that enlists African partners in building free market democracies that offer liberty and prosperity and realize the continent's full potential. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, with the Strategic Competition Act you have given us our marching orders and new tools. If confirmed I commit that U.S. embassies in sub-Saharan Africa will act to confront the Chinese challenge to the international rules-based order.

Finally, and not least, if confirmed I promise to be a champion of the people of the State Department's Africa bureau, to unleash their full potential with a vigorous commitment to diversity and inclusion and to cultivate the special *esprit d'corps* that has traditionally defined the bureau.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Witkowski?

STATEMENT OF ANNE A. WITKOWSKY, NOMINATED TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (CONFLICT AND STABILIZATION OPERATIONS), AND TO BE COORDINATOR FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms. WITKOWSKY. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations, and Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization.

I am deeply grateful to President Biden and to Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me for this nomination.

I am joined here today by my husband, John, and our son Jack, with our daughter Elizabeth watching remotely. I want to underscore how much their love and support means to me, as well as that of my mother, sister, and all family members.

Growing up in the Midwest, I am grateful my parents modeled for me the values of public service. My father served in the Army Corps of Engineers in World War II, and as the first Chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education, while my mother volunteered for many civic organizations.

I have by now had the opportunity to serve in the Executive Branch across four administrations; within the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and on the White House National

Security Council staff. While I have held positions outside government as well, there has been no greater privilege than to serve alongside the talented and dedicated men and women in the national security community, in the civil service, foreign service, the military services, law enforcement and intelligence.

Throughout, I have learned the critical importance of effectively using all U.S. national security tools, including diplomacy, development and defense to support U.S. policy priorities and advance U.S. interests and values.

From my experience pursuing conventional arms control in Europe at the end of the Cold War, to advancing counterterrorism policies and programs in the post-9/11 period, to supporting the Department of Defense response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, I have learned that the U.S. Government is most effective when integrating our policies, programs, and activities to work at common purpose. That is a key lesson I intend to bring to my position as Assistant Secretary, if confirmed.

The Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, or CSO, has a vital role to play in developing and carrying out U.S. conflict prevention and stabilization policy and programs, working in close cooperation with USAID and the Department of Defense. Preventing conflict is hard, and outcomes can be tough to measure. Yet, when we do not address instability at the front end, too often we find ourselves having to address it in different, more costly ways at the back end.

The strategic environment for the CSO mission is growing more challenging. The number and duration of violent conflicts is increasing. Democracy is backsliding for the 15th straight year, and authoritarianism is on the rise. We see territory controlled by governments being reduced, as non-state armed actors gain ground.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on populations globally. The displacement of people is at a recorded high; climate change, corruption, gender inequality, and the rapid spread of disinformation pose additional underlying challenges.

Therefore, if confirmed, I will place priority on strengthening the Bureau's contributions to the U.S. Government's effectiveness in meeting these challenges.

Policies and best practices should be regularly adapted, drawing from lessons learned. We will deepen and renew U.S. partnerships on these issues, bilaterally and with multilateral organizations, to advance common objectives. And we must work collaboratively with civil society.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Members of this committee, including those who have been instrumental in providing new tools to break the costly cycle of conflict. Among those tools are the Global Fragility Act of 2019, and the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018, as well as the Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017, all bipartisan legislation.

CSO will exercise leadership, working with other State Department bureaus and interagency partners, to advance their implementation, together with the 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review.

And as I consider our plans, we will identify how the work of CSO can reinforce support for democratic values and human rights at the heart of our foreign policy. That work must be anchored in

understanding how Russia's malign efforts undermine democracies and exploit instability, and the geostrategic challenge of China's ambitions.

Finally, I will be dedicated in full to building a strong workforce, one that is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Thank you again for this opportunity to lead the CSO Bureau, to advance American interests and values toward a more peaceful and safer world.

I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Witkowsky follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANNE A. WITKOWSKY

Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for Conflict and Stabilization Operations and Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. I am deeply grateful to President Biden and to Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me for this nomination.

I am joined here today by my husband, John and our son Jack, with our daughter Elizabeth watching remotely. I want to underscore how much their love and support means to me, as well as that of all my family members. Growing up in the Midwest, I am grateful my parents modeled for me the values of public service. My father served in the Army Corps of Engineers in World War II and as the first chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education, while my mother volunteered for many civic organizations.

I have by now had the opportunity to serve in the Executive Branch across four administrations, within the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and on the White House National Security Council staff. While I have held positions outside government as well, there has been no greater privilege than to serve alongside the talented and dedicated men and women in the national security community, in the civil service, foreign service, the military services, law enforcement and intelligence.

Throughout, I have learned the critical importance of effectively using all U.S. national security tools—including diplomacy, development and defense—to support U.S. policy priorities and advance U.S. interests and values. From my experience pursuing conventional arms control in Europe at the end of the Cold War, to advancing counterterrorism policies and programs in the post 9/11 period, to supporting the Department of Defense response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, I have learned that the U.S. Government is most effective when integrating our policies, programs, and activities to work at common purpose. That is a key lesson I intend to bring to my position as Assistant Secretary, if confirmed.

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Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017, all bipartisan legislation. CSO will exercise leadership, working with other State Department Bureaus and interagency partners, to advance their implementation, together with the 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review.

And, as I consider our plans, we will identify how the work of CSO can reinforce support for democratic values and human rights at the heart of our foreign policy. That work must be anchored in understanding how Russia's malign efforts undermine democracies and exploit instability, and the geostrategic challenge of China's ambitions.

Finally, I will be dedicated in full to building a strong workforce, one that is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Thank you again for this opportunity to lead the CSO Bureau, to advance American interests and values toward a more peaceful and safer world. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Thank you all very much. So first I have a series of questions on behalf of the committee as a whole, and a simple yes or no to the question by each of you, is what we request. These are questions that speak to the importance that this committee places on responsiveness of all officials in the executive branch and that we expect and will be seeking from you.

So with a simple yes or no answer: Do you agree to appear before this committee and make officials from your office available to the committee and designated staff when invited?

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Yes.

Ms. WITKOWSKY. Yes.

Dr. DONFRIED. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Ambassador?

Ambassador PHEE. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Do you commit to keeping the committee fully and currently informed about the activities under your purview?

Ambassador PHEE. Yes.

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Yes.

Ms. WITKOWSKY. Yes.

Dr. DONFRIED. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Did I hear a yes from you, Doctor?

Dr. DONFRIED. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed? Not just providing notification after the fact?

Ambassador PHEE. Yes.

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Yes.

Ms. WITKOWSKY. Yes.

Dr. DONFRIED. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And do you commit to promptly responding to request for briefings and information requested by the committee and its designated staff?

Ambassador PHEE. Yes.

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Yes.

Ms. WITKOWSKY. Yes.

Dr. DONFRIED. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. Thank you, all.

So we will start a round a five-minute questions. I will start with myself. There is a lot of room, a lot of waterfront to cover here with all four of you. So it will be difficult.

But let me start by focusing with you, Dr. Donfried, on a series of issues that I am very much concerned about. Section 231 of CAATSA is a provision that imposes sanctions on entities that conduct significant transactions with the Russian defense and intelligence sectors. I help write that law. Do you agree to section 231 of CAATSA has prevented significant funding from going to the Russian defense and intelligence sectors? And do you support its full implementation?

Dr. DONFRIED. Chairman Menendez, it is such an honor to appear before the committee, and I will turn to your question, but I do not want to let this opportunity pass to thank you for your support of GMF. And as you were giving your opening comments earlier, I had a flashback to 2019 when you delivered an important keynote speech about the importance of trans-Atlantic relations on GMF stage in Brussels. And I just want to thank you for not only your leadership of this committee, but also being such an important public voice on these issues.

You mentioned your role on CAATSA, and I would absolutely agree with you that that legislation has been important in pushing back against Russian influence and countering its malign activities. And if confirmed, I would, indeed, commit to the full implementation of CAATSA.

The CHAIRMAN. Very good. Do you commit to regularly engaging with me in efforts to ensure its full implementation?

Dr. DONFRIED. Chairman Menendez? If confirmed, I would look forward to working closely with you on its full implementation.

The CHAIRMAN. Now what do you think about CAATSA sanctions on Turkey unless Ankara gets rid of its Russian S-400 system?

Dr. DONFRIED. Chairman Menendez, I would say that we have to keep sanctions on Turkey for as long as it has the S-400s.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. So, let me turn to a few other things. The administration has yet to impose congressionally mandated sanctions in response to the attempted murder of anti-corruption activist, Alexei Navalny, as required under the Chemical and Biological Weapons Act. These sanctions were due on June the 2nd. I will note that they were pending since the past administration and neither have yet acted on it.

If confirmed, will you commit to briefing us on why the administration continues to ignore the law?

Dr. DONFRIED. Chairman Menendez, I find Russia's use of chemical weapons chilling and shocking. And if confirmed, I will follow the law and I will stand up to Russia's reckless and aggressive behavior. And I will look forward to the opportunity to consult with you in so doing.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Now let me turn to the Eastern Mediterranean. This is an increasingly important, I think, part of the world, we passed the Eastern Mediterranean Security and Partnership Act, which I think enhanced our relationships with critical countries in the region: Greece, Cyprus, Israel, to mention some, and creating a new paradigm in the Eastern Mediterranean in both energy and security.

But we wake up today to see a statement by President Erdogan of Turkey with reference to Cyprus saying that peace talks on the

future of ethnically-divided Cyprus can take place only between two states, only between two states.

Now this is in violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 550 that called upon members to not recognize the Government in the North, that calls for Varosha to come under U.N. administration, and that considers any attempt to resettle Varosha by other than its inhabitants, to be inadmissible.

And it further violates the U.N. Resolution 789, that called for a significant reduction in foreign troops, that calls for U.N. peacekeepers to be deployed to Varosha, and called for a recommitment to the peace process.

Erdogan is violating all of the U.N. Security Council Resolutions. He is in the north of Cyprus today instigating, and creating a challenge to a country that is part of the European Union. Now I will say that over several administrations, we have been rather passive, from my view, about this engagement. And all we see is Erdogan encroaching in the exclusive economic zone of not only Cyprus, seeking to do so with Greece.

It has played, in my view, a nefarious role in a variety of things in the region. And unless we take an assertive role and push back, we are going to find ourselves with a significant challenge.

Now I would like to hear from you, if you were to be confirmed, what role you would take, what position you would take as it relates to these issues?

Dr. DONFRIED. Chairman Menendez, thank you for your engagement on the Eastern Med. It has made a real difference. And I have been following the breaking news from Cyprus as I entered this hearing room, and this latest announcement by the Turkish Cypriot leader and by Turkish President Erdogan about the Turkish Cypriots taking control over parts of Varosha is exactly part of the narrative you are talking about.

This is a move that is clearly inconsistent with U.N. Security Council Resolutions. I do not know if the U.S. Government has yet issued a statement about this, but I am certain this action will be condemned, and these actions are provocative, they are destabilizing for the region, and they are an impediment to any settlement for Cyprus, that will be on the basis of a bizonal, bicomunal federation.

And if I were to be confirmed, I would want to work closely with you on this. In this particular case of Varosha I think that we need to refer the situation to the U.N. Security Council. We need to encourage the international community to give a strong response to this action. We also need to work to deescalate tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean, and I do appreciate your engagement on this.

The CHAIRMAN. So I have your commitment that if you are confirmed, this will be one of your priorities in your portfolio?

Dr. DONFRIED. Yes, Chairman, it would.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.
Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I certainly want to associate myself with those remarks regarding Erdogan and his actions throughout the globe.

Ms. Donfried, I want to start with our relationship with our friends in Europe, and particularly as it relates to both of ours and Europe's relationship with China. One of the ways, as we push back on the Chinese challenge, is it is going to take a real partners to do that. No country is going to be able to do it alone. If we put our population, Europe's population together, we are still only about a third of what the Chinese population is.

Because we have common and shared values with our European allies, it is the most natural alliance there is to push back against China. I authored a report on this, and I think others have given speeches on it, and also done reports on it. What are your thoughts on how we can work together with Europe to push back on the challenges we are going to get from China?

Dr. DONFRIED. Ranking Member Risch, thank you for that question. I have read your November 2020 Report and I would commend it. The comprehensiveness and breadth of the view you took on how the United States can work more closely with Europe on these key challenges in the relationship with China, I think in many ways is path-breaking.

And I would commit to you that I would look forward to working with you on how we flesh out what you called a concrete agenda for trans-Atlantic cooperation on China. I think there is no better moment for us to be doing this because I think Europe understands today much more than it has over the past decade, the challenge China poses.

And when President Biden made the trip to Europe just last month, at the G7, at the NATO Summit, at the U.S.-EU Summit, we saw this commitment on the part of our allies to work with us on the agenda. I think that we can put U.S. diplomatic muscle to good effect here. Thank you.

Senator RISCH. Well, I appreciate that. And I think we have all got to commit ourselves to getting China to comply with international norms, and rule of law, and enforcement of rule of law. And if we do not, it is going to be a long 21st century for all of us if we do not, if we do not do that.

Let us turn to Georgia for a minute. I and other members of this committee, have been disappointed in what has been happening in Georgia. Senator Shaheen and I were there when they had their elections in October of 2012, which we thought was a new dawn, and a new beginning. And after that we have been regularly disappointed as to what happens there.

And they come to Washington, D.C., all the time, the different parties, and each of them try to engage us and get us to take sides in their political maneuvering, which every country does. And we keep telling them that they have got to resolve this themselves. We are not going to take sides in this.

But they are not making much progress. You get to a point where you wonder whether or not it is time to just reevaluate where you are with this. What are your thoughts Georgia?

Dr. DONFRIED. Thank you, Ranking Member Risch. And I am grateful to you and Senator Shaheen for that trip that you made. And I also would point to the CODEL that Senator Shaheen and Senator Portman took to Georgia quite recently, and I think that broad bipartisan engagement is critical in the relationship.

If confirmed, I would continue to push for the full and prompt implementation of the agreement that was signed on April 19, and urge all parties in Georgia to support that agreement. And I cannot underscore enough how important electoral reform and judicial reform is for Georgia. As you well know, Georgia has made substantial strides to strengthen its democracy, but it has much more distance to travel, and I will press for them to cover that distance.

At the same time, I would reaffirm U.S. support for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and continue to support for Georgia's integration in the Euro-Atlantic community, which is tied to the strength of Georgia's democracy. And I would look forward to working with you on these issues.

Senator RISCH. Well, thank you. I certainly appreciate those thoughts.

My time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Coons?

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch. And thank you to our nominees today. And particularly to your families who have supported you in your careers in Foreign Service, so far.

Dr. Donfried, if I might? I want to associate myself with the concerns raised by the chairman about Turkey's nefarious role, both in Cyprus and in the region, and my concerns about that. We will have a hearing about Turkey, I believe tomorrow, where we will explore that more thoroughly. And the ranking member raised concerns about China that I might well have just echoed, but I would like to ask you specifically about the path forward in U.S.-German relations.

President Biden just welcomed Chancellor Merkel to the White House. We have long enjoyed a close and positive relationship. There are upcoming elections. I think Germany is one of the central powers in all of Europe. One of our core allies, one of the most important nations in the world in terms of sharing our values and an economy built on advanced manufacturing.

What do you see as the future of U.S.-German relations, and how does our work with them in Europe, around collective security, and in the rest of the world, in terms of pushing back on China, have positive and negative aspects? How do you intend to navigate all this?

Dr. DONFRIED. Senator Coons, thank you very much for that question. And I remember being at a site event at the Munich Security Conference with you in Germany.

Senator COONS. Mm-hmm.

Dr. DONFRIED. And I am mindful of how very knowledgeable you are about these issues as well. As you know, Germany is a critical partner and ally of the United States. It is, of course, the largest and wealthiest member of the European Union. And we just saw Chancellor Merkel visit President Biden last week, where the discussion based on the press conference, seemed to cover many of the issues you just referred to.

There is an election in Germany on September 26th, so as we saw last week, in many ways, this was a farewell visit by Angela Merkel as Chancellor after 16 years in office. So we are all expecting change in this relationship. It may well be that her party, the

center-right party, maintains the chancellery, but the coalition is likely to look different.

And that will matter for German policy, particularly with regard to countries like China and Russia, where if you had the Greens in coalition, I think you would see a greater sensitivity to the human rights violations that we see those countries make. So I think it is an exciting moment for the relationship with Germany. While on the one hand we can celebrate what has been, I think there will be opportunities for the U.S. Government to forge and deepen cooperation on issues like China. Thank you.

Senator COONS. Thank you. And I am looking forward, hopefully, to participating in the Munich Security Conference again with the leadership of this committee and many other colleagues.

Ambassador Phee, if I might? Great to see you again, since we last visited in Juba in 2017. Congratulations on your nomination.

There is so much to discuss across the Continent. Let me just bear down on a few things quickly, if I might. Since my visit to Ethiopia a few months ago, on behalf of our President, the situation in Tigray, and the U.S. bilateral relationship with Ethiopia, has deteriorated significantly.

Could you just, briefly, outline your plans to make progress in opening up humanitarian relief, making progress towards a ceasefire and then, God willing, peace and some reconciliation in Tigray? And what do you think might be the path towards accountability for those who have committed human rights violations, and for possibly rebuilding the U.S.-Ethiopia relationship on the other side of this, if possible?

Ambassador PHEE. Thank you, Senator. And it is an honor and a privilege for me to see you again, in this environment.

I want to thank you and other members of the committee, including Ranking Member Risch who introduced a resolution on Ethiopia, for the efforts you have made to make clear, U.S. concerns about the situation that has resulted from the conflict in Tigray.

Your efforts have been instrumental in making sure that all parties to the conflict understand that the United States urgently seeks an immediate end to hostilities, unconditional humanitarian access, accountability for atrocities, and a new course to achieve the political and economic reforms sought by the Ethiopian people.

And if confirmed, I am committed to using all available tools in partnership with this committee to achieve those critical objectives, and to working with you to help Ethiopia get back on track.

The Prime Minister started his premiership with a positive direction, with important rhetoric that was responsive to the desire of the Ethiopian people for economic and political reforms.

That initial positive start has gone badly off track, and it is in our interest to work across the political spectrum in Ethiopia to get it back on track, both for the immediate concern for the civilians who are suffering, but also so that Ethiopia can regain its leadership role in the Horn. Thank you.

Senator COONS. Thank you. Thank you, Ambassador.

Mr. Chairman, could I continue, or should I have a number of additional questions? I did not know if you were doing a second round or not.

The CHAIRMAN. Did you say you have a hundred additional questions?

Senator COONS. A few.

The CHAIRMAN. Oh, a few.

Senator COONS. A very few.

The CHAIRMAN. Because I have at least a hundred.

Senator COONS. Maybe two.

The CHAIRMAN. Actually, happy to let you go on.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your forbearance.

If I might, Ms. Witkowsky; the Global Fragility Act is a, I think, promising new tool. There are many areas of fragility, Ambassador Phee and I might have gone on at greater length if we had the opportunity about the Sahel, and about Mozambique, and other places where there are significant conflicts.

The CSO Bureau has an important role to play in the implementation of the Global Fragility Act that Senator Graham and I wrote and was signed into law last December. And it tries to come up with strategies that will prevent instability. Can you just briefly share your vision for how you will employ this new tool?

Ms. WITKOWSKY. Senator Coons, thank you very much. And thank you so much for your leadership on this important issue, and for providing the opportunity of this new tool to the U.S. Government, to move forward on the complex and difficult challenges of addressing fragility.

The Global Fragility Act maps an important new way of doing business on fragility, with its ten-year commitments, its emphasis on solutions being locally led, and its requirements for tighter integration among bureaus, agencies, the field, and Washington.

If confirmed, I see that CSO will play a leadership role in the day-to-day implementation, of the Global Fragility Act implementation, one of coordination, and working with all relevant agencies who are participating in moving forward to implement the Act and supporting our embassies, working with civil society. And that process will amass to the higher-level process that you have mandated under the Steering Committee in the Act.

I look forward to drawing in my many years of leading large agency and interagency efforts to move forward successfully with its implementation. And I can assure you that implementing the Global Fidelity Act will be a high priority for me.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Ms. Witkowsky.

My last question for Ms. Adams-Allen; you have been involved in the Inter-American Foundation. Ambassador Phee will be on the Board of the Africa Development Foundation, both of them relatively small, agile responsive. One of my real concerns is about increasing localization and flexibility of our assistance programs.

I just visited Guatemala, and had a chance to visit a shelter for trafficked children, a site that I know Samantha Power, the Administrator, also visited. I am really concerned about the lack of credible partners for us to work with in a number of the countries, in Central America, and in other places in the world.

What is your strategy for increasing the localization of assistance programs so that we are not solely reliant on government partners? And what would you think about piloting that in Central America, where I think we are genuinely constrained in terms of the quality

of the government partners we have available to do robust development projects with?

Ms. ADAMS-ALLEN. Thank you for the question, Senator. I could not agree more about the need to localize U.S. foreign assistance and make sure that it is sustainable and it is really locally owned. As you mentioned, this is precisely what The American Foundation does, and it is my contention that there are actually numerous potential local partners across the world.

But I know particularly in Central America that USAID could tap into a pipeline of existing, vetted, tested local partners who are working on issues of livelihoods, crime prevention, peace building, and governance in the affected communities.

In terms of a strategy, you know, if confirmed, I think it will be important for USAID to build on existing efforts, not only looking at the model of the USADF, OIF, but also building on the new Partner's Initiative and the Local Works program that they have been testing at USAID.

I think it is going to be crucial to streamline the procurement processes at USAID so that small local organizations can have access to partnership potentials with USAID.

Third, I think it is going to be crucial to strengthen the capabilities within USAID, in particular, the technical staff, and the contracting staff who are the ones we are going to need to support local organizations.

Senator COONS. Thank you very much. Thank you to the panel. Thank you for your forbearance, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Van Hollen?

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Risch. Congratulations to all of you on your nominations.

Dr. Donfried, it is good to see you, it was good to catch up with you a little bit the other day. You know, one of the key responsibilities I think of this portfolio you have will be to work with our European partners to counter China's use of unfair economic policies, and trade policies, to establish a set of agreed-upon rules of the road. And I know that it is going to be part of what you are focused on.

I want to also associate myself with the comments the chairman made regarding CAATSA, and the importance of fully enforcing CAATSA, and making sure that, you know, Turkey continues to see those sanctions applied because of the purchase of the S-400s.

I heard in your response to Chairman Menendez, a reference to Erdogan's, President Erdogan's visit to Cyprus today, which of course is the anniversary of the illegal Turkish invasion of Cyprus. And he is taking some very provocative steps, including talking about resettling parts of the Varosha, which would be a gross violation of numerous United Nations Security Resolutions, and U.S. policy statements with respect to not changing the status quo, except for through a negotiated settlement.

Senator Menendez and I, and Senator Rubio, and others, sent a letter to the President Biden last week on this issue. It has now come to pass. So in addition to just making strong statements condemning the action, I think it is important that we work with our European allies in the EU to look at other sanctions that can be imposed for the violation of law here, rule of law.

President Biden has sort of recentered U.S. policy on rule of law. So do you agree that it is important to stand firm, together with our partners in the EU, on this violation?

Dr. DONFRIED. Senator Van Hollen, thank you for taking the time last week to meet with me. I appreciated that. And to your question, yes, I do agree we should work closely with the European Union, with our European allies on how we pushed back against this. I think we will be stronger for doing so.

And I also look forward to working closely with you and with the chairman, if confirmed, on these critical issues around stability and peace in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. I appreciate that. We are going to be having a hearing. I know that the chairman has organized a hearing tomorrow on Turkey specifically. So I will have a greater chance to talk about that. But we just see this series of very provocative moves in Cyprus, in the Eastern Mediterranean, also walking away from the parameters of a bizonal Federation that had defined the talks for peace in Cyprus.

Ambassador Phee, if I could? You have a huge portfolio. I look forward to working with you on all the issues including trying to really increase U.S. investment in Africa. My question relates specifically to Sudan. Senator Coons and I visited Sudan, I think back in May now, and Sudan, of course, is one of those countries where in a world where we see retrenchment, and people moving in the wrong direction, i.e. issues of democracy and rule of law, Sudan is a bright spot.

And I know you agree that we should do everything we can to support their transition from dictatorship to democracy. At the end of June, Prime Minister Hamdok gave a very important speech. And one of the things he focused on was the importance, the urgent importance of consolidating the military, which consists, as you know, of various militia, including the RSF, under a unified command, and that command be under civilian control.

The U.S. continues to have a law in place based on the Bashir Government coup decades ago that limits our ability to engage with the armed forces through security systems.

Would you agree that we should look at ways of changing that? Given the fact that we now have seen a peaceful revolution and where the United States could play, I think, a constructive role, carefully, but a constructive role in helping Sudan, integrate and consolidate its military under unified command under civilian control?

Ambassador PHEE. Senator, it is an honor and pleasure to see you again. And I thank you for your leadership of the Africa Subcommittee. And I thank you for your efforts, such as the recent trip that you took with Senator Coons.

You have perfectly captured, I think, this critical moment in the Sudanese transition. The Senate has already played such a vital role in supporting the transition by giving us the tools, helping to dismantle. As you note, some of the architecture that was put in place during the Bashir regime. And if confirmed, I absolutely commit to review the important option you have suggested here today, about how we might work more effectively with the security forces.

In tandem with the Prime Minister's announcement, there were also statements made by the military leadership about the importance of working together. So there are real opportunities for us to continue to support this very critical transition, which will have such a transformative impact on the Continent. Thank you.

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you. I look forward to working with you. And while it has taken a long time, I know AID is finally finalizing its \$700 million commitment. So the committee looks forward to working with you as that moves forward as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. All right. There are presently no other members seeking recognition. But there is one member on their way here, so I have a few extra questions, so I am just going to pursue them now.

Let me go back to you, Dr. Donfried. You have a very large universe to cover. Earlier this year the Biden administration recognized the Armenian genocide. Do you support the administration's decision to recognize the Armenian genocide?

Dr. DONFRIED. Chairman Menendez, I do. And I would like to thank you for your leadership on that issue. You have been a long-time champion of the U.S. Government officially recognizing the Armenian genocide. And I think it puts the United States in a very good place to be on the right side of history on this issue.

The CHAIRMAN. There is another issue in the region that is a little more complicated—well, that it took a long time for us to recognize the genocide, but I am glad. And I give credit to President Biden for doing so.

But given Azerbaijan's aggression last August in Nagorno-Karabakh war, the administration continued the use of waivers for Section 907 restrictions. I have to be honest with you, and based on the declared meaning of Section 907 as I read it I am not quite sure—it was quite a stretch, to go ahead and waive. What are your views on that?

Dr. DONFRIED. Chairman Menendez, if I am confirmed, I would look forward to working closely with you on that issue, of the waivers for that assistance to Azerbaijan. I think it is critical that we make sure that any support we are giving to Azerbaijan is not in any way affecting the balance of power between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and that we are committed to resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The CHAIRMAN. No, I appreciate that. The Azerbaijanis are now interfering in the physical territory of Armenia, and a border issue. And it just seems to me they will continue to be aggressive unless they have a clear message that it is not acceptable.

I understand that you have had the chance to review the Ukraine Security Partnership Act. Do you support the legislation which would give increased security assistance to the country?

Dr. DONFRIED. I am grateful for the broad and bipartisan support there is on this committee for U.S. support for Ukraine. And I would read with great interest, the Act, which has many interesting and important ideas captured in it. And if confirmed, I would very much look forward to working with you on how we can increase our support for Ukraine.

The CHAIRMAN. Finally, last week the British Government proposed halting all prosecution of British soldiers and militants involved in three decades of conflict in Northern Ireland, which sparked an angry response from victims' families, and politicians in Belfast and Dublin. The Stormont House Agreement provides a framework to deal with legacy issues from the troubles. Do you support the implementation of the Stormont House Agreement as a way to deal with legacy issues?

Dr. DONFRIED. Chairman Menendez, I mentioned earlier that I spent 10 years at the Congressional Research Service, and one of the issues, I spent a great deal of time on then, was Northern Ireland. And it was a bright time because actually we saw the peace process move forward, and that Stormont House Agreement, or the Good Friday Agreement, I think has to be the basis for U.S. policy toward the Island of Ireland to maintain peace there. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ambassador Phee, let me ask you. The situation in Tigray and across Ethiopia is rather bleak. The Ethiopian Government's unilateral cease fire does not appear to be getting much traction, and worryingly, it appears to me that we may be entering a new phase of the conflict characterized by the mobilization of ethnic militia, and even more mass atrocities.

What more can the United States do to get the parties, to reach a negotiated ceasefire? If you were to be confirmed, what advice would you be giving?

Ambassador PHEE. Chairman Menendez, thank you for raising this very disturbing issue, which poses such a threat to the civilians of Ethiopia, and to this stability of the Horn. If confirmed, I would enthusiastically endorse the efforts of our Special Envoy, Ambassador Jeff Feltman, who is working right now to mobilize the support of partner nations in Africa, of the partner nations in the Gulf who are engaged in Ethiopia, our partners in Europe, and our partners in the United Nations.

This problem requires all of us pulling together to help Ethiopia stop the current fighting, to stop the spread that you have correctly identified as a genuine threat, and to work on a national dialogue, to address the political and economic performance that are so desperately needed.

The CHAIRMAN. Yeah. And I think we have to look at, if the type of atrocities that are being reported are such, I think we have to look about what other consequences for such atrocities. If we look away then, you know, at the end of the day, others in other parts of the world will do it.

Ambassador PHEE. Chairman Menendez, I fully agree with that sentiment. We have, as you know, a longstanding and multifaceted partnership with Ethiopia, and there are options for us to act in that direction if it becomes necessary. And if confirmed, I would commit to pursuing those options to make clear, just as you have said, that this kind of action is unacceptable.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me turn to the situation of the Sahel, which continues to be deeply concerning, with violence in the region fueling what U.N. agencies deemed the world's "fastest-growing displacement crisis". As you may know, I am the lead sponsor of S615,

the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act, which calls for a whole-of-government strategy for the Sahel.

Do I have your commitment, if you are confirmed, to develop a strategic approach to the Sahel?

Ambassador PHEE. Chairman Menendez, you absolutely do. If confirmed, I would address the concerns that are outlined in your legislation, and I would do our best to pull together all the elements of the U.S. Government capability to help support a better outcome in the Sahel.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Now, Sudan's civilian-led transition to democracy is in a critical phase of the transitional government led by Prime Minister Hamdok, has initiated laudable reforms over the last two years, but there are several intractable problems that need to be addressed. What in your view are the major obstacles to democratic transition and stability in Sudan?

Ambassador PHEE. Chairman Menendez, in my view, the main obstacle to the transition in Sudan is helping the military understand that there is a new way of governance in the country, and that it is time for the civilians to remain at the forefront. That is the most important challenge we face, and it is incumbent upon us to do all we can to help them realize that transition.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, Senator Risch?

Senator RISCH. Briefly. Ambassador Phee, I wanted to talk about this one detail that Senator Van Hollen mentioned. And it prodded me into thinking about it some more. And that is, regarding the \$700 million that has been provided for Sudan as a result of the legal peace settlement, what are your thoughts on how the U.S. should use that amount?

Ambassador PHEE. Ranking Member Risch, I understand that we should use that money exactly for the purposes for which you appropriated it, which is to help consolidate support for the transition to help provide economic sustainability in Sudan, so that there is popular support for this transition to continue. I understand there is frustration in the pace of disbursement, and if confirmed, I would undertake to immediately look at that issue.

Senator RISCH. Yeah. Frustration would be an understatement. The mechanics that are in place, are you familiar with those or?

Ambassador PHEE. No, sir. I am not as familiar as I should be.

Senator RISCH. I might do that as an additional question for the record. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Well thank you.

Senator RISCH. I do not want our other two nominees to think I have no affection for your work. I do. And I will be submitting a series of questions for the record. For that fact, there will be a series of questions to all of the nominees from me, and I am sure from other members.

The CHAIRMAN. I would urge you to answer them fully and expeditiously so that the committee can consider your nominations at a business meeting.

With no other members before the committee, this hearing will be adjourned. The record will remain open until the close of business tomorrow, which, questions for the record will be submitted.

And with thanks to the committee, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:13 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

Additional Material Submitted for the Record

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO MS. PALOMA ADAMS-ALLEN BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Question. Last July, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report depicting extensive demographic data demonstrating the serious challenges the Agency faces when it comes to building a diverse workforce. The GAO concluded “mixed progress” in the Agency’s efforts to increase diversity, and presented a number of troubling findings, including numerous barriers to promotion for racial and ethnic minorities in early- or mid-career Civil Service positions.

- Will you commit to prioritizing actions to address these problems?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to prioritizing actions to address these problems.

Question. Please describe what actions you believe USAID should prioritize to realize and advance the goals of USAID’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative?

Answer. Ensuring USAID remains the world’s leading development agency requires the Agency center the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in everything it does—reflecting them in its people, its workplace culture, policies and practices, and funding and program approaches. If confirmed, I will make diversity, equity, and inclusion foundational priorities for both our mission around the world and how we support and invest in our workforce. The report you referenced, for example, presented data demonstrating that “promotion outcomes at USAID were generally lower for racial and ethnic minorities than for whites in early to mid career.” If confirmed, I will engage staff across the agency to understand the challenges facing them as they seek to advance in their USAID careers, solicit their advice on how to create more internal ladders and equitable opportunities for professional development and promotion, and treat these issues with the urgency they demand. I understand that one of Administrator Power’s first acts at the Agency was to approve the new DEI Strategy, affirming her commitment to integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the Agency’s work with a workforce that reflects the diversity of our country. If confirmed, I commit to implementing this Strategy, including by ensuring that staff’s perspectives and experiences are reflected in USAID’s plans for recruiting, retaining, and investing in a workforce that reflects the rich diversity of our country.

Question. That same GAO report indicated significant understaffing in USAID’s Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, a deficiency that reduces USAID’s capacity to respond effectively to allegations of discrimination, identify potential barriers to equal employment opportunity, and submit required reports on diversity and inclusion efforts.

- Will you commit to ensuring that this Office is adequately staffed and empowered to responsibly execute its mission?

Answer. Answer: Yes, if confirmed, I will immediately review staffing and resource needs for USAID’s Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCD) and commit to enhancing its ability to deliver its mandate. I understand the Agency increased OCD’s operating budget from less than \$400,000 in FY2017 to \$2,723,000 in FY2021, exclusive of salaries and benefits, while doubling OCD’s staff allocation from 13 to 25 in FY2020. In addition, I understand that OCD’s Acting Director has a regular channel through which to engage with USAID’s senior management to discuss EEO Program matters, should OCD have additional needs or seek additional resources in the future. If confirmed, I will ensure that OCD has the resources and the access needed to address concerns about discrimination and to advance the Agency’s diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

Question. How will you approach restoring expertise and recruiting new talent?

Answer. Attracting and retaining purpose-driven development professionals with deep technical expertise and broad programmatic and management experience is key to the Agency delivering on its mission, and doing so nimbly and effectively in increasingly complicated settings. Rebuilding the Agency’s workforce must include examining what the practice of development will look like 10-15 years from now,

and identifying and recruiting talent to position the agency for the future. If confirmed, I commit to leading a thoughtful, forward-looking workforce planning effort.

Tapping into needed new talent demands that USAID expand its recruitment pipelines beyond traditional sources, to include U.S. community colleges, minority serving institutions, and professional organizations. I understand that USAID is currently engaging and recruiting diverse high-quality talent through targeted outreach and recruitment events and expanded partnerships with organizations serving underrepresented groups. If confirmed, I will focus on expanding the Agency's external recruitment pipelines so as to bolster its staffing overall, as well as prioritizing the retention and promotion of underrepresented groups as part of a broader effort to fill gaps in expertise by tapping into internal talent pools.

Question. USAID's greatest asset are the international development and humanitarian experts on staff.

- How will you establish a culture where the Agency's actions are based on the insights and talents of its experts?

Answer. USAID cannot accomplish any of its national security and development priorities without the top-notch development professionals who everyday tackle global development and humanitarian challenges with passion, integrity, and skill, so as to empower partners (communities, governments, local and international organizations) as they build a better world for all of us. I experienced this commitment and expertise firsthand in my time at the Agency and now in my current role at the Inter-American Foundation. Building a culture that draws on and leverages the expertise and experience of development and humanitarian professionals requires that leaders look to the experts and seek out their input into and leadership on policy, programming, and operational considerations.

Throughout my career, I have created and led diverse, purpose-driven teams; fostered open, inclusive, and transparent workplaces; and empowered staff by removing obstacles to growth and success, while relying on their expertise and championing their creativity and know-how. If confirmed, I will continue that approach and work to empower USAID staff by always seeking their input, promoting their leadership, and unlocking the support and resources they need to thrive.

Question. Workforce planning is essential to ensuring USAID has expertise and capacities to successfully execute the Agency's wide range of activities and achieve results that often require years of work and engagement.

- Will you commit to advising each Bureau in developing a workforce plan for its programs and missions?

Answer. Yes. I agree that comprehensive workforce planning is essential to ensuring that USAID has the expertise and capacities required to address the increasing global needs and manage increasingly complex programs in more than 100 countries. If confirmed, I commit to working with USAID's office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Bureaus, and Missions, to conduct comprehensive strategic workforce planning that positions the Agency to meet the needs of the moment, as well as adapt to future challenges and opportunities. This effort must include analyzing the Agency's current workforce, identifying skills gaps, anticipating future staffing and expertise needs, and developing and implementing an Action Plan to secure and support the range of expertise (policy, technical, operational, and management) needed to ensure the Agency's continued success. I look forward to working with you to support that strategy, if confirmed.

Question. What do you think USAID can do to improve FSNs' standing within USAID and ensure these hardworking professionals are afforded ample opportunities for professional growth, promotion, and recognition for their work?

Answer. Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs), which constitute nearly half of USAID's global workforce, are an integral part of achieving the Agency's mission. They are a critical link to cultivating and maintaining trust and strong relationships with local communities, which is the foundation for successful development and humanitarian assistance. I understand that USAID is currently working on various initiatives designed to enhance recognition for the value that FSNs bring to the Agency, and to enhance morale among this critical part of the workforce. Specifically, USAID is working to promote leadership opportunities for FSNs at all levels; increase virtual FSN fellowship programs; increase the number of senior-level FSN-13 positions; expand professional development and training opportunities; and expand the use of ladder positions within the FSN workforce to enhance career development. If confirmed, I commit to working with USAID leadership in Washington and its overseas Missions to further advance initiatives that will afford FSNs with

opportunities for inclusion, professional growth, promotion, and recognition for their contributions to the Agency.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO MS. PALOMA ADAMS-ALLEN BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

China and COVAX

Question. Global health is one of the largest parts of USAID's annual budget and, in 2021, the agency received significant additional resources to support U.S. international COVID-19 relief efforts. Importantly, USAID also is responsible for managing U.S. engagement with COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the WHO-supported Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT). Unfortunately, while the United States has made \$4 billion (as well as 580 million vaccine doses) available to COVAX, China has contributed nothing. Worse yet, China now stands to profit from a pandemic that it unleashed upon the world through the sale of its state-owned vaccines to COVAX.

- If confirmed, how will you ensure U.S. contributions to COVAX will not be used to underwrite or subsidize the purchase and distribution of China's state-owned, substandard COVID-19 vaccines?
- If confirmed, will you prioritize resources for bilateral, in-kind contributions of U.S. vaccines over financial contributions to COVAX? If not, why not?

Answer. I understand that funds from the generous \$4 billion U.S. contribution to Gavi in support of COVAX were not used to purchase vaccines made by Chinese companies. These funds were allocated by Gavi prior to the facility's decision to purchase Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines. I also understand that there are no further contributions of U.S. funds to COVAX planned at this time. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the U.S. continues to signal concern about procurement of lower-efficacy vaccines, and urges China to pick up its fair share of the global burden on vaccine access rather than simply profiting off of other donors' generosity.

I understand that the decision on when to use bilateral, in-kind contributions of U.S. vaccines over financial contributions to COVAX was based on multiple factors including global and domestic vaccine supply variables. If confirmed, I will work with my interagency colleagues to review the current facts, supply projections and needs in order to continue to advance global COVID vaccine availability as fast and safely as possible.

U.S. International Food Aid and Cargo Preference

Question. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has released a memo which, among other things, directs the new OMB Made in America Office to "review how best to ensure agency compliance with cargo preference requirements to maximize the utilization of U.S.-flag vessels, in excess of any applicable statutory minimum, to the greatest extent practicable." This is likely to increase pressure upon USAID to exceed existing cargo preference requirements for food aid under the Food for Peace Act, notwithstanding the fact that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) repeatedly has found that such requirements significantly increase the cost of food aid while failing to advance the statutory purpose of the Cargo Preference Act of 1954.

- Do you agree that U.S. cargo preference requirements for food aid have outlived their statutory purpose?
- If confirmed, will you work with OMB to mitigate the deleterious impact of U.S. cargo preference requirements on life-saving food aid?
- In your estimation, how would an increase of cargo preference requirements impact USAID's budget and ability to meet historic levels of need for food aid?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with Congress and the interagency, including OMB, to make USAID's food assistance programming as effective and efficient as possible. Each food assistance modality (U.S. in-kind food, locally and regionally procured food, and cash-based programming) is critical to USAID's ability to appropriately respond to unprecedented global humanitarian needs. An increase in cargo preference requirements would directly result in increased transportation costs for food assistance programs, which would reduce the amount of resources USAID can dedicate to purchasing agricultural commodities to respond to historic levels of global hunger.

Material Support

Question. The United States has strict laws prohibiting the provision of material support to designated foreign terrorist groups.

- If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that USAID and its implementing partners strictly adhere to all relevant material support laws, regulations, policy directives, and vetting requirements?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with USAID staff and partners to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. I understand that USAID has numerous vetting tools and monitoring safeguards, financial accountability mechanisms, as well as an independent Office of Inspector General, whose work I am committed to supporting if I am confirmed.

Question. If confirmed, what measures will you seek to put in place to ensure not only that all contracts and agreements contain the required material support clauses, but also that adherence is closely monitored and transparently reported to Congress by USAID?

Answer. I am committed to ensuring that USAID funding does not fall into the wrong hands, whether it be terrorism, fraud, or waste. I understand that USAID has numerous vetting tools and monitoring safeguards, financial accountability mechanisms, as well as an independent Office of Inspector General, whose work I am committed to supporting if I am confirmed.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working with the Department of Justice, the Department of Treasury, and the Department of State to eliminate ambiguity and ensure that USAID's implementing partners, including USAID's humanitarian assistance partners, have clear guidance on what constitutes material support, how to identify intentional and incidental breaches, and how to respond?

Answer. Understanding that USAID does not administer U.S. sanctions programs, if confirmed, I do commit to working with the Department of Justice, the Department of Treasury, and the Department of State to ensure that all implementing partners, including those who support humanitarian programs in some of the most challenging operating environments in the world, have clear guidance about applicable sanctions.

USAID Staffing

Question. Whether Foreign Service, Civil Service, Foreign Service Limited, Foreign Service National, or other, USAID's most valuable asset is its people. Unfortunately, with at least 22 different hiring mechanisms and outdated assumptions about how specific missions, bureaus, and offices should be supported, the agency is in desperate need of a modernized strategic staffing plan that is flexible and adaptive to today's challenges. The budget request includes an increase for USAID's operating expenses and proposes to increase the number of Foreign Service Limited positions, including for global health and humanitarian assistance.

- If confirmed, how will you approach modernizing USAID's arcane staffing mechanisms?
- Should an increase in resources for additional direct-hire positions be paired with a decrease in the number of contractors USAID retains using program funds? If not, why not?
- If the requested increase for direct-hire positions is approved, how will positions be prioritized? Should the recruitment, hiring, and deployment of competent, field-based contracting and agreement officers (COs and AOs) be a priority?

Answer. I understand that USAID is committed to strengthening its global workforce to advance the Agency's mission and U.S. national security priorities. In my experience, USAID has complex requirements and needs to increase both the size and agility of the career workforce while also improving non-career employment mechanisms.

As the administrator stated in her recent testimony before the committee, USAID's staffing has not increased at the same rate as the programmatic needs and requirements. With regard to USAID's Contracting and Agreement Offices, she noted in her testimony that each USAID acquisition and assistance officer has managed over \$65 million annually over the past four years: more than four times the workload of their colleagues at the Department of Defense who manage an average of approximately \$15 million. I will work to rationalize non-career hiring mechanisms and strategically grow the Civil Service and Foreign Service, while building the overall cohesiveness of the Agency's workforce. If confirmed, I look forward to updating you on the Agency's progress in this area.

USAID Budget Allocations

Question. Section 653(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2413) requires that “not later than thirty days after the enactment of any law appropriating funds to carry out any provision of this Act (other than section 451 or 637) or the Arms Export Control Act, the President shall notify the Congress of each foreign country and international organization to which the United States Government intends to provide any portion of the funds under such law and of the amount of funds under that law, by category of assistance, that the United States Government intends to provide to each.” Unfortunately, delays in the appropriations process, the imposition of overlapping spending directives, and other factors relating to the relationship between OMB, the Department of State, USAID, and the Congress have contributed to excessive delays in submission of the mandated 653(a) Report. Moreover, it has become common practice for the relevant agencies to consult only with the committees of Appropriations—rather than with the authorizing committees responsible for oversight of the Foreign Assistance Act—in finalizing such report.

- In your view, what are the chief constraints to delivering the 653(a) report in a timely fashion? How can the process be fixed?
- If confirmed, will you commit to working with the Committees on Foreign Relations in the Senate and Foreign Affairs in the House on the development and execution of the 653(a) report in an open and transparent manner?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed, I commit to working in an open and transparent manner with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the 653(a) report. As you note, while Section 653(a) of the FAA requires that the report be submitted within 30 days of enactment, I understand that has not been possible in years past. If confirmed, I commit to working within the Agency and with interagency stakeholders to improve the timelines for the submission of the 653(a) report.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO MS. PALOMA ADAMS-ALLEN BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

USAID Transformation

Question. The Trump administration had submitted proposals to Congress under its Transformation initiative to make changes to the Bureau for Management and create a Bureau for Policy, Resources, and Planning (PRP). PRP would have combined the functions of the Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning and the Office of Budget and Resource Management (among others). Congress did not approve such changes and the Biden administration withdrew the proposed changes in May, 2021. Prior to the withdrawal, some international stakeholders had recommended that the Biden administration complete the proposed changes, in particular realizing the PRP Bureau.

- How do you respond to those who advocated for the completion of USAID’s organizational restructuring?
- In your view, do additional structural changes need to be made to USAID’s central bureaus and/or independent offices? If so, what challenges would those changes seek to address?

Answer. I understand that USAID successfully completed the majority of its restructuring efforts, co-locating vital capabilities related to humanitarian assistance; food security and water; and the Agency’s technical assistance to the field. I also understand that USAID’s staff were heavily involved in the prior organizational restructuring and so any further changes need to be thoughtfully considered. If confirmed, I will engage with the administrator, my co-deputy, and the Agency’s internal and external stakeholders, to assess the need for any further change to USAID’s organizational structure.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. KAREN DONFRIED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Will you commit to providing vital humanitarian assistance to the people Nagorno-Karabakh including supporting the clearance of unexploded ordnance?

Answer. From the onset of last years fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, the United States has worked to meet urgent humanitarian assistance needs for vulnerable populations fleeing the violence and the communities that host them. If confirmed, I will support the provision of humanitarian assistance to areas affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. I understand the Department continues to work with other relevant agencies to evaluate the needs of the region and explore opportunities to fund possible programs to clear post-conflict unexploded ordnance in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.

Question. I do not support the administrations decision to waive sanctions on Nord Stream 2. I think it was a mistake that will only bolster Russias position in Europe. The measures announced last week when the German Chancellor visited Washington fall well short of what is needed to support Ukraine right now.

- What specific further measures do you think the U.S. should take to bolster Ukrainian security and energy transit in the wake of the administration's decision to waive sanctions on Nord Stream 2?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue the administration's policy of supporting Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity against Russian aggression in any form. I commit to providing the assistance Ukraine requires to defend itself, including lethal weapons, based on a U.S. and Ukrainian assessment of Ukraines defense requirements. On energy security, I believe an extension to Ukraines gas transit agreement with Russia will help to preserve gas transit revenues for Ukraine and provide time for Ukraine to eliminate its dependence on Russian gas and transit fees, as it has long sought to do. Ukraine should also diversify its energy resources, with an emphasis on clean and sustainable energy.

Question. The Belarusian opposition leader is in Washington this week. The U.S. has yet to announce long overdue sectoral sanctions.

- If confirmed, do you commit to advocate for the imposition of these sanctions?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to advocate for additional measures, including sanctions, to apply continued pressure to the Lukashenka regime to release all political prisoners and start a facilitated dialogue, inclusive of the opposition and civil society, that will lead to free and fair elections.

Question. Will you also commit to ensure that the administration produces a new Executive Order on Belarus that would authorize new sanctions?

Answer. In the May 28 White House statement following the forced diversion of the RyanAir flight, the U.S. Government previewed the Treasury Departments development of a new draft executive order designed to increase pressure on the Lukashenka regime. If confirmed, I will support these efforts.

Question. How does the Biden administration's public commitment to counter corruption correspond with the U.S.-led effort to push for an amendment to Bosnias election law, which could significantly strengthen the position of ethnic party leaders?

Answer. The administration has made clear that by countering corruption and demonstrating the advantages of transparent and accountable governance, we can secure a critical advantage for the United States and other democracies. Efforts to strengthen democratic processes and reduce corruption in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are mutually reinforcing. If confirmed, I will work with others in the administration to encourage reforms that address corruption and implement relevant decisions of BiHs Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights. I will also support efforts to ensure that BiHs electoral system meets international recommendations for electoral integrity, including those made by the OSCEs Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the Council of Europe.

Question. Does this not undercut U.S. efforts to counter patronage and machine politics in the country?

Answer. Limited constitutional and election law reforms are necessary to further BiH on its Euro-Atlantic path, a primary goal of U.S. foreign policy for the Western Balkans. The United States welcomes efforts among BiHs political and civic leaders to reach solutions that will increase the integrity, transparency, fairness, and legitimacy of BiHs democratic processes. If confirmed, I will work to bring all actors to the table to forge compromise and local ownership of an improved electoral system that represents and protects the rights of all citizens of BiH.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO DR. KAREN DONFRIED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. Which country or countries do you believe are the most important to U.S. interests in Europe?

Answer. NATO is indispensable for the advancement of U.S. interests in Europe and to our security. NATO, founded 72 years ago and comprising 30 Allies, is a pillar of stability for the world and the essential forum for Transatlantic security and political issues. The United States is firmly committed to advancing NATO's founding values, enshrined in the Washington Treaty, of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. The United States' commitment to Article 5 is ironclad. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with all of our NATO Allies and the Alliance's partners to safeguard our shared interests in our challenging security environment. The European Union is also a fundamental partner for the United States, as many issues on which we coordinate, including economic security issues, climate policy, and sanctions, among others, are EU competencies.

Question. Do you believe that the U.S. should err on the side of undertaking diplomacy with the European Union, or should it focus its diplomatic efforts bilaterally?

Answer. The United States and the European Union are natural partners to write the rules of the road for the 21st century economy, rules based on our shared democratic values and harnessing the power of the largest economic relationship in the world. At the June 15 U.S.-EU Summit, the leaders of the European Union and the United States renewed our transatlantic partnership and committed to resolving long-standing disputes in order to work together on common challenges. If confirmed, I will endeavor to support that renewed partnership. The U.S.-EU partnership does not supplant the need for bilateral diplomatic efforts with member states and other likeminded countries. If confirmed, I will pursue diplomacy with the EU and bilaterally to further U.S. policy objectives.

Question. How do you believe relationship between the United States and the European Union (EU) has changed since the United Kingdom removed itself from that bloc? What challenges has the United Kingdom's departure from the EU presented for American diplomacy?

Answer. The Biden administration has already worked in concert with both the EU and the UK on sanctions actions targeting Russian officials linked to the poisoning of Alexey Navalny and Chinese officials due to human rights abuses in Xinjiang. The administration supports a strong UK and a strong EU and welcomed the entry into force of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the Northern Ireland Protocol. The United States has been unequivocal in its support for the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, which is an historic achievement that must be protected. If confirmed, I look forward to working with both partners to address the range of global challenges as the UK and the EU continue to adjust to their new post-Brexit relationship. I support the renewed commitment to the U.S.-EU partnership made by leaders at the June 15 U.S.-EU Summit. The UK's post-Brexit foreign policy presents opportunities for even closer cooperation on shared priorities. If confirmed, I look forward to collaborating with the UK as it works with a broad range of partners to carry out its Global Britain agenda, including global economic, health, and climate priorities.

Question. In your opinion, what do you believe the United States will gain from the deal that was recently struck between the United States and Germany that will allow the NordStream 2 pipeline to go forward?

Answer. The package announced on July 21 puts in place measures in order to prevent the worst-case scenario—an operational Nord Stream 2 pipeline without any risk-reduction measures for Ukraine or other countries that stand to be impacted by the pipeline. The measures represent a significant commitment by Germany, supported by the United States, to push back against the Kremlin's malign activities and to advance a more secure and sustainable energy future for Ukraine and other frontline NATO and EU countries. It also makes clear that the United States will not allow the Kremlin to weaponize energy resources against our allies and partners and commits Germany to take national measures and pursue measures at the European Union-level to impose costs on Russia should it attempt to use Nord Stream 2 or any other pipeline to achieve aggressive political ends.

Question. Which nations do you believe the United States should work most closely with to counter China's growing malign influence and actions around the world? Which countries do you see as most aligned with U.S. goals and values vis-à-vis China?

Answer. The United States must engage the People's Republic of China (PRC) from a position of strength, which includes acting in close cooperation with our Allies and partners across Europe and Eurasia. There has been a convergence of views among the world's democracies on PRC activities as evidenced by the outcomes of last month's G7, NATO, and U.S.-EU summits. If confirmed, I would work with U.S. Allies and partners to respond to the PRC's non-market practices, speak out against Beijing's human rights abuses and forced labor practices, and address the systemic challenges from the PRC to the rules-based international order.

Question. What are your views on the recently agreed-upon EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment? Should the United States be engaging with the European Parliament to stop its ratification?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to early consultations with our EU and European partners on shared concerns about the People's Republic of China (PRC), including through the recently relaunched U.S.-EU dialogue on China and the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council. The European Parliament has conditioned any further action on the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) on the lifting of the PRC's retaliatory sanctions. Ultimately, the onus will be on the PRC to uphold its commitments on forced labor, state-owned enterprises, and subsidies.

Question. Many European countries have pledged to keep unsafe telecommunications companies out of their networks. What do you view as the next priority areas for cooperation between the United States and the EU?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our engagement with European allies and partners on secure development and deployment of 5G networks, including through the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council. The United States advocates for measures that exclude untrusted vendors, in line with the Prague Proposals and the EU 5G Toolbox. If confirmed, I will continue working with allies and partners to support a diverse supply chain of trustworthy telecommunications equipment and services. This includes support for open, interoperable approaches like Open RAN (radio access network) technologies that promise to increase vendor diversity and market competition and have the potential to lower costs and improve security.

Question. To what extent do you believe that there is an emerging Russia-China axis? Some suggest that the United States should try to drive wedges between the two nations to destroy any emerging axis. Do you agree with that analysis?

Answer. It is not surprising that Beijing and Moscow would seek to deepen their ties, but we should not overestimate this alignment. Russia and the PRC collaborate when it is mutually beneficial, but a deep-seated lack of trust realistically limits their so-called "strategic comprehensive partnership." Areas of friction between the two suggest they may each have reasons to hedge against over reliance and potentially slow their convergence for their own reasons. If confirmed, I would work closely with European partners and Allies to push back effectively against Russian and PRC actions that run contrary to our values and the international standards of rule-based behavior.

Question. It is likely that Russia has placed nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad, and there is great concern that they may do the same in occupied Crimea. How should the United States respond, if at all, should Russia place nuclear weapons in Crimea? Would that action, in your view, dramatically change the way that the United States looks at Black Sea security?

Answer. The administration will continue to oppose Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea, which is sovereign Ukrainian territory. If Russia were to deploy nuclear weapons in Crimea, it would represent a significant escalation of tensions not just with Ukraine, but in the Black Sea region, and in Europe. If confirmed, I will continue to work bilaterally and through NATO with Ukraine and other partners and Allies in the Black Sea region and across the entire Eastern Flank to improve their ability to deter and defend against the full spectrum of Russian military threats.

Question. Russia has increased its provocations in the Black Sea and is increasingly turning the region into a Russian lake. Do you believe that the U.S. and NATO responses to Russia's actions and growing militarization of Crimea have been adequate? If yes, why? If no, what more would you like to see done to push back on Russia in the Black Sea?

Answer. Russian provocations in the Black Sea and other parts of Europe, including its military build-up and exercises, require robust NATO deterrence and strong support for NATO partners. The United States continues to work bilaterally and

through NATO with our Allies, as well as Ukraine, Georgia, and other NATO partners, to improve their ability to deter and defend against threats to their security. Since Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine, NATO has implemented the most significant reinforcement of its eastern flank in the post-Cold War era. In the Black Sea region, these crucial deterrence activities include tailored Forward Presence, a series of land, air, and maritime measures that have increased NATO's presence and exercises and improved situational awareness and readiness in Romania and Bulgaria. All of this is a necessary and proportionate response to Russia's aggressive behavior. If confirmed, I will work with our NATO Allies and partners to modernize their militaries and enhance their capabilities in order to enhance deterrence and defense in the Black Sea region.

Question. Does Turkey's behavior with regard to increasing ties with Russia change how we and our allies think about future NATO expansion and the evolution of the NATO Strategic Concept?

Answer. Turkish-Russian relations are transactional and fraught with strategic rivalries. If confirmed I will urge Turkey not to retain the Russian S-400 system it took delivery of in 2019 and remind Ankara that any new major Russian purchase risks additional CAATSA sanctions. Turkey is a critical ally, it has NATO's second-largest military, and it is a key contributor to Allied missions. Ankara's support for Ukraine's and Georgia's sovereignty, and Turkey's efforts to counter Russia in Syria, the Caucasus, and Libya create significant pressure on Turkey-Russia relations. If confirmed I will work to advance the U.S. and Turkey's many shared interests while also being frank with Turkish counterparts on areas of disagreement.

Question. Since undersea gas fields were discovered in the Eastern Mediterranean some years ago, littoral nations have been developing strategies to harvest and export it. Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum have emerged as competitors over the future economic development of the zone.

- How should the U.S. engage with parties to ensure that economic development is executed in a safe, stable, and fair way?

Answer. The United States supports regional cooperation to bring durable energy security to the region, create new markets, and provide economic prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Biden administration is committed to ensuring stability in the Eastern Mediterranean. If confirmed, I commit to encouraging peaceful and diplomatic resolutions to disagreements in the region.

Question. What are the challenges and threats we face surrounding the issue?

Answer. Recent offshore gas discoveries in Israel, Egypt, and the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) have redefined regional relationships, which presents both challenges and opportunities. These new energy sources, if managed well, can continue to improve economic and political cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean while reducing reliance on Russian and Iranian supplies. This gas would also serve as a useful transition fuel as the region continues to reduce emissions and moves to greater reliance on renewable resources. New routes and types of fuel for European and Middle Eastern partners help to end dependence on Russian gas. Turkey added more LNG to its energy mix in 2020, some of it from the United States, in part to reduce its reliance on Russian and Iranian pipeline gas.

Question. What are the security implications in the region?

Answer. Long unresolved maritime boundary disputes have led to naval confrontations between littoral states. The United States supports all efforts to reduce tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. Resource development in the Eastern Mediterranean should promote cooperation and provide a foundation for durable energy security and economic prosperity throughout the region. The "3+1" format including Greece, Israel, the ROC, plus the United States, and the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF), which Egypt hosts and in which the United States is an observer, are venues to promote greater cooperation, energy security, and economic prosperity. The United States supports the EMGF as a technical platform.

Question. President Biden and his administration have repeatedly made commitments to upholding universal rights at home and abroad. In Turkey, authorities are abusing people's human rights and attacking peaceful dissidents at an alarming rate.

- How will you work to address human rights violations in Turkey?

Answer. President Biden's administration has elevated democracy, human rights, and rule of law in our bilateral agenda with Turkey. If confirmed, I will continue to publicly and privately urge Turkey to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, fair

trials, and association, which are important to any healthy democracy. If confirmed, I will reinforce at the highest levels of the Turkish Government that addressing democratic backsliding could positively impact our bilateral relationship. I will also ensure a continued strong focus in our own assistance on media freedom and freedom of expression and will work with the EU and international partners to defend fundamental freedoms.

Question. How is Turkey's declining human rights record impacting its relationship with the United States?

Answer. I share your concerns about the steps the Turkish Government's has taken which have weakened the freedoms of expression, association, fair trial, and peaceful assembly. Such moves erode the foundations of democratic society, stifle growth, and undermine the rights of Turkish citizens as guaranteed by their constitution. Turkey is a key Ally and critical regional partner. It is in our shared interest to keep Turkey anchored to the Transatlantic community. That means effectively pressing and supporting Turkey to do more to bolster rule of law, protect human rights, support fundamental freedoms, uphold the rules-based international order, and stand united with the Transatlantic community in addressing global challenges from Iran, Russia, and the PRC.

Question. Do you believe that the United States should try to drive a wedge between Russia and Turkey? If so, how should we undertake that task?

Answer. Russia attempts to harmfully influence domestic processes and drive wedges between the United States and its Allies, including Turkey, using manipulative energy tactics, corrupt business deals, and disinformation. Turkish-Russian relations are dynamic, transactional, and frequently divided by strategic rivalries. For example, Russia and Turkey are often on the opposite side of regional conflicts (e.g., Syria and Libya). At the same time, Turkey is heavily dependent upon Russian energy supplies. Russian tourists, construction sector projects, and agricultural purchases are important for the struggling Turkish economy. If confirmed, I will work with Turkey to prevent Russian influence from weakening a key NATO Ally or harming our bilateral relationship with Ankara.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with the EU and its member states to ensure that North Macedonia and Albania are given a true and fair chance at admission to the EU?

Answer. The United States recognizes that a prolonged delay in starting accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania will have significant political consequences in both countries and could severely set back recent reform progress in North Macedonia and the entire Western Balkans. Both countries have enacted difficult and essential reforms to meet conditions for opening negotiations and deserve to advance on their accession paths. If confirmed, I will work closely with the EU and its member states as part of our shared political and financial commitment to the Western Balkan region.

Question. France and Bulgaria, for two different reasons, have stymied efforts to open accession negotiations with Macedonia and Albania. If confirmed, will you engage with France and Bulgaria on this topic? If so, how?

Answer. Although the EU approved opening accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania in March 2020, Bulgaria has blocked the official start of negotiations since November due to its ongoing dispute with North Macedonia. On June 10 in Paris, French President Macron reaffirmed support for North Macedonia's EU accession without delay. On May 21, the Portuguese EU Council Presidency presented to both countries' leaderships a promising, creative resolution proposal, to which the current Slovenian EU Presidency committed its continued support. If confirmed, I will work with all countries involved to see the EU hold the first Intergovernmental Conferences with North Macedonia and Albania as soon as possible.

Question. How do you believe the United States should interact with the EU as we work together to find a solution to the issues between Kosovo and Serbia? Should the United States be in the lead on these efforts? The EU?

Answer. From its inception, the United States has strongly supported the EU-facilitated Dialogue to normalize Kosovo-Serbia relations. If confirmed, I will closely coordinate with our EU partners and engage both Kosovo and Serbia to advance the process. A comprehensive normalization agreement remains the only way for Kosovo and Serbia to unlock their EU futures. The United States believes normalization should be centered on mutual recognition, as the best way for these two neighbors to put this dispute behind them. Both parties have re-engaged in the EU-facilitated

talks—the most recent high-level session took place on July 19 in Brussels—and both countries have reiterated their commitments to normalizing their relations.

Question. Russia and China have voiced their shared belief that the Office of the High Representative to Bosnia should be shut down in 2022, saying that Bosnia has achieved the progress necessary to have such oversight removed. Do you agree that the Office of the High Representative has outlived its usefulness? If yes, why? If no, what do you believe should be the path forward for Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Answer. The United States remains steadfast in our support of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The OHR plays a critical role in pressing for BiH's progress towards reconciliation, consolidation of democratic institutions, and further Euro-Atlantic integration. The conditions for closing the OHR were clearly laid out in 2008 in the 5+2 Agenda with the support of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, including Russia. These conditions have not yet been achieved, and urgent reforms are still necessary. Focus on the fulfillment of the 5+2, plus anti-corruption initiatives, will advance BiH on its Euro-Atlantic path. If confirmed, I will collaborate with incoming High Representative Christian Schmidt on these priorities.

Question. Earlier this year, Senator Menendez and I passed the Ukraine Security Partnership Act out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It aims to support Ukraine in its fight against Russian-backed separatists in the east and push the country to continue necessary reforms of its military and defense sectors. In the bill, we propose placing conditions on Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) funding.

- What is your view on Ukraine's historical response to conditionality?

Answer. It is my belief that certain types of conditions on assistance, such as those imposed by the IMF or Department of Defense, can be powerful drivers for reform. The Department of Defense, in consultation with the Department of State, has annually certified that Ukraine has met the certification requirements described in Section 1237 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (c)(2). If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the Department of Defense and my colleagues in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs to ensure the conditions placed on future assistance further advance Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration and military transformation efforts.

Question. Do you believe that increasing conditionality on a portion of military support for the country would provide incentive for further reforms?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to advance our objectives of ensuring Ukraine has the military capabilities it needs to defend itself against ongoing Russian aggression, is systematically advancing security sector reform priorities, and is taking full advantage of U.S. assistance programs like IMET. I am committed to working with my colleagues in the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs to support a policy approach that most effectively achieves these objectives.

Question. What do you believe are the areas that are most ripe for reform in Ukraine?

Answer. Ukraine has made tremendous strides in its thirty years of independence, and particularly since the 2014 Revolution of Dignity. These gains have been made often with significant U.S. support. There remains a real need to continue to make progress, and, if confirmed, I will push for further progress on economic and rule of law reforms that address corruption and strengthen the independence, transparency, and integrity of Ukraine's democratic institutions. I will also work with Ukraine to help hold accountable corrupt actors who stand in the way of reforms or try to undermine Ukraine's efforts to ensure a bright, prosperous, and secure future for all Ukrainians.

Question. China is increasingly making inroads in Ukraine, wooing it with appealing business deals and the promise of vaccines. What steps should the United States and its allies take to keep Ukraine firmly rooted in the West and to keep Ukraine's valuable technological know-how from falling into the wrong hands?

Answer. The United States is committed to ensuring that American companies can operate on an even playing field in Ukraine, providing a meaningful alternative to China's predatory approach as well as promoting entrepreneurship and fair practices. If confirmed, I will focus on supporting Ukraine's economic and corporate governance reforms, countering the PRC's predatory business practices, and leveraging U.S. assistance to ensure outcomes in line with U.S. and Ukrainian national security interests.

Question. Ukraine continues to fight two wars: one with the Kremlin and its various attempts to undermine Ukraine's freedom and independence; and a second with its own demons, particularly the entrenched corruption that has so often undermined Ukraine's democratic transition and Euro-Atlantic ambitions.

- Should the United States continue to condition certain types of assistance on continued economic and anti-corruption reforms? Should existing conditions for aid be expanded?

Answer. It is my belief that certain types of conditionality, such as those imposed by the IMF for financial assistance to Ukraine, can be powerful drivers for economic and anti-corruption reform. At this time, I consider the conditions for continued IMF disbursement, if met by Ukraine, an important motivator of crucial judicial and corporate governance reform and protecting central bank independence. If confirmed, I will continue to encourage Ukraine to address the concerns of the IMF and the U.S. over backsliding on legislative action and empowerment of anticorruption institutions.

Question. What further incentives does the United States, along with our European partners, have to encourage Ukraine to complete its land reform, decentralization, privatization of State-owned-enterprises, and creation of an independent and responsive judiciary?

Answer. If confirmed I will continue to work in coordination with our European partners, and directly with Ukraine, to support its chosen Euro-Atlantic path, including by providing assistance and pushing for progress on economic and rule of law reforms that strengthen the independence and transparency of Ukraine's democratic institutions. I welcome the judicial reform laws recently passed by Ukraine's parliament with the strong backing of the President of Ukraine and have been encouraged by Ukraine's willingness to challenge the influence of corrupt oligarchs. For Ukraine to be a strong, secure, and democratic state, it must tackle endemic corruption and ensure the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all Ukrainians.

Question. Since its independence, Georgia has made generally good progress in instilling democracy and implementing market-based economic reforms and has been a strong U.S. partner with ambitions to join the EU and NATO. However, over the past few years, the country has suffered democratic backsliding and oligarchic capture of the judiciary, media, and the ruling political party.

- What levers can be used to push Georgians, including and especially the ruling party Georgian Dream, to reform Georgia's judiciary and complete electoral reforms? Should we consider sanctions?

Answer. Much work remains to reverse backsliding and strengthen democratic institutions and norms in Georgia. Deeper electoral and judicial reforms, and the effective implementation of reforms, are needed to level the playing field and introduce transparency, independence, impartiality, and accountability. If confirmed, my team and I will support Georgia in these efforts, employing diplomatic engagement, exchanges, and assistance programs. We will also seek to take lessons learned from across the region to advance important reforms, which will strengthen Georgia's resilience to Russia's aggression and ongoing occupation of 20 percent of Georgia's territory. We will evaluate all available tools and forms of leverage to push Georgia's governing party to complete these reforms inclusively and transparently.

Question. Has the political and governance situation in Georgia reached the point at which we should re-evaluate our relationship with the country, including by conditioning certain aid to Georgia?

Answer. I share your concern about the current political tensions and lack of progress on urgently needed reforms. It is in the U.S. interest, however, to continue to support Georgia in becoming more democratic, more capable of countering Russian and other malign influence, more able to defend the rights of its citizens throughout its internationally recognized territory (included that occupied by Russia), and more economically prosperous. U.S. foreign assistance programs are an integral part of furthering U.S. strategic interests in Georgia and any proposed conditionality should be approached with this in mind. If confirmed, my team and I will evaluate all available tools and forms of leverage, and I would welcome the opportunity to work closely with you to advance U.S. interests in Georgia.

Question. The U.S. Embassy in Russia has been working under duress for a number of years and is now facing extreme pressure due to restrictions on the hiring of locally employed staff. The Russian Embassy in Washington and the Russian Government in Moscow have not proved terribly willing to work with the United

States to make sure that our embassy is fully staffed and able to continue operations.

- What can be done to negotiate a solution with Russia and restore our full embassy operations?

Answer. I am disappointed by the decision of the Russian Government to impose restrictions on the U.S. mission to Russia. It is at times like these that we need more open channels of communication between our governments, including through our respective embassies. Locally employed staff are key members of our workforce around the world. Their contributions are important to our operations and to our bilateral missions. If confirmed, I am committed to working to put our Mission on better footing to advance on our vital national security priorities.

Question. What can be done to support our embassy until we reach a solution, or if we cannot?

Answer. I look forward to working across the Department to identify how we can best leverage resources—both financial and personnel—to support Embassy Moscow. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring our embassy colleagues receive the support needed to continue executing core functions.

Question. What do you believe should be the role of sanctions in the creation and execution of U.S. foreign policy? With respect to Russia, how do you believe the sanctions imposed on that country since 2014 have affected the Russia's economic and foreign policy decision-making?

Answer. Sanctions are a critical tool in both the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy, serving as a key deterrent to Russia as well as conveying U.S. intent. U.S. sanctions on Russia, especially those implemented in coordination with allies, send a clear message: that the international community will not stand by while Russia continues to violate international norms and laws. The sanctions imposed since 2014 have deterred and deprived Russia of the resources to carry out its aggressive and destabilizing activities around the globe. The legislative tools that Congress has created are key to the effective use of sanctions, and if confirmed, I will advocate to use them to promote accountability and impose costs for Russia's harmful activities.

Question. Given the wide range of Russian malign behavior, how can the United States (including Congress) and Europe do a better job of more clearly defining the conditions necessary for rolling back or removing sanctions with respect to Russia?

Answer. Sanctions are designed to cause a change in behavior, and the most useful sanctions are those with clearly defined intent. The administration sent a clear message to Russia that its activities against the United States would no longer be tolerated via the sanctions imposed in its April 15 action, "Imposing Costs for Harmful Foreign Activities by the Russian Government" including through the issuance of Executive Order (E.O.) 14024. This EO is an important complement to existing legislative sanctions tools, providing the flexibility to target Russian entities engaged in hostile or destabilizing activity around the globe. If confirmed, I will advocate to use all these tools to push back against harmful behavior by Russia.

Question. Do you believe that the imposition of more sanctions on Russia would accomplish U.S. policy goals? What are other measures besides economic sanctions that could be effective tools with respect to U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia?

Answer. U.S. sanctions on Russia, especially those implemented in coordination with allies, send a clear message: the international community will not stand by while Russia continues to violate international norms and laws. The sanctions imposed since 2014 have imposed a measure of deterrence and diminished the resources to carry out Russia's aggressive and destabilizing activities around the globe. The administration has been clear that it will use every tool available—including economic sanctions—to promote accountability and impose costs on Russia for its continued acts of aggression.

Question. As relations between the U.S. and Russia have worsened, the level of people-to-people contact has likewise diminished.

- If confirmed, what outreach do you intend to undertake with to everyday Russians, if any?

Answer. The Russian Government has intensified its crackdown on civil society and independent media and is specifically targeting programs promoting cultural and academic exchanges with Western countries, including shutting down Bard College's 25-year-old joint degree program with Russia's Smolny University. It is therefore even more critical now for us to engage with everyday Russians and to share

our values and insights from the American experience in democracy. The U.S. Embassy Russia has been able to adopt a wide range of new virtual tools, hybrid engagements, and exchange programming for this purpose. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing and finding new ways to expand outreach to the Russian people.

Question. Are there new, more creative mechanisms (perhaps through technology) that the United States can use to rebuild person-to-person relationships between Americans and Russians?

Answer. I support the continued use of new technology and other tools to facilitate person-to-person interaction between Americans and Russians, who continue to be interested in engagement with the West despite obstacles. In addition to the work the U.S. Embassy is already doing with virtual and hybrid engagements, the U.S. Agency for Global Media is exploring ways to enhance its ability to reach Russian audiences, including through the Open Technology Fund, even if the Kremlin forces Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty to leave its physical bureau in Russia. If confirmed, I am committed to strengthening civil society partners and people to people engagements to foster mutual understanding.

Question. The State Department just released the 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report, which identified a troubling trend of backsliding on trafficking prevention, prosecution, and protection efforts from a number of Western European nations, including Norway, Switzerland, Ireland, Portugal and more. It is clear that something must be done to address this serious, ongoing issue to curb this scourge.

- If confirmed, please outline what steps you would take in your various bilateral relationships to address this problem.

Answer. Trafficking in persons is an appalling crime. If confirmed, I will prioritize bilateral engagement across Europe and Eurasia to press governments, including Ireland, Norway, Portugal, and Switzerland, to address the concerns the Department has highlighted in this year's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, and to take concrete action to combat trafficking. If confirmed, I will call out shortcomings where they exist, and use the annual reports to assist each government to identify priority areas for improvement and encourage each to implement the TIP Report's recommended improvements.

Question. If confirmed, will you raise this issue with Foreign Ministries at the first opportunity?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will raise this issue with foreign ministries as combating human trafficking is a priority for the United States and will also be a priority of mine.

Question. Anti-Semitism is on the rise globally, but especially across Europe. If confirmed, what steps will you take alongside the Office of the Special Envoy To Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism to address this concerning and growing problem?

Answer. Anti-Semitism is abhorrent. If confirmed, I will prioritize combating anti-Semitism in the region alongside the Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism. If confirmed, I intend to work with Congress and implement the following priorities: securing Jewish communities; reporting, investigating, and prosecuting hate crimes; countering anti-Semitism both on- and off-line; promoting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Anti-Semitism; building and strengthening coalitions across different faith communities, civil society, and the private sector; and promoting Holocaust education, remembrance, and commemoration, and combating Holocaust distortion and denial.

Question. Across Europe, there are over 100 detained journalists who were imprisoned for simply doing their jobs. In 2021, the Council of Europe notes 6 journalists have been killed in Europe alone. These statistics are staggering and require immediate attention and action from the United States Government. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary, how will you address this problem and assure our partners and allies that we will not allow the abuse and imprisonment of journalists anywhere in the world?

Answer. Promoting and defending independent media is key to an informed citizenry and healthy democratic institutions and processes. If confirmed, I will seek to deepen our engagement with partners in Europe to address the challenges facing journalists in Europe and the media globally. This includes working through regional organizations including the Council of Europe. Additionally, I will support efforts to promote accountability for those who commit abuses against journalists through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy; public messaging; sanctions and visa

restrictions; and foreign assistance programs, including rapid response resources that support journalists, civil society activists, and human rights defenders under threat.

Question. The lack of meaningful progress regarding Cyprus on the political front and the subsequent peacekeeping mission, United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), is quite troubling.

Answer. The status quo is unacceptable. If confirmed, I will continue to support a Cypriot-led comprehensive settlement to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation to benefit all Cypriots and the wider region. The United States appreciates the U.N. Secretary-General's efforts to restart political discussions on Cyprus. If confirmed, I will encourage both sides to demonstrate the necessary openness, flexibility, and compromise to find common ground to restart formal talks. I believe UNFICYP continues to play an important role in preventing a resurgence of fighting between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, supervising ceasefire lines, maintaining a buffer zone, and supporting the Secretary-General's Good Offices.

Question. Do you believe reaching a political settlement is possible?

Answer. Yes. But ultimately, the responsibility for finding a solution lies first and foremost with the Cypriots themselves.

Question. Turkish President Erdogan's recent behavior regarding Varosha is unacceptable and a flagrant disregard of current international norms and two U.N. Resolutions. If confirmed, what actions would you take to address this issue and growing, illegal Turkish activity in northern Cyprus?

Answer. The announcement by Turkish Cypriot leader Tatar and Turkish President Erdogan on July 20 regarding the transfer of parts of Varosha to Turkish Cypriot control was clearly inconsistent with U.N. Security Council Resolutions 550 and 789, provocative, unacceptable, and incompatible with their past commitments to engage constructively in settlement talks. If confirmed, I will work to urge Turkish Cypriots and Turkey to reverse their decision announced on July 20 and all steps taken since October 2020, and work with the international community to give a strong response to this action. I will also underscore the need to avoid provocative unilateral actions that increase tensions on the island and hinder efforts to resume Cyprus settlement talks in line with U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Question. Do you see President Erdogan's calls for "a two-state solution" in Cyprus as feasible?

Answer. A Cypriot-led comprehensive settlement to reunify the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation is the only path to lasting peace and stability. This is the only framework with broad international community support and approved by the U.N. Security Council.

Question. Maintaining recent stability in Kosovo remains a priority, but some Security Council members (including the United States) have indicated a desire to downsize the mission. If confirmed, would you support a strategic review of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)?

Answer. Although the U.N. Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has operated in Kosovo since its independence in 2008, it has long since fulfilled its original purpose. U.N. engagement with Kosovo in a more appropriate form that acknowledges and strengthens Kosovo's sovereignty could provide an important support for continued development of democratic institutions. If confirmed, I would continue to urge that the U.N. Security Council consider better ways of helping Kosovo to realize its full potential, which a strategic review could identify. It should be noted that Russia, as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, unhelpfully insists on UNMIK remaining in its current incarnation. I would also caution that change to the NATO security presence should be conditions-based.

Question. Since the August 9th presidential election, Belarusians have peacefully protested in unprecedented numbers to contest the official results, which fraudulently awarded Alexander Lukashenka another term. The Government has responded to these peaceful protests with violence, initiating a campaign of disappearances, arrests, torture, and violence against the protestors and journalists. Since the protests began, the United States has increased its support of civil society in Belarus. What more can the United States-through USAID and along with our European allies-do to assist Belarusian advocates of democracy?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to work energetically with partners and Allies to keep pressure on the Lukashenka regime to end repression, release all polit-

ical prisoners and begin an inclusive dialogue with the opposition (including the Coordination Council led by Svyatlana Tsikhanouskaya) that leads to free and fair elections under international observation. Specifically, I plan to continue efforts to coordinate and strengthen economic sanctions, provide assistance and support for civil society- including those working to support human rights, free press, democracy, and Belarus' independence- and keep pressure on the regime through all bilateral and multilateral diplomatic channels.

Question. The International Monetary Fund is in the process of sending around \$1 billion to Belarus as part of its program to use Special Drawing Rights to help the world's poorer countries emerge from the coronavirus pandemic. In Belarus, this money will go right into Lukashenka's pocket and will help keep him in power.

- What can or should the United States do to make sure that these monies are not given to Mr. Lukashenka?

Answer. It is my understanding that the United States retains the right to refuse to purchase Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) from any country that we choose, including those under U.S. sanction regimes. We are working with Treasury to develop a strategy to engage our like-minded allies to do the same. However, these countries will not automatically be able to exchange their SDRs- which are reserve assets- for hard currencies. Belarus would need to find a willing country to provide them with hard currency in exchange for their SDRs. If confirmed, I will continue working with our partners at the Department of Treasury to increase transparency around SDR exchanges.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to working to keep these funds out of Lukashenka's hands?

Answer. Yes, I commit to using all tools at my disposal to prevent the Belarusian authorities from exchanging their SDRs for hard currency.

Question. How important is it that the United States and its European allies take steps to make our own systems less friendly to kleptocracy and less penetrable by dirty money?

Answer. The United States will continue to work with European partners to combat corruption by supporting efforts to recover and return stolen assets; deny safe haven to those who engage in corruption; combat money-laundering; stem foreign bribery; and empower and protect civil society and independent media. The United States supports the work at the OSCE and Council of Europe to help participating states implement more effective and transparent anticorruption policies and mechanisms and ensure countries are following through on their international anticorruption commitments. If confirmed, I will also support the work of countering corruption in our own system and continued use of sanctions related to the Global Magnitsky Act, Executive Order 14033 on the Western Balkans signed by President Biden on June 8, 2021, and others.

Question. Will the administration make a concerted push on anti-corruption in the EU and its periphery with the dual purpose of benefitting European citizens and making it more difficult for malign actors like Russia and China to gain a foothold?

Answer. The United States remains committed to combatting corruption not only in Europe, but across the globe. Fighting corruption benefits citizens while also making it more difficult for malign actors to exert their influence. If confirmed, I will continue to work with governments across Europe and Eurasia to strengthen anti-corruption efforts, and encourage these countries to work to fulfill their obligations under the U.N. Convention against Corruption, and to implement the recommendations of regional organizations, such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe, to combat corruption. I will also support the continued use of sanctions related to the Global Magnitsky Act, Executive Order 14033 on the Western Balkans signed by President Biden on June 8, 2021, and others to combat corruption in the region.

Question. The United States and France share several overlapping priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa and work together on many fronts, including fighting the terror threat in the Sahel. However, American and French interests in the region do not always align, including with regard to the ongoing conflict in Northwest and Southwest Cameroon.

- If confirmed, how will you engage our French partners to ensure that we employ a mutually-beneficial partnership across the Sahel and West and Central Africa that reflects the various points of leverage and capability the United States and France each bring to the table?

Answer. France has significant ties in the Sahel and West and Central Africa, and is a steadfast partner in the fight against terrorism. Our shared priorities include

security, governance, economic development, and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. If confirmed, I will continue our deep cooperation in Africa with France. I will engage the French on our priorities in West and Central Africa, encouraging them to use their strong political, economic, security, and cultural influence toward long-term stability in these regions. I will work within our interagency to support French efforts when mutually beneficial.

Question. How can the United States better coordinate with France to holistically address security threats and improve diplomatic engagements in the Sahel and West and Central Africa from a holistic perspective?

Answer. Both France and the United States share security, governance, economic development, and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic as priorities in the Sahel and West and Central Africa. These priorities cannot be achieved independent of one another. If confirmed, I will work strategically and tactically with the French to ensure that our efforts are mutually supportive and reinforcing. I will encourage the French to use their strong political, economic, security, and cultural influence to promote the political, security, and democratic reforms that are the best path to long-term stability in these regions, and work with our interagency to support French objectives when aligned with ours.

Question. How can the United States better coordinate and collaborate with the European Union, as well as individual European Governments such as the U.K., to enhance policy consistency and advance mutually-beneficial opportunities for trade, investment, development, and security cooperation with the African Union, regional bodies, African Governments, and private sector partners?

Answer. The EU and European Governments are crucial partners of the United States to advance prosperity and security in Africa. On June 12, President Biden and G7 leaders agreed to launch a global infrastructure initiative called Build Back Better World that will mobilize private sector capital in four areas of focus—climate, health and health security, digital technology and gender equity and equality. The scope of this initiative will include Africa, as well as Latin America, the Caribbean and the Indo-Pacific. The June 15 U.S.-EU Summit Joint Statement confirmed that the United States and the EU are committed to peace and sustainable development in Africa, and plan to provide support for a sustainable economic recovery from the pandemic. U.S.-EU cooperation resulted in the U.N. Human Rights Council's July 13 decision to adopt an EU-led and U.S.-cosponsored resolution on the Tigray region of Ethiopia, and to defeat hostile amendments. If confirmed, I will work collaboratively with our European partners to continue our cooperation.

Question. Russian malign activity in Africa is increasingly a growing concern, particularly given credible reports of elections interference across the continent and deployment of Russian mercenaries, including through the Wagner Group in Northern Mozambique and through nontransparent transfers of weapons and training via Russian security sector support to the Touadera administration in the Central African Republic (CAR). From your perspective, how can the Bureau of European Affairs and the Bureau of African Affairs coordinate to more effectively counter the malign activities and influence of Russia in Africa generally and, more specifically, of Yevgeny Prigozhin and affiliated mining and security companies (like the Wagner Group) in Africa?

Answer. Russian harmful activity in Africa is a matter of grave and growing concern. The use of proxies like Prigozhin's enterprise in the Central African Republic and elsewhere is a particular threat to stability, good governance, and human rights on the continent. I know the Bureaus of European and Eurasian and African Affairs are already working in close coordination on this issue, something I would seek to continue and build upon if confirmed. I would also prioritize collaboration with our European Allies and partners on this issue, as they too are invested in the future of the African continent, directly and via various U.N. programs. The UK and EU have already designated Prigozhin for sanctions, a clear signal that they also take this threat seriously.

Question. There are around 10,000 ISIS fighters housed at various detention facilities around the world. This includes at least 2,000 foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) that U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) characterizes as "hardcore foreign terrorist fighters." Many of these FTFs are housed at Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, like al Hol in northeastern Syria. The al-Hol IDP camp has become fertile ground for ISIS recruitment of vulnerable populations, posing a serious risk to global security. Despite this risk, countries with foreign terrorist fighters have failed to make any progress to date towards repatriating their nationals.

- Can you commit to using all tools at your disposal to press the Europe and Eurasia region to repatriate nationals from camps for ISIS fighters and affiliates in northeast Syria?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I intend to encourage countries to repatriate their nationals from northeast Syria, including foreign terrorist fighters and associated family members, and to prosecute them, as appropriate. As I understand it, the Department holds that repatriation—followed by appropriate prosecution in domestic courts of law—is the best way to keep these fighters off the battlefield and hold them accountable for their crimes. If confirmed, I will also support repatriation of associated family members as a means to rehabilitate and reintegrate individuals into their local communities, as appropriate.

Question. How do you plan to engage with EUR countries to advance repatriation efforts, which remains a critical to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to continue our consistent diplomatic outreach to European and Eurasian countries urging them to repatriate their nationals from northeast Syria. I will collaborate with the interagency in their work to support countries' efforts to repatriate their nationals with logistical and planning assistance for repatriations, including the use of U.S. Government assets to transport foreign fighters and associated family members out of the region.

Question. United Nations humanitarian assistance program in Syria relies on the border crossings from Turkey to deliver aid to millions of Syrians. Although Russia held off from vetoing the renewal of the last remaining border crossing, it will need to be renewed in December. In the event all border crossings between Turkey and Syria close, what alternatives do we have to get aid to the Syrian people? How could we pressure the Assad regime and Russia to provide aid in our stead?

Answer. The United States led a successful diplomatic campaign to overcome Russian opposition and renew the U.N. Security Council's mandate authorizing cross-border humanitarian assistance from Turkey into Syria. I continue to believe that cross-line assistance alone cannot meet existing humanitarian needs, which is why extending the cross-border mandate at Bab al-Hawa for another year was so important. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs to move forward on a political solution in line with U.N. Security Council Resolution 2254 and continued engagement between the United States, Russia, Turkey, and other key players in Syria.

Question. In your assessment, what are the top five most pressing challenges the People's Republic of China (PRC) poses to both the United States and Europe?

Answer. The most pressing challenge posed by the PRC is its attempt to undermine the rules-based international order, including the multi-lateral U.N. system. If confirmed, I will stand up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet. I will work to support Taiwan, a leading democracy and essential partner, in keeping with U.S. commitments. I will make it a priority to support efforts to ensure supply chains for critical supplies are secure and free of forced labor. I will work with Allies and partners to defend access to the global commons, including freedom of navigation under international law. And finally, if confirmed, I will work with Congress and Allies to confront Beijing's coercive economic practices, unfair and illegal trade practices, and cyber theft.

Question. What are the areas that the United States and EU have the most opportunity to work together on mutual challenges posed by the PRC, and which areas still require regulatory reform (either U.S. or EU) to better facilitate cooperation?

Answer. The United States and EU intend to closely consult and cooperate on the challenges posed by China, including through the U.S.-EU dialogue on China and the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council. It is important that the United States and EU work together to confront Beijing on the ongoing genocide in Xinjiang and human rights abuses in Tibet and Hong Kong, protect freedom of navigation in the East and South China Seas, and ensure peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. If confirmed, I will work with the EU to promote an open, free, secure, and reliable digital space and, along with likeminded partners around the world, work to ensure the rules governing tomorrow's technology are based in democratic values.

Question. How do you view Europe's attempts at strategic autonomy, and what challenges does it pose to U.S. cooperation with Europe on issues related to the PRC?

Answer. We welcome efforts of our Allies and partners to strengthen their capacity and capabilities, but it is important that these efforts be compatible with our alliances and contribute to Transatlantic security. Together, the United States and

its Allies and partners set the global rules of the road, and we must continue to do so. If confirmed, I will seek to resolve difficult issues with our European Allies and partners while safeguarding U.S. interests and ensuring a level playing field for U.S. companies. As Secretary Blinken has noted, the United States will be much more effective in engaging the PRC when we do so with our Allies and partners.

Question. The United Kingdom has previously joined U.S. freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea, and France recently announced it would set up a coast guard network with the Pacific Island nations to deter predatory and coercive behavior. What other opportunities are there for the European countries to increase their presence in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. The Biden administration supports robust engagement by European counterparts in the Indo-Pacific. Some European countries, including Germany and the Netherlands, have published Indo-Pacific strategies, and EU member states have tasked the European Commission and European External Action Service to release an Indo-Pacific strategy by September. The United States supports the UK's "Indo-Pacific Tilt" to the region and its ongoing deployment of the UK-led Aircraft Carrier Strike Group 21 which plans to transit through the South China Sea. If confirmed, I plan to support ongoing efforts by the EU and European counterparts to direct more diplomatic, military, economic, and other resources to the region.

Question. In my China-Europe report published last fall, I discuss the importance of overcoming barriers to U.S.-Europe technology cooperation to counter Chinese technology supremacy, including working through competing regulatory approaches on joint-R&D, data transfer, and privacy shields. What steps do the U.S. and Europe each need to take with respect to technology regulations, and what do you see as the hardest obstacles to overcome in this area?

Answer. President Biden and his EU counterparts established the U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council as a forum to demonstrate to the world how democratic approaches to trade, technology, and innovation can improve the lives of our citizens and counter authoritarian influence in the digital realm. Discussions on an enhanced Privacy Shield framework also underscore our shared commitment to privacy, data protection, and the rule of law; our mutual recognition of the importance of transatlantic data flows to our respective citizens, economies, and societies; and our common interest in aligning against the growing government surveillance ambitions of authoritarian states. If confirmed, I will work to deepen cooperation in these important areas.

Question. The latest EU strategy on China mentions "the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan strait." What should the EU do to better support Taiwan in light of an increasingly aggressive PRC?

Answer. Taiwan is a leading democracy, a critical U.S. security and economic partner, and a key U.S. partner in addressing shared global challenges. The United States continues to encourage European allies and partners to engage and publicly support Taiwan. The U.S. commitment to Taiwan is rock solid and contributes to the maintenance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and in the Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I will support the administration's efforts to support Taiwan and encourage our European Allies and partners to do the same.

Question. My China-Europe report, published last fall, covers the growing presence of PRC companies in building undersea cables. The previous administration focused on this issue through its Clean Cable initiative, and by providing financing for specific cable projects in the Indo-Pacific. A PRC company—Huawei Marine (now called HMN Technologies)—is currently constructing an undersea cable that terminates in Marseilles, France. Please describe your understanding of PRC activities in the undersea cable market and the implications and risks for U.S. and allied interests. Do you commit to prioritizing this area of technology if you are confirmed?

Answer. As with 5G networks, the Biden administration views the security of commercial undersea communications cables as a high priority. The secure development and deployment of undersea cables and related infrastructure in both developed and developing economies is of critical concern to the United States. Countries and citizens need to be able to trust that such equipment will not introduce risks that threaten national security, personal privacy, or human rights. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging on this topic with our European allies and partners to promote open, interoperable, reliable, and secure information and communications technology infrastructure.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO
DR.KAREN DONFRIED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. Support for Governance, Democracy, and Human Rights: Supporting democracy, human rights, and good governance, which begins with fighting corruption and must continue to be a priority of U.S. policy.

- What more can we do to further these efforts with our European partners, especially on the battle against corruption?

Answer. The United States will continue to work with European partners to combat corruption by supporting efforts to recover and return stolen assets; deny safe haven to those who engage in corruption; combat money-laundering; and stem foreign bribery. If confirmed, I will support the OSCE's work to help participating States create robust anti-money laundering regimes, a solid ethics infrastructure, and sound financial and resource management.

Question. How can we better work within the OSCE to address these issues?

Answer. If confirmed, I would also encourage the OSCE to take a cross-dimensional approach to anticorruption that focuses on building the capacity of law enforcement, strengthening legal frameworks, and defending members of civil society and the media which expose corruption.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARY CATHERINE PHEE BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. Somalia: As you are aware, the Trump administration ended our troop presence in the country and the Biden administration has dramatically reduced the pace of counter-terrorism operations there.

- If confirmed, what actions will you take to support a sustainable political transition in Somalia?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to supporting Somali efforts to complete a timely, peaceful, and transparent electoral process, which is vital for the advancement of political reconciliation and governance, security, and economic reforms. I am prepared to engage with Somali leaders to ensure they follow through with their commitments with respect to the electoral and government formation processes. I also will coordinate closely with other international partners to ensure consistent policies and messages, and to discourage efforts that could exacerbate political tensions or disrupt a political transition.

Question. In what specific areas should the United States focus security assistance in Somalia going forward? Are there lessons learned from long running security assistance programs that you believe could be better applied?

Answer. The United States supports efforts to advance peace and security in Somalia with a wide range of activities. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing State Department-administered security assistance programs in Somalia to ensure they are effectively and efficiently advancing our policy goals. If confirmed, I will prioritize close coordination with regional and international partners in the security sector, accountability of U.S. security assistance, and mentorship and training of partnered forces.

Lessons learned applicable to Somalia include biometric enrollment of Somalia National Army (SNA) forces receiving U.S. support, sustained mentorship and training of SNA and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces and the introduction of clear accountability procedures for U.S. assistance when transferred to partners. With regard to lessons learned on mentoring, U.S. security assistance monitoring has identified that the SNA-Danab program improved by recruiting for clan appropriate battalions, increasing the recruitment of women, and ensuring the Federal Government of Somalia and its Member States agree to both support SNA-Danab. Over time, the results have demonstrated increased unit cohesion and pride, successful joint operations with the AU Mission in Somalia Forces, and lower instances of desertion.

Somalia

Question. As you are aware, the Trump administration ended our troop presence in the country and the Biden administration has dramatically reduced the pace of counter-terrorism operations there.

- If confirmed, how will you work to better manage the sometimes of unhelpful engagement of outside actors in Somalia, including neighboring states and countries from the Middle East like Turkey, the UAE, and Qatar? If confirmed, how do you plan to engage the Bureau of Near East Affairs on issues relate to the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea Corridor?

Answer. The United States has close and constructive relations with many of the external actors engaged in Somalia, including the Gulf states, Turkey, and some of Somalia's neighbors. If confirmed, I would collaborate with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs to employ U.S. influence and leverage to encourage our Gulf partners to engage strategically to promote long-term security and stability in Somalia specifically and the Horn of Africa more broadly.

Nigeria

Question. Poor governance and leadership have prevented Nigeria from reaching its full potential. Endemic corruption remains a challenge. There is little accountability for extrajudicial killings by security forces. ISIS West Africa Province remains a potent force in the northeast, and, intercommunal violence and banditry plague various parts of the country.

- If confirmed, how will you engage with the Nigerian Government on these challenges?

Answer. The United States has a strong and enduring relationship with Nigeria, Africa's largest democracy and economy. Nigeria's stability and economic growth can advance our mutual prosperity as well as that of West Africa and the broader continent. If confirmed, I will continue to raise the profile of our engagement with Nigerian leaders to advance our national security priorities and strengthen our collaboration to address security, economic, and governance challenges. Working with other State Department bureaus and U.S. Government agencies, I will support our investments in training Nigerian security forces to build their effectiveness in fighting common threats and serving the Nigerian people, increase accountability for military or police personnel who commit human rights violations and abuses, and strengthen security forces coordination. Working across the U.S. interagency and in partnership with Nigeria's new Ambassador to the United States as well as civil society stakeholders and the Nigerian diaspora, I will undertake a holistic approach to our bilateral relationship that emphasizes shared values and candid dialogue. Through the annual Bi-National Commission and in other bilateral and multilateral meetings and fora, I will engage actively with Nigerian leaders within and beyond government to champion the strengthening of democratic institutions, diversification of its economy, and pursuit of important reforms.

Question. Do you commit to working with the committee to develop a coherent framework in which to provide security assistance before moving forward with additional arms sales and security assistance programs in Nigeria?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I commit to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to actively reinforce the importance of civilian protection, and respect for human rights in all elements of our security assistance to Nigeria. I will urge the Nigerian Government to hold security force elements accountable for human rights abuses and violations. To help Nigeria reduce the risk of civilian harm, I will support a combination of legal training and advising to provide stronger underpinnings for the Nigerian military and police to address systematic human rights concerns, develop a professional process for military justice and police accountability, and develop more disciplined security forces.

Arms sales and security assistance programs in Nigeria help bring about incremental institutional reform. I will seek to combine military and law enforcement capability sales with comprehensive training and maintenance programs. Our goal, which the Nigerian Government supports, is greater professionalism of Nigerian security services. Recent improvements demonstrate that Nigeria is a willing security partner, making needed investments and security sector institutional reforms that will bring lasting results in combatting a variety of security challenges.

Question. If confirmed, what new, innovative approaches will you recommend that administration take to mitigate conflict, stop human rights abuses, counterbalance Russian influence, and help the people of CAR achieve a stable democracy?

Answer. The United States supports CAR's efforts to develop strong institutions and strengthen the rule of law through capacity building and technical assistance. If confirmed, I will work to increase coordination within the Department of State, across the U.S. Government, and with likeminded partners such as the European Union and France to ensure our efforts are aligned and mutually supportive to strengthen the CAR Government's ability to mitigate conflict, stop human rights

abuses and violations, hold those responsible for such actions accountable, and help the country achieve a stable democracy that does not require the support of dubious external actors. Specifically, to counterbalance Russia's influence, I will pursue opportunities to stand up to negative Russian behavior.

Question. As the U.S. engages to strengthen accountability, security, and inclusiveness, will you commit to supporting processes and institutions, rather than a specific individual or leader?

Answer. Yes. Across administrations, the United States has worked to advance democracy and human rights in the DRC, prevent conflict, and promote economic development. If confirmed, I will work with the DRC Government and our civil society partners, as well as our partners in the region and at the United Nations, to promote political, economic, and security reforms.

The recent inauguration of a new cabinet in the DRC opened an historic new chapter in the country's political history. If confirmed, I will urge DRC leaders to heed the calls of the Congolese people for reforms. I will emphasize to DRC leaders the early imperative of undertaking the legal, financial, and technical preparations necessary for free and fair elections in 2023, including reform of the Independent National Electoral Commission. I will also work with our partners in the DRC to counter pervasive corruption that undermines the country's institutions and will pursue accountability for corrupt actors with all tools at our disposal.

Question. What actions should the administration be taking right now to help support a credible presidential election in 2023, and what specific steps do you plan to take if confirmed to support credible elections?

Answer. If confirmed, I will emphasize to DRC leaders the early imperative of undertaking the legal, financial, and technical preparations necessary for free and fair elections in 2023, including reform of the Independent National Electoral Commission. To be credible, those elections must be inclusive, conducted transparently and impartially, and held in accordance with constitutional deadlines. I will also continue to work with this committee on issues related to the 2023 elections. Appreciating your longstanding interest in this issue, I will work with you to ensure we take your views on board in advance, and that we have the appropriate resources in place to help our Congolese partners with this important task.

Zimbabwe

Question. U.S. policy regarding Zimbabwe has been largely consistent across recent administrations, including the rigorous implementation of ZDERA and other sanctions. Yet the Zimbabwean Government of today is no less authoritarian and corrupt than it was under former president Robert Mugabe.

- If confirmed, how will you approach U.S.-Zimbabwe relations?

Answer. I share the committee's deep concern over the Government of Zimbabwe's authoritarian and corrupt practices, including the targeting of opposition political figures, journalists, and members of civil society through harassment, arrests, and detentions. I appreciate the willingness of this committee to publicly call out repression by the Zimbabwe Government. The Department of State, Africa Bureau, and U.S. Embassy in Harare issue condemnations when appropriate and publicly voice our support for the courageous Zimbabwean women and men who speak out against government corruption and abuses.

The United States supports democratic governance programs that improve electoral processes, refine citizen advocacy strategies, and enhance public accountability measures. We provide support to those the Zimbabwean Government singles out for abuse, and we impose targeted sanctions to promote accountability for corrupt actors and those who abuse human rights and undermine democratic processes.

But we should continue to look at all options. If confirmed, I will work with this committee, civil society, regional neighbors, and likeminded partners to shine a brighter light on the situation in Zimbabwe so that, together, we can increase the pressure on the Government of Zimbabwe to respect democratic principles and human rights. If confirmed, I will also work with our interagency partners to mobilize our sanctions programs to promote accountability for those individuals who are currently active in corruption and human rights abuses.

Question. Is it time to rethink our Zimbabwe policy, in your view?

Answer. We should continually examine our policy towards Zimbabwe to ensure that it is timely and effective. The United States currently employs a blend of programs and strategies in Zimbabwe to strengthen democratic institutions, promote equitable economic growth, boost public health, and improve food security for the

benefit of the Zimbabwean people. If confirmed, I will review these programs and strategies.

If confirmed, I will be guided by the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act in our efforts to press the Government of Zimbabwe to respect democratic principles, basic freedoms, and human rights, and to support those citizens who seek to build an open and accountable system. I also will work with this committee, likeminded partners, and subject matter experts within civil society to examine ways to ensure that our policy towards Zimbabwe is relevant and effective.

Question. What new measures should the U.S. pursue in advancing democracy and human rights in Uganda?

Answer. This year's flawed elections in Uganda underscored the continuing deterioration of both Uganda's democracy and respect and support for human rights and freedoms. Helping the Ugandan people reverse this trend will take new ideas and increased engagement with Ugandan leaders and the country's beleaguered civil society. If confirmed, I will assess what more the United States can do to promote democracy, human rights, and accountability in Uganda and seek to develop options for advancing these goals and objectives.

Question. Given democratic and human rights deficits in Uganda, what will you recommend if confirmed, relative to continued cooperation with the Museveni regime on regional security matters?

Answer. Uganda plays an important role in supporting regional security and counterterrorism efforts in Somalia and elsewhere in the region. During deployments, Ugandan units have been among the most capable and professional in regional missions. The conduct of specific Ugandan troops at home, however, is of concern. If confirmed, I will ensure that U.S. policy in Uganda appropriately reflects the centrality of democracy and respect for human rights called for by President Biden. In addition to working with the African Union (AU), the United Nations (U.N.), and the Government of Uganda to ensure that personnel are properly vetted, follow the rules of armed conflict, and respect human rights, I support working with the AU and the U.N. to identify potential new troop contributors that would reduce AMISOM's reliance on forces that may be implicated in human rights abuses. There is also a need to engage the AU and the U.N. in a timely and credible process to identify and remove potential troop contributors that may be implicated in human rights abuses.

Question. How serious is the new leadership in Tanzania about pursuing genuine political reform?

Answer. President Hassan has taken some encouraging steps in the early days of her administration. These include significant revisions to Tanzania's approach on COVID-19, reengagement with the international community, and overtures to the business community suggesting greater openness to foreign investment. Her initial outreach to opposition political parties and civil society organizations was welcome but needs to be accompanied by significant democratic and human rights reforms. The arrest of leading opposition politicians on July 20 was gravely concerning. If confirmed, I will prioritize U.S. engagement in Tanzania to encourage rule of law, good governance, political pluralism, and people's freedom to exercise their rights without fear of harassment.

Question. What steps will you take if confirmed to incentivize the new Tanzanian leadership to repair the damage of the Magufuli era, both in terms of political reform at home, and Tanzania-U.S. bilateral relations?

Answer. The new Tanzanian leadership has been much more receptive to engagement with both Embassy Dar es Salaam and senior Department of State officials. Such engagement has already contributed to the Hassan administration's increasingly positive steps with regard to its COVID-19 policy. If confirmed, I would work with Embassy leadership to continue to highlight to the Tanzanian Government the additional, potential benefits of closer cooperation with the United States, including renewed support for the country's development and economic recovery efforts. At the same time, I would underscore the democratic and economic reforms that would be required on the part of the Tanzanian Government in order to attain such support and repair in full the Tanzania-U.S. bilateral relationship.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARY CATHERINE PHEE BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, what specific actions will you take to meet the administration's stated goal of prioritizing Africa?

Answer. If confirmed, I intend to engage respectfully with African partners to meet global challenges—including security, global health, climate change, freedom and democracy, and mutual prosperity. You would see greater attention to our relationships with African states and publics, with regional institutions like the African Union, and with the African bloc in international organizations.

If confirmed, I look forward to participating in an interagency policy process as the Biden-Harris administration develops a fresh U.S. strategy for Africa that enumerates our national interests in Africa and develops operational actions to advance them, guided by the priorities of this committee. Responding to President Biden's direction, I would highlight the role of democracy and human rights and add a new emphasis on anti-corruption. Without good governance, African states will not be well-positioned to expand peace and security and manage the threats posed by terrorism and migration. I will ensure that we work with our African partners to mitigate and adapt to climate change. I will support programs that promote two-way trade and investment to create opportunities for African youth that benefit workers there and here. In line with this committee's direction, I will work to advance an affirmative agenda rooted in our values and our longstanding investments in development, security and people to prevail in the strategic competition with China. In this effort, we will seek to expand our partnership with Europe and other likeminded nations to reinforce our collective impact.

I will also capitalize on our soft power—engaging with youth, encouraging education opportunities, and engaging the diaspora. Finally, I will join the U.S. Government campaign to help Africa mitigate the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Question. What changes in U.S. posture toward Africa are needed to demonstrate to our African partners that “Africa is a priority”?

Answer. We need to expand the quantity and quality of our engagement across the Continent. As Secretary Blinken noted in his January 19 testimony before this committee, senior-level engagement on a consistent basis will be one important way to demonstrate our commitment. Showing up and showing respect is important. Consistent with our values, we must champion leaders seeking positive change and hold others to account. This approach means reinvigorating our focus on human rights, transparency and accountability, and the fight against corruption which are essential for stability and economic growth. Expanding trade and investment, tackling climate change, and responding to COVID-19 are all shared priorities between the United States and African nations. If confirmed, I will support diplomacy that translates this rhetoric into action.

Question. What specific policies and strategies will you pursue to ensure that you and the Bureau of African Affairs are meeting what you've indicated as “President Biden's agenda to expand the quantity and quality of our engagement with African Governments, institutions ... [and] African publics”? What changes, if any, are needed within the Bureau of African Affairs to ensure they are best prepared to carry out this vision?

Answer. As Secretary Blinken noted in his January 19 hearing before this committee, the United States has engaged African countries as partners in pursuing our shared interests and values—including security, global health, climate change, freedom and democracy, and shared prosperity. Expanded senior-level engagement on a consistent basis will be one important way to demonstrate our commitment. If confirmed, I will actively support engagement through senior-level visits to Africa, increased consultations with the African Union and African regional organizations, initiatives and economic opportunities to harness the innovation and energy of Africa's youth, university partnerships and training opportunities, and active engagement with the African diaspora here in the United States, to name a few. If confirmed, I will closely review the Africa Bureau's organization, management, staffing, and budget to align our resources to support execution of this vision.

Question. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, will you commit to work with Secretary Blinken to ensure that ambassadorial positions in Sub-Saharan Africa are filled by qualified, experience nominees in a timely manner?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I am committed to working with Secretary Blinken to ensure that ambassadorial positions in Sub-Saharan Africa are filled by qualified, experienced nominees in a timely manner.

Question. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, will you commit to work with Secretary Blinken to ensure that first-time career ambassadorial nominees will not be the first choice when identifying nominees for high-profile and strategic U.S. missions in Sub-Saharan Africa?

Answer. The Department of State has a robust process for choosing Chiefs of Mission. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Secretary and other Department leadership to ensure that we identify highly qualified individuals for every one of these positions in the Bureau of African Affairs.

Question. Under your leadership as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, if confirmed, what actions will you pursue to ensure that hard to fill posts in Sub-Saharan Africa are sufficiently and consistently staffed?

Answer. I recognize that the Africa Bureau is chronically understaffed, both in numbers of assigned positions and vacancies in those positions. If confirmed, I will personally prioritize personnel and allocate additional resources to support that effort. I am committed to an inclusive workplace and will build on the Bureau's progress to date in implementing management reforms designed to support diversity in recruitment, hiring, and retention.

Other actions I intend to pursue include reviewing staffing levels across the continent with the goal of aligning staffing to our most pressing national interests; exploring options for enhancing incentives for service at hardship posts; and attending to morale and reinvigorating the sense of public service that attracts professionals devoted to making a difference for the United States in Africa.

Question. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, how will you ensure that the Bureau of African Affairs has the requisite capacity, including sufficient number of trained contract officers and staff, to ensure that it can implement, monitor, and conduct appropriate oversight of TSCTP and other programs?

Answer. If confirmed, I will start by reviewing existing capacity within the Bureau of African Affairs in order to identify any necessary increases in resources necessary to appropriately implement, monitor, and conduct appropriate oversight of TSCTP and other programs. I will work with the leadership of the Department of State to secure required support. I also commit to working with the committee toward our shared goal of improving the effectiveness, transparency, and oversight of TSCTP.

The Africa Bureau has already made a number of changes to respond to the OIG's recommendations. These include, but are not limited to, establishing a TSCTP secretariat to facilitate coordination and implementing best practices around procurement, management, and oversight of AF-funded TSCTP programs. If confirmed, I will review the TSCTP and consult with the committee to ensure we have the appropriate resources, authorities, flexibility, and management controls in place to meet shared objectives for this important program.

Question. How can the Department of State, in coordination with other relevant departments and agencies, support our African partners to manage the activities and impacts better of armed groups on populations, economies and governance?

Answer. Tailored U.S. diplomatic, development, and human rights-sensitive security assistance can play a critical role to support peace and security. While security cooperation is necessary, it is not sufficient to address the drivers of violence and extremism. Sustainable gains—whether governance, security, or economic—require a holistic approach across our government and in coordination with African and other partners.

If confirmed, I plan to work closely with the Department of Defense, USAID, other U.S. Government agencies, and our allies and partners to support African efforts to reduce the activities of armed groups and support policies and programs that build democratic governance structures that respect human rights and deliver liberty and prosperity.

Question. How can the Department of State better address the cross-border movement of armed groups, including through the development and execution of regional approaches?

Answer. Armed groups and illicit traffickers exploit weak border controls and inadequate surveillance but also often benefit from assistance or indifference from border communities that often are underserved by governance, administration, security, and economic opportunities offered by regional and national governments. Address-

ing cross-border movement of armed groups requires holistic approaches and regional cooperation and information-sharing. Working with partners to build professional, capable, and accountable security and intelligence services to monitor and secure often vast and porous borders must complement rather than replace efforts to provide stability and economic opportunities to vulnerable communities along borders. The Department of State and our embassies across Africa are committed to leverage our influence and diplomatic engagements to promote cross-border collaboration, exercises, information sharing, and coordination among security sector and civilian entities from neighboring and regional states to develop improved cross-border protocols, relationships, and operational effectiveness. Programmatically, the Africa Bureau is reinvigorating the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and the Partnership for East Africa Counterterrorism (Preact) in part to strategically identify resources and expertise to address these issues and support regional and sub-regional efforts in West and East Africa to increase border management and security.

Question. What are your views on the role trade and investment could and should play in building stronger ties between the United States and the African continent? How should U.S.-Africa trade and investment initiatives factor into the U.S. global strategy to counter China in Africa?

Answer. We need to do more to boost trade and investment. We want to be partners in creating responsible and sustainable trade and investment that secures good livelihoods for both Africans and Americans. If confirmed, I will advocate for U.S. companies that provide the world class products, technology, and services that Africans seek to grow their economies. I commit to working with interagency partners to mobilize all the tools of the U.S. Government to support this effort and meet the challenges posed by China. The positive economic contributions to Africa that U.S. companies bring—robust training, capital, and high labor and environmental standards—are our best way to compete with strategic competitors such as China.

Question. How can the U.S. Government better promote African countries as destinations for U.S. private sector foreign investment? How can the U.S. improve access for African firms seeking to do business here? How can we best engage the U.S. African diaspora?

Answer. As Secretary Blinken noted in his January 19 testimony to this committee, the United States, using our economic diplomacy and the tools of the DFC, USAID, MCC and Treasury, will work with the U.S. private sector, African Governments, and international financial institutions to increase trade and investment in Africa and promote U.S. business. If confirmed, I will ensure our Embassy Deal Teams in Africa prioritize trade and investment opportunities, as well as business climate reforms that can provide a strong foundation for economic growth more generally. I will make full use of all U.S. Government tools, including through Prosper Africa, to bring opportunities to the attention of the private sector.

If confirmed, I will make full use of USAID's programs to help African firms utilize the preferential access provided by the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. Likewise, I want to ensure we are making full use of the SelectUSA program at the Department of Commerce to promote the United States as an investment destination for African investors. I agree that we need to work robustly to tap the dynamic African diaspora in the United States as a partner in promoting greater two-way trade and investment between the United States and Africa. If confirmed, I will promote active outreach to diaspora organizations as a vital piece of our engagement.

Question. How can the U.S. Government most effectively support efforts to improve the enabling environment for competitive foreign investment by U.S. firms in Africa? What types of partnerships work best, and how can the U.S. best incentivize reforms and other actions necessary to foster economic opportunity and expand two-way trade and investment with the African continent?

Answer. The Prosper Africa initiative can play an important role in ensuring effective coordination of U.S. Government assistance to improve investment and business climates toward the overall goal of expanding trade and investment. U.S. Government programming needs to be targeted at areas where there is strong host country will to reform. I believe there is potential to do more in partnership with our private sector, particularly in the technology area, to incentivize governments to implement needed reforms, given our firms generally have a clear sense of what needs to be done. Successful partnerships require clear goals and expectations.

I noted in my testimony the importance of greater efforts on governance, human rights, and anti-corruption. I see these areas as vital components of work to build sound, prosperous economies, and to attract needed investment. If confirmed, I will

also support our soft power efforts-engaging with youth and encouraging educational opportunities, that amplify our good governance messaging.

Question. Do you agree that countries like Zimbabwe, South Sudan, and Somalia are unsuited for strategic investments under Prosper Africa?

Answer. I agree that Zimbabwe, South Sudan, and Somalia are currently unsuited for strategic investments under Prosper Africa. I also believe we should support U.S. businesses and investors across Africa wherever possible when they see opportunities for increased trade and investment.

Question. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, will reinforcing democratic institutions and norms in Africa be a priority?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, I will prioritize reinforcing democratic institutions and norms in Africa.

Question. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that messaging from the Bureau of African Affairs and its embassies and leadership consistently reinforce U.S. democratic values and interests, including the need to respect democratic institutions and norms, advance human and political rights, and enhance citizen responsive governance?

Answer. Yes, if confirmed as Assistant Secretary I commit to ensuring that messaging from the Bureau of African Affairs and its embassies and leadership consistently reinforce U.S. democratic values and interests.

Question. If confirmed, how will you engage our French partners to ensure that we employ a mutually-beneficial partnership across the Sahel and West and Central Africa that reflects the various points of leverage and capability the United States and France each bring to the table?

Answer. Given its colonial history, France has significant ties in the Sahel and West and Central Africa and concerns about the direct threats posed to Europe from migration and terrorism. Our shared priorities include promoting improved security, governance, economic development, and recovery from COVID-19. France has been a steadfast partner in the fight against Islamic State-Western Sahara (IS-Ws) and Al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM). If confirmed, in line with President Biden's direction to revitalize partnerships with key allies, I will act to sustain and build on the historic strong coordination between the United States and France, aligning our respective comparative advantages to holistically address the security and governance challenges across the region.

Question. How can the U.S. better coordinate with France in Africa to holistically address the security threats and improve diplomatic engagements, particularly in the Sahel and West and Central Africa, from a holistic perspective?

Answer. Both France and the United States share security, governance, and economic development as priorities in the Sahel and West and Central Africa. These priorities cannot be achieved independent of one another. If confirmed, I will encourage the French to use their strong political, economic, security, and cultural influence toward African political, security, and democratic reforms that are the best path to long-term stability in these regions, and work with our interagency to support French objectives when aligned with ours. The United States and France regularly coordinate on issues of mutual concern and, if confirmed, I commit to working with France and our other allies and partners in Europe, including the EU, to holistically address the security threats and improve diplomatic engagement across the continent. Specifically, I see continued areas for improved coordination with our French partners in the Sahel and towards resolving the crisis Cameroon. As your report on U.S.- European cooperation noted, the significant demographic and economic shifts underway across the African continent requires a strong transatlantic alliance, in coordination with our African partners, to collaborate on countering malign influence, and promoting the growth of healthier, more stable, democratic societies that share our values and interests.

Question. Political and ethnic tensions and violence in Burundi have contributed to instability, human rights abuses, and humanitarian crises in central Africa's Great Lakes region for decades. On June 9, 2020, the Government of Burundi announced that sitting President Pierre Nkurunziza (age 55) died suddenly of "cardiac arrest," two and a half months before he was expected to step down following general elections on May 20, 2020. Nkurunziza's elected successor, CNDD-FDD party head Evariste Ndayishimiye, was inaugurated in late August, after the constitutional court upheld his victory with 68% of the vote in the May 2020 elections.

- How optimistic are you about deepening ties with the new Burundian administration under President Ndayishimiye?

Answer. If confirmed, I will need to assess the approach of President Ndayishimiye's administration and will review Burundi's progress.

Question. Do you feel that upgrading Burundi's ranking in the State Department's 2021 Trafficking In Persons Report from Tier 3 to Tier 2 Watch List was warranted based on an objective assessment of progress made in Burundi on TIP issues?

Answer. I understand that Burundi's 2021 Trafficking in Persons ranking as Tier 2 Watch List is based on the Burundian Government's overall increasing effort to counter trafficking in persons. This effort included increasing investigations and prosecutions of suspected trafficking offenses, convicting traffickers, and referring victims to assistance. The Government also developed and implemented the country's first-ever national data collection system on law enforcement's efforts to combat human trafficking and trained officials on its use. If confirmed, I will commit to working with Burundi to ensure it continues to prioritize countering trafficking in persons.

Question. What additional tools does the United States have at its disposal to encourage a peaceful and enduring resolution to the Anglophone conflict in Cameroon?

Answer. On June 7, 2021, Secretary Blinken announced that the United States was taking steps to impose visa restrictions on certain individuals who are believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. Secretary Blinken's decision to restrict the visas of individuals responsible for undermining peace in Cameroon is a concrete example of options the Department of State can exercise to push for peace and dialogue. If confirmed, my focus would be to continue urging all parties to end violence and to engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. I would make clear U.S. support for the Swiss Government's effort to advance mediation between the Government and separatist armed group leaders and encourage the Government to take concrete steps to move this effort forward. I will also review the different tools we have to hold human rights violators accountable, including sanctions, and continue the practice of reviewing security assistance on a case-by-case basis. I will continue to pursue engagement with France, other likeminded partners, and U.N. Security Council member states to find ways to promote a peaceful resolution of the ongoing violence.

Question. How can the United States more effectively encourage France to use its significant leverage in Cameroon to encourage the Government to engage in meaningful dialogue and end the conflict?

Answer. The United States and France share an interest in stability and prosperity in Sub-Saharan Africa and meet regularly to discuss how to advance those priorities, including the critical effort to press the parties in Cameroon to pursue an inclusive and constructive path toward peace and stability. Secretary Blinken regularly consults with his counterpart French Foreign Minister Jean Yves Le Drian. If confirmed, I will support ongoing U.S. engagement with France, a key partner in Cameroon, as well as with the UK, the EU, Canada, Switzerland, Germany and other allies, to align our efforts in support of dialogue to resolve the Anglophone conflict.

Question. How is the Department mobilizing other partners to assist Cameroon to find peace and justice, and how do you plan to lead such an effort once in-country?

Answer. The United States regularly engages allies and U.N. Security Council member states at the highest level regarding the need to resolve the Anglophone conflict. If confirmed, I will continue to strongly engage with France, which is key in this process, the UK, the EU, Canada, Switzerland, Germany and other key allies both bilaterally and in multilateral fora to find ways to work together to achieve tangible progress towards peace.

If confirmed, I will also make clear U.S. support for the Swiss Government's efforts to advance mediation between the Government and separatist armed group leaders and encourage the Government to take concrete steps to move this effort forward. The Department of State can support the likeminded countries' effort to support the Swiss Process through coordinated actions and messaging. The process of working with our allies and NGO partners is a regular on-going effort, which I will continue with focus and vigor.

Question. What is your perspective on the performance of the Tshisekedi administration to date?

Answer. The United States supports President Tshisekedi's goal of building a more peaceful and prosperous DRC. Since President Tshisekedi took office in 2019, the U.S.-DRC partnership has contributed to the freeing of individuals who have been unlawfully or arbitrarily detained; establishment of an anti-trafficking agency; the highest-level corruption conviction in DRC history; and related steps that merited the reinstatement of DRC's AGOA eligibility.

The recent inauguration of a new cabinet in the DRC opened an historic new chapter in the country's political history. If confirmed, I will emphasize to DRC leaders the early imperative of undertaking the legal, financial, and technical preparations necessary for free and fair elections in 2023, including reform of the Independent National Electoral Commission. To be credible, those elections must be inclusive, conducted transparently and impartially, and held in accordance with constitutional deadlines. I will also urge DRC leaders to heed the calls of the Congolese people for reforms in the mining sector and security apparatus.

Question. Is it your assessment that the Tshisekedi administration is in a position to continue to advance reforms, including in the areas of anti-corruption and in the security and mining sectors?

Answer. The United States supports President Tshisekedi's and the Government's goal of building a more peaceful and prosperous DRC. Since President Tshisekedi took office in 2019, the U.S.-DRC partnership has contributed to the freeing of individuals who have been unlawfully or arbitrarily detained; establishment of an anti-trafficking agency; the highest-level corruption conviction in DRC history; and related steps that merited the reinstatement of DRC's AGOA eligibility. The recent inauguration of a new cabinet in the DRC opened an historic new chapter in the country's political history. If confirmed, I will work with our partners in the DRC to counter pervasive corruption that undermines the country's institutions and will pursue accountability for corrupt actors with all tools at our disposal. I will also urge DRC leaders to heed the calls of the Congolese people for reforms in the mining sector and security apparatus.

The United States supports the Congolese Government's efforts to stabilize eastern DRC by addressing the drivers of escalating violence, including holding those in the military responsible for corruption and human rights abuses and violations to account. If confirmed, I will urge the Congolese Government to continue to work with the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) in support of the peacekeeping mission's efforts to protect civilians, reduce intercommunal tensions, and strengthen state institutions.

Question. In your view, how can the United States continue to support democratic reforms in the DRC, including by enhancing prospects for free, fair, and transparent elections in 2023?

Answer. If confirmed, I will emphasize to DRC leaders the early imperative of undertaking the legal, financial, and technical preparations necessary for free and fair elections in 2023, including reform of the Independent National Electoral Commission. To be credible, the 2023 elections must be inclusive, conducted transparently and impartially, and held in accordance with constitutional deadlines. Knowing of your longstanding interest in this issue, I will work with you to ensure we take your views on board in advance, and that we have the appropriate resources in place to help our Congolese partners with this important task.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with Congress and USAID to ensure the \$700 million is programmed efficiently and effectively to support Sudan's ongoing transition?

Answer. If confirmed, I will stress the importance of timely consultations with Congress by the Africa Bureau and our USAID colleagues on the utilization and effective programming of these appropriated funds. I will also ensure we consult closely with Sudan's civilian led transitional government to ensure these new resources will assist the Government to meet the urgent needs of the Sudanese people at this moment in the transition, and to support efforts related to human rights and accountability, conflict mitigation, and democracy and governance, especially in support of marginalized communities long shut out from having a voice in determining Sudan's future.

Question. If confirmed, do you commit to work with Congress to ensure the \$700 million is programmed appropriately?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I am committed to working with Congress on the programming of these funds, working closely with USAID to ensure that funds are used appropriately and effectively in support of Sudan's transition.

Question. Given that the United States is a significant stakeholder in ensuring that South Sudan achieves sustainable peace and development, what diplomatic investments would you make as Secretary of State bilaterally, regionally, and with multi-lateral institutions?

Answer. Expedited progress on the integration of security forces, anti-corruption, transitional justice, and a permanent constitutional process leading to post-transitional elections is key to achieving sustainable peace and development in South Sudan. If confirmed, I will make clear to South Sudan's leaders our serious concerns about delays in implementation of commitments in these areas and look for opportunities to increase pressure on those officials responsible for such delays. I would also invigorate the use of all available diplomatic and development tools to provide support to South Sudanese civil society and non-governmental organizations seeking positive change. Additionally, I would consult with regional and international partners to review critically and comprehensively our current approach towards South Sudan. I intend to collaborate with U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Linda Thomas-Greenfield to ensure that the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has the necessary resources and mandate to support accelerated implementation of South Sudan's peace process. Finally, I would continue to prioritize diplomatic efforts to press South Sudan's leaders to do more to facilitate the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to the people of South Sudan, to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers in the country, and to hold accountable those responsible for growing violence against humanitarian organizations.

Question. What is your perspective on the ongoing U.S. assistance review, announced in 2018, for South Sudan? If confirmed, how would you support a timely conclusion to the assistance review and enable action on its findings?

Answer. I understand the Biden-Harris administration continues to evaluate the findings of the assistance review in South Sudan conducted under the last administration to ensure that programs are being implemented efficiently and are consistent with our objectives. If confirmed, I would work to continue this process and ensure that programs are strategic, effective and have adequate oversight. The United States Government continues to work to maximize the impact of our humanitarian assistance in South Sudan and mitigate risks of diversion or obstruction of aid or perpetuation of kleptocratic governance.

Question. How would you take a fresh look at U.S. policy in the Horn of Africa as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs?

Answer. A stable and prosperous Horn of Africa is critical to U.S. economic and security interests. The external actors who are most engaged in the Horn are U.S. partners in the Persian Gulf. If confirmed, I will collaborate with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs to employ U.S. influence and leverage to encourage our Gulf partners to engage strategically to foster peace and security in the Horn—a shared goal. I will also consult with the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, Ambassador Jeff Feltman, to review our policy, especially our engagement with regional and international partners, to hone a coherent and integrated U.S. approach.

Question. There is broad consensus that U.S. policy toward Somalia needs reconsideration. What is your perspective on U.S. policy toward Somaliland? Do you think the U.S. has missed an important opportunity over the last several years to support and engage more fully with a more stable and democratic entity at the behest of Mogadishu?

Answer. The United States recognizes a single Somalia, which includes Somaliland. The United States has maintained a positive relationship with the authorities in Hargeisa and has encouraged the Federal Government of Somalia and Somaliland to cooperate on issues of mutual interest and to engage in constructive dialogue on questions related to Somaliland's status. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing U.S. engagement with Somaliland to ensure it effectively advances U.S. interests, including with respect to our relationship with Mogadishu.

Question. From your perspective, what tools (including those currently underutilized) does the United States have at its disposal that are underutilized to encourage democratic and economic reforms in Zimbabwe?

Answer. I share the committee's deep concern over the human rights abuses, economic mismanagement, and kleptocratic behavior that we continue to see in Zimbabwe. I appreciate this committee's condemnation of the Government of Zimbabwe's abuse of human rights and repression of its people. The Department of State, Africa Bureau, and U.S. Embassy in Harare regularly issue similar condemnations and publicly voice our support for the courageous Zimbabwean women and men who speak out against government corruption and abuses.

The United States supports democratic governance programs that improve electoral processes, refine citizen advocacy strategies, and enhance public accountability measures. We provide support to those the Zimbabwean Government singles out for abuse, and we impose targeted sanctions to promote accountability for corrupt actors and those who abuse human rights and undermine democratic processes.

But we should continue to look at all options. If confirmed, I will work with this committee, civil society, regional neighbors, and likeminded partners to shine a brighter light on the situation in Zimbabwe so that, together, we can increase the pressure on the Government of Zimbabwe to respect democratic principles and human rights. If confirmed, I will work with our interagency partners to use our sanctions programs to promote accountability for those individuals who are currently active in corruption and human rights abuses.

Question. An area of considerable debate has been the value of reincorporating political party programming into the portfolio of U.S. democracy assistance to Zimbabwe. Do you commit to reviewing the Department of State's posture on political party support in Zimbabwe?

Answer. Since the 2018 election, the Government of Zimbabwe has systematically weakened the opposition through manipulated court rulings, harassment and incarceration of key figures, and thinly veiled actions to install pliant political figures in parliament.

If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the Department of State's posture on political party support in Zimbabwe.

Question. What is your assessment of the appropriateness of Nigeria for this designation?

Answer. The Department is reviewing this designation as part of the annual process. That process is underway, and the Department will consider all available information. I take this issue very seriously and do not wish to prejudge the process or the Secretary's decision.

Question. What is your assessment of the drivers of conflict in Nigeria? How do the drivers of conflict in Nigeria differ across geographical regions?

Answer. Nigeria faces growing insecurity on multiple fronts, including kidnapping and banditry in the North West, insurgency from the Islamic State in West Africa (ISIS-WA) and Boko Haram in the North East, communal violence including herder-farmer conflict in various regions, attacks by Biafran separatists in the South East, and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. The drivers of conflict are numerous and overlapping, and also vary across regions. Experts have cited the proliferation of small arms, increasing competition over land and water resources, lack of accountability and access to justice, as well as politics, ethnicity, and religion among contributing factors. Ineffective state security responses, poor governance and service delivery, endemic corruption, and lack of economic opportunity also create conditions that are ripe for conflict.

The United States is partnering with Nigeria to build more effective and accountable security forces to better respond to the country's security challenges and protect civilians. The U.S. Government also helps Nigerians prevent and mitigate conflict through our diplomacy, police and justice reform programs, peacebuilding programs, early warning and early response programs, dialogue efforts, and development programs.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARY CATHERINE PHEE BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. How can the United States support a peaceful resolution of Cameroon's Anglophone conflict?

Answer. I share your concerns about the ongoing violence in Cameroon and the conflict in the Anglophone region. If confirmed, my focus would be to continue urging all parties to end violence and to engage in an inclusive dialogue without preconditions. I would make clear U.S. support for the Swiss Government's efforts to advance mediation between the Government and separatist armed group leaders and encourage the Government to take concrete steps to move this effort forward. I will also review the different tools we have to hold human rights violators accountable, including sanctions. I will continue to pursue engagement with France, key allies, and U.N. Security Council member states, to find ways to promote a peaceful resolution of the ongoing violence.

Question. How can the United States balance support for the counterterrorism campaign in the north with efforts to promote a peaceful resolution of the Anglophone conflict?

Answer. Cameroon has long played a crucial role in regional stability. With the protracted crisis in the Central African Republic, instability in Nigeria, the terrorist threat posed by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa, and increasing incidents of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, Cameroon's role as a partner in securing and maintaining stability in the region is even more important. Since 2018, the Department has significantly reduced security assistance because the Government of Cameroon had not taken appropriate action to investigate credible allegations of gross violations of human rights by its security forces and hold the perpetrators accountable. If confirmed, I commit to continuing the practice of reviewing security assistance on a case-by-case basis to ensure the assistance the United States provides aligns with U.S. interests, including promotion of respect for human rights. I will also ensure the Department vets potential recipients of security assistance, consistent with the Leahy laws, and does not provide assistance to Cameroonian security force units where there is credible information that the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights.

Question. Would you advocate the use of sanctions on Cameroonian officials and others responsible for hindering a resolution of the Anglophone conflict?

Answer. On June 7, 2021, Secretary Blinken announced that the United States was taking steps to impose visa restrictions on certain individuals who are believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. I understand the Department of State continues to work on expanding visa restrictions on individuals on both sides of the conflict. Secretary Blinken's decision to implement a visa restrictions policy on some of those responsible for undermining peace in Cameroon is the first of many possible approaches the Department of State can take to push for peace and dialogue. It has encouraged both the UK and the EU to look at utilizing their new sanctions laws. It is yet another sign of the commitment to back up words with actions. If confirmed, I will consider all the tools at our disposal aimed at promoting a peaceful resolution of the ongoing violence which has resulted in much suffering and threatens to become even more critical day by day.

Question. According to the U.N., nearly 5.2 million of the Tigray region's 5.7 million people are in need of emergency food assistance, and more than 2 million have been displaced by violence. U.N. humanitarian agencies have scaled up to meet the needs of civilians in Tigray, distributing food aid to more than 1.4 million people and working to reach people with shelter, clean water, hygiene supplies, and other critical relief items and services. The U.N. is also working to identify and provide support to survivors of gender-based violence, which has been widespread during the conflict. Unfortunately, the U.N. and its partners are only able to help a fraction of the people in need because parties to the conflict—largely the Ethiopian and Eritrean militaries—continue to block humanitarian access to large parts of the region.

- How is the administration working to address this issue?

Answer. Intensified conflict in western Tigray and the expansion of conflict into the neighboring Afar region has effectively blocked overland access for humanitarian supplies. In light of these recent developments, the Biden-Harris administration has prioritized the establishment of direct talks between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) with the aim of achieving a negotiated ceasefire. Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Jeffrey Feltman is working in close coordination with international partners to create the necessary conditions for such talks to occur. Ending hostilities is an essential component of ensuring that sufficient humanitarian supplies can reach the Tigray region. In addition, the Biden-Harris administration has taken a number of steps to press all parties to provide unhindered humanitarian access. On May 23, we put in place a visa restriction policy under Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act for any current or former Ethiopian or Eritrean Government officials, members of the security forces, or other individuals—to include Amhara regional and irregular forces and members of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)—responsible for, or complicit in, undermining resolution of the crisis in Tigray. This includes those who have conducted wrongful violence or other abuses against people in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, as well as those who have hindered access of humanitarian assistance to those in the region. If confirmed, I would carefully review the option of implementing additional sanctions against those who are preventing access to humanitarian assistance. It will also be important to continue to encourage our likeminded partners to support such targeted sanctions.

Question. What leverage or pressure points do we have with the Ethiopian Government that can be brought to bear to ensure that the U.N. and other humanitarian actors are able to access vulnerable communities?

Answer. Sustained diplomatic engagement with all parties to the conflict is essential to press for unhindered humanitarian access. If confirmed, I would work closely with our Ambassador, Special Envoy Feltman, and international partners to continue to make clear to the Ethiopian Government its responsibility in this regard and the impact of interference with humanitarian assistance on our bilateral relationship. The Biden-Harris administration has already ended most non-humanitarian U.S. development and security assistance programming to Ethiopia. The Department of State has established a visa restriction policy including on those who have hindered humanitarian access to those in the Tigray region. If confirmed, I would carefully review the option of implementing additional sanctions against those who are preventing access to humanitarian assistance.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO HON. MARY CATHERINE PHEE BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

Question. What next-level plans and programs does the United States Government have prepared to increase pressure on those who are responsible for perpetuating violence and instability in the region?

Answer. In addition to the visa restriction policy under Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act announced by Secretary Blinken on May 23 with regard to the issuance of visas for any current or former Ethiopian or Eritrean Government officials, members of the security forces, or other individuals-to include Amhara regional and irregular forces and members of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)-responsible for, or complicit in, undermining resolution of the crisis in Tigray, the Biden-Harris administration has ended most non-humanitarian U.S. development and security assistance programming to Ethiopia. If confirmed, I would carefully review the option of implementing additional sanctions against those who are undermining resolution of the conflict, who are engaging in human rights abuses, violations, or atrocities, or who are preventing access to humanitarian assistance. These could include Global Magnitsky designations under E.O. 13818 and a new Executive Order (E.O.) establishing a Tigray-specific sanctions regime. It will also be important to continue to encourage our likeminded partners to support such targeted sanctions. The goal of these measures is to increase pressure on all the parties to the conflict to agree to an immediate negotiated cessation of hostilities, an end to human rights abuses and violations, and unhindered humanitarian access to the Tigray region.

Question. What measures does the State Department intend to take to hold Prime Minister Abiy accountable for ignoring, misleading, and deflecting the international community while civilians were facing grave human rights abuses?

Answer. In concert with international partners, the Biden-Harris administration has consistently called out human rights abuses committed by all parties to the conflict, including the Ethiopian Government, and stressed the need for accountability. Because of concern about human rights violations, abuses, and atrocities, the Biden-Harris administration has suspended most non-humanitarian U.S. development and security assistance to Ethiopia and established a visa restriction policy. If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the feasibility of additional measures, such as imposition of targeted Global Magnitsky sanctions and a new Executive Order establishing a Tigray-specific sanctions regime. At the United Nations, the United States played a leading role in arranging an open meeting of the Security Council on July 2 on the situation in Tigray and is continuing to press for additional action by the Security Council. The United States also worked with partners on the U.N. Human Rights Council to successfully arrange for the adoption of a Tigray-specific human rights resolution that calls for ongoing joint investigations by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, and mandates reporting on their progress and outcomes. Additionally, the Department of State is exploring support for additional documentation and associated accountability and transitional justice options that could be used to address atrocities and other abuses that have been and continue to be committed by parties to the conflict in Tigray. If confirmed, I am committed to employing U.S. leverage and influence to hold all parties to the conflict to account.

Question. What are our like-minded partners in Europe and elsewhere doing to help address these concerns?

Answer. I understand that the Department of State is working in close coordination with the G7 and other like-minded partners to increase pressure on all parties to the conflict to agree to an immediate negotiated cessation of hostilities, an end to human rights abuses and violations, and unhindered humanitarian access to the Tigray region.

The Department of State is also collaborating with international partners in an effort to open communication among the parties to the conflict with the goal of achieving an immediate negotiated ceasefire. Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Ambassador Feltman and other State Department officials coordinate closely with an Ethiopia contact group of like-minded international partners. Special Envoy Feltman is actively engaging with influential countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kenya, and Sudan. At the United Nations, the United States played a leading role in arranging an open meeting of the Security Council on July 2 on the situation in Tigray and is continuing to press for additional action by the Security Council. The United States also worked with partners on the U.N. Human Rights Council to successfully arrange for the adoption of a Tigray-specific human rights resolution that calls for ongoing joint investigations by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and mandates reporting on their progress and outcomes. If confirmed, I commit to sustaining these intensive efforts to work with like-minded partners.

Question. What is the Biden administration's policy position on Somalia? What role should the United States play in helping to address armed conflict, terrorism, and political crisis in the country? What changes, if any, would you seek to State Department-administered security assistance programs in Somalia?

Answer. The Biden-Harris administration supports efforts to advance peace and security in Somalia by countering the threat from al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia operating in the country. This effort addresses the drivers of instability by promoting democratic governance and market-oriented economic reforms that are necessary for lasting stability. It is imperative that the United States continue to coordinate closely with the Somalis and international partners, such as the United Nations, the African Union, Somalia's neighbors, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and Gulf states, to tackle the country's considerable security and political challenges. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing State Department-administered security assistance in Somalia to ensure these programs are effectively and efficiently advancing our policy goals.

Question. Two of the largest troop contributing countries to AMISOM, Ethiopia and Uganda, are credibly accused of committing serious human rights violations at home. Has the time come to seek a new configuration and/or new partners for AMISOM?

Answer. Somalia continues to require regional and international support to mitigate the threats from al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia and address the drivers of instability. While AMISOM has played an important role during the past 10 years in liberating territory from al-Shabaab and stabilizing parts of Somalia, reconfiguring the mission (1) to better respond to the terrorist threats and (2) to transfer increasing security responsibility to Somalia's security forces must be a priority during upcoming negotiations for a new mandate in 2022. I agree that troubling new developments in the region should also be considered in upcoming negotiations. If confirmed, I commit to working with the African Union, the United Nations, and individual AMISOM troop contributing countries to ensure that personnel are properly vetted, follow the rules of armed conflict, and respect human rights. There is a need to engage the AU and the U.N. in a timely and credible process to identify and remove potential troop contributors that may be implicated in human rights abuses.

Question. Would we not be better off with partners that will not use the threat of pulling their troops from AMISOM as leverage for getting the United States and others to refrain from taking a hard stance on corruption and human rights abuses in their home countries?

Answer. AMISOM troop contributing countries (TCCs) participate in the mission because it serves their interests to mitigate the threat from al-Shabaab to their own countries. I am not aware of a serious threat to withdraw troops from Somalia, despite occasional resistance to U.S. efforts to combat corruption and human rights abuses in TCC capitals.

Ethiopia/Sudan Border Dispute

Question. A long simmering border dispute between Sudan and Ethiopia in the al-Fashaga region of Sudan appears on the brink of turning hot. The United Arab Emirates had, for a time, taken the lead on mediating this dispute, but their role is no longer clear.

- Who is currently leading the mediation effort in this long-running dispute?

Answer. I share your concern about the risk of escalating tension between Sudan and Ethiopia generated by a military buildup and recent violence along the border of Ethiopia and Sudan in the al-Fashaga area. My understanding is that the UAE initiative is currently inactive. If confirmed, I will join the efforts of Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Ambassador Feltman and U.S. embassies in Addis Ababa and Khartoum to encourage both governments to engage in constructive dialogue to de-escalate tensions as part of a U.S. Horn strategy to address the interlinked political, security, and humanitarian crises in the region. I will also engage international and regional partners, including the UAE, to explore ways to persuade the two parties to agree to a mutually acceptable resolution.

Question. What is the Department doing to alleviate the pressure on this potential hot spot?

Answer. The Department of State continues to engage the two parties to press for a de-escalation of tensions and to call for no further violence. If confirmed, I will join the efforts of Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Ambassador Feltman and the U.S. embassies in Addis Ababa and Khartoum to press the two parties to find a mutually acceptable resolution in coordination with international and regional partners.

Question. How confident are you in President Tshisekedi's commitment to advance reforms in the mining sector, state security apparatus, and election process?

Answer. The United States supports President Tshisekedi's goal of building a more peaceful and prosperous DRC. Since President Tshisekedi took office in 2019, the U.S.-DRC partnership has contributed to the freeing of individuals who have been unlawfully or arbitrarily detained; establishment of an anti-trafficking agency; the highest-level corruption conviction in DRC history; and related steps that merited the reinstatement of DRC's AGOA eligibility.

The recent inauguration of a new cabinet in the DRC opened an historic new chapter in the country's political history. If confirmed, I will emphasize to DRC leaders the early imperative of undertaking the legal, financial, and technical preparations necessary for free and fair elections in 2023, including reform of the Independent National Electoral Commission. To be credible, those elections must be inclusive, conducted transparently and impartially, and held in accordance with constitutional deadlines. I will also urge DRC leaders to heed the calls of the Congolese people for reforms in the mining sector and security apparatus.

Question. The DRC holds over 51 percent of the global cobalt reserves and produces nearly 70 percent of the total cobalt feedstock globally. Underpinned by huge demand for from the battery sector, competition for control over global cobalt feedstock supply chains has intensified in recent years. What is the Department of State doing to support more responsible trade missions and U.S. commercial delegations to the DRC and to assist the DRC's efforts to improve the transparency of its minerals trade, including strong support for implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), beneficial ownership transparency, and the formalization of the artisanal mining sector?

Answer. The United States is working with the DRC Government to bolster economic opportunities for all Congolese, including by establishing conditions that attract American companies to the DRC, expand trade, advance gender equality and women's entrepreneurship, and encourage business climate reforms to promote inclusive development. The reinstatement of the DRC's AGOA eligibility on January 1, 2021, affirmed the Tshisekedi Government's positive progress on reform, and bolstered our effort to expand U.S.-DRC commercial ties to benefit workers in both countries.

The United States supports responsible minerals sourcing and trading and works closely with the private sector to support conflict-free minerals supply chains, emphasizing compliance with section 1502 of the U.S. Dodd-Frank Act. The Public-Private Alliance for Responsible Minerals (PPA), forged by the Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Labor and inclusive of U.S. companies and civil society organizations, seeks to improve due diligence and develop the governance systems needed for ethical supply chains of critical minerals in the DRC and Great Lakes region. PPA programming also aims to increase transparency and monitoring

of child labor in artisanal mining in the DRC's cobalt supply chain while building government capacity to do the same.

The United States has been one of the strongest supporters of the EITI since its founding in 2003. In addition to providing financial support, as well as capacity building to improve EITI's financial management and operational effectiveness, the Department of State serves on the EITI International Board. In a related initiative, the Department of State is supporting improvements to the governance of the DRC's mining royalties with a Fiscal Transparent Innovation Fund grant to the Carter Center.

Finally, the Critical Minerals Security Initiative provides the Department of State with a new tool to engage U.S. companies operating in the critical materials and minerals supply chain in countries such as the DRC. If confirmed, I commit to supporting and expanding these efforts to promote responsible minerals sourcing and trade.

Question. What are the prospects for regional military operations and the imposition of martial law in eastern DRC to address the security and humanitarian crisis in the region?

Answer. The United States remains deeply concerned about continued violence, humanitarian crises, and allegations of human rights abuses and violations in eastern DRC. The expanding role of ISIS-DRC and other armed groups in conducting horrific acts against civilians is of particular concern. To tackle these challenges, the United States has called for an end to the violence, justice and accountability for those responsible, the professionalization of state security services, and inclusion of local communities and the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) in peace and reconciliation efforts.

The United States supports the Congolese Government's efforts to stabilize eastern DRC by addressing the drivers of escalating violence, including holding those in the military responsible for corruption and human rights abuses and violations to account. We have reiterated this message since the Government imposed a "state of siege" in two provinces in eastern DRC most affected by the conflict. If confirmed, I will urge the Congolese Government to continue to work with MONUSCO in support of the peacekeeping mission's efforts to protect civilians, reduce intercommunal tensions, and strengthen state institutions.

We welcome President Tshisekedi's diplomatic outreach to the DRC's neighbors. If confirmed, I will support diplomatic solutions and cross-border cooperation. As appropriate, I will share the U.S. view that any potential regional military cooperation must be conducted in a transparent manner in coordination with the DRC Government and MONUSCO.

Question. What changes, if any, would you seek to the U.N. peacekeeping operation in DRC, MONUSCO?

Answer. The U.N. plays a critical role in the stabilization of the DRC, particularly in eastern DRC, where armed group violence remains widespread. The MONUSCO mandate, last renewed in December 2020, prioritizes tasks to protect civilians, support stabilization efforts, and strengthen state institutions. MONUSCO has transitioned out of the Kasai provinces due to favorable gains in security and is scheduled to transition out of Tanganyika province by mid-2022 as part of a responsible, conditions-based transition to allow for more resources to focus on North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri provinces.

The Department of State continues to promote reforms to support the offensive operations mandate of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), including through the addition of new units and improved operational capabilities. If confirmed, I will collaborate with U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield to encourage MONUSCO to improve its ability to protect civilians, conduct effective quick-reaction operations, and build state capacity in support of sustainable peace in this restive region.

Question. What is the Department doing in response to the Government of Nigeria's growing levels of intolerance for universal human rights and freedoms?

Answer. President Biden has charged us with restoring democracy and human rights to the forefront of U.S. diplomacy. Advocacy for human rights and fundamental freedoms is foundational to our relationship with Nigeria, Africa's largest democracy. The United States is engaging Nigeria's Government at the highest levels to urge Nigerian leaders to uphold their country's constitution and our shared democratic principles. The Department of State spoke clearly when Nigeria recently suspended Twitter operations. If confirmed, I commit to engaging directly about these foundational rights.

The Department of State also supports programs to strengthen the capacity of government institutions and civil society to promote respect for human rights. Of note, the Department of State supported the demands of Nigerian civil society who successfully pressed for the establishment of judicial panels of inquiry in 28 Nigerian states to examine allegations of human rights violations and abuses by Nigeria's now-defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and the Nigerian Police Force.

Question. What efforts does the Department have underway and in the planning process to assist journalists and protesters in Nigeria to exercise their rights to freedom of association and freedom of expression?

Answer. The Department of State is committed to partnering with Nigerian journalists and civil society activists who, despite facing many hardships and risks, are highly active and well-established, and in many respects serve as a model for the continent. The Department of State employs a range of foreign policy tools to promote media freedom, including public messaging; sanctions and visa restrictions; and foreign assistance programming. In addition to multi-donor-funded initiatives like the Lifeline Fund for Embattled CSOs, the Department of State has established emergency mechanisms to respond to specific needs of journalists in crisis. If confirmed, I will prioritize support for and engagement with journalists and civil society.

Question. What impacts have reported abuses by Nigerian security forces had on U.S.-Nigeria military relations?

Answer. Nigeria faces multiple drivers of instability: a terrorist threat from ISIS-West Africa and Boko Haram, entrenched insurgencies, banditry, pastoralist/farmer conflict, ethnic divisions, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, a rising separatist movement in the South, and widespread criminality. In contending with these challenges, Nigerian security forces have committed incidents of human rights violations and abuses. In response, the U.S. Government has limited—in line with our laws and policies—the provision of certain military training and capabilities that could otherwise be useful to Nigeria in combatting these security challenges. To address the parallel priorities of security and human rights, the Biden-Harris administration is committed to engaging with the Nigerian Government and security services to support the institutional reforms and improved professionalism that will promote conduct that respects human rights. In seeking U.S. military sales that include mandatory training and maintenance programs, the Nigerian Government has shown a commitment to the investments and security sector institutional reforms that will enable the expansion of U.S.-Nigeria military relations and the improvement of Nigerian security capabilities.

If confirmed, I will work with the Nigerian Government to actively promote the professionalization of their security forces to reinforce the importance of civilian protection and respect for human rights. I will urge the Nigerian Government to hold security force elements accountable for human rights abuses and violations.

Question. To what extent does China's engagement in Africa threaten U.S. interests? How should the United States respond?

Answer. As Secretary Blinken has said, there are adversarial, competitive, and cooperative aspects of our relationship with China, and this dynamic applies to our respective partnerships in Africa. Our best asset will be a dynamic and affirmative U.S. policy agenda that enlists African partners in building free market democracies that offer liberty and prosperity and realize the continent's full potential.

Africans and Americans alike support democracy, the rule of law, open competition, and human rights. This robust foundation will help us achieve a mutually beneficial relationship.

If confirmed, I commit to working with Congress and interagency partners to mobilize all the tools of the U.S. Government to boost socially responsible and climate-friendly trade and investment that secures good livelihoods for both African and American workers. Following the President's lead, I will liaise with the EU, the G-7 and other likeminded partners to engage African partners in the struggle to uphold the international rules-based order, in line with the guidelines in the Strategic Competition Act.

Question. Are there any areas where cooperation with China might advance U.S. goals?

Answer. Where cooperation might advance U.S. goals, such as efforts to promote peace and stability, we will consider collaboration. If confirmed, I am committed to working with you to ensure American values and interests prevail.

Question. What is the administration's approach to supporting COVID-19 responses in Africa?

Answer. Recognizing the devastating human loss and the debilitating second-order economic impacts of COVID-19, the Biden-Harris administration has committed to providing and supporting the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines across Africa. This commitment includes activities that will support public health and case management interventions to stop transmissions and mitigate the impacts of the pandemic across Africa. In May, President Biden committed to sharing 80 million COVID-19 doses from the U.S. supply with the world. In total 25 million of these doses are being shared with Africa and distribution has been coordinated closely with the African Union and COVAX. Of this allotment, more than one million doses have thus far been donated to Africa, with Djibouti being the first African country to receive vaccine doses on July 17. The President subsequently committed the United States to provide 500 million doses of Pfizer vaccine to Gavi for distribution via COVAX to 92 low- and lower-middle-income economies as defined by Gavi's COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), and to the African Union. Almost half of the COVAX AMC countries are in Africa.

The Biden-Harris administration is also supporting the expansion of vaccine manufacturing capacity in Africa. The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), with international partners, announced on June 30 a financing package for Aspen, Africa's largest manufacturer of pharmaceuticals located in South Africa, to increase production capacity for COVID-19 vaccines, and on July 9 U.S. announced its commitment to support Fondation Institut Pasteur de Dakar (IPD) to boost vaccine production in Senegal.

Finally, since the start of the pandemic, the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development have provided roughly \$541 million in health, humanitarian, and economic support assistance to more than 40 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Biden-Harris administration will also provide additional foreign assistance under the American Rescue Plan Act to Sub-Saharan Africa to support COVID-19 vaccine preparedness and delivery activities to ensure 'shots in the arms' of African people. In addition, this funding will support public health efforts, strengthen case management, and interventions to stop and help mitigate the pandemic's effects on economic growth, food security, education, democracy, and women and girls.

Question. The Biden administration just announced that it was sending 25 million vaccines to three African countries—Burkina Faso, Djibouti, and Ethiopia. In your view, what are the key challenges to more effective vaccine distribution?

Answer. Over the last two decades, the U.S. Government invested roughly \$100 billion in Africa's public health infrastructure. The result is strong systems that allowed partner countries to prepare for and respond rapidly to COVID-19. Rapid and equitable distribution of novel COVID-19 vaccines, however, is a complex operational challenge with legal, regulatory, logistics and cold chain considerations. Thanks to Congressionally-appropriated funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, the U.S. Government is supporting vaccine preparedness in Sub-Saharan Africa, working with international partners and COVAX to provide technical assistance, logistics support, build cold chain capacity, and enhance vaccine absorptive capacity. To date, U.S.-supplied vaccines have been successfully donated to four African countries, and COVAX has delivered vaccines to over 40 sub-Saharan African countries. As in the United States, vaccine hesitancy in Africa remains a concern. To respond, the United States partners every day with national and local African health ministries and services, as well as international and NGO partners, in support of messaging campaigns to address vaccine hesitancy in African populations as well as to confront COVID-19 vaccine mis- and disinformation.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO MS. ANNE A. WITKOWSKY BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Stabilization Priorities:

Question. If confirmed, what criteria would you utilize when assessing whether the United States should engage more closely in conflict-affected countries and regions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue CSO's efforts to incorporate data, evidence, and quantitative and qualitative methods into policy-making and prioritization when assessing whether the United States should engage more closely in conflict-

affected countries and regions. CSO's analytical tools, such as the Instability Monitoring and Analysis Platform (IMAP), provide global data analytics on state fragility, instability, and conflict. CSO is monitoring the impacts of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, gender inequality, human rights abuses, and democratic backsliding to understand how these factors impact conflict risk and how targeted interventions might mitigate these trends.

Question. With these criteria in mind, are there any countries or regions where conflict is either already evident or at risk of occurring where you believe the United States should consider dedicating more resources and attention?

Answer. Several countries, such as those laid out in this year's report to Congress pursuant to the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018, including Ethiopia and Burma, warrant increased attention and action, and it will be critical to monitor and address the broader, regional impact of the situations in these countries.

CSO Role in Preventing Conflict and Promoting Stability

Question. In addition to the Department of Defense, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and other federal agencies, the State Department's regional bureaus, Office of Foreign Assistance, and Chiefs of Mission are responsible for elements of the U.S. Government's efforts to prevent conflict and promote stability abroad.

- With this in mind, if confirmed, in what areas do you anticipate directing the CSO Bureau to play a leading role in these efforts, including through the work of CSO stabilization advisors in the field?

Answer. If confirmed, and in support of the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights, I will direct CSO to continue its leading role in coordinating the U.S. Government's efforts to implement the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018, 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review, and Global Fragility Act (2019) while integrating and advancing the Women, Peace, and Security Act (2017) as a cross-cutting priority. CSO informs key U.S. strategies, policies, and programs on conflict prevention and stabilization by combining quantitative data analytics with the qualitative expertise of its stabilization advisors, particularly in peace process support, security sector stabilization, and strategic prevention. Deployed CSO stabilization advisors provide technical conflict and stabilization expertise to DOD Geographic Combatant Commands and to U.S. embassies in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Western Hemisphere.

Question. Similarly, where is the Bureau better positioned to play a complementary role in efforts led by other agencies and State Department bureaus?

Answer. Given its unique conflict expertise and advanced analytics tools, CSO complements other U.S. Government efforts to prevent conflict and promote stability by deploying Stabilization Advisors, harnessing data analytics, and leading, informing, and implementing policy and programs on conflict prevention and stabilization. If confirmed, I will continue CSO's close coordination with other State Department bureaus and other agencies, including the J Family Bureaus, the Office of Foreign Assistance, USAID's Bureau of Conflict Prevention and Stabilization (CPS), the Department of Defense Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, and the Department of Treasury.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Many analysts have expressed concern regarding the potential impacts of COVID-19 on fragile states.

Question. How would you prioritize addressing COVID-19-related challenges in the context of the many risk factors capable of exacerbating violence and instability in fragile states?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure CSO continues to consider the impact of COVID-19 as a risk factor for instability and the interacting effects of COVID-19 and other drivers of conflict. CSO is currently monitoring the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on countries experiencing fragility, including through disruptions to remittances and tourism revenues and the general capacity of states' ability to deliver medical and other services to their citizens. CSO is also monitoring state repression through exploiting lockdowns, delays in elections, and other warning signs of democratic backsliding. I will ensure this work continues, and I will work across the department and interagency to investigate how targeted outreach and programming may mitigate COVID-19-related challenges.

Leveraging CSO Data Analytics: Former CSO officials have identified a need to ensure that CSO data analytics tools are utilized by other State Department officials and bureaus in policy and programming decisions.

Question. Please share your understanding of how the State Department is currently leveraging CSO's analytics tools, such as its Instability Monitoring and Analysis Platform? If confirmed, how, if at all, would you work to ensure these tools are used more widely?

Answer. If confirmed, I would ensure that CSO's analytics capabilities and tools continue to be incorporated into all aspects of CSO's work, including support for the Global Fragility Act (GFA), the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018, and the Women, Peace, and Security Act. Since October 2019, CSO's analytics products have been requested and utilized by more than 50 State Department bureaus and embassies. CSO's Instability Monitoring and Analysis Platform (IMAP) provides all State Department employees and select interagency partners with global data analytics on state fragility, instability, and conflict, supporting the administration's policy to make evidence-based decisions guided by the best available data. I am eager to work with Congress to ensure that robust analytics continue to play a key role in CSO's work and to expanding opportunities for analytics to improve policies and programs at all levels.

CSO's Role in Atrocity Prevention

Question. What is CSO's role in interagency efforts related to atrocity prevention? And, what are the specific activities CSO has engaged in related to atrocity prevention?

Answer. CSO supports the National Security Council process to coordinate interagency implementation of the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018 (Elie Wiesel Act) and serves as the Secretariat of the White House-led Atrocity Early Warning Task Force. In collaboration with other bureaus and agencies, CSO provides atrocity risk assessments for countries of concern and develops atrocity risk response plans targeted at likely pathways or scenarios to atrocities. CSO produces a classified quarterly Early Warning Assessment that identifies countries at risk of large-scale and deliberate civilian killings, a key indicator of potential atrocity. This assessment is one of three primary risk lists the Task Force uses to guide and prioritize its efforts. CSO funds a small amount of atrocity prevention programming, complementing efforts of other bureaus and agencies. To fulfill the Elie Wiesel Act's mandatory training requirements, CSO worked closely with stakeholders to develop the Department's first virtual atrocity prevention training that has trained over 2,700 Department personnel since its launch in February, 2020.

Role of Women in Conflict Stabilization

Question. If confirmed, how, if at all, will you direct the CSO Bureau to continue implementing the U.S. Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security and elements of the Global Fragility Strategy focused on encouraging the meaningful participation of women in processes connected to peace and security?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support CSO's robust Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) efforts. CSO works closely with the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues, among others, to ensure that conflict-sensitive gender analyses, data on gender-based violence, and meaningful consultations with local women and girls will inform the development, implementation, and monitoring of GFA implementation efforts. CSO developed a new Gender Analysis of Conflict Tool to guide more nuanced assessments of how gender norms drive both men and women towards violence or peace.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO MS. ANNE A. WITKOWSKY BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Mission and Mandate

Question. In your view, what is the Bureau for Conflict and Stabilization Operations' mandate? Is CSO principally charged with policy formulation, program implementation, both, or none of the above?

- If confirmed, how would you work with the relevant regional and functional bureaus within the Department of State and with the relevant regional and functional bureaus at USAID to clarify roles and responsibilities, ensure unity of effort, and reduce duplication and waste?

Answer. CSO's mandate is to anticipate, prevent, and respond to conflict that undermines U.S. national interests. CSO is charged with both policy formulation and program implementation. Among CSO's highest policy priorities are coordinating

interagency implementation of the Global Fragility Act (2019), the 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review, and Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018.

It is my understanding that CSO coordinates closely with other bureaus and agencies, and I am committed to ensuring unity of effort and preventing duplication, particularly among State, USAID and the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I will reinforce current coordination efforts to implement policy priorities.

Global Fragility Act

Question. In your view, what role should CSO play in country selection, strategy design, and program implementation under the Global Fragility Act?

Answer. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with my colleagues in the White House, across the U.S. interagency in Washington and the field, and with multilateral partners and civil society, to ensure full implementation of the Global Fragility Act (GFA), including country selection, strategy design, and program implementation. CSO's expertise and coordination role will be critical to innovative implementation of the GFA and will advance ongoing learning, monitoring, and adaptive management to inform policy and programming decisions.

Question. Does CSO have the authority to act as arbiter of disputes between the relevant Federal departments and agencies charged with implementing the Global Fragility Act, to include U.S. embassies in selected partner countries?

Answer. CSO does not currently have formal authority to act as arbiter of disputes among the relevant Federal departments and agencies charged with implementing the Global Fragility Act, to include U.S. embassies in selected partner countries. If confirmed, I will work closely with the White House, across the U.S. interagency including embassies and missions in the field, and with multilateral partners and civil society to implement fully the Global Fragility Act. I will work to enhance CSO's coordinating role and build consensus among all involved.

Data, Analytics, and Early Warning

Question. The White House-led Atrocity Early Warning Task Force (the Task Force) was designed to serve as a focal point for the relevant Federal departments and agencies, policy makers, and civil society working to identify and address the early warning signs of atrocities.

- If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that existing and future data analytics and forecasting tools developed and managed by CSO are relevant and readily available for use within the Department, and by overseas missions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that CSO commits and advocates for the necessary resources to keep its data analytics tools and capabilities freely available to support the Department and its overseas missions. My understanding is that all State Department employees and select interagency partners are able to freely access CSO's Instability Monitoring and Analysis Platform (IMAP) which includes global data analytics on conflict and instability, forecasting tools, and past reports and products. I look forward to engaging with you further on evidence-based policy making.

Question. What is the task force's role in identifying security priorities and regional policy?

Answer. The Atrocity Early Warning Task Force (AEWTF) coordinates a whole-of-government approach to strengthen the U.S. Government's ability to forecast, prevent, and respond to atrocities. To inform security and regional policy development, the Task Force conducts global atrocity risk forecasting, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, and shares early warning signs with policy decision-makers. The Task Force has worked closely with relevant regional directorates to conduct atrocity risk assessments and produce corresponding atrocity risk response plans for at-risk countries. The AEWTF is a functional Interagency Policy Committee, for which close and ongoing partnership with regional directorates and policy processes is critical. If confirmed, I will support CSO's role in atrocity prevention, which President Biden reaffirmed as a core moral obligation and national security priority for the United States.

Question. How does the task force define success?

Answer. My understanding is that the Atrocity Early Warning Task Force defines success as early warning leading to early action. This process includes early identification and communication of atrocity risk, development of atrocity risk assessments and response plans for countries at-risk, and securing long-term attention through integration of atrocity prevention in existing regional policy processes.

Question. What efforts can the task force undertake to amplify public messaging on signs of atrocities and/or other conflict indicators?

Answer. Pursuant to recommendations engendered by the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act of 2018, the Atrocity Early Warning Task Force has progressed on improving public messaging through civil society, Hill, and public engagements. The 2021 congressional report - released by Secretary Blinken - sent a clear signal that the U.S. Government will publicly call out atrocities that have occurred or are ongoing - a strong risk factor for further atrocities. These efforts can be useful to shed light on, and raise the costs for, perpetrators of potential or ongoing atrocities, but their use must be weighed carefully according to context. If confirmed, I will evaluate where CSO should recommend the Task Force amplify its public messaging.

Question. If confirmed, how would the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations address the on-going crisis in Afghanistan?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) remains engaged in the Department's efforts to address the ongoing crisis in Afghanistan through peace process support, atrocity prevention, and stabilization initiatives. CSO will continue to provide technical support to the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation (SRAR) and others involved in the negotiations. CSO will continue to participate in the interagency processes to mitigate atrocity risks facing women and minorities via planning discussions, recommendations for short- and long-term civilian protection, and atrocity risk analysis.

Question. If confirmed, how would the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations address the on-going crisis in Tigray?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that CSO contributes to Department efforts to address the on-going crisis in Tigray by urging Ethiopians to come together to confront growing divisions. CSO currently supports efforts to promote a negotiated ceasefire and inclusive political dialogue to end the conflict in Tigray. CSO stands ready to support preparations to assist Ethiopians to advance post-election dialogue and national reconciliation in Ethiopia.

RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED
TO MS. ANNE A. WITKOWSKY BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Ethiopia

Question. As the second most populous country in the African continent and given its recent transition toward democracy in 2018 with the election of Prime Minister Abiy. With the recent June 21 general election and allegations of irregularities in the voting process, conflict and violence are expected to increase. The political violence has proven to have devastating impacts on the country, from disrupting Ethiopia's response to the COVID pandemic to the famine in the Tigray region which is reported to have spawned the most severe hunger crisis the world has seen in more than a decade. CSO's mission includes both conflict-resolution as well as crisis mitigation in regions determined to be vital to American interests.

- Does the current conflict in Ethiopia pose a threat to American interests and if so, in what ways?

Answer. Yes. A secure, stable, peaceful, and developing Horn of Africa is critical to U.S. economic and security interests. Conflict and instability in Ethiopia adversely affect the entire Horn of Africa region. The United States has a strong interest in supporting democracy and human rights overseas, and the current conflict undermines these efforts. For that reason, the Biden-Harris administration has urged all parties to end the hostilities, pursue a negotiated ceasefire and inclusive political solution, and hold accountable all those responsible for human rights violations and abuses.

Question. What steps could CSO take to ensure a fair and verifiable election to help secure democracy in Ethiopia and prevent further loss of life in the region? Is there a role for the bureau in such a situation?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that CSO continues to join Department leadership in supporting Ethiopians who exercised their right to vote on June 21. The Department is calling for the September 6 elections to be free and fair. The September 6 elections will cover several areas that did not participate in the June elections due to logistical and security challenges. While elections alone are not a sufficient mark-

er of democracy or true political reform, these elections are part of a democratic political process that should involve dialogue, cooperation, and compromise among all Ethiopians on the future of their country.

Burma

Question. On February 1, 2021, the military of Burma launched a military coup d'état, endangering their nascent democracy by detaining State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint, and other members of parliament. The situation has been further escalated by gross human rights violations, including the ongoing ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya people. The coup has also sought to create "media blackouts" in the region, preventing information from leaving and entering Burma during a political and public health crisis. Senior generals of the Tatmadaw have been sanctioned by the United States Government for perpetrating gross human rights violations and are subject to ongoing investigations into their conduct by the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice.

- What steps besides sanctions and investigations could the U.S. Government and its subsidiaries, such as the CSO, be taking to bring about an end to the military coup in Burma, especially considering that, as of today, the coup leaders remain in power and are continuing to persecute the Burmese people and foreign nationals, such as journalists, in what can only be described as authoritarianism in its most severe form?

Answer. The United States has led the international community's immediate and forceful response to the military coup in Burma. The United States has galvanized allies and partners to take concrete action and urge the regime to end violence, release all those unjustly detained, and restore Burma's path to democracy. I understand that such efforts include diplomatic outreach to ASEAN members, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and other countries in the region. The administration has worked with international partners to deny the regime access to hundreds of millions of dollars in resources in international financial institutions, and pushed for an arms embargo as well as restrictions on exports of dual use technology. The Department continues to urge all countries to use all available levers to restrict the junta's access to financial institutions. If confirmed, I will work diligently to ensure that CSO continues to add value to State Department efforts to support the people of Burma.

Stabilization Priorities

Question. With many countries in conflicts to keep a close eye on around the world, it is important to assess how the US will engage in specific regions.

- If confirmed, what criteria would you utilize when assessing whether the United States should engage more in conflict-affected countries and regions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen CSO's analytical capacities to incorporate data, evidence, and quantitative and qualitative methods into policy-making and priority setting as the Department assesses its engagement in conflict-affected countries and regions. CSO's analytical tools provide the State Department and interagency partners with a basis for decision making on state fragility, instability, and conflict. I understand that among other factors, CSO is monitoring the impacts of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, gender inequality, human rights abuses, and democratic backsliding, to understand how these factors impact conflict risk, how targeted intervention might mitigate these trends, and what adjustments might be recommended for policy focus and attention.

Question. With these criteria in mind, are there any countries or regions where conflict is either already evident or at risk of occurring where you believe the United States should consider dedicating more resources and attention?

Answer. It will be critical to monitor and address the broader, regional impact of the situations in those countries laid out in this year's Elie Wiesel Act report to Congress, including Ethiopia and Burma. If confirmed I will ensure CSO provides full analysis of conflict criteria as the Department determines its engagement in countries or regions where conflict is already evident or at risk of occurring.